

Abstract

Original Article

Experiencing Deeper Dimensions of Gratitude, Well-being and Meaning in Life after Suffering

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Abstract

Background: Earlier research indicates that human beings after suffering often go through personal changes and dedicate to themselves a greater understanding of life.

Aims: The aim of this study is to uncover the deeper dimensions in the understanding of life that the human being may dedicate to herself or himself after having lived through suffering. The research question is: what existential changes and deeper dimensions in the understanding of life may the human being dedicate to herself or himself after having lived through suffering?

Methodology: A hermeneutical approach is used in this study. The material was collected through focused interviews with ten adults who had lived through personal suffering. The texts were interpreted through hermeneutical reading. Participation in the study, data storage and handling for research purposes were approved by the participants when they provided their informed consent. Permission to conduct the study was granted by an ethical committee.

Results: The results show that human beings experience deeper gratitude, wisdom and meaning in life after suffering. Human beings show greater empathy and acceptance of others. The courage to create well-being is strengthened since they attain a greater awareness of their inner source of strength. Living in the present becomes important at the same time as a greater awareness of life's fragility and finiteness evolves.

Conclusion: After having lived through suffering the human being has potential to grow and gain deeper gratitude in life thanks to a deeper awareness of the existential dimensions. The human being gains greater empathy and understanding of suffering. Further research should focus on uncovering the existential fragility that emerged as an interesting aspect in this study that adults experience after suffering.

Keywords: suffering, existential issues, gratitude, meaning in life, well-being, quality of life, interviews, hermeneutical reading