

Ordinary People Paper – Existential Therapy

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Existential Therapy - Ordinary People Paper

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Existential therapy was created by Austrian Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp survivor during the 20th century, who believed that existential therapy would help people find meaning in their lives despite what they have gone through. Undoubtedly, that kind of attitude is why he survived and was mentally well enough to create such a therapy.

Viktor Frankl created existential therapy based on human nature believing that human beings are responsible for creating their own sense of purpose and meaning in their own lives.

Conrad was mentally, emotionally, and psychologically impaired for quite some time, and his mother's ignorance, rejections, and inability to seek, and accept help for herself, and on behalf of her family, made it worse. If only she was able to grasp, or have an inkling of what he was experiencing, they would have been able to help each other sooner. Conrad perhaps, would not have reached the point of attempting to commit suicide. Based on what both Conrad and his father stated, she was apparently too wrapped up in her own loss and grief to notice what happened to her other son (Conrad). Conrad's effort to accept his father's suggestion to seek therapy saved his life. Though it took a while, he was able to accept his brother's death was not his fault, which was a relief for him. He was then able to forgive and gather himself, let go, and move forward in cultivating new relationships.

Conrad had the space, courage, and opportunity to reflect on all he went through. The loss of his friend Karen, and his brother Buck. He finally had the strength to release them both. He made the decision to quit the swim team because the swimming and the water reminded him of when he was forced to let go of Buck.

Conrad actively listened, knowing that he found someone who was willing to listen; someone who heard and understood him, and who responded to him in a way he was not expecting, solidifying his trust and belief in the process.

Using these techniques, allow Conrad to pull himself up out of bed, out of isolation, and made meaningful decisions based on what he thought was best for him and what he was comfortable with, rather than what others wanted for him. He found purpose in his life through his own lenses of recognition, acceptance, as well as rejection. He was finally able to end the fear that debilitated him for far too long. It was obvious that Conrad found freedom and peace in the therapeutic process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, existential therapy placed emphasis on the person-to-person relationship, believing that it is not the therapy nor techniques that made individuals well, but rather it is the client-therapist relationship. Viktor, after everything he went through, based on his own experiences, suffering, endurance, and resilience, was able to rise above it all. He believed that everyone can at least try to make the effort to reach their full potential, regardless of their circumstances.

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References

Corey, G. (2018). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*, (10th ed., pp. 95-128). Cengage Learning.

Ordinary People, released September 19th, 1980 (USA)

Directed: Robert Redford

Award: Academy Award for Best Picture, Academy Award for Directing, More

Language: English

Music composed by: Marvin Hamlisch

Watched on Pluto