

11 Things You Can Do Instead of Seeing a Counselor

FREE MINISTRY RESOURCE



11 THINGS YOU CAN DO INSTEAD OF SEEING A COUNSELOR

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You're thinking about seeing a counselor, but you don't have the funds. Let's face it, people in full-time ministry are not rolling in the dough. Or you do have the funds, but you can't find a counselor who jives with your personality or gets your missionary world.

Counselors are great and necessary, but there are things you can do on your own instead of seeing a counselor to move forward in your struggles.

No. 1 | Fill up the Thank Tank

You know you should be thankful, but do you jot them down? Take two minutes each day to write down what you are thankful for, even if it doesn't relate your struggles. Research proves thankfulness improves our mood and well-being.

No. 2 | Identify Bad Boundaries

List the areas where you people please? Where are you not saying "No" when your gut tells you to? Where do you prioritize caring for others at the neglect of yourself?

No. 3 | Focus on Past Successes

When has your struggle not been a struggle? What were you doing, thinking? What other areas of your life are working well? What are you doing to make those happen? How can you apply those same skills to your current area of struggle?

No. 4 | Stop Being Polite with Jesus (Car Screams Encouraged)

Ladies and gents. Many missionaries I counsel struggle to get gut honest with God. He can take it. He's the only one who can truly take it.

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No. 5 | Lift Up the Hood — Reflect

Take time to understand what is going on in your heart with your struggle. When you don't get at what drives your behaviors, they seep out in other ways, even after your problem goes away. If you need some guided heart reflection questions, **check out my Head & Heart Reflection Guide at: www.julielavin.com/ministryleader.**

No. 6 | Quit Playing Hide & Go Seek

Do you expect others know you are struggling and want them to initiate with you? Your friends don't have ESP. If they do, they need to put that bad boy skill to work with your support raising! Many missionaries I've counseled are unable to be raw with their peers. Reach out to those who care about you.

No. 7 | Develop Structure and Accountability

The world's best athletes don't reach their goals without a coach and structure. If your struggle hasn't changed over a significant period of time, bring in someone else to help you make a plan and stick to it. Remember the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

No. 8 | Seek Out Beauty

What is beautiful to you or fills you with awe? Make a list. It could be a simple walk in the park, or reading a book that refreshes you. When you are surrounded by the broken things of this world, you need to lift up your eyes and seek out beauty.

No. 9 | Doubt Yourself

With your problems, do you get locked on your version of the truth? You are certain how a situation happened. You are certain this or that is true of you. But what if you doubt those thoughts. For example, "What if that's not what they meant when they said that?" Or, "What if I am not the total failure that I think I am right now?"

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No. 10 | Worship when you don't feel like it

When my heart aches, this is the last thing I want to do, but the first thing I need to do. This does not mean being fake. It connects back to No. 4 – get honest with Jesus. Put on worship music that points you to Jesus and let the songs wash over your heart. Pray, “Jesus, help me believe these lyrics are true.”

No. 11 | Allow periodic breakdowns

We missionaries think we should be better quick. Are you graceless with yourself? What if you are really sad about a struggle? Give yourself a day to not be productive and stay in bed. That day might not be today, but don't move on too quickly when things hurt. Grant yourself space. As I said in No. 5, when you move on too quickly and don't let your heart process events, the inner problems pop up other ways that are not pretty.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it gives you tracks to run on. If you cannot make headway in your struggles after trying these steps, [book a counseling session at: www.julieavin.com/session](http://www.julieavin.com/session).

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