what constitutes a great man, so associative for Freud, is that he be "far ahead of his time" (Max Schur, *Freud: Living and Dying*, 1972, p.468).

In sum, Freud selected heroic personages as ego ideals that he could emulate because they were intellectually stimulating, stood up for their principles, and were men of outstanding achievements. With some personages, even where there was ambivalence about them, he affirmed those he felt were progressive-minded. In his works, he amply accorded them credit and acknowledged their determining influence on him. This led him to scientifically develop the significance of the concept of having ego ideals.

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Freud and Me: Idealization and Over-idealization

David Lotto—Psychoanalytic Practice

In 1964, as a 17-year-old physics major in my fourth semester at Brandeis University, the direction of my life changed dramatically when I took the course, Psychology 18b: Motivation. It was taught by Richard M. Jones, author

of *Ego Synthesis in Dreaming* (1962), who had been a student of Erik Erikson and Andras Angyal. Professor Jones had a way of talking about himself, his dreams, his experiences, and his inner world that was both new and fascinating to me. This course was my introduction to Freud, Erikson, and psychoanalysis—it was something quite different from what I had learned about in physics classrooms and laboratories. Later, as a graduate student in clinical psychology at the University of Chicago and York University in Toronto, I had the good fortune to be able to study and do my master's thesis with David Bakan, author of *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (1965), and fierce critic of the cult of empiricism that has always ruled academic psychology. In 1968, Dr. Bakan left Chicago to relocate to Canada and I went with him to Canada, partly because I was at risk of being drafted to fight in the war in Vietnam.

Later influences on me were my psychoanalyst Paul Lippmann, and a number of teachers and supervisors at the analytic institute where I trained—they were mentors and role models who contributed to the creation of my ego ideals.

Now, a few brief thoughts on the formation of ego ideals. Psychoanalysts are very interested in the process of how experiences with other people can become part of oneself or one's inner life. There are several words, all of which start with the letter "i," that have been used to describe these processes—imitation, introjection, incorporation, internalization, idealization, and identification being the main ones. Something from the outside world is somehow taken inside, metabolized, absorbed, and turned into a part of you. In psychoanalysis this has been called the formation of psychic structure. Freud first accepted Jung's term for internalized images, yet another "i-word"—imago. Later he named the psychic structure that dealt with one's aspirations for who and what one wanted to be, the repository of a person's ideals and values, as the ego ideal. Still later, the ego ideal lost

its independent status and became the loving, as opposed to the punitive aspect, of the superego.

But it is not only the residues of one's actual experiences that can become part of the ego ideal; one can imagine, fantasize, and create an image, an ideal hero imbued with all sorts of admirable traits which one can then, by means of the same "i-word" processes, make a part of one's ego ideal, or more broadly, one's identity. These admirable traits may be more or less actually present in the model person to whom they are attributed. Also, one does not have to have had actual interaction with a role model for them to be taken into oneself. For me, Sigmund Freud, or the idealized version of him that was presented in, among other places, Ernest Jones' biography, became a major figure in the formation of my ego ideal.

Sometimes it's the little things that get incorporated. For example, for many years, long after most therapists had gone to 45-minute sessions I kept mine to 50 minutes, just like Sigmund Freud did. Or, maybe not such a little thing, a feeling that in the evening, even after a full day's work of seeing patients, I didn't feel right unless I spent some time being professionally productive, usually writing, or reading in preparation for writing, or corresponding, by e-mail rather than letters, but still clearly imitating the habits of my hero.

Finally I would like to add a word about heroes, idealization, and idolatry. It seems to me that there are some dangers inherent in the process of ego ideal formation by means of identification with role models. The more one idealizes a figure the easier it becomes to let them, or the idealized image of them, to become internalized and part of one's ego ideal. Idealization inevitably means distortion. The admirable and the good are recognized, amplified, and most likely exaggerated while faults, weaknesses, and defects that may be present are minimized, ignored, or denied.

There are two problems that can arise from this situation. The first is that idealization will slip into idolatry; which could lead to many pitfalls such as feeling the need to defend the reputation of one's "hero" and to either ignore or unjustly attack those who express valid criticisms of your role model. The second is disillusionment: the despair that can follow when reality intrudes and one can no longer deny that the idol has feet of clay; that they, like most human beings, are fallible.

So as an antidote for and prophylactic against over-idealization and hero worship, I try to be aware of the foibles of those I have taken as role models and not to be shocked when I discover that Freud was quite wrong about a number of things and had his fair share of psychopathology as well as poor judgment of both people and political situations. I find that recognizing the flaws in one's heroes actually strengthens rather than weakens my identifications with my role models. In psychoanalytic language, relationships are always ambivalent; fathers are both loved and hated. With regard to my relationship with Freud, the recognition and acknowledgement of his faults and weaknesses has made it easier for me to identify with the man in all of his complexity.

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