

The case herewith, besides being high-potential for conferencing, demonstrates the advantages of line-enumeration. It's from a 1970 CTS DM, Kent I. Groff [CTS REGISTER, Winter/75]. The same pastor provides, on the reverse of this thinksheet page, a sample case in the more-difficult-to-use, no-line-enumeration form.

1 BACKGROUND Lillie B. was a sweet, young-looking old lady when we  
2 first met some three years ago. Born outside of Smithsburg in 1887,  
3 she left the area as a child and spent most of her years working for  
4 a large dept. store in Cincinnati. She was used to 'the good life'  
5 and found it hard when forced to move back to Waynesboro to cut costs.  
6 The following two-year sequence of events did not help: hospital-  
7 ization and convalescence in a sanitarium during which her husband  
8 died; extensive surgery at Hershey Med. ctr.; skilled care until  
9 transfer to Franklin Co. Home when funds ran out; only relatives to  
10 help were 76 yr. old nephew & his grandson. It is not hard to im-  
11 agine how all this changed Lillie from her former self to a bitter,  
12 garrulous old woman who thought everyone was out to get her and  
13 treated them accordingly. The last straw was a fall (possibly due to  
14 unavailability of a nurse), a broken hip and insertion of a pin in  
15 same. It was no surprise when the Home requested my visit.

16 DESCRIPTION I arrived at the county home late one afternoon to find  
17 Lillie in a 'super-low.' She had never seemed so depressed before.  
18 She repeated continuously the words "If only I could die." My every  
19 attempt to communicate at another level was answered with this same  
20 response. Finally, after a brief silence, I said, "Lillie, do you  
21 really want to die?" "Oh, if only I could," she said, "Will you  
22 pray for me to die?" Recovering quickly from this surprise request,  
23 I told her that I would if she could share with me the reason she  
24 herself could not seem to 'let go'. She said it was terrible that  
25 an old woman couldn't fool a young man even when she was dying. "I  
26 am afraid He doesn't want me," she blurted out. She expressed sor-  
27 row for her actions of the past three years (see background) and  
28 wished that she didn't feel so bitter about the end of her life.  
29 I told her that her feelings were quite natural and that God would  
30 understand her situation. I said I would pray for her death upon  
31 the condition that she had an honest 'talk' with God after I left  
32 and that she should ask him the same that she was requesting of me.  
33 We had some prayers and I left. Lillie died in her sleep forty-  
34 eight hours later.

35 ANALYSIS Lillie had expressed a death wish many times before, but  
36 this was the first time that she would not allow me to 'draw her  
37 away or cheer her up' by means of some communication techniques that  
38 I had picked up along the way in my ministry. She couldn't fool me  
39 but I couldn't fool her, either! It seemed as if Lillie had some  
40 inner knowledge that she was going to die very soon, but not before  
41 she had completed some 'unfinished business.' What impressed me  
42 most was her realization that she could have seriously damaged her  
43 relationship with God even in those last few years of a long life.  
44 What scares me is the possibility that I was the only one (in her  
45 mind) who could help straighten out that relationship!

46 EVALUATION I was not caught completely off-guard by Lillie's death  
47 wish. When positive that her desire was sincere, I think I did  
48 right by suggesting that she clean up unfinished business. My con-  
49 cern is, was I lucky? or can we really learn to listen for the sig-  
50 nals that the dying seem always to run up? Do we actually control  
51 the last few moments of our lives, or must we wait upon God's good  
52 pleasure? I think there must be an answer somewhere in the middle.

**BACKGROUND:** Several weeks ago a middle-aged mother, Mrs. Smith, came to me about her problem high school junior. I called Brooklane to inquire about the program where the parent(s) and youth go in and separately interview for a series of conferences, then are brought together. The mother made the appointment, (husband did not go), and went for the first session with her son. On the second occasion, they went, and the son refused to get out of the car. Now only recently another mother, Mrs. Tome, has called about serious threats from her teenage son (age 13). I offered the same suggestion, and she is concerned that the son (Will) will not cooperate, since his resentment is focused against his mother—divorced. Mrs. Barnes at Brooklane suggested that perhaps I might be able to help to get the son to go, but I really do not know him well (he is only mildly active in church), and he would see me on his "mother's side."

**DESCRIPTION (EVENT ITSELF):** On a recent Sunday morning I was standing in the hallway of the Christian Education building when Mrs. Tome and her 3 children could be seen about to enter. I disengaged myself from conversation to be free to say good morning to the son, Will, the other boys, and Mrs. T. In a rather casual manner, as I would with any other teenager, I said, "Good morning Will!" and reached out my hand. He conspicuously avoided my contact and shuffled by me as if to say "forget it." His mother spoke to me as usual in a pleasant manner.

**ANALYSIS:** I see this case in light of the experience only weeks before where the other teenager terminated the counseling by refusing to go. I felt from the start that Will would turn me off, associating me with his mother and the adult world he is rebelling against. I thought I would use a natural meeting that Sunday to "prime the pump" for any contact in urging him to seek help. It is obvious to me it did not work, nor will any further direct efforts by me to persuade him.

**EVALUATION:** The major question that haunts me is this: when one has a limited objective (referring to Brooklane), what possible steps could be taken to see that repeated failure does not occur on the part of the counselees to take advantage of the referral? I cannot help but ask if it would not have been better to have suggested for these mother(s) and son(s) to see me, which I think they would have consented to do. I did not refer them to Brooklane with any feeling that they were professional and I'm not, but with the feeling that a neutral setting would help them most, especially in light of the fact that neither teenager was gung-ho church. But on the other hand, their mother's primary contact when the chips were down was me, a religious professional. They must have felt I had something to offer, though in each case they explicitly said they were asking me for such a contact as Brooklane, and both seemed to be convinced that was a good suggestion. How can the pre-counseling be more effective in follow-through on referrals? My evaluation is that it can be. My extra-vertiveness sometimes gets me into trouble. Perhaps I infringe on the rightful privacy of persons—I reach out too strongly and turn people off, such as Will. Yet, all said, that is a risk I would rather take, than to have felt "I could have helped and didn't." I usually feel the Spirit is giving me such opportunities as that hand-shake that didn't quite make it.