

Abstract

Title: The meaning and the learning of rest. A study with a life-world phenomenological approach

Language: Swedish, with a summary in English

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The aim of this dissertation has been to develop a tentative theory about rest and the learning of rest, by proceeding from people's lived experience of rest. The aim also has been to develop a model for learning how to rest, where the mutuality between the learning content, the people learning and the conditions for learning are considered. Three research questions have been used as a guide in the dissertation work: What is the meaning of rest? How do individuals learn to rest? How can conditions be created to help people learn how to rest?

In society, there is a tendency that both the pace of life and the production process is expected to function as quickly as possible, so that the time can be used as effectively as possible. Individuals are finding it problematical to relate to and deal with these changes. An accelerated tempo and an increased consciousness of time are signs of this. This creates ill health, which can be partly understood as an inability to rest. Therefore, it becomes a pedagogical question for people to learn how to rest, which can be described as to acquire a skill or an art. A skill is situated in between theory and practice. Knowledge and action are inseparably allied with each other in skills.

The research questions were studied with a life-world phenomenological approach, and interviews were chosen as method for collecting data. In the interviews, the researcher was guided by concepts significant for human science research: openness, immediacy, intersubjectivity, meaning, uniqueness. In the analysis of the data a descriptive phenomenological methodology was used, with searching for essence.

A general structure of the phenomenon of rest, implies a duality between rest and non-rest. The essence of rest is a harmony in feeling, action and motivation. The formation of rest develops when people's inner reality, concerning need and longing, correspond to the shape and character of their external reality. The constituents for the essence of rest is: rest rhythm in life, atmosphere of beauty and comfort, to be accepted without judgment, a relation involving mutual interests, freedom from anxiety and compulsion, a state of detachment and relaxation, enjoyable experiences and challenges. The essence of non-rest is a disharmony in motivation, feelings and action. This experience of disharmony, drains people of energy, which becomes more obvious the longer the period of non-rest continues. The constituents for the essence of non-rest is: to be motivated but not be able to, be able to yet not be motivated, to be motivated but not be able to feel.

To learn how to rest involves becoming conscious of a rhythm in one's way of life, to allow for a rhythm in life, and to find or create sources where energy can be drawn. The model for learning how to rest is constituted by three dimensions: learning about rest, learning through rest and learning in rest.

Learning about rest can be related to ideas about life-world, lived body, time and space, circularity and intentionality. Knowledge about learning through rest can be related to ideas about health, and knowledge about learning in rest can be related to ethics and aesthetics.