

**Herve Talom**

**LE 4: Participation in 8 counseling triads**

**CD702: Working With People**

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Our "Counseling Triad" consist of Areum, Samuel and Hervé during our counseling triads, each member had to participate as a "*speaker, listener, and observer*.". What made this group very special was the vulnerability of the members and how easy it was for the speaker to express their feelings honestly. One of the first things that made the speaker feel comfortable was asking them about their background. This gave the speaker a chance to explain where they were born and what their parents did for a living to give the listener a clearer picture.

The first counseling triad was uncomfortable, but it set the foundation as every member progressively got to talk, and it became evident that we all needed a counselor and therapist. As the speaker, I was initially nervous, but that feeling soon subsided as I thought about how much my story encouraged others. But at the same time, my mind was racing about when to tell it and how much of the details I should spare or share. I noticed that I was uncomfortable when Areum or Samuel asked me questions to gather more information. However, their persistence and patience in gathering information compelled me to share personal information. The voice and the body language played a significant role in our triad, the tone of voice created a comforting atmosphere which made me confident.

As a listener, I tried to understand their hurt and pain The first time I was a listener, it was tough because I wanted to finish their sentences for them and felt a sense that part of the story that they were telling was very similar to mine. However, on the second day, I was more comfortable in my role as a listener. I had to suppress thoughts that came to the front of my mind and not ask a question when I saw that their voice became shallow or when their body language changed by being sort of tense. As a listener, I learned to adjust my tone of voice or paraphrasing to make them feel comfortable.

However, one of the most complex parts of being a listener is unlearning how we are used to asking questions; most of the time, they start with (the question) why? In addition, the other thing that the group all believed was challenging was the need to offer resolutions from the speaker. Whenever I wanted to assist the speaker with different solutions, I heard Professor Sanders say, "This class

is called working with the people, not helping the people." If we decided to help the people trying to find out where they are and their identity by offering them decisions, they would want us to help them continually. We must let them sort out their situation to find clarity for themselves. In hindsight, they want us to play God, which will only hinder them and the one trying to assist them.

When it came to being the observer, I could gleam and get a better perspective of what was happening between the speaker and the listener. It was as if she needed more time to think about and answer each question individually. However, as Samuel paused, Areum could analyze Samuel's body language and proceeded with caution by letting Samuel regroup, collect his thoughts, and answer the questions that she wanted to when it came to Samuel (as the listener) and Areum (as the speaker), Samuel seems to be more reserved when asking questions, but very fluent with his "yes and okays," and more empathetic which made Areum more comfortable to go further into her shadow. In addition, as the observer, I saw and realized where I had failed by not letting the silence or quietness work to my advantage. For example, when either Areum or Samuel was quiet, I now realize (as the observer) that they were internalizing their thoughts and feelings, but instead (when I was the listener), I asked a question that made them go in a different direction.

Overall, after discussing what we did well and what needed to strengthen, we all agreed that we would have to enter one's world to understand better, communicate, and draw out what the speaker is trying to or avoiding saying. We also learned a lot from what questions were being asked, but I learned most from what they were left out (as an observer), which made me more effective when I became a speaker (according to Areum and Samuel). When grading my colleagues, I would give Areum an "A" because of her ability to extract essential information so that a person can take ownership of their issues. I would also give Samuel an "A" because of his vulnerability and promptness.

**Samuel:**

Samuel shared a lot about his struggles and the impact of Korean culture on his life and ministry, but he thinks as a leader the higher you are, the higher you go, and you begin to really narrow those who have access to you to the close as a leader. In addition, Samuel mentioned that one of the closest people in his life is his dad and the biggest blessing in his life "I called to hang out with him, talk with him asking about questions about your ministry and life" As a leader, how can welcome people in our sphere our contact.

**Areum:**

Sharing about her grief and how her parent's constant movement affected her. She went through 12 schools. Areum enjoys listening to music; she prefers Korean bands.

**Hervé:**

I multitask most of the time and work hard on every project. My struggle now is the ability to focus on one area, be efficient, and be listen effectively.

The takeaway from the counseling triad sessions that would help my ministry is learning to be a good listener. I came in from an engineering background; I enjoy fixing things and providing solutions in a challenging situation. For me, it was challenging to listen without providing a solution. So that was the biggest takeaway for me.

***Being a good listener does not mean that you agree or disagree with the speaker's point of view, but just be reassuring by using eye contact and by replying with questions such as, what do I hear you saying?*** It also helps to realize that what is said differs from what is being communicated. This is important because a person's body language and facial expressions can give one a better idea of what is going on in their head and allows us to focus on their needs, not their counseling needs. People will see the truth and reveal more of themselves by talking candidly. The whole point is to make people understand there is a process to get to the next level. Each step can bring people closer to a "new life pattern" and freedom if they are willing to do the complex and challenging work.