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## ***“THE READINESS IS ALL”*** **DEATH AND PSYCHOTHERAPY**

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*Anonymous, Triumph of Death,*  
Plague tablet (Pesttafel), Augsburg, Germany (1607/1635)

# THE TOP FIVE REGRETS *of the* DYING



*A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing*

BRONNIE WARE

- I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
- I wish I didn't work so hard.
- I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
- I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
- I wish I had let myself be happier.

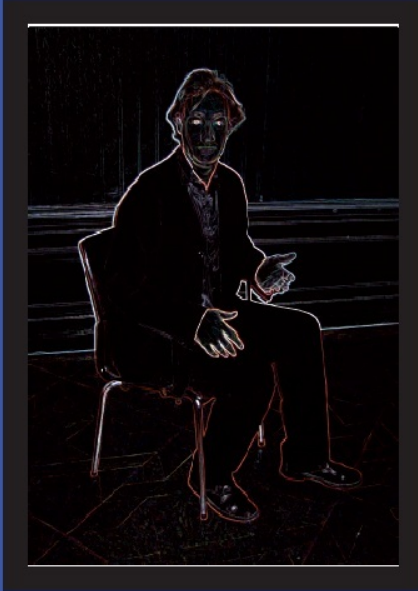
# Death and ...

1. ... its omnipresence
2. ... psychotherapy orientations
3. ... strategies of avoidance
4. ... philosophy
  - Part of life or opposite?
  - My death or the death of the other?
5. ... person-centered perspectives
  - Death's question to life
  - Is there anything questioning death?
  - Facilitating the relationship to death in therapy

# 1

## THE HIDDEN OMNIPRESENCE OF DEATH

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LIFE MANAGEMENT  
ODER  
DIE ULTIMATIVE THERAPIE

EIN KICK-OFF MEETING



Media in vita in morte sumus.

*Notker the Stammerer,  
840-912*

# 2

# DEATH IN THE PSYCHOTHERAPY ORIENTATIONS



Death, not dying ...

- **Psychoanalysis**

death instinct

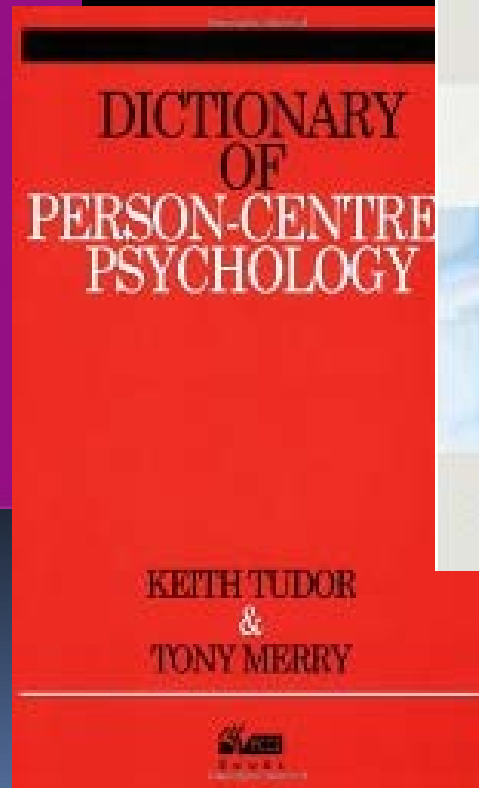


- **Behavior therapies**

fear of death is learned

- **PCE therapies**

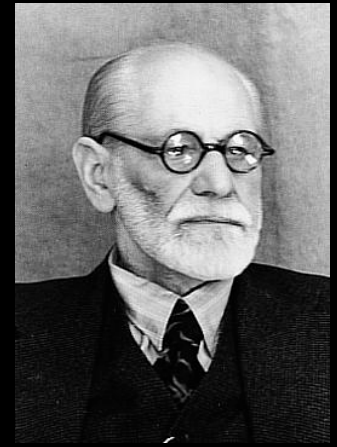




???

- **Psychoanalysis**

death instinct



- **Behavior therapies**

fear of death is learned

- **PCE therapies**

???



- **Existential therapies**

death as primary source of anxiety



Mors nobis timenda non est,  
quia, donec sumus, mors non est,  
et cum mors sit, non nos sumus.

*Epicurus*

# 3 STRATEGIES OF AVOIDANCE

... today the experience of death is rare.  
... death is excluded from social reality.  
... if it cannot be disguised.  
                        this is considered as failure.

# Strategies of avoidance

- 1 The defiance of death of the invulnerable.**
- 2 The insouciance of the very sheltered.**
- 3 The self-conceit of the arrogant ones.**
- 4 The self-assurance of the generalizers.**
- 5 The imperturbable coolness of the down-players.**
- 6 The soul liberating ideas of the glorifying .**
- 7 The self-redeeming phantasies of the immortals.**



# Strategies of avoidance

- 8 The doomsday commination of the prophets of disaster .**
- 9 The perfectionistic control of the chance avoiding obsessives.**
- 10 The blandishing sugarcoating of the idealizers.**
- 11 The projection of guilty feelings of the demonizers and avengers.**
- 12 The lecherous sensationalism of the voyeurs.**
- 13 The sublime suppressing of the sexualizers.**

# 4

# DEATH IN PHILOSOPHY

To philosophize is  
to prepare for death.

*Cicero*

- **Plato:** To philosophize is to anticipate death.
- **Seneca:** Tota vita discendum est mori.  
(The whole life is learning to die.)
- **Augustine:** Exercitium artis bene moriendi.  
(Exercising the art of having a good death.)
- **Marcus Aurelius:** Do not fear death, but fear never begin to live.
- **Franz Rosenzweig:** All knowledge of the universe begins with death.
- **Thomas Bernhard:** Everything is ridiculous if you think of death.

# 4

## DEATH IN PHILOSOPHY

Part of life or opposite to life?

- Martin Heidegger



Life is „being towards-death“.

→ Death is a central part of life.

→ Authentic existence takes death into life.

- Martin Heidegger



Life is „being towards-death“.

→ Death is a central part of life.

→ Authentic existence takes death into life.

Kierkegaard: Live gives meaning to death.

- Jen Paul Sartre



Life and death cannot be reconciled.

→ Death is the absurdity as such.

→ You cannot prepare for death.



- Jen Paul Sartre



Life and death cannot be reconciled.

→ Death is the absurdity as such.

→ You cannot prepare for death.

Camus: Death is an attack to freedom (Sisyphus)

Is death the finale of life  
or  
is it radically different from life?

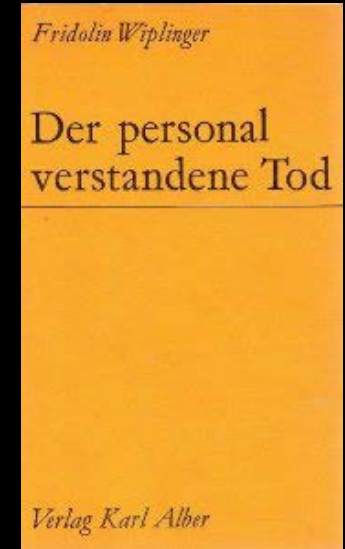
# 4

## DEATH IN PHILOSOPHY

My death or the death of the other?

Am I primarily considered  
with my own mortality  
or  
that of beloved people?

- Fridolin Wiplinger



The death of the Other:  
Death is separation from those we love.  
But the dead person still fills the remaining  
person with love.

Fear of loss of the self  
(annihilation)

*substantial dimension of personhood*

Fear of loss of relationship  
(isolation)

*relational dimension of personhood*

# 5 PERSON-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES

# „Person“

<b>Substantial notion</b>	<b>Relational notion</b>
»Persona est sub-stantia.«	»Persona est ek-sistentia.«
Person = Being from oneself and for oneself	Person = Being from others and for others
<b>Autonomy</b> Sovereignty	<b>Interrelatedness</b> Solidarity



# Death of the person

<b>Substantial notion</b>	<b>Relational notion</b>
» Persona est sub-stantia.«	» Persona est ek-sistentia.«
Fear of loss of the self	Fear of loss of relationship
Ultimate Annihilation	Ultimate Isolation

Fear of loss of the self  
**(annihilation)**

*substantial dimension of personhood*

Fear of loss of relationship  
**(isolation)**

*relational dimension of personhood*

The earnest of death is its  
question to life.

*Fridolin Wiplinger*

# 5

## PERSON-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES

The fundamental contradiction

Love is strong as death.

*Song of Songs 8:6*

## The contra – diction of death

... death questions love ...

(„was it absurd?“)

## The contra – diction of hope

(spes contra spem)

... love questions death ...

(„you shall not die!“)

# 5

## PERSON-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES

Therapy as empowerment of hope

- ... to co-facilitate unconditional acknowledgment of death (= comfort and confrontation)
- ... to co-facilitate realizing what life means (in the face of death)
- ... to co-facilitate the realization of the underlying  
We in the dialogue



If it be now, 'tis not to come;  
If it be not to come, it will be now;  
If it be not now, yet it will come –  
The readiness is all.

*William Shakespeare, Hamlet*

## *Related PowerPoint Slides*

*„On the art of being anxious  
in the right way“*

**Person-centered, dialogical and existential  
perspectives on anxiety.**



welcome to | willkommen auf  
bienvenue à | bienvenido a

**pca-online.net**

# The Person-Centered Website

by **Peter F. Schmid**



## THE PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH

### THE PCA

What is the PCA?  
Carl Rogers  
Resources  
Links

### BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Carl Rogers Bibliography Online  
(English & German)  
Rogers: Bibliographie  
francophone  
The PCE Online Bibliography  
Bibliography Gendlin  
Bibliography Peter F. Schmid

### EVENTS

PCE World Congress 2012  
Conferences

### INSTITUTIONS

WAPCEPC  
PCE World Association  
PCE Europe  
PCE Institutions & Associations  
Person-Centered Association  
in Austria (PCA)  
[www.personzentriert.at](http://www.personzentriert.at)

### JOURNALS

Journal PCEP  
Journal PERSON

### PAPERS

Papers P.F.Schmid download  
Links to other papers online



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Bibliography

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## PERSON-CENTERED WORKSHOPS

Personal development group & process reflection	monthly
Women are different – Men are different	29-30 9
"Shame on you!" - On shame & blaming	12-13 10
Depression: Love & hate reconciled?	9-10 11
Severe illness - dying - death	23-24 11
Trust and control	7-8 12 2013
Sexualities & sexual disorders	25-26 1
THE AUSTRIA PROGRAM 2013	29 5 - 5 6

*Register online*



Person-Centered Psychotherapy Science  
Sigmund Freud University, Vienna  
Carl Rogers Institute

### PFS: TOPICAL PUBLICATIONS

The person and evil  
Psychotherapy is political  
The Handbook of PCT  
(2nd edition 2012)

FAUST III. Vol. 1  
FAUST III. Vol. 2  
Life Management



APA  
Carl Rogers Award  
to Peter F. Schmid

PERSON & DIALOGUE  
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