

Personal growth lessons from 'A Dangerous Method'

Margaret Beaton 15 March 12

All personal growth requires effort, willingness to try, to fail, to try again, learn and eventually grow from the experience. In common parlance, there's no gain without pain.

All too often I hear mentors or mentees bemoaning a lack of progress and an absence of spark in the mentoring relationship. On the hand, I also witness inspiring examples of working together, making progress and producing results that would not have been possible without the mentor-mentee relationship.

Why do some mentor-mentee relationships succeed while others struggle, stutter and stop?

Watching *A Dangerous Method*, the movie based on the Sigmund Freud-Carl Jung master-apprentice relationship, provided clues to the answer. In the early years of Jung's development as a psychoanalyst he learned from Freud. As apprentice and master, they discussed patients, explored new ideas and challenged assumptions by meeting and exchanging letters. But tensions emerged as Jung's theories diverged from Freud's narrower doctrine. It was painful and difficult. But both learned, perhaps more so Jung who ultimately became his own person in every sense.

Jung and Freud had the courage to confront each other in the context of their work and lives. The strength of their convictions enabled Jung to grow. Freud achieved a noble purpose, although at personal and professional cost.

How many mentoring relationships would benefit from principled confrontation and courage?

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