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When it comes to making our inner engineering work, here's a quote I rather like:-

"Rather than to solve a problem, it is clever to dissolve them." – Stafford Beer

And to give an example of this here's a story I told at a meeting of a public speaking club. Perhaps it may be of interest or use to a fellow explorer...

MENTORS, PROTÉGÉS & THE SELF

*Text of a speech given by Peter W.T. Bogacki
in January 2020 at a meeting of a public speaking club.*

In any activity whatever your goals having a mentor can be invaluable. And to help achieve public speaking goals, Toastmasters advise that each of us has our own mentor. Generally a mentor is personally available over a long period of time to support a protégé in the achieving of goals. But what if your goal is simply to learn to be your true self and communicate naturally. Who's your mentor then?

It was winter 1978 and I was in the Piccadilly Hotel in central Manchester. I was 24 years old and had just completed a 3.5 daylong seminar about 'you making your life work now'....The experience blew my mind totally open and turned my life around 180° – the first key milestone in my life..

Since the age of 6 I had been unable to make sense of, or share anything using language. And after 18 years of failure to get words to work for me my entire experience of life was one of total confusion, isolation from my fellow human beings, and existential terror. Deep inside however, I'd always had and still have a very early and powerful memory of myself as a happy, energetic, outgoing infant, and driven by a desire to return to that place I knew that somehow it was up to me to find a way to free myself from my mental prison.

I'd already run out of things to try – Conversation, Religion, Medicine, Self-help books, Scientology, Hypnosis, Re-birthing, Psychology, Psychiatry, anything else I could think of – nothing had worked for me so the decision to do the seminar was a no-brainer – there was no downside.

The seminar – called ‘The Exegesis Programme’ – began on Monday evening with an orientation meeting. It continued on Thursday at 8pm and then through Friday, Saturday and Sunday, beginning at 9am each day and finishing late in the evening, when the specific result for the day had been achieved. I was one of 17 trainees and we sat most of the time theatre style. The group leader, Robert, gave out information, dealt with questions and received anything that any of us wished to share.

Put simply, it was the most amazing, terrifying, and wonderful experience of my life. For 3.5 days Robert was my mentor and remains to this day the most naturally powerful, harmless, wise, insightful person I’ve ever spent time with bar none. Finally, towards the end of the last day I made the decision to accept that I too was totally responsible for making my life work. In other words, for creating my entire experience, my life and my circumstances. In that instant my mind became consciously re-connected to my source of experience deep in the core of my being, a kernel of language that works for me, and a sense of the next step needed to push through my barriers and grow naturally as a person. In short, suddenly I had become a mentor for my own process of natural personal growth.

After the seminar my number one goal was to make sense of my entire experience using language and create trust in every word, phrase and sentence I’ve ever used. Over 40 years later after working through my entire experience I finally achieved it in February last year – that was the second key milestone in my life.

That 40 year journey was simply a process of search for, and discovery of the experience of what works in communication and that included:-

- doing the seminar again purely as an observer.
- transforming a project successfully while unsupervised in the isolation of the Nigerian bush.
- doing an MBA followed by a Masters in IT and learning that neither syllabus referred to the form of communication that I’d been using intuitively in Nigeria.
- discovering, learning and using a model of that same form of communication – it’s called The Viable System Model or The VSM – which is a hard (or structural) version of the soft (or non-structural) one used throughout the seminar.

- learning about NLP, that's Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and doing an NLP practitioner training – NLP is the odd one out in this list since it's a model that only partially works.
- learning about EST – Erhard Seminar Training – the seminar I did was a derivative of it, as is the next item.
- doing the Landmark Forum and the Advanced Course both run by the organisation: Landmark Worldwide.
- transforming my entire experience by writing and sharing certain material:-
 1. firstly, my autobiography.
 2. secondly, a translation of the seminar into book form.
 3. thirdly, more than 20 articles, 2 of which I presented earlier here.

and finally,

- using Toastmaster meetings to grow my ability to converse and speak more freely and spontaneously.

Since that second milestone my goal has been simply to grow my trust in my ability to converse and speak more freely and spontaneously and have more fun. And I'm happy to report that that's precisely what I've been doing, and that both mentor and protégé are firmly on track and growing naturally in strength.

Now I know that this story can be difficult to understand and that having a person use his core self as a mentor is a trifle unusual, but when it comes to you making your life work now and communicating naturally by being your true self, come from your experience and ask yourself this question....

‘ Who is the one person on the planet who truly knows every single thing about you, and who you really are? ’