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Fifty Failure Factors

By Jay Adams | Published On: December 15, 2014 | Categories: Counseling

Counselor, are you stuck with a difficult counseling situation that just does not seem to be moving forward? Is it possible that **YOU** have failed in your handling this situation? Here is a list of questions you should ask yourself:

1. Is the counselee truly a Christian?
2. Has there been genuine repentance?
3. Is there a vital commitment to the Biblical change?
4. Are our agendas in harmony?
5. Do you have all the necessary data?
6. Are you trying to achieve change in the abstract or concretely?
7. Have you been intellectualizing?
8. Would a medical examination be in order?
9. Are you sure you know the problem(s)? Is more data gathering necessary?
10. Are there other problems that must be settled first?
11. Have you been trying to deal with the issue while ignoring the relationship?
12. Did you give adequate scriptural help?
13. Did you minimize?
14. Have you accepted speculative data as true?
15. Are you regularly assigning concrete homework in written form?

16. Would using a D. P. P. form help?
17. If this is a life-dominating problem, are you counseling for total restructuring?
18. Are you empathizing with self-pity?
19. Are you talking about problems only or also about God's solutions?
20. Have you carefully analyzed the counselee's attitudes expressed in his language?
21. Have you allowed counselees to talk negatively about others behind their backs?
22. Has a new problem entered the picture, or has the situation changed since counseling sessions began?
23. Have you been focusing on the wrong problem?
24. Is the problem not so complex after all, but simply a case of open rebellion?
25. Have you failed to move forward rapidly enough in the giving of homework assignments?
26. Have you as a counselor fallen into some of the same problems as the counselee?
27. Does doctrinal error lie at the base of the problem?
28. Do drugs (tranquilizers, etc.) or sleep loss present a complicating problem?
29. Have you stressed the put-off to the exclusion of the put-on?
30. Have you prayed about the problem?
31. Have you personally turned off the counselee in some way?
32. Is he willing to settle for something less than the scriptural solution?
33. Have you been less aggressive and demanding than the Scriptures?
34. Have you failed to give hope by calling sin "sin"?
35. Is the counselee convinced that personality change is impossible?
36. Has your counseling been feeling-oriented rather than commandment-oriented?
37. Have you failed to use the full resources of Christ (e.g., the help of the Christian community)? Are others from without bringing a negative influence on him?
38. Is church discipline in order?

39. Have you set poor patterns in previous sessions (e.g., accepting partially fulfilled homework assignments)?
40. Do you really know the Biblical solution(s) to his problems? (Can you write it out in thematic form?)
41. Do you really believe there is hope?
42. Has the counselee been praying, reading the Scriptures, fellowshiping with God's people, and witnessing regularly?
43. Should you call another Christian counselor for help (with the counselee's knowledge, of course)?
44. Would a full rereading of your Weekly Counseling Records disclose any patterns? Trends? Unexplored areas?
45. Have you questioned only intensively? Extensively?
46. Have you been assuming (wrongfully) that this case is similar to a previous case?
47. Has the counselee been concealing or twisting data?
48. Would someone else involved in the problem (husband, wife, parent, child) be able to supply needed data?
49. Are you simply incompetent to handle this sort of problem?
50. Are you reasonably sure that there is no organic base to the problem?

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