

Managing Chaos: Personal Writing as a Self-Therapeutic Tool at Life Transitions

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The objective of this study was to investigate the essence of personal writing as a way of coping with life transitions and to understand the complexity of using it as a “rite of passage” or “personal definitional ceremony” in life transitions.

The methodology is in the discipline of the qualitative research and the analysis of the texts has been done through narrative research. The study participants include three women whom experienced life transitions and used personal writing during these transitions. The study was written using two main tools: semi-structured interviews from which one type of text was produced for each participant, and personal writing which produced another type of text relating to the life transition experiences. A content analysis was performed on these texts according to the Spector-Marzel’s narrative analysis model (Spector-Marzel, 2010).

The study results suggest that the participants' writing is indeed a “rite of passage”. Nonetheless, the results only partially support the personal writing as a "personal definitional ritual."

The results also indicate an essential difference between representing life transitions stories orally and in writing. These are two contexts which show the story profoundly different. While the oral story gives a more partial description of the life transition experience, the written story presents a more extensive and rich narrative of the life transition experience.

Presenting this kind of story is an objective of therapy and of bibliotherapy in particular. The inclusion of writing during therapy encompasses the uniqueness and goals of bibliotherapy. This study contributes to the understanding of the significance of bibliotherapy.

Bibliography:

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