

ABSTRACT

DEATH OF A CLOSE PERSON IN THE CONTEXT OF SPIRITUALITY

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The dissertation submitted is dealing with the relationship between the subjects of the death of a close person and spirituality, especially personal concept of spirituality. Death of a close person is a crucial turning point in the life of a human being. The turning point affecting the next life in all aspects of the human life, in all its directions – biological-, psychological-, and sociological-spiritual. The complete care about a human being is more and more applied in the context of health or disciplines working with relations or connections; it is thus relevant to be aware of this fact of multidisciplinary cooperation and enrichment.

I introduced the status of current approaches to subjects of the death of a close person and spirituality and introduction to the problematic in the beginning of my work. The subject of spirituality occurs in relation to extraordinary events, i.e. in the interdisciplinary field; this corresponds just with human dimensions. If our interest in a human being as a whole, i.e. also the care about a human being as an entire being is concerned here, it will be understandable that not only various disciplines but, first of all, the interdisciplinary cooperation should be perceived in this direction.

The first part of the work submitted is focused theoretically on defining current knowledge of the three main subjects. The conceptualization of the terms and categories is concerned here, upon which the basic research question is formulated in the research part. The definition of areas and terms for the needs of the work submitted is

essential for helping to make the method of processing the data obtained more comprehensible.

The first chapter is focused on the concept of death and sorrow processes in the context of modern theology. It represents theoretical concepts and models focused on this subject. It is followed by the second chapter studying the concept of death and sorrow processes in the context of social sciences. It represents models working with the processes of grief and sorrow. The third chapter is concluding this subject by proposing a model of sacral-secular death and sorrow processes, i.e. another possible view, by which I was trying to integrate knowledge of modern theology and social sciences. The fourth chapter is focused on the definition of the term of spirituality so as to explain how to understand spirituality within the entire work. The relationship level of spirituality is essential and, in the theoretical part, I defined the areas of freedom, relationship, and emotions in relation thereto. This structure is then taken into account in the research part. The theoretical part ends with the fifth chapter focused on the spiritual development, which could occur due to a loss in the form of the death of a close person. Such a development is connected with the grounds of a crisis, where a potential spiritual growth can be observed.

The second part is focused on the research methodology (narrative interview) and definition of the problem researched. It describes the course of the research and the method of processing the interviews with accenting the narrative content of the problematic researched. Narrative approaches allow us to work with a story in the way the specific person lived and felt it and talked about it. The work is performed in a triangle with the story in its centre and with one involved person – respondent, researcher, and reader – in each of its vertices. The depth of perception and description of the experience included in the narrated story is in our spotlight. The research question has been defined: *“How are changes to spirituality in the context of a crisis caused by the loss of a close person described by the people who experienced such loss?”*.

The third part contains the research as such with three levels of findings. In the first level, the analysis inside the case is concerned when a story is being told over the life and spiritual cycle of respondents with accenting significant and surprising moments of the same. The second analysis is a case-to-case analysis. The so-called second reading is concerned here with accenting a spiritual awareness of respondents and the chapter 10 is related thereto. The analysis is based on the structure divided into freedom, relationship, and emotions as defined in the theoretical part. The third level focused on the theoretical reflection of the second reading is relating thereto, which is focused on the spiritual development based on the reflection of theoretical concepts.

The narrative research method also indicates potential use of the narrative approach methods for experts dealing with subjects of the death of a close person and spirituality. It has been obvious from the beginning of the dissertation that an interdisciplinary field of various disciplines was concerned here. Within those disciplines, the narrative approach can be used for researching the relation between a crucial life milestone such as the death of a close person and spirituality. Spirituality and its personal concept being one of the dimensions of a human being can be described upon particular milestones with taking changed perceiving and experiencing of spirituality into account. It can help in making the process of spiritual changes including the spiritual growth at the work with people who experienced the death of a close person more conscious. It is also relevant to be aware of the fact that the interdisciplinary approach is not based on mutual awareness of each other only, but, in particular, on the functional cooperation. The reason is that the cooperation of various disciplines such as theology, psychology, healthcare, or social work can help in enhancing human stamina at the processes of confronting losses as well as in the following growth.