

## THE BASICS OF PEOPLE HELPING

### People helping principle 1

In any helping relationship, the personality, values, attitudes, and beliefs of the helper are of primary importance.

#### *Empathy*

This word comes from the German word *eingulung*, which means "to feel into" or "to feel with."

#### *Warmth*

Warmth is somewhat synonymous with caring. It is friendliness and consideration shown by facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, posture, eye-contact, and such non-verbal behaviour as looking after the helpee's comfort.

#### *Genuineness*

This means that the helper's words are consistent with his actions. He or she tries to be honest with the helpee, avoiding any statement or behavior which could be considered phony or insincere.

### People Helping Principle 2.

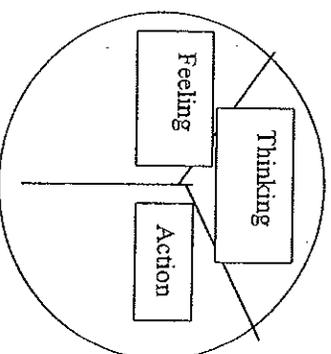
The helpee's attitudes, motivation, and desire for help are also important in counseling.

### People Helping Principle 3.

The helping relationship between helper and helpee is of great significance. As every counseling student soon learns, good rapport is essential for successful counseling, so essential that one writer has even described counseling as primarily a helping relationship between two or more people.

### People Helping Principle 4.

Helping must focus on the helpee's emotions, thoughts and behavior-all three. In many of the secular and Christian approaches to counseling there is an emphasis on either emotion, or thinking, or behavior, but rarely on all three together.



## People Helping Principle 5.

Helping involves a variety of helper skills. This word "skills" might be viewed from two perspectives. On the one hand there are the counseling techniques-things like listening attentively, watching carefully, or questioning wisely as the helpee describes his problem. These refer to what one does in counseling. They are skills which can be learned by the counselor-helper.

a) *Listening.* This involves giving our undivided attention to the helpee and showing this attention through eye contact, a relaxed posture, the use of encouraging statements (e.g., "that makes good sense," "I see what you mean"), an occasional probing response (e.g., "go on," "tell me more," "what then?"), and a periodic repeating of what the helpee said, just to be sure we understand.

### Some Guidelines for Listening

1. *Prepare to listen.*
  - i) Intellectually: reading about the issue being discussed can help you to listen both intelligently and critically. To know what to listen for is to listen better. Don't avoid difficult subjects.
  - ii) Physically: Since listening is hard work, take enough rest before you face it. Don't take an overrelaxed position that induces fatigue or grogginess.
  - iii) Mentally:
    - a. Realize that if you really want to listen to another person, this will do a great deal to increase your listening effectiveness.
    - b. Decide that you are going to learn by listening. Listening is not only of the best ways of learning new information and ideas, but it is also one of the best ways of learning about people-those to whom you listen.
    - c. Be aware that concentration is not easy and that listening requires discipline.
    - d. Recognize that not-listening equals indifference and this doesn't help anyone.
    - e. Realize that learning to listen to one another help us learn how to listen to God.
    - f. Get rid of the idea that listening is less important than speaking. A poor listener is likely to be a poor speaker as well.

9. Don't assume that you already know the full implications of the idea you are listening to.
2. *Judge content as well as delivery.* We look at the speaker and often concentrate on what we see rather than on what we hear. We can better understand content by paying attention to both nonverbal and verbal cues from the speaker.
3. *Control your emotions.* You might feel overpowered by your own emotional problems and be tempted to stop listening intently. Don't stop listening because you dislike the other person. Be patient with what he says,
4. *Resist distractions.* We are distracted not only by what we hear, but by what we see and are thinking. A good listener instinctively fights such distractions.
5. *Pay attention.* Attention is necessary for listening. Try to be interested in what is being said. Look at the person who is talking. Lean toward the person as he or she talks.
6. *Capitalize on the fact that you can think faster than another person can talk.*
  - 1) Think ahead.
  - 2) Weigh what you hear.
  - 3) Review what you have heard.
  - 4) Listen between the lines.
7. *Ask questions sparingly.* Especially try to avoid asking "why?"
8. *Try not to interrupt.*
9. *Stick to the speaker's subject.*
10. *Use the speaker's words to get your own point across.*
11. *Don't preach.*
12. *Go slow on giving advice.* Most people don't want advice and promptly ignore it when they hear it.
13. *Don't argue.* Don't try to persuade your helpee by becoming more argumentative, for this confirms his original beliefs and leaves him deaf to any kind of reasoning about the subject. If you win the argument you may lose a friend. If you lose, you may forfeit the respect of your helpee. Either way you have nothing to gain, and either does your helpee.
14. *Don't probe for additional facts for your own curiosity.* Your purpose is not that of obtaining information for yourself.
  - b) *leading.* Sometimes we use techniques which encourage the counselee to talk. We want him to share his feelings, to say what he is thinking, and to describe what he has done or not done about the problem.

- c) *Supporting.* This word in no way implies that the helper hods up psychological cripples so that they never learn to cope with their problems alone.
- d) *Confronting.* It is possible for the helper to listen, to make leading comments, and to support a helpee who nevertheless doesn't get better at all. This is because the helpee's problem is often rooted in behavior, attitudes, or thoughts which must be changed.
- e) *Teaching.* Basically this is what counseling really is. The helpee is learning how to act, feel, and think differently; the helper is fulfilling the role of a teacher. Teaching of course, can occur in a variety of ways. It may involve instruction, giving advice, or telling t he helpee what to do.

*The counseling process has at least five steps, all of which are clearly illustrated in the Bible.*

- a. *building a relationship* between helper and helpee. (John 6:63; 16:7-13; 1 John 4:6).
- b. *Exploring the problems*, trying to clarify issues and determine what has been done in the past to tackle the problem. (Rom. 8:26).
- c. *Deciding on a course of action.* There may be several possible alternatives which could be tried one at a time (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13).
- d. *Stimulating action* which helper and helpee evaluate together. When something doesn't work, try again (John 16:13; Acts 10:19, 20; 16:6).
- e. *Terminating the counseling relationship* and encouraging helpee to apply what he has learned as he launches out on his own (Rom. 8:14).

### **People Helping Principle 6.**

*The ultimate goal of helping is to make disciples and disciplers of our helpees.*

To clarify this sixth principle let us think for a moment of the Christian physician. Like every other believer, he too has a responsibility to be making disciples, but in the emergency room he does not pull out his Bible and start preaching. He starts with people where they are hurting. He demonstrates the love of Christ through his actions and concerns, realizing that the alleviation of suffering is honoring to Christ and his often a step towards evangelism (Prov. 14:31; Matt. 10:42).

- a) the helper may come into a life at any point in these five steps. He may deal with a non-believer who has never heard the gospel or, he may counsel with a mature saint who has been growing as a disciple and discipler for many years.
- b) The helper may take his helpee through all five stages or he may be with for a short time, making a few influences in his life and then moving out while someone else takes over.
- c) The spiritual can be introduced too quickly and too abruptly, some helpees have been turned off in the past by well-meaning but pushy Christians who have rushed in to present the gospel or to give mini-sermons on how to live better lives.
- d) Helping, like discipleship, involves the whole body of Christ. In Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and elsewhere in Scripture we read that the body exists for mutual support, help, burden-bearing, and edification.
- e) Discipleship counseling is concerned about the whole person. Man is a unity who rarely has a strictly spiritual need, a solely psychological abnormality, an exclusively social conflict, or a purely physical illness.