

To Kendig B. Cully

Dear Sir, 25 September 1937

You can learn a great deal of psychology through studying books, but you will find that this psychology is not very helpful in practical life.

A man entrusted with the care of souls ought to have a certain wisdom of life which does not consist of words only but chiefly of experience.

Such psychology, as I understand it, is not only a piece of knowledge but a certain wisdom of life at the same time.

If such a thing can be taught at all, it must be in the way of a personal experience of the human soul.

Such an experience is possible only when the teaching has a personal character, namely when you are personally taught and not generally.

In India since ancient times they have the custom that practically everybody of a certain education, at least, has a guru, a spiritual leader who teaches you and you alone what you ought to know.

Not everybody needs to know the same thing and this kind of knowledge can never be taught in the same way.

That is a thing which is utterly lacking in our universities: the relation of master and disciple.

And that is at the same time the thing which you ought to have and any of your colleagues who want to have a psychological preparation.

Anybody whose calling it is to guide souls should have his own soul guided first, so that he knows what it means to deal with the human soul.

Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkneses of other people.

It would not help you very much to study books only, though it is indispensable too.

But it would help you most to have a personal insight into the secrets of the human soul.

Otherwise everything remains a clever intellectual trick, consisting of empty words and leading to empty talk.

You may try to find out what I mean in my books and if you have a close friend, try to look behind his screen in order to discover yourself.

That would be a good beginning.

Sincerely yours,

C.G. Jung ~Carl Jung, Letters Vol. 1, Pages 236-237.