

Abstract

Original Article

Love as the Original Source of Strength for Life and Health

Jessica Hemberg, PhD, RN

Postdoctoral Researcher, University Lecturer, Abo Akademi University, Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies, Department of Caring Sciences, Vaasa, Finland

Katie Eriksson, PhD, RN

Professor Emerita, Abo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland

Lisbet Nystrom, PhD, RN

Docent, Abo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland

Correspondence: Hemberg, Jessica PhD, RN, postdoctoral researcher, university lecturer, Abo Akademi University, Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies, Department of Caring Sciences, PB 311, 65101 Vaasa, Finland. E-mail: jessica.hemberg@abo.fi

Abstract

Background: Love is seen as important as a basis for the caring-relationship but very few studies have examined the ontological relationship between love and health.

Aims: The aim of the study is to uncover a deeper understanding of love as the core of life and as the human being's source of strength as well as love's relationship to health. The research questions are: what characterizes love as the source of strength for the human being, and what is the ontological relationship between health and love?

Methodology: Hermeneutical reading and an abductive approach was used for uncovering texts by Kierkegaard and texts from interviews with adults who have lived through personal suffering and regained health.

Results: Love is the origin of everything and as the human being's source of strength. Love is the human being's holy entity towards which the human being's inner longing turns. The ontological relationship between love and health reveals that the core of health is love as part of a trinity, where love has the deepest dignity. The love of one's neighbour is seen as a health potential and as the core for becoming in health.

Conclusion: According to this study, love and health are bound to each other through the alliance with eternity as understood by the metaphor of *the human being's original home*. Love brings new light to life which may provide strength for health and life.

Keywords: love, health, source of strength, strength, wellbeing, life, hermeneutical reading, abduction, Kierkegaard, interviews