



Difficulties of Being the Counsellor Friend

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You know what sucks? Vacuum cleaners. You know what else sucks? Being counsellor-zoned.

Not always, though. Sometimes, being the counsellor friend is a really nice feeling, because if you're that kind of person, you'll genuinely enjoy helping other people. Unfortunately, it isn't always like the proverbial walk in the park that I have yet to go on. Sometimes, being the counsellor friend sucks as much as vacuum cleaners do. With that being said, this article is for all the people in the Counsellor Friends Association (CFA) to relate to (hopefully).

First and foremost: viewpoints. The people who come up to you for help are almost COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. I suppose while reading this some of you might be thinking "Um, yeah, that's kind of blatantly obvious" but you might not realise the sheer magnitude of that statement. You can't just listen to them and say something like "I know how you feel" or "Everything will be alright" or "Hey, the starving kids have it way worse, get over your first world problems". They aren't here because they need you to say something that has almost zero worth - they're here so you can offer possible solutions or give them legit comfort and that's difficult to do when everyone has a different viewpoint. Taking that into account, you have to counsel EACH PERSON DIFFERENTLY. Moreover, something they've come up to you with might not even seem like much of a deal, but it is in their eyes.

Second problem and tying in with the first: patience (not the Guns N' Roses song). This is going to sound incredibly bad, but in your view, the problem the other person has come up to you with is

so mind-bogglingly stupid. In your view the solution might be right there in plain view. It's bad enough when they don't see it, even worse when they deny it. And that's if you're lucky; some people happily ignore the advice THEY asked for and then complain because they walked right into the sewers and found "it". Telling them "you're a @%\$^#\$& moron" isn't a feasible choice of words. In their view,



there might be a storm and being in the CFA, your aim isn't to dispel the storm but to guide them out of it (regardless of how stupid they can be sometimes). It can be annoyingly difficult when you've counselled someone for three hours and they've barely budged a few inches (no joke, happened to me once).

Third? The very act of offering the advice. Under all the "You're so great at

giving advice", there's a good chance that we members of the CFA are quite lost on what to say sometimes. While we do probably reply back in the space of 10 seconds, we're lost in a private world where we're reinventing calculus to figure out how to get you out of the storm only YOU can see. We have to judge if we're in a worse part of the storm through calculation, speculation and the way our

"counselee" is reacting (or maybe that's just me).

Fourth: counselling can be emotionally exhausting. There are other problems apart from the previously mentioned three. Remaining neutral under all circumstances is incredibly taxing and we don't even get tax revenue out of it. You can't get angry at them, lose your patience, or let your own emotions cloud

your judgement, because God knows THEIR emotions are all up in their s***. It's like trying to become a robot that can almost perfectly understand human emotions but not have any itself. Saying no to someone who needs help because you're tired is irritatingly guilt-inflicting on yourself.

Then there's the weight of understanding that your advice must be as practical as possible because sometimes, everything hangs on what you say. And the absolute worst feeling is resentment when you're there for them, but they aren't there for you - or maybe they are, but unlike you, they have no idea what to do. Hence, you're left to counsel yourself and convince yourself you don't need to go to the psychiatrist despite talking to yourself like a schizophrenic.

I suppose there are many more common difficulties in being a counsellor friend, but these are the general ones I've found in common with others. Note that this article isn't to promote the "fact" that all of us at the CFA hate what we do, but to be honest, despite having discussed this topic with quite a few fellow members, not everyone might go through these difficulties. In fact, some people might not have difficulties at all. As stated before, we do it quite honestly because we want to do so and the humanitarian desire to make the world a happier place. But for all of you readers who have got this kind of friend, cherish them. They're like gems coated in a thick-layer of dust. It'll seem like just like any other rock, but it really isn't.

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