

***CENTERPOINT***

Several years ago, on a battlefield bus tour in Virginia, I found myself seated next to a young man named Jeff who, after some small talk about our livelihoods, appeared perplexed about why people would ever seek counseling. Jeff, a devout Catholic, finally asked, “why don’t they just go to Confession?” His question sounded at first a little naïve and even amusing, but then it got me thinking.

Counseling is closely akin to confession, and, as such, it represents a convergence of culture and religion, of psychology and the Judaic-Christian tradition. In fact, it can be argued that our religious traditions of confession, whether Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant, led us to create and value what has become the process of counseling. It might even be said that psychology as a discipline, yet only a little more than a century old, is a daughter of theology.

Both the traditional psychological and the theological understandings of the human person consider that confession, or the act of talking openly and honestly with a listener, is not only a sign of, but also a precursor to deeper emotional health and wholeness.  
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-George R. Slaton