

HOSPICE *of the* VALLEY
Bereavement Literature

TOP TEN REASONS FOR AVOIDING COUNSELING

Some people make it a part of their New Year's resolutions to finally undertake the counseling they've been avoiding. Here are ten reasons they may draw upon to continue avoiding it.

1. *I don't have time.* Counseling does require a commitment of time. So does pointless worry, repetitive arguments, beating up on ourselves and sleepless nights. So does going to the physician to deal with high blood pressure and ulcers. The question isn't how much time does it take but rather, how do you want to invest your time?

2. *It's not all that bad.* There are times when that's true, when we simply need to keep muddling along and getting through. However, if your pain or your grief or your anxiety is keeping you from living the life you desire, then that's reason enough to undertake the healing journey.

3. *I (we) should be able to handle this by myself (ourselves).* Imagine a friend coming to you, gingerly cradling her arm. She refuses your offer to drive her to the hospital. "I should be able to handle this by myself," she says. Ridiculous? No more so than what we tell ourselves about the broken places we carry around in our souls.

4. *I don't have a problem. It's all his/ her/ their fault.* Clearly, the behavior of other people isn't under our control, as much as we might wish it was. But what we can do is change our patterns of thinking and acting. We can learn to make choices as to how we relate to others instead of merely reacting to them.

5. *I tried counseling once and it didn't work.* There are a number of factors in the counseling process. There needs to be a good fit between counselor and client. There's also a need for what the Greeks call *Kairos* "the right time or the fullness of time." It's the moment you know you're ready to face what you've resisted facing for a long time. But a bad fit or timing that's off in one experience doesn't mean that you can never take advantage of counseling.

6. *Talking about myself (and spending money to do it) is self-indulgent.* It would seem so, wouldn't it? And yet, the paradox is that as we heal, we actually have more time to offer to others. We have more energy, more resources, more of our own gifts available. We clear out the things that have gotten in the way of our hearts and so our hearts may be more open to others. Instead of being self-indulgent, it's actually an investment in the future.

7. *I don't want to make changes.* Counseling does ask us to change, whether it's changing the way that we think, the way that we view the world, what we do with our feelings or the actions that we take. And you have the right not to make those changes, keeping in mind the definition of insanity offered by Alcoholics Anonymous: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

8. *If I only had enough faith/ guts/ intelligence/ education/ friends/ money/ etc., the problems would go away.* The problems obviously haven't gone away. So why not learn to use the resources you do have to deal with the problems?

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9. *Other people aren't very happy. Why should I be different?* You can only be responsible for the choices that you make. What do you choose for your life? Your life may be as small and unfulfilling or as large and as satisfying as you choose.

10. *It costs money.* As does the pizza at your door, the movies, the new sweater. We are willing to invest our time and money into that which we value. How important is it for you to have the chance to become the person you were created to be? For those with genuine financial need, arrangements can sometimes be made to make the counseling affordable.

-Peggy Haymes, LPC Therapist, in Kalalogos: Quality Resources for Healing, Growth and Change
www.healing-growth-change.com and www.petcaring.com