



**ASSOCIATION FOR BIBLICAL  
COUNSELLING AND EDUCATION**

**BIBLE BASED  
COUNSELLING**  
*Course 1*  
**SEMESTER 1**

**WEEK 7**

## STUDY SCHEDULE FOR SEMESTER 1

The schedule provides guidelines for the maximum time to be spent on studying the material. Each student is unique, and this also applies to their circumstances. You may study in your own way and at your own pace. It is, however, in your own interest to study all the material and assignments thoroughly. The word, **Textbook** refers to Chapters 1 – 6 on this CD.

WEEK	UNIT	SUB-UNIT	FOCUS	SOURCE
7	Chapter 3	3.1 3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.3	Relationship building phase Three relationships Relationship with God Relationship with Counsellee	Textbook

### Week 7

#### Unit ( Chapter) 3

#### Sub--Unit 3.1

#### Learning Outcome:

Studying this chapter ought to enable you to describe the different relationships in the counselling relationships, as well as the critical elements that have to be communicated.

#### Main learning points:

1. The relationship between counsellor and counsellee is made possible by and points towards the relationship between counsellor and God. The aim is that the relationship between counsellee and God will be restored.
2. Communication is the most important component in the building of the relationship. The critical elements are
  - Love
  - Empathy
  - Identification
  - Realism
  - Closeness
  - Distance
  - Patience
  - Compassion
  - Respect
  - Trust
  - Hope

### **Assignment for self-study**

Describe in your own words:

1. How does God build a relationship with you as a sinner? In what way should the counselling relationship reflect this relationship with God?
2. Compare Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. Timothy needed more encouragement than Titus. See if you can find out how Paul kept the difference between Timothy and Titus in mind. The letters basically have the same contents, but the way in which Paul communicates differs.
3. Think of two different persons and name the critical elements that you should communicate in each case.

# **CHAPTER 3: METHOD OF COUNSELLING**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In chapter 1 and 2 the dynamics of change in the human heart and behaviour were explained. This brings us to the question: How can the counsellor facilitate change in the counsellee? There are various ways or methods for assisting a person to change. The purpose of this chapter is to propose a Biblical method that can be used to guide a person to change.

We can differentiate three phases of the method:

- the priestly phase: building a relationship between counsellor and counsellee
- the prophetic phase: developing understanding together with the counsellee
- the kingly phase: confronting / encouraging the counsellee and facilitating practical change in the counsellee's heart and behaviour (action)

The process to be followed in this method can be represented as follows:

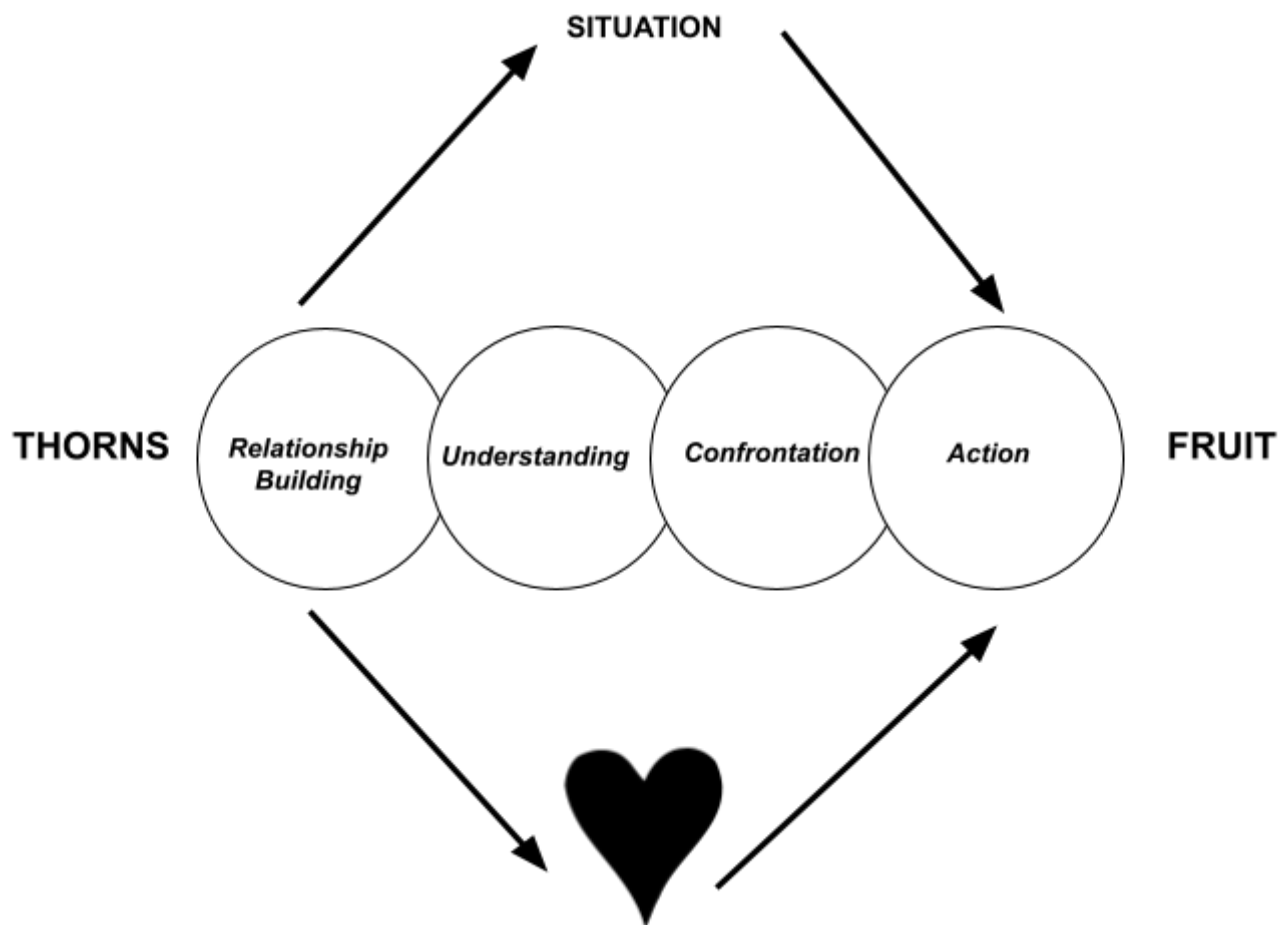


Fig. 1

The four phases do not follow each other in a chronological order, but run concurrently. The relationship, for example, is built throughout the counselling process. Data collection (understanding phase) occurs all the time. The process flows organically and the phases are at most a way in which the counselling is organised.

In the preceding sketch the thorns (bad fruit) are given on the left. They occur in a particular setting in life. In order to help the counsellee a relationship is developed (priestly phase). Understanding is developed together with the person (prophetic phase). Confrontation / encouragement occurs (speaking the truth in love) and this leads to action in everyday life (kingly phase). The result should be bearing good fruit in the same situation. Change can only occur if the heart changes: thoughts and desires.

In the following sections the four phases of the counselling method will be discussed: relationship building, understanding, encouragement (confrontation) and action.

### 3.1 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PHASE

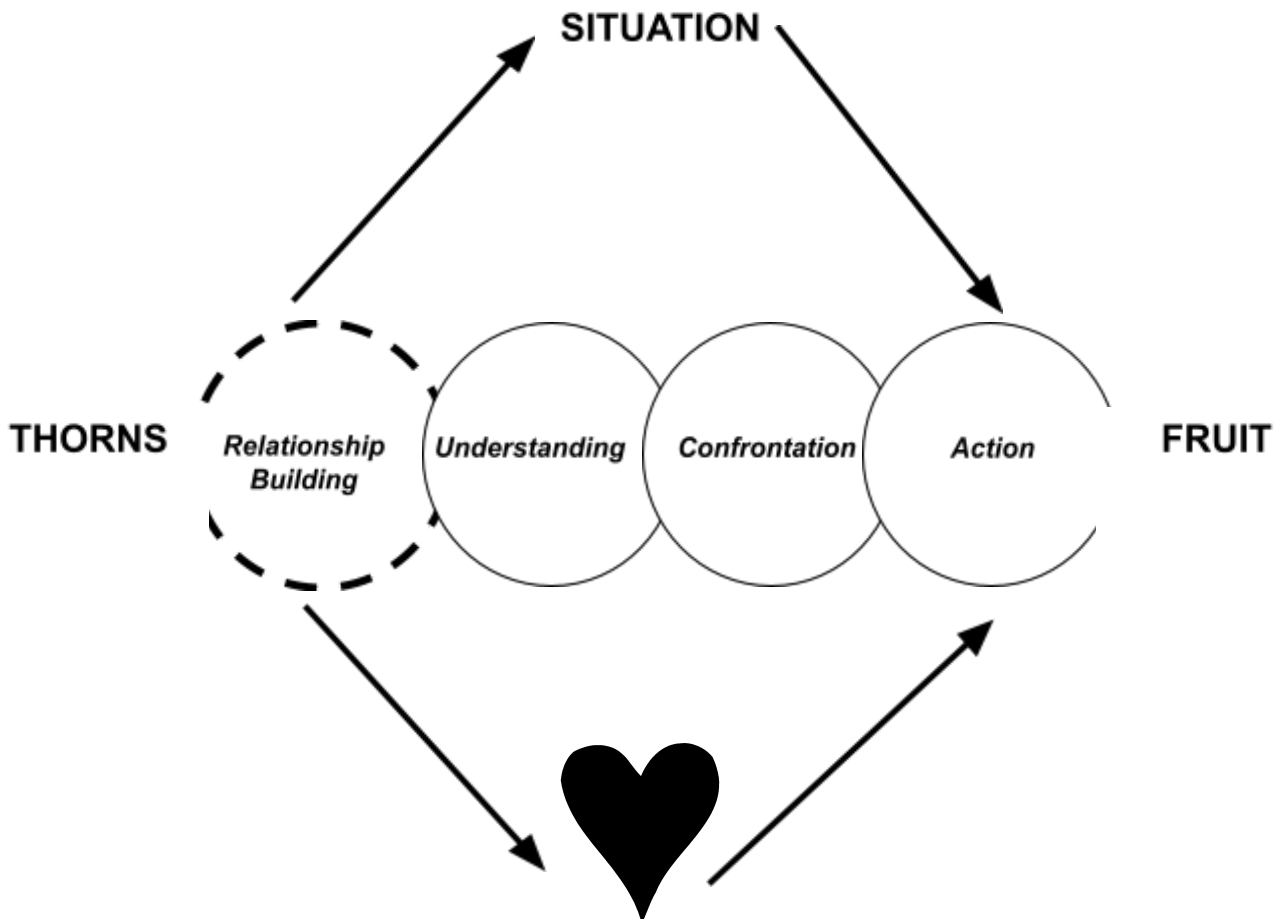


Fig. 2

#### 3.1.1 Three relationships

Three relationships are relevant:

- the relationship between the counsellee and God;
- the relationship between the counsellor and God;
- the relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee.

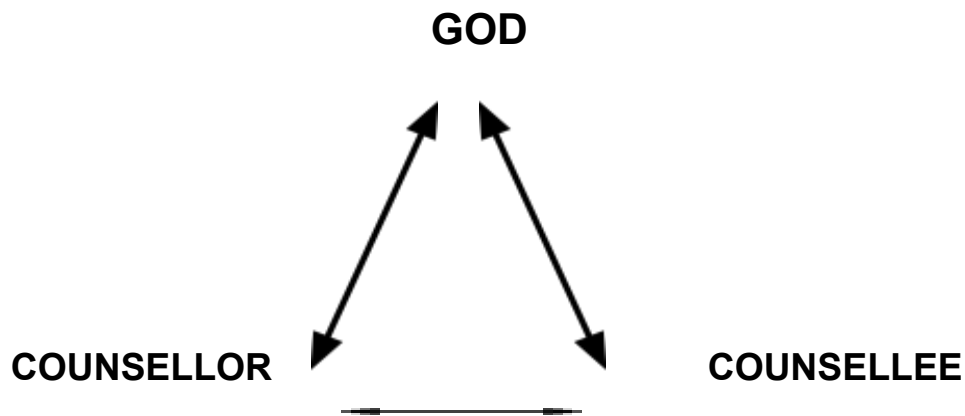


Fig. 3

The counsellor's and counsellee's relationships with God determine the relationship between the counsellor and counsellee. We will first discuss the relationship with God and then the interpersonal relationship between counsellor and counsellee.

### **3.1.2 Die relationship of the counsellee / counsellor with God**

Die relationship of the counsellor / counsellee will now be considered based on the following: being a child of God as prerequisite for counselling, the origin of the relationship with God, and acceptance by God

#### **3.1.2.1 Being a child of God enables counselling**

Although God is the primary Counsellor who directly counsels his child through his Spirit with his Word, He also uses human counsellors to guide his child. Believers can counsel each other based on the fact that they are children of God.

In order to guide the counsellee towards living based on God's power, the counsellor should have a living relationship with Him. To make disciples (followers, learners) of God (Matthew 28:20), the counsellor should be a disciple of God (Matthew 16:24). The counsellor should be a student / listener / doer of the Word, and can then expect this of another person (1 Timothy 4:12, 15-16). Parents will be credible counsellors of their children if they know the Word themselves and live based on it (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

#### **3.1.2.2 The origin of a relationship with God**

How does the counsellor / counsellee come in a relationship with God? The relationship of both the counsellor and counsellee with the Lord is based on:

- **Justification:** God declares a person to be justified based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in his/her place. You become part of the justification and holiness of Jesus through faith.
- **Adoption:** God takes you as his child for the sake of the perfect sonship of Jesus. His identity is given to you as a gift.
- **Sanctification:** God separates you for Himself in order to continually live a life dedicated to Him.

Sanctification does not occur without justification and adoption as child of God. God does not say: "As soon as you transformed yourself, I will accept you". No, God initiates this relationship and sanctification occurs within this relationship. And it is within a relationship with God that He says to the counsellee: "I accept you where you are, and will guide you to continually change. I have a great future for you. I am going to teach you to live as my child".

It is important that the counsellor personally knows this process in his/her life and wants to be where God wants him/her: to love God above all and to love his/her neighbour (counsellee) as him/herself.

### **3.1.2.3 Acceptance by God**

Counselling occurs within a relationship. God changes people within the context of a relationship. What enables a person to confess his/her sins before God? The fact that he/she has the certainty: God accepts me as his child based on the perfection of Jesus and the sacrifice He made for my imperfection. There is no fear of rejection. This is the mind-set with which the counsellor should do counselling. The counsellor is transparent so that the counsellee can see God and can come into a personal relationship with God.

### **3.1.3 The relationship between the counsellor and counsellee**

The fuel for a good relationship between the counsellor and counsellee is communication. In point 3.2.4 of this chapter we will discuss listening, asking questions and clarification of definitions. The counsellor should communicate in such a way that the counsellee understands the intention of the counsellor – and thus the relationship will grow.

People are different, live in different situations and struggle with different problems. This implies that the counsellor cannot build a relationship in the same way every time. The counsellor should therefore ask very early in the development of a relationship: Who is

the counsellee? What does he/she struggle with? How will this information assist me in building a relationship?

Fear and other emotions may create distance between the counsellor and counsellee:

- If the counsellee has many fears, then trust becomes an important gateway to building the relationship. Fearful people do not trust easily, they do not want to be used and abused, and experience the pain of a broken relationship.
- If the person is depressed (i.e. if the person does not have any hope and wants to give up on life, does not believe that change is possible), then it is critical that the counsellor should communicate hope.

It is therefore important to determine what you should communicate.

We will now discuss the critical elements that should be communicated for building a good relationship: empathy, identification, realism, solidarity / closeness, distance, patience, friendliness, trust in God, respect, trust between counsellor and counsellee, and hope.

**CRITICAL ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED**

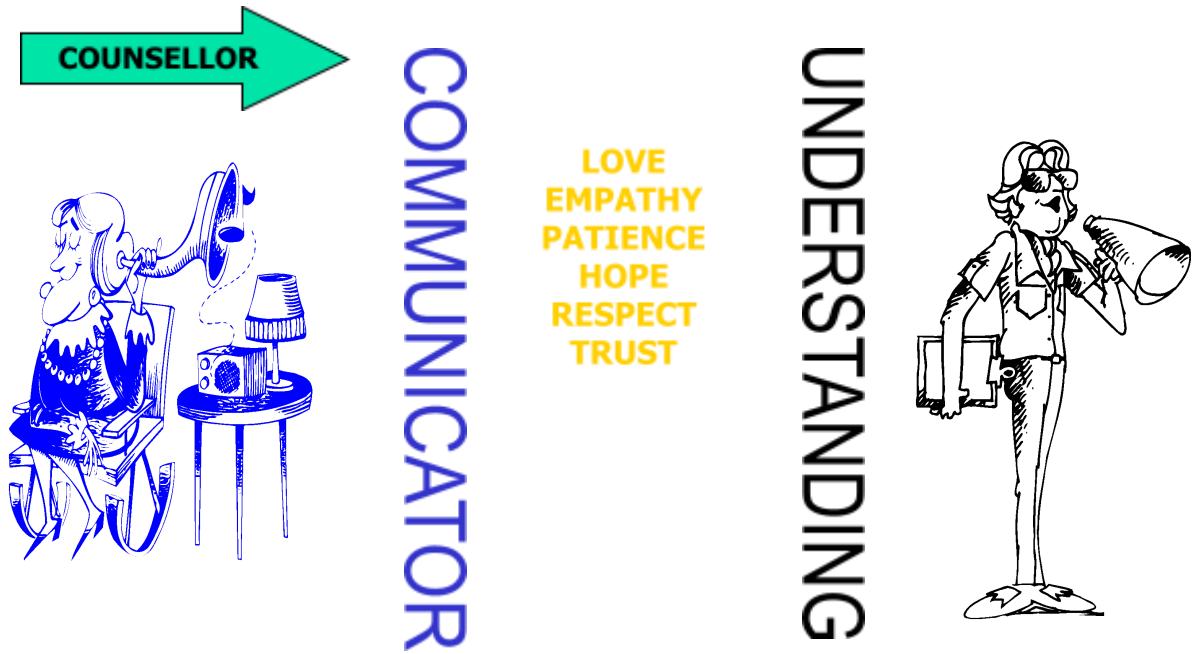


Fig. 4

### **3.1.3.1 Empathy**

Hebrews 4:14-16 provides a model for the counselling relationship between counsellor and counsellee. The world in which the counsellor and counsellee live differ – and this may lead to lack of empathy. The manner in which Jesus developed empathy for us, is by coming into our world. There can be no bigger difference between the world of Jesus and our world. He closed the gap by entering into our world.

In order to build a relationship with the counsellee, the counsellor should enter the world of the counsellee. Counselling should also be a process of “becoming human” and of “putting oneself in the place of the other”. The counsellor should become a fellow-human and enter into the world of the counsellee. The Son of God lived in our world. We can therefore go to Him – He understands our world. Likewise, the counsellor should enter the world of the counsellee where ever he/she lives.

What qualifies the counsellor to show empathy? His/her own struggles and suffering, and God's comfort in his/her own life!

How did Paul offer comfort? What was his method? He did it through unselfish self-disclosure! In 2 Corinthians 1 he wrote a number of surprising things. The man of faith says:

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. (verse 8)

Paul despaired of life! And about this he wrote:

We do not want you to be uninformed...

How did he display self-disclosure? He did it in the context of victory: He was in a situation where God came to meet him. The counsellor should be willing to do this – to use him/herself as example – where God met him/her.

What is the result? Hope in God and not in the counsellor!

This breaks the counsellee's dependence on the counsellor and develops people who are convinced that they can make it – with God. They trust God, because He is there to meet them.

A few comments on transparency is needed here. With honesty and caring the counsellor can show his/her feeling to the counsellee. Only a counsellor who personally feels safe in his/her relationship with Christ, who can make an honest self-evaluation, can be transparent and offer to another person an image of the compassion and personal involvement of Christ.

### **3.1.3.2 Identification**

Hebrews 4:14-16 makes it clear that Jesus identified with us. He also has compassion because He experienced the same pressure and temptations in this world as us. He has empathy with our human weaknesses. He understands what it means to be weak. The counsellor and counsellee can therefore go to the Lord with confidence.

By entering the counsellee's world, the counsellor should develop compassion with the counsellee and his/her weaknesses. This builds trust so that the counsellee can open up and discuss the sensitive things in his/her own life. This is the relationship building model that should be followed.

### **3.1.3.3 Realism**

We read in Hebrews 2:10,11 that Jesus came to perfection. This means that He, as perfect Son of God, came to earth and demonstrated what a perfect life means. He lived under the pressure of this world and did this without any flaws.

As discussed previously, the believer is declared perfect by God (justified) based on the perfection of Jesus. After becoming part of the perfection of Jesus, a person still goes through a process of suffering and growth until he/she eventually stand perfect before God in the life hereafter. In Hebrews 2:11 Jesus calls the believer his "brother". He tells the believer that He understands the process which the believer goes through.

This is the attitude with which the counsellor makes him/herself available to the counsellee. He/she is not the perfect counsellor without any flaws (1 John 1:8-9). The counsellor should also receive forgiveness for his/her sins; he/she is also in this process of sanctification. The counsellor and counsellee are part of the same family: brothers and sisters. If the counsellor is ashamed to hear some things about the counsellee, then he/she is not realistic about him/herself – and it is then possible that he/she displays moralism or pietism. If the counsellor thinks that he/she is perfect, then he/she cannot be a model for the gospel. He/she is then rather a model of "human perfection" which is unrealistic.

#### **3.1.3.4 Solidarity / closeness**

In order to build a relationship with the counsellee, the counsellor should have solidarity with the counsellee. This solidarity implies closeness – not forced, but open and sincere. It is not closeness in order to manipulate the counsellee, but closeness as a fellow redeemed sinner.

Is this also possible with unbelievers? There can still be solidarity, because both were created in the image of God. However, it is easier with believers because they are also receivers of God's grace.

#### **3.1.3.5 Distance**

The counsellor and counsellee live next to / close to each other as redeemed sinners in this broken world. But both (counsellor and counsellee) should listen to the Word of God. The counsellor listens to the Word and then he/she guides the counsellee based on it. This brings the required distance (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The tension between closeness and distance is conducive to the development of the counselling relationship. Too much distance obstructs communication and dialogue – too much closeness will cause the counsellor to get stuck with the counsellee.

#### **3.1.3.6 Patience**

Patience (1 Corinthians 13:4) does not mean that the counsellee's behaviour is condoned. To be non-judgemental does not mean that the counsellor uses his/her own standards. Rather it means to meet another person where he/she is. How does one develop patience? By looking at yourself in a realistic way and removing the log from your own eye. This process in the counsellor's own life brings patience with another person's problems. Patience therefore points to God, to his patience with us! (Psalm 103:8). This gives hope to the counsellee.

#### **3.1.3.7 Friendliness**

Friendliness accompanies patience (Galatians 5:22). This means to really be close to a person: when the counsellor counsels the counsellee, he/she should be convinced in his/her heart. Friendliness and patience mean to create space for another person. It is an expression of agape love, i.e. "open-eyed love". This love recognizes God's love for the counsellee and then develops space for the other person.

Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).

This description of love indicates the importance of the counsellor not comparing him/herself with the counsellee (like the pharisee measured himself against the tax collector), because then there will be no humility (which means a correct self-evaluation) and flexibility in the counsellor. Anger could then be communicated if the counsellee does not cooperate.

### **3.1.3.8 Trust in God**

If the above aspects of love are in place in the relationship between the counsellor and counsellee, then the relationship is being built. Because trust will then be part of the relationship:

... love rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (verse 6-7).

It doesn't mean that the counsellor overlooks the counsellee's problem. He/she actually sees it even better than before. He/she sees how God is going to work with this person over time. He/she believes what this person is going to be. He/she believes and hopes in what God is going to achieve with the counsellee.

### **3.1.3.9 Respect**

Respect means a correct relationship with the specific person (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Paul acts in a specific way towards older people, brothers, sisters. There are boundaries. The counselling relationship is the opportunity to model respect.

Respect does not mean to view the counsellee as sin on two legs, but as the image of God. Respect implies that the counsellor can even accept criticism and admonition in a gracious way. It means recognizing the value of the counsellee despite the nature of the problems.

The problem of the counsellee may in fact be that he/she does not experience respect in his/her life or does not know its real meaning. Respect may become a new experience which builds the relationship and speeds up the healing process.

### **3.1.3.10 Trust between counsellor and counsellee**

Trust implies two way traffic:

- The counsellee should be able to trust the counsellor because the counsellor acts on his/her promises.
- The counsellor should be able to trust the counsellee – it is a choice which he/she makes. There is no relationship if the counsellor does not display trust. This means trusting until contradicting facts come to the fore – then the counsellor asks for clarification.

### **3.1.3.11 Hope**

The counsellor should ask him/herself: If I have somebody with me who has no hope, will I be able to inspire hope? What aspects are there in the life of the counsellee which takes away hope?

Signs of hopelessness in the counsellee are, for example, living for material things, living for the acceptance of people, seeking recognition through doing, anger and depression.

The counsellee should then be encouraged by providing hope:

- Point out Scriptures that provide hope to God's children.
- Share examples of persons who've been counselled and who shared their stories of hope with you.
- Provide examples of hope in your own life.
- Ensure that hope is rooted in the Gospel and not in human abilities. Hope means: being a child of God; having received forgiveness and mercy; awareness of God's control over everything; trusting in God's plan for redemption which unfolds even now; relying on God's eternal agenda; knowing God has the power to change us.

Therefore, search for the gateway through which the counsellor can move to the counsellee's heart, to what happens inside his/her – in order to build the relationship.