



Episode 20: When The Student Outgrows The Teacher

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

instructor, coach, student, move, feel, current, outgrow, challenge, journey, podcast, seminar, agility, mentor, episode, embrace, remember, experience, progress, dog, transition

This is the agility challenge with Daisy peel. You're listening to Episode 21. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started. This is the podcast for you. You can have the best training and the best skills and the best dog and access to the best trainers, coaches and instructors in the world. But if you don't have your mental game under control, you'll never be able to successfully use all those skills you have to the best of your abilities. Now let's dive in to today's episode.

Welcome to another episode of the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host Daisy peel. And today I'm going to dive deep into the topic of when the student outgrows the teacher. This is an important aspect of personal growth and development that several listeners including agility challenge members have asked about. And I've been wanting to do an episode on this topic. And after this past weekend, I figured the timing was perfect.

Last week, I headed out on a road trip to go to a seminar for a few days, where I was planning on being a student and not a teacher. It's important for me to continue to be a student of the game. And so when



I get the opportunity, I try to make the most of it. Not only is it a good opportunity for me to get a set of eyes on my training and handling, and a good opportunity to get some new training and handling tips. It's also important, I think, to just be a student, and to remember what it takes to put myself in a position to be scrutinized, critiqued, and to learn. Practicing being a student is an important skill for anybody, but especially for those whose primary role is an instructor. So anyway, I was pretty jazzed to get out of town and be a student for a few days. But then in a pretty interesting turn of events, the seminar presenter got stuck in transit. And after over 24 hours of trying to complete travels to get to the seminar site, it became clear that the seminar presenter was just not going to make it. And so I was asked to step in and be the instructor for the three days of the seminar.

Now, I really had not anticipated needing to put my instructor hat on, I had my student head on. And for me, either roll takes some preparation. If I'm heading somewhere to be a student, my mental preparation is quite a bit different than if I'm heading out my front door to be an instructor. So when I had to rapidly make that mental transition from student to teacher, it was quite a bit more challenging than I thought it would be.

And that's not exactly the topic of this podcast episode. But it did get me thinking about that other transition that can be difficult and that's when as a student, you outgrow your coach, or mentor, or instructor. I don't mean that your coach or mentor or instructor has nothing left to provide. But generally speaking, this transition happens when your progress is stalling out because you're not being pushed in quite the same way you were when you started with that particular mentor, coach or instructor.

This has happened to me several times throughout my several years in the sport. And usually, in my experience, I can feel this transition coming well before I've reached the point where it's time to move



on. Even if I can't quite verbalize what is happening. I usually start to feel some tension or maybe a feeling of frustration, in the sense that I have this vague feeling of being held back. Now of course, nobody is really holding me back in these situations but myself, but it's more of a vague sense that there might be more, and that I'm ready for some for a next step of some kind. And then it occurs to me that maybe I'm ready to move on. But then I get caught up in how to do that without damaging the relationship that I have with my current mentor, instructor or coach.

When you outgrow an instructor or coach, you have to remember that it's a sign of progress and evolution. It's kind of the way it's supposed to go. It means that you've reached a point in your learning journey, where your current mentor instructor or coach can no longer provide the level of challenge and guidance that you need to continue growing

It's important to understand that this is a natural part of the learning process, and it doesn't reflect negatively on you, or your current coach, instructor, mentor, teacher or whatever. It just means that as a student, you're ready for new perspectives and new experiences. And as students, it's essential for us to recognize the signs of outgrowing our mentors. So if you consistently find yourself surpassing the challenges set by your coach, or instructor, or if you feel a lack of enthusiasm, or maybe stagnation with your progress, these might be they're not necessarily but they might be indicators that it's time to consider moving on to a new chapter. Now, it might also mean you just need to have a conversation with your coach and let them know hey, I don't feel like I'm challenged, can you can you help me move to the next level, because it's possible that your coach or instructor has been holding back because they didn't think you were ready for some reason or another. So it might mean that it's time to move on. But it also might mean that it's just time to have a heart to heart with your instructor.



Realizing that you may have outgrown your coach or your instructor or your mentor, they're kind of interchangeable terms can be exciting and also scary. It's pretty normal to feel a mix of emotions, because you're kind of stepping into uncharted territory, you might be worried about being on your own without the guidance of your instructor that you've come to rely on. But you have to remember that this is an opportunity for growth, and self discovery. And it's also important to remember that most of those who are at the top of the sport at the top of the game at any game really are they're not only because they've had the support of coaches throughout their journey. But also at some point, they've also had to make that step where they're kind of stepping off the edge of the cliff into uncharted territory, and there's nobody leading them. So if you've become accustomed to a coach or an instructor leading you and telling you what to do, it can be really daunting to think about

continuing to move forward without that support without that hand holding. So that too, is an opportunity for growth, and self discovery.

So the key to navigating this journey, and some of this can be it's relational and but it can be kind of emotional, and it can get it can go downhill really quickly if you're not careful. So you have to engage in open and honest communication. And that can be tricky, it can be tough can be uncomfortable. You have to have a respectful conversation with your current instructor. And make sure that you express gratitude for their support and their guidance. While explaining your desire to explore new challenges. It's it's super important that you focus on your personal growth, rather than criticizing their methods or approach because remember, those methods and that approach got you to the point where you were ready to step up to the next level.



So a mature and respectful dialogue can lead to valuable insights and can help ease some of your apprehensions. Your instructor may have been exactly in the place where you are now where they were once a student and then they made a step to instructing themselves and instructing others and instructing you.

It's normal to worry about hurting your current mentor or coaches feelings, and outgrowing a mentor or coach, it can go really, really poorly if you don't take some time to think about how to have what can be a potentially difficult conversation. But also, there's just so much to be gained from having that conversation in a mature, heartfelt adult way.

So picture this,

you've been training under your instructor, maybe for years, and that instructor has been your guiding light. They've been cheering you on through successes, they've been helping you get back up after failures. But now maybe you feel like you've hit a plateau, you're no longer challenged, and you just can't shake the feeling that there's more to explore. Now, this realization is maybe both liberating and terrifying. It's liberating because you're on the verge of expanding your horizons. And you can feel it you can tell. But it's also terrifying because you're on the verge of expanding your horizons and you're gonna have to step into some unknown territory in order to do that. And this is where doubt can creep in, where you start to wonder what if I make the wrong decision? Can I really do this on my own? And it's important at that moment in those moments to remember that it's natural to feel that way. And it's also important in those moments,



to remember that this is about us and our needs. And it's not about the instructor. And this is where I feel like so often it can go wrong, where we, we feel those doubts and we feel that insecurity and we really want to offload that onto somebody else. And so we get into blaming instructors or blaming our current instructor, and minimizing

the benefit that we gained from having traveled on our journey with that instructor. Partially because we want to minimize the discomfort and the pain of changing the relationship we had with that instructor. So remember that outgrowing your instructor and moving on to another instructor does not need to mean severing your relationship with your current instructor it shouldn't you had a rich, full experience with that instructor. And moving on simply means moving on, it does not mean burning bridges.

If you've ever gone through this process, or you feel like you're about to go through this experience, I want you to know that you're not alone, I've gone through it. Lots of people have gone through it. Many great athletes, artists and professionals have faced this crossroad. It's a testament to your commitment and passion for the sport, and to your dog training and handling that you've reached this point. And it's also a testament to your instructor for helping lift you to this point.

I'm going to encourage you to embrace this change and this stepping stone with gratitude. And with respect. This is your chance to explore new horizons and involved and evolve as a dog agility handler and trainer. And it's also a chance to give credit where credit is due to your previous and current instructors. For like I said, for lifting you up and getting you to this point on your journey where you could level up, even if it means moving on to another instructor.



Moving on from your current instructor does not mean that you're leaving them behind, you may have built up a strong relationship, and maybe even a strong friendship and the experiences that you've shared will always be a part of you. So it's really important to not minimize those experiences and to not minimize that instructor and the way that they helped you get to this point, you're going to want to cherish those memories and those friendships, and probably you're going to be continuing to see that instructor in your community at competitions, even once you've moved on. So you want to be able to carry forward all of the material and experiences and memories of that that instructor provided for you as a source of inspiration.

You are going to have to embrace the uncertainty of moving forward. And hopefully with a sense of curiosity and courage, even if you're not feeling super confident. You know, I've talked about confidence versus courage before, you don't have to be confident at all, to have courage. You're going to want to trust in the abilities that you've developed so far by yourself and with that instructor, and know that the path to progress almost always involves at some point or another embracing the unknown. And if you've approached the need to move on with grace, and open communication, your current instructor is going to appreciate that you're moving on that they've helped you get to a point where you could move on. And also that you may need to come back to them for support at some point. You want your previous instructors to feel appreciated, and to know how much they helped you on your journey to get to where you are now. And you want to make sure that they've still got your back if you need them. Because even if we think we might be ready to move on from an instructor, we may need to loop back around to what that instructor has to provide at some point in the future. So I said it before and I'll say to say it again, moving on, should not involve burning bridges.



So part of moving on is thinking about how are you going to find a new instructor. And again, if you've had a heartfelt honest, open communication with your current instructor. Even if you feel like it might be really difficult. It may be that your current instructor can help you with this process. Your current instructor may be able to recommend an instructor that can help help you move on to the next level. It might be that their instructor is someone that you'll level up toward.

You're going to need some practical steps for finding a new instructor or coach who aligns with your current goals and aspirations. And again, like I said your current instructor if you have gone about this in a mature fashion might be the best person to help you find another instructor.

It's going to be essential for you to take the time to read

Search and identify potential mentors, instructors and coaches who can help you continue on your dog agility, training, handling, and maybe even competitive journey.

So again, if you've gone about this with poise, and maturity, even if it's uncomfortable, then start by talking to your current instructor. And then beyond that, look for workshops and seminars to attend, that are presented by different instructors. Observe classes and training sessions conducted by prospective instructors if you can, or even better schedule a private lesson with a potential new instructor to kind of test it out. This is gonna give you a really good look into a prospective instructors teaching style approach and overall philosophy and ask them questions about that. Ask them about what your teaching style, what's your approach, what's your overall philosophy.



But it doesn't stop there. Talk to other students who are working with that instructor or who have worked with that instructor in the past, get their perspectives on the instructors strengths, their areas of expertise and how they've grown as students under that instructors guidance.

Finding somebody who as an instructor, who their whose values resonate with your vision for growth is critical.

Your journey is unique and the right instructor is going to help understand and support your goals. And this new relationship that you're looking for should be a partnership that's built on trust and a shared commitment to your growth. Just like the last relationship with your previous or current instructor was. So you really don't want to minimize that relationship that you're in right now with an instructor, and how much it's helped you get to where you are at this moment where you could level up.

So, before I finish out this episode, I want to remind you that the journey that you're on with your dog agility, training your dog training your dog handling your competitive journey is more. It's about more than just technical skills and achievements. It's also about personal development. Resilience is a tackling challenge with a growth mindset and discovering what your potential really is. When you outgrow an instructor, or a teacher or a coach. It's a testament to the growth mindset that you've cultivated and it's a testament to that growth mindset that you've cultivated, probably with the help of that instructor, or coach who you feel like you need to move on from now.

So embrace the lessons that you've learned. Honor your progress. Honor your previous and current instructors, mentors and coaches, and be excited about the opportunities that are in front of you be



excited about the unknown. You have the power to shape your path and make a positive impact on the world around you, your community, both inside and outside this crazy sport called dog agility.

So that's it for this episode of the agility challenge podcast. I want you to remember that growth is a lifelong journey and it's okay to outgrow your current instructor, mentor or coach. Embrace the change, seek new challenges and approach this transition with honor, respect, and maturity even though sometimes that's not the easy way out. It's the right way.

If you enjoyed this podcast episode, please consider leaving me a review and share it with your friends. And until next time, lean in to the agility challenge. If you enjoyed today's podcast, and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things I talked about today. Head to the web page for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash 20](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/20). And scroll to the bottom you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. I'm a pretty tech savvy person but even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com forward slash 20](http://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/20). subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend.

Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know your thoughts about what I discussed today. What did you think about when it's time to move on from your current instructor, mentor or coach? Have you had that experience before? I'd love to hear from you and discuss your thoughts for a future episode.