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Methodological and Practical Guidelines on Increasing Capacity for Moral-Ethical Reflection of a Modern Adult

The article deals with studying a phenomenon of moral-ethical reflection as an integral personality trait reflecting sense-value guidelines which influence features of personal development. The author describes the urgency of this matter from the point of view of the modern social structure and the necessity of the system revision of psychological bases of the latest humanitarian schools towards making practical steps in solving this range of problems, and also the necessity of increasing a modern person's active, responsible position in choosing a vector of personal self-determination and the necessity of moral-ethical definiteness and autonomy for this purpose. This article briefly characterizes purposes and hypotheses of the empirical dissertation study, stages of its carrying out and the main conclusions. The author describes a seminar-training program created by the results of the theoretical and empirical study of this work, and also features and results of carrying out primary trainings. Steps of the further practical application of the data of the research are also outlined.

Keywords: moral-ethical values, moral-ethical reflection, personal development, self-realization, personal autonomy, consciousness.

The modern psychological view of the problem of harmonious personal development is unambiguous, "Consciousness determines being". Such a relation to reality makes it possible to create own life completely, proceeding from individual value filling.

A constant transformation in social structure requires a modern person's search for a new value sense content. This leads to the necessity of searching a support inside himself/herself, directing and regulating own life independently. This spiritual-psychological reorganization yields easily not everyone. The modern person has to live in a continuous fuss. Reactive way of thinking and reactive behavior have become usual and habitual. Spiritual and mental "emptiness" has filled all spheres of activity. Many people are in a situation of existential and ideological vacuum, lose meaning of life. It is extremely seldom that one can find a person with a harmonious, logically intelligent and coordinated system of norms and rules, where the person exists and constructs a certain strategy of activity.

By the beginning of the XXI century a huge number of philosophical and psychological schools, which try to help the person to find himself/herself, to answer eternal



questions of existence, were created. Modern scientists emphasize the importance of studying a person's moral-ethical self-determination as this range of problems considers and reveals essential features of the person. Now it is not simply a question of studying this phenomenon, but it concerns a system revision of philosophical, psychological, pedagogical bases of modern humanitarian schools from the point of view of making practical steps for a person's return to himself/herself.

And yet psychologists' understanding of the importance and necessity of the process of moral-ethical formation in the general context of harmonious personal development is not enough for answering the question concerning things which bring a modern person to a way of life which generates hopelessness, doom, despair and uncertainty of tomorrow. Constant anxiety forces out the belief in positive moments of life, consolidates grief for happiness, satisfaction and pleasure. A person does not see a way of further self-realization any more; gradually he/she ceases to be a master of his/her own life.

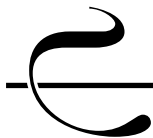
V. Frankl has named the XX century the century of fear and uncertainty. In the XXI century little seems to have changed for the better with the only difference that there have appeared new, modern social and personal reasons of a psychological deformation which lead to anxiety disorders and loss of the sense of existence.

Both science and society really need a new psychological understanding of this problematic.

The ability to moral-ethical reflection is one of important criteria of healthy personal formation. To settle down in life according to own scenario it is necessary to have internal system of values, own reference point in the main vital issues. It is impossible to be a creator of own life without understanding of own creative, mental and moral-ethical intensions, ability to discover in self new abilities and to realize them for a good cause of self and society. "Full-grown creation is possible when spirituality is realized through moral-ethical categories of personality" [5].

The person's ability to "... reflex self, to rise above self, to be beyond self, beyond any own actual state, even own actual general nature..." leads to a higher level of spiritual-moral being of the person – identity. "As an identity the person manifest himself/herself in an original author's interpretation of social norms of life, in the working out of own, especially individual (unique and inimitable) way of life, own outlook, own "uncommon" face, in following to a voice of own conscience" [4]. Ability to reconsider the past, to realize the present and to think about the future is a necessary skill for a modern, progressive, person who aspires to self-development and spiritual growth.

Moral-ethical reflection as well as personal reflection can be subdivided into retrospective, situational and perspective ones. **Retrospective moral-ethical reflection** is shown in a person's disposition towards the analysis of the moral-ethical values which were formed by the family and the social environment by a certain age. **Situational moral-ethical reflection** ensures self-control of behavior of the person in a concrete



urgent situation; this is the ability to understand what moral-ethical values adopted by an individual as own ones influence his/her choices, behavior and relations in the present. **Perspective moral-ethical reflection** corresponds to the function of the analysis of the forthcoming activity; this is an ability of estimation and analysis of the possibility of the forthcoming activity which can be carried out on the basis of his/her own moral-ethical values.

The conception of the nature of the human being as a free, responsible, having a dual material and spiritual nature being, which does not deny his/her sociality, which was created within humanitarian schools, makes it possible to speak about the problematic of moral-ethical self-determination and self-realization problems as about two interconnected and mutually initiating categories assuming personal development.

The relevance of our research lies in understanding moral-ethical reflection as the integrated property of personality reflecting a sense-value orientation which determines harmonious personal development, and the obvious need to increase a person's active role in independent determination of a vector of personal development, and the necessity of moral-ethical definiteness and autonomy for this purpose.

The purpose of our research is to study features of a modern adult's moral-ethical reflection and its interrelation with the sense-value sphere of personality and self-realization.

The research object is the psychology of a modern adult.

The research subject is studying moral-ethical reflection as a factor defining personal development of the modern adult.

The research hypothesis: moral-ethical reflection is an essential factor defining the specificity of personal development of a modern adult.

The main hypothesis is concretized in a number of specific hypothesis.

1. There is an interrelationship between the level of moral-ethical reflection of personality and the level of the sense-value sphere development, the general personal consciousness (reflection), responsibility, ability to self-realization, and also a person's desirable value relations to life, self, people (which it is possible to call the general level of moral-ethical good breeding).

2. There is a potential to develop a program for increase of the level of the general personal and moral-ethical consciousness which will make it possible to lower the level of personal disorientation and raise the level of satisfaction with life, will motivate a person towards searching individual ways of spiritual development, ability to moral-ethical autonomy, opportunity to plan and carry out healthy personal development.

At the first stage of the experimental study we have worked out two questionnaires for studying the level of the moral-ethical reflection of respondents. Having analysed the generalized indices of two questionnaires, we have created two experimental groups with 60 persons in each: group 1, respondents with a low level of the



moral-ethical reflection, group 2, respondents with a high level of the moral-ethical reflection.

At the second stage of the experimental study we have created a test battery for research of the sense-value sphere of personality and features of self-realization of respondents of two experimental groups by the following parameters: urgency of the need for self-realization; the degree of realization of the need for self-development; steadiness of desirable value relations to life, to people, to self; sense-of-life orientations: consciousness(existence of purposes of life), interest inthe process of life (richness of life), satisfaction with the past, orientation of the locus of responsibility; general level of reflexivity.

At the third stage we have carried out correlation analysis by means of Mann-WhitneyU-test for comparison of two experimental groups in a degree of discriminability of the above described parameters.

At the fourth stage we have carried out the statistical analysis of correlations between the results obtained by all techniques of our experimental study by means of Spearman rank correlation coefficient.

The obtained results.

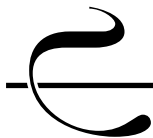
Unlike respondents of group 1 respondents with a high level of the moral-ethical reflection (group 2) showed higher indices by the following parameters: on the whole, sense-value filling of life (in particular, interest inthe process of life, internal locus of control – ability to take the responsibility for his/her own life, general level of moral-ethical good breeding),self-reflection, need for self-realization, realization of the need for self-development. We have established that the level of moral-ethical reflection correlates with indices of the sense-value sphere of personality, general level of personal reflexivity, desire of self-realization and ability to self-development.

At the fifth stage we have developed a two-day program of a seminar-training directed on increase in the level of moral-ethical general personal consciousness.

The program of this seminar-training is based on the most effective psychological models and techniques which are compatible with natural self-expression and a person's innate state to be free of obstacles of the circumstances imposed by various forms and reactions towards life, which are formed under the influence of adverse external and internal circumstances.

Goals and objectives of the seminar-training: decreasing the level of personal disorientation, increasing the level of satisfaction with life, motivating towards searching individual ways of personal and spiritual development, increasing the ability to moral-ethical autonomy, creating the possibility of planning and implementation of healthy personal development.

This program includes lecture material, games, exercises, creative tasks directed on self-knowledge, answers to questions, group discussions. The techniques directed on increase in the level of the moral-ethical and personal consciousness, offered to



participants of the training, include an alloy of philosophy, psychology and spiritual doctrines.

In 2014 we have carried out a series of primary trainings where 115 people took part. They were inhabitants of Moscow aged 35–63 years. The majority of them took part in our experimental study earlier.

Further we offer an abstract of the **“Moral-Ethical Values Which Form My Life”** seminar-training.

1. Modern categories of sense-value problems (reasons of moral-ethical degradation).
2. “Consciousness determines being”, the relation to reality which will make it possible to become a full, responsible participant of own life.
3. The conception of a three-level human nature (Spirit, Soul and Body).
4. Attention, consciousness, responsibility, “How is it possible to become a rightful owner of own life”.
5. Features of reactive behavior.
6. Mechanism of conscious behavior.
7. “There is no happiness in in the world, but there is peace and will” (features of healthy emotional-volitional behavior).
8. External and internal locus of control.
9. Dynamic attention (trainingselective attention skills).
10. Two possible stands in life: “A Victim” and “An Owner of Life”.
11. Creating the “Owner of Own Life” code.
12. The courage to create (Life as creativity. Creator – Creativity – Creation).
13. Three types of moral-ethical reflection (retrospective – the values adopted from the family and imparted by society; realities of the present – your true values with which you live now; future prospect – values on the basis of which you will construct your reality).
14. Five main values of your life.
15. The “Map of Your Life” exercise (features of your interpersonal and professional communication).
16. Practical integration of the knowledge gained during the training in own life.

After 2 weeks of carrying out the training we have carried out 3-hour post-training events directed on studying a psychological state and possible changes in public and social activity of participants of training groups. These events included the questionnaire filling of a meeting of a group format where each participant could to ask questions and express his/her towards the group in a free form. The purpose of the post-training meeting is a feedback on the process of the carried out training and abreaction of personal states.

The results of questioning and post-training conversation with participants were processed by means of the quantitative content analysis. The procedure of carrying



out the content analysis consisted in processing the text and speech by means of search of the units of analysis reflecting confirmation of the presence of an object sign being reflected in respondents' estimation of the quality of changes which they observe among themselves after participation in the training.

Categories of the analysis were distinguished by a deductive method from a sense field of desirable positive changes of participants which formed the bases of goals and objectives of the seminar training and by an inductive method from participants' of training answers. Subcategories of the analysis have reflected either presence or absence of a category in participants' of training answers.

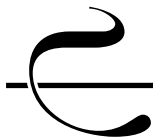
In result we have distinguished 9 categories of content analysis: 1) a participant's estimation of the seminar-training as an event promoting the general personal development; 2) rise in the general level of consciousness about a phenomenon of moral-ethical development; 3) increase in a responsible position concerning the level of own moral development; 4) improvement of a psychoemotional state and the level of general satisfaction with life; 5) decrease in the level of personal disorientation, increase in the level of consciousness concerning own life (the sense of existence became more obvious and substantial); 6) increase in the motivation towards search of individual ways of personal and spiritual development; 7) increasing the ability to moral-ethical and personal autonomy; 8) real practical steps towards improvement of interpersonal relations; 9) planning of concrete steps on reformatting own professional activity for the purpose of gaining the greatest moral-ethical and emotional satisfaction from it. For obviousness let us graphically present a share presence of each category of content analysis in answers of participants of the training (table 1).

Table 1

Presence of each category of content analysis in answers of participants of the training

Category	Share presence
1	95 %
2	100 %
3	65 %
4	80 %
5	75 %
6	70 %
7	60 %
8	65 %
9	65 %

Thus, we can state that the program of our seminar-training has established a reputation as meeting all requirements, goals and objectives, and we can recommend it



for use in the work of educational institutions, psychological and social services for clients facing such problems of personal development as problems of sense-value filling of life, personal and professional uncertainty, personal and professional dissatisfaction, lack of creative self-realization, problems of personal communication and others.

Unfortunately, modern psychological experience shows that an average person lives out of consciousness, out of his/her own true values, out of the responsibility for own life and self, out of a format of real time, either in constant thoughts of the past, or in dreams of the future, leaving behind a lot of very important for self "here and now". The person must aspire to essential self-understanding and self-realization. But it is possible to do this only having realized own true moral-ethical sources, their realization in the present self, and aspiration to become more intelligent, spiritual, ready for new frontiers of human being.

Further we plan to publish educational-methodological materials recommended to teachers, psychologists and social workers, fuller revealing the materials of this publication.

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