

Chapter #4

HUMAN LIFE-WORLD STABILITY AS A TOOL AGAINST LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

Irina Loginova¹, Olesya Volkova¹, & Daria Kaskaeva²

¹ Department of Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, Krasnoyarsk State Medical University, Russia

² Family Medicine Clinic, Krasnoyarsk State Medical University, Russia

ABSTRACT

The paper reveals the idea considering life self-fulfillment of a human being from the position of anthropological psychology which is framed by historical development of the psychological science and finds reflection in different theories and provisions.

The paper presents the analysis of studying the human life-world stability as a factor preventing learned helplessness.

It was revealed, that the stagnating nature of the life-world stability manifestation does not contribute to productive life process and optimal self-realization. It also forces the learned helplessness formation.

The constructive nature predominance of the human life-world stability contributes to the preservation of health, personal growth and creativity, as well as determines the learned helplessness prevention.

The results of the research demonstrate that the human life-world stability phenomenon and the learned helplessness are overlapped states, which point out different sides of effective/ ineffective and productive/ unproductive life self-fulfillment. This fact opens new prospective of interdisciplinary studies wide by the context and deep by the approach. These points urge the necessity of developing the system of psychological support including psychotherapy, psycho correction and psychological prevention of aimed at solving the problem of unconstructive life-world stability and learned helplessness of the person.

Keywords: cultural-historical psychology, system anthropological approach, life self-fulfillment, human life-world stability, learned helplessness.

1. INTRODUCTION

The human life-world stability is considered in psychology as an essential indicator of the success of the life self-fulfillment and opportunities of transfer inherent of him (man) into reality. The growth (formation, discovery) of a unique living space takes place due to this transfer. This space provides a person with freedom from rigid dependence on constantly changing situations, characterizes the degree of his openness to the world and sets the direction of movement of the psychological system (Klochko, Galajinsky, Krasnoryadtseva, & Lukyanov, 2014). At this level, a human becomes capable of discovering new correspondences that are the cause of interaction with the world.

The human life-world stability can be connected with the life self-fulfillment. The reference to the concept of “life self-fulfillment” is also connected with the idea that human being formation, as a question of contemporary psychological science, concerns the way of person’s self-presentation to the world which itself opens new possibilities to the personality. The paradigm being formed in psychological science, which is characterized

with a systemic redefining the subject of the science and leading researchers to understanding a human being as a self-fulfilled system, explains the designation of the psychic in a human being formation through comprehension of mission and designation of a human being as a higher system defining “from above” the possibilities of psyche and its role in the self-fulfillment processes.

The human life-world stability allows choosing the optimal mode of the psychological system functioning: a process of life activity organized in a special way by the person, contributing to the health preservation, personal growth and creativity. In the absence or lack of human life-world stability expression a person demonstrates the identity not of his entire life but only of its fragments, individual events and situations (Blauberg, 2003).

The idea of considering life self-fulfillment of a human being from the position of anthropological psychology is framed by historical development of contemporary psychology. It finds reflection in theories and the provisions realizing “breakthroughs” to a new ideal of rationality. The generating interaction of a human being with the environment is revealed in finding his own multidimensional world, the living world, the living space in which there is a self-fulfillment of a human being. Such enrichment of a psychological science in respect of anthropological ideas is considered by us as “a future challenge” on which the possibility to answer in the present is prepared by last achievements of science (Loginova, Chupina, & Zhivaeva, 2012; Klochko et al., 2014).

Referring to the problem of evolutionary movement Bergson in his work “Creative evolution” noted that life is characterized by the self-creation possibility, the result of continuous creation of oneself (Blauberg, 2003). According to the Bergson, life is a kind of result which changes each time under influence of the newly obtained forms of this life: if he (a human being) follows “the natural direction then it will be development in the form of tension, continuous creativity and free activity” (the author names this orderliness a living one) and if he turns back there is other form of an order that is the inertia and automatism. It is necessary to understand that the free activity underlies the life self-fulfillment.

Systemic anthropological psychology became the methodological basis of the research since processes of life self-fulfillment of a human being can be comprehended only within the context of a whole human being that is included in diverse and various communications and relations with a reality but lives and operates as a unity (Klochko et al., 2014).

It is suggested that the problem of optimal life self-fulfillment strategy correlates with both problem of human life-world stability (constructive, unconstructive, stagnant) and problem of learned helplessness of the person. These two problems are similar in their definition and revealing the level of responsibility of the person for his life (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Studying the problem of the “learned helplessness” (Seligman, 1993) as a phenomenon being formed in ontogenesis, under the influence of external and internal determinants and factors, such as social environment and physical condition of a human body, is important to consider conceptual provisions of the cultural and historical concept of a person’s mentality origin in which an attempt of solving the problem of a person’s consciousness origin and development is made. Psychological wellbeing itself as a conscious state can’t be followed by feeling of helplessness priori, but, on the contrary, is a resource state, basic in the course of self-actualization of the personality (Volkova, 2016).

It concerns not life self-implementation of the person and life itself as processes “existing separately”, but personal inclusiveness in evolutionary processes (ontogenetical and a phylogenetical order). They are characterized by the increasing release of the person “from the dictatorship of the determination according to the personal need normalizing his

life” and the increasing submission of “extra normative opportunities determination by the nature” (Loginova, 2012). This inclusiveness opens human new opportunities for development and formation. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the person (in onto-and phylogeny) is constantly changing: changing at the same time own ideas about the world and own personality, reinterpreting and overestimating the past, keeping thereby both own historicity, and historicity of the phenomena studied by him in a certain logic – transpective (Loginova, 2012).

This coexistence of the person and his world as life spaces in unity of times, inseparably linked, forms a continuum of life self-implementation of the person which characteristic is possible only from such point of view which holds a set of threads in a uniform sheaf, coming out to a tendency of personal development.

Consequently, it makes the opportunity to suggest that the human life-world stability allows prevention the learned helplessness development providing higher flexibility in real-life situations, realization of the authentic position concerning own life, self-congruency.

2. BACKGROUND

Conducting research, it seemed to us important to find proof that the orientation of life self-fulfillment as development of a human resource in the course of life coincides with how it was defined by L. Vygotsky with reference to development of the higher mental functions and a human being as their systemically important basis: “The whole development is that function development goes from me to I” (Vygotskiy, 2003). In this view, a problem related to occurrence, existence, transformation, development and self-development of a human being in unity with the world, its individual life strategy act defined in relation to the chosen strategy of life potential realization (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

A systemically important basis of the work is the understanding of a human being as a complex self-organized system which mode of existence is the self-development providing progress of a human being in a direction of complication of a psychological system (Galazhinskiy & Klochko, 2007). Thus, the attribute “life” bears special loading specifying the extent of “place-time” developing self-realization (it is not the one-stage act of own potential realization) where a human being makes effort on the ways to oneself opening “human” spaces in oneself and developing one’s resource.

Having defined a human being as a self-organized system it is possible to outline the process of manufacture and generation by the new system which is immediately included into further determination of the system self-organization as a form in which its development is carried out. To understand life self-fulfillment of a human being as a product of the latter and his life means possibility to understand and the human being itself is the most mysterious event of the world. In turn, recognizing living subjectivity as “the concrete unique general” - living life of reality, concept “life” fills the life activity of a human being with the real cultural-historical content. That is why in each separate act, action, life activity and life creation a human being’s life self-fulfillment reveal its essential features and increases them in an incessant vital stream where a human being “feels oneself a part of this mighty impulse of life” (Blauberg, 2003) embodying in process of life the creativity, continuous formation, the vast variety as that infinite number of freedom degrees that defines boundless possibilities of a human being. In the point of overlapping of possibility of a human being and reality conditions is the starting point for the “successful life” of a human being as a guarantee of achieving the purpose in realization of each action. That is why achieving the purpose of a human being gives the latter (a human being) the

greatest subjective satisfaction that covers success of life self-fulfillment. Productivity of a human being's self-realization depends on many psychological qualities of the latter, developing which increases the efficiency, masters various forms of self-realization accompanied by different levels of aspiration expressiveness to personal growth and development, characteristics of motivation and needs spheres and mindsets of a human being. Along with personal qualities among the factors promoting effective self-realization, it is possible to emphasize a high social status and an educational level expanding living space of a human being.

All these indicators, in our opinion, have a direct reference to life self-fulfillment of a human being, i.e. balancing between order and chaos which Prigozhin (1997) named movement "from life to formation and back" when the accent is shifted from balance position to instability condition where the structure is generated and reconstructed. This single moment of fixation to balance, to stability along with an openness which "breaks" the established rules is related to the life self-fulfillment of a human being as specially built relation with the world around pointing on the issue regarding the fact whether the life is that a human being (under the formula "I live") performs or it is something that is performed in a human being (under the formula "I am lived"). Being a mean for realization of the vital project, life self-fulfillment acts as the special value allowing setting frameworks to the new life standard contextually entering wider problematic field as compared to issues of social and economic functioning of a society. Since in life self-fulfillment the inherent form of transition of possibility into the reality proves special, only to a human being, and as a source of such behavior "intense possibility" consideration of the given phenomenon and its "consequences" can go in a direction of the human life content (Klochko, 2005). It is a question not so much of a basis of a new economic coil, but of the reference to a human being which once again becomes "a measure of all things", acting simultaneously as the carrier of this life standard and the figure focused on creation of life conditions adequate to this standard and providing to it a wide spectrum of possibilities (Berdyayev, 2006).

3. DESIGN

The study was comparative and organized in the two samples to reveal the degree of trait manifestation. All respondents provided voluntary informed consent to participate in the study in accordance with the norms of the Local Ethics Committee of Krasnoyarsk State Medical University. The study was conducted from 2012 until 2016.

The study involved students of the Clinical Psychology Faculty who signed the agreement to participate in study by the typical informed consent. The number of students is 238 people. The students were divided into two groups according to the quality of the manifestation of the human life-world stability.

- The first group – students characterized by the manifestation of unconstructive human life-world stability.
- The second group – students characterized by the manifestation of constructive human life-world stability.

*Table 1.
Distribution of respondents by parameters within groups.*

Options	Gender		Age
	Women	Men	
First group	70%	30%	20,2±0,7
Second group	70%	30%	20,4±0,5

4. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the research was to study the human life-world stability as a tool against the learned helplessness and is pointed out by two questions:

1) Can a human, characterized by the life-world stability, resist the learned helplessness?

2) What methods and strategies a human uses as the tools of confrontation with learned helplessness?

5. METHODS

The methodology “Investigation of the human life-world stability” (Loginova, 2012) was used as the main research method, which allows to study the features of the human life-world stability in the process of real-life activity (Loginova, 2012). This method is aimed at studying the features of the organization of human life and allows revealing the manifestations of the life stability (constructive, unconstructive, and stagnant).

The next research tool was “The technology of complex analysis of learned helplessness genesis” (Volkova, 2016). The technology was elaborated as the result of studying of unique ways of learned helplessness development and identification of its place in life of a specific person. The formation mechanisms and prevention ways of “the learned helplessness” phenomenon demands considering an environment factor, studying patterns of behavior mastered by means of interaction with the environment, mechanisms of fixing and maintenance of these patterns, and also their combinations to the specific physiological state caused by somatic factors. Studying the influence of a unique complex containing the specified structural elements as the model forming learned helplessness in ontogenesis since the period of the preschool childhood till adulthood, is one of the objectives of this research.

Mathematical processing of the obtained results was carried out using the SPSS Statistics 21 software package.

6. RESULTS

All results of two groups respondents on the method “Investigation of the human life-world stability” were systematized in accordance with the instruction and are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2.
Results of the human life-world stability of two groups.

Options	First group	Second group
Temporary of events tendency	The present 30% The past 40% The past - the present 30%	The present - the future 60% The past - the present - the future 40%
The ratio of verbs	The present 40% The past 40% The past - the present 20%	The present - the future 60% The past - the present - the future 40%
Criterion for the described events content selecting	Chronotopic 20% Topological 20% Biographical 60%	Chronotopic 30% Topological 60% Biographical 10%
General emotional background of events	Positive 30% Neutral 40% Negative 30%	Positive 60% Neutral 30% Negative 10%
The meaning of the described life events	The overall direction of the development line is conserved 20% General orientation is not withheld 30% Center of the development line 20% Completion of the development line 30%	The overall direction of the development line is conserved 50% General orientation is not withheld 30% The beginning of the development line 20%
Attitude to events	Value 15% Responsible 5% Rational 80 %	Value 60% Responsible 20% Rational 20%
Continuity of personal history	Retained 5% Situationally 30% Missing 65%	Retained 75% Situationally 20% Missing 5%
Author reflexive position	Holistic reflexive position 10% Situational reflexive attitude 30% Absence of a reflexive relation 60%	Holistic reflexive position 60% Situational reflexive attitude 25% Absence of a reflexive relation 10%

Differences between these groups are statistically significant ($t = -11.35$ at $p < 0.001$).

Table 3.
Study results in the clinical and control samples.

First group		Second group		t -test	p
μ	δ	μ	δ		
28.69	7.73	62.67	10.24	-11.35	0.001

The next step was to match the results of the human life-world stability and learned helplessness measurements. It was found that 85% of students characterized by the manifestation of unconstructive human life-world stability have signs of the learned helplessness state. In this case, 65% of this education was stably manifested, and

20% - situationally. It was found that 15% of students characterized by the manifestation of constructive human life-world stability have the signs the learned helplessness. In this case, only 5% of this education was stably manifested, and 10% - situationally.

The research results revealed that students characterized by the manifestation of unconstructive human life-world stability choose the following ways of confronting the learned helplessness:

- external support,
- appeal to a psychologist / psychotherapist,
- writing an analytical diary,

While, students characterized by the manifestation of constructive human life-world stability choose the following ways of confronting the learned helplessness:

- self-control,
- reflective attitude to events,
- regular self-assessment of emotional state.

7. CONCLUSION

It was founded, that the stagnating nature of the life-world stability manifestation does not contribute to productive life and optimal self-realization. It also forces the learned helplessness formation.

The constructive nature predominance of the human life-world stability contributes to the health preservation, personal growth and creativity, as well as learned helplessness prevention.

The results of the research demonstrate that the human life-world stability phenomenon and the learned helplessness are overlapped states, which point out different sides of effective/ ineffective and productive/ unproductive life self-fulfillment. This fact opens new prospective of interdisciplinary studies wide by the context and deep by the approach being oriented to the following objectives in the system of psychological facilitation:

- 1) Decrease in number and intensity of psychological difficulties in relationship with the close social environment;
- 2) Subjective perceptions of own psychological state as improving;
- 3) Increase in indicators of psychological and physical health;
- 4) Increase in level of search activity;
- 5) Increase in level of independence;
- 6) Increase in stress resistance;
- 7) Development of emotional intelligence;
- 8) Improvement of an emotional state, increase in vitality, social activity.

These points urge the necessity of developing the system of psychological support including psychotherapy, psycho correction and psychological prevention which are aimed at solving the problem of unconstructive life-world stability and learned helplessness of the person.

Thus, within the limits of the systemic anthropological psychology consistently developing ideas of cultural-historical psychology in a post-nonclassical key, life self-fulfillment of a human being acts as the process mechanism which is a transition of possibilities to the reality, transition of a human resource to the potentialities leading a human being to limits of his personal life in those points, sectors, segments of the life world in which environment answers its possibilities with occurrence of new value and semantic measurements.

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AUTHORS INFORMATION

Full name: Irina Loginova

Institutional affiliation: Krasnoyarsk State Medical University (Russia)

Institutional address: 660022, 1-Partizan Zheleznyak str, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation

Short biographical sketch: Irina Loginova completed her PhD in the field of Systemic Anthropological Psychology from Tomsk State University (Russia) in 2000. She is a Doctor of Psychology, Professor, Head of Clinical Psychology Department at the Krasnoyarsk State Medical University. She is an author of more than 70 papers in reputed Russian and International journals, book chapters and monographs in Russia and Europe. The major scientific studies reveal the problem of “Life self-fulfillment of a human being from the point of systemic anthropological psychology”. Now the research interest is in the field of studying the human life-world as characteristic of Psychological system: adaptation, self-regulation, self-organization and human life-world stability.

Full name: Olesya Volkova

Institutional affiliation: Krasnoyarsk State Medical University (Russia)

Institutional address: 660022, 1-Partizan Zheleznyak str, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation

Short biographical sketch: Olesya Volkova completed her PhD in the field of Clinical Psychology from Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University (Russia) in 2009. She is an Associate Professor of the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy at the Krasnoyarsk State Medical University. Olesya Volkova is the author of more than 60 papers in reputed Russian and international journals, book chapters and monographs in Russia and Europe. The main field of scientific interests concerns studying the learnt helplessness genesis in the process of personality formation, psychosomatic medicine, correlations between psychoemotional states, learnt helplessness and somatic status.

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Full name: Darya Kaskaeva

Institutional affiliation: Krasnoyarsk State Medical University (Russia)

Institutional address: 660022, 1-Partizan Zheleznyak str, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation

Short biographical sketch: Darya Kaskayeva graduated from the clinical internship at the Department of Polyclinic Therapy and Family Medicine at the Krasnoyarsk State Medical University (Russia) in 2006. In 2009 she graduated from the postgraduate study in the field of optimization the treatment of patients with an arterial hypertension at the Krasnoyarsk state medical university (Russia). Darya Kaskayeva has PhD in Medicine, she is an Associate Professor, Head of General Medical Practice Department at the Krasnoyarsk State Medical University. She is an author of more than 80 papers published in the scientific journals, book chapters and monographs in Russia and Europe. Darya Kaskayeva is a member of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Society of Therapists, the Chief non-staff specialist on General Medical Practice of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Health Ministry.