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**The conscience of becoming the self
– Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

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Introduction

This research explores whether self-development can be subject to conscience, as each decision not only influences the individual's self-development but also contributes to shaping their overall persona. Hence, the principal objective of this study is to investigate the psychological impact on individuals when they perceive self-development as a moral duty to oneself. This is an initial and general idea of the area of research. It needed to be narrowed to allow making precise research goals that can be subjected to research procedures of psychology. For the sake of this study, the phenomenon in question is named Conscience of Becoming the Self. While no precisely similar phenomenon has been empirically researched in the existing literature, there are theoretical issues that can be associated with it.

Existential philosophy delves into the experience of one's existence, where individuals are acutely conscious of their current state, perpetually comparing it to an internally desired way of being (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). This state is often identified as authenticity or the true self. However, the journey to attain authenticity is fraught with the experience of negative emotions, including anxiety, depression, despair, or loneliness (Nietzsche, 1873-1876/2003b; Tillich, 1952). Several reasons contribute to the association of these specific emotional states with exploring one's being. Firstly, recognizing what the true being represents for an individual is inherently challenging. Secondly, pursuing authenticity is difficult and comes hand in hand with negative emotions. Thirdly, actively avoiding the call of one's inner self also results in negative emotions (Heidegger, 2010). Nonetheless, a genuinely authentic existence should ultimately lead to self-fulfillment and happiness (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b; Tillich, 1952). The existential interpretation of the human condition notably highlights the burden of choice and the responsibility accompanying it (Sartre, 2001a).

The ideas of viewing an individual holistically and acknowledging the subjectivity of experience are central themes in existential psychology, as expounded by figures like Rollo May (May, 1981, 1993, 1995), Victor Frankl (Frankl, 2009, 2010, 2012), and Irwin Yalom (Yalom, 2008, 2023). Concurrently, humanistic psychology places significant emphasis on self-development, advocating for the realization of one's potential within a supportive environment, as well as the pursuit of authenticity through spontaneous behavior (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 2014). The concepts of responsibility, the existential burden of existence, and the journey of self-progress appear to intricately interweave within the realms of humanistic and existential psychology. These interconnected themes find a resonant expression in Erich Fromm's (Fromm, 1996) concept of the humanistic conscience—a guiding internal voice that speaks to the completeness of self-development.

This leads to virtue-based ethics, where resolving the question of who I should become, and the proper conduct of the answer is an ethical duty (Żylicz, 2010). The exemplification of such an approach is personalism, where creating self through one's development and within relations with others is an ethical issue (Mounier, 1960).

Positive psychology takes issues discussed on humanistic psychology grounds and tries to measure them in a statistically conclusive way (Trzebińska, 2012). Therefore, the connection between behavior and experience of happiness is more apparent in this approach.

The concept of Conscience of Becoming the Self is rooted in the theoretical issues outlined above. Existential reflection underscores the intensity of self-experience, accentuated by the weight of responsibility for one's choices, serving as the foundation for 'conscience-like' experiences within Conscience of Becoming the Self.

Simultaneously, the humanistic approach posits self-realization and authenticity as focal points within the questioned conscience.

The main objective of this study is to delve into the individual experience of the Conscience of Becoming the Self. To achieve this, a qualitative approach was employed, utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the method of data analysis. The study involved 61 participants from Poland and 11 from other countries, all of whom participated through written interviews distributed via social media.

This thesis will outline the approach taken to achieve the primary goal of this study, organized into three main chapters. The first chapter introduces the theoretical foundations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self. The second chapter outlines the chosen methodological strategy to address the key questions of this study. The final chapter serves as a conclusion, presenting results and discussions.

Chapter I Theoretical background

Where do conscience and self-progress lie in the intellectual space of definitions and terms? The content and understanding of the two are not convergent. Simplifying, conscience is the subject of ethics, while self-progress is the subject of psychology. However, the conceptual areas of the discussed terms are broad. The primary assumption of this thesis is that there is a connection between ethics and self-progress. The relationship between conscience and self-progress, on both the theoretical and empirical sides, is valid and reliable enough to create a new realm of interpretation and research. Although conscience and self-progress have their definitions, there are underlying fundamental processes that guide and establish these concepts.

The structure of theoretical reflection is as follows. *Gaining self-awareness of oneself and own potentialities* starts with conceptualizing being, thus describing how it can be experienced, expressed, or defined. Therefore, it is shown how *being* is related to awareness, freedom of choice, and responsibility. This section draws a strong influence from existential philosophy, followed by a presentation of reflection through a psychological lens. Subsequently, the significance of meaning, discovering, and developing own potentialities is presented. Throughout the whole review, individual perspectives and social contexts are considered. Subchapter *Gaining self-awareness of oneself and own potentialities* leads to the conclusion that the process of becoming the self is a personal obligation, described on the background of philosophy and operationalized in psychological research.

Subchapter *Transgression from Awareness to Commitment to Oneself*, describes the conceptual area of conscience on a philosophical background and psychological research, leading to the final topic of this research, the Conscience of Becoming the Self.

This way, the Conscience of Becoming the Self is contrasted with a standard understating of the term conscience.

The theoretical introduction draws upon philosophical sources and incorporates references to psychology. The philosophical approach to phenomena such as being, becoming, conscience, and awareness has been a significant source of inspiration for this research. As a result, the theoretical part of this work can be considered interdisciplinary.

Gaining self-awareness of the own self and own potentialities.

Human biological functioning is extended into an individual's psychological sphere of functioning. The psychological construction of a person can be identified based on behavior. One of the subjects of psychology is examining and researching those behaviors to make theories and concepts about people's psychological functioning. However, before this search, there was a philosophical reflection on the qualities of human nature.

Questioning oneself is one of the significant features that differentiate humans from animals. This type of question might be a primary fuel for human science. The perception of time for people is extended from constant present to historical past and potential future. This is the time perspective a person finds himself in. How a person refers to the creations of civilization, both physical and intellectual, is another necessity. People also find themselves in relations with other people and groups of people. Lastly, people are also considered a physical part of the world or nature. Therefore, a person is formed within all spheres (mentioned above) and takes a stand.

In the experience of others, a person can initially be identified as an object, precisely as a body that can be seen (Ricoeur, 2018). Later on, with better acquaintance, some psychological qualities are added to an initial physical representation of the person. However, the question is what constitutes the person. What indicators do people use to

recognize other people as already known? What qualities does perception of self have to give a person an integrated and unified identity?

In this context, understanding the term "being" is significant for this paper. It is widely explored in the background of existential philosophy. Therefore, I will try to outline the most essential and adequate for the subject of this study, area of consideration.

Being is self-given and belongs to a person (Heidegger, 2010). As such cannot be taken away as existence is a reflection of being (Sartre, 2001b). It is thrown into the world and exists within three quality levels. First, through a material, physical world of nature and objects (*umwelt*); second, through a world of relationship networks (*mitwelt*); third, through own body and any inner experiences of a person (*eigenwelt*) (Binswanger, 1963). Being is a possibility, changeable identity (Galarowicz, 2014), and complete synthesis (Toeplitz, 1980) that manifests itself through actions (Crosby, 1996; Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). Through experiences, a person discovers what elements of being are essential (Ingarden, 1987). The essence, the authentic being, is searched by a person through their being in life (Heidegger, 2010; Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). Being perceives oneself and can contemplate the actual state of own being, therefore should be able to recognize that true being. What does the true essence of a person want? That authentic being demands from existence (Jaspers, 2004), creating a self accordingly to an individual plan, adequate to the true essence of a person (Szyszkowska, 1998). However, this calling is not always heard or understood. Therefore, experience and perception of being can differ.

Despair (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008), anxiety, and loneliness (Sartre, 2001a; Szyszkowska, 1998; Tillich, 1952), depression (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b) are negative emotions accompanying fulfilling being. Despair is a complex reaction to an issue of pursuing the true being. At first, the despair is treated as a gift of awareness (Kierkegaard,

1849/2008). It is the sign that a person realizes own being and is aware of the difference between the actual being and the being that should have been. Such a gift – a state of awareness - allows one to follow the path that will lead to despair. A person can try to avoid this inner calling, reject pursuing an authentic being, or vice versa, can take a challenge and try to achieve a true being. Any of these decisions will lead to negative experiences. The despair of rejecting the true self and anxiety of leading an unpurposeful life (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008; Tillich, 1952). Following calling brings the despair of being lonely, alienated in society, and anxiety about breaking through own barriers instead of fitting in (Kierkegaard, 2008; Szyszkowska, 1998). The person must also face that decision-making leads to losing some possibilities of a person's nature (Heidegger, 2010). Fighting for own self is a curse and a gift simultaneously (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). The person should aim to live according to own nature and make subsequent spontaneous, meaningful decisions (Tillich, 1952). The peace of self-affirmation must be genuine (Tillich, 1952), as subordination and conformity may also bring a feeling of safety and balance (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008).

A human individual's life force is embodied in the will to power. The position taken in the context of own being might take a turn of strength, resistance, courage (Tillich, 1952), or concentrated will to pursue and act (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b). Purposeful, striving, conquering orientation gives emotions of pleasure or pain depending on how a person fulfills own being (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b). Achieving individual goals of progress gives pleasure, while otherwise, unpleasant feeling. However, struggling and facing new challenges might also be associated with unpleasant feelings, which fuels the will to power (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b). The courage to take a challenge of aware being is a necessity (Tillich, 1952).

Therefore, through existential philosophy, the concept of true being costs a person the neurotic emotion of despair, anxiety, loneliness, and alienation and is achieved through the firm, oriented, and courageous will to pursue.

Actions fulfill two functions in the context of being. On the one hand, actions are means of expression for being. On the other, own behavior can also be an identifier of the quality of own being. As ideal states, the behavior should be consistent with true being and lead to it. However, a person might mislead his or her behavior to not engage in significant acts. It is the case of a sort of fragmentation. When engagement in pointless duties of everyday life takes space for aware reflection about self and meaningful actions (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). It can also take the form of entanglement in commonness. In social relations, it is revealed through pointless conversations, where a choice of words misleads the truth, and through dishonest relationships with others, curiosity that focuses on sensations of life also misleads a person from true self-being reflection (Szyszkowska, 1998). Therefore, it is challenging to learn what a true being is and follow its calling. However, learning own self, honest personal needs, and listening to the inner voice of conscience is the way not to get lost in a crowd of social networks and complex terms of science (Nietzsche, 1873-1876/2003a).

Being cannot be described without a concept of will, freedom, and freedom of choice, which act as a background for decision-making in the context of being. Initially, freedom might be considered from a physical perspective as being limited by no physical obstacles, which is significant for intellectual and moral freedom (Schopenhauer, 2016). A person's external circumstances do matter, as it was also already mentioned. A person is permanently submerged in a sort of influence (e.g., social, environmental, intellectual). Therefore, comes the question of how much a person's will can express itself through actions and to what extent freedom of choice exists. Those concepts are significant

categories considered while reflecting on human existence beyond its biological functioning and contrasted with determination (Liberkowski, 2007). In existential interpretation, choice and responsibility for them lay entirely on the person's side (Sartre, 2001a). Therefore, again, emotional states accompanying the process of being have their foundation in the perception of free will. Pursuing self is a gift and curse simultaneously, and freedom is a gift and sentence for a person (Sartre, 2001a). Free will and creating being do cooperate in the perception of human existence. One would not be possible with another.

The discussed issues float on the edge of philosophy and psychology. Many concepts presented earlier might repeat themselves on psychological backgrounds. The acknowledgment of existential dilemmas that people have to face when engaging in their being (May, 1989) or ambiguous state of will (Frankl, 2010; Fromm, 1998; Obuchowski, 1993) are rediscussed in the psychological field. However, the accent is shifted more on the positive side. Experience of will by people, rather than its source, is what interests psychology. From the previous analysis, pursuing an individual self-program is difficult from two perspectives. First, a quality of awareness about one's own being is needed to set the right path for behavior. However, gaining this specific knowledge is quite a tricky, existential task. Secondly, engaging in meaningful acts costs experiencing negative emotional states. With such emotional baggage, and high, overwhelming responsibility, the perspective of being self might be a source of fear (May, 1995). As Kierkegaard claims, despair is experienced whether a person tries to pursue a true being or not (Kierkegaard, 2008). Then maybe it is better not to achieve awareness of being and intentionally or unintentionally escape the difficulties of freedom.

One way of escape is conformism – a complete adaptation of norms and cultural patterns to own personality so that an individual essence is dominated completely

(Fromm, 1998). As a result, anxiety and alienation are under control at the cost of own individuality (Fromm, 1998). More subtly, being might be less genuine when shifted to "having" (Fromm, 1999). It can be seen in language first, when instead of giving a self-description of "what I am," people describe "what they have." It is an interesting issue but challenging to explain. Being driven by the need for possession, desire, and attachment is not genuinely free (Fromm, 2020). In a consumption society, building an identity on products is an issue (Bauman, 1996). However, the modus of "having" is a broader concept. The motivation in modus of "having" results in focusing awareness on achieving and consuming material and intellectual possessions. However, even if a person might gain knowledge, it is not accompanied by reflection. Life experiences and gained knowledge should be absorbed, leading to higher awareness. This is not the case in modus "having." Furthermore, the modus of "having" represents a strong attachment to self, which, on the one hand, restricts openness to the genuine synthesis of intellectual information and social response. Therefore, a person does not have the Socratic courage to challenge own beliefs, knowledge, or even self-image (Kozielecki, 1996). On the other, strong self-attachment enables person to commit to significant social relations such as friendship, parenthood, and love (Fromm, 1999, 2020). It is a crucial limitation as being can be redefined and transformed in genuine relations, as Heidegger experienced it in his relationship with Hannah Ardent (Galarowicz, 2014). Modus "being" is the opposite of modus "having, and is the right way to achieve a genuinely satisfactory being (Fromm, 1999).

In psychological terms, disturbance in being, blocked possibility to be the self, and inability to manifest own will might cause depression (Nietzsche, 1901/2003b) or result in neuroticism as the last attempt to save self (May, 1993; Obuchowski, 1993).

Taking all into account, being, freedom, and will are associated with the heavy burden of existence. The external effect of spheres a person is submerged in (e.g., social, intellectual) seems somewhat limiting and unsupportive for individual development.

However, freedom can also have a positive understanding as freedom allows a being to manifest itself and its will through spontaneous acts (Fromm, 1998). It creates an environment where own being can intentionally transgress into actions that exceed material, social, cognitive, and symbolic boundaries (Kozielecki, 1997).

The society and environment people live in could be supportive if adequately educated about psychology and understanding of own emotions (Fromm, 2020). The freedom of an individual is associated with the freedom of others. They do coexist and form each other (Obuchowski, 1993). The idea is to create a society where individual goals and the common good cooperate harmoniously (Fromm, 2008).

Indirectly, it was already mentioned how being is searching for purpose. The purpose of own being and the purpose of own life both fulfill each other and seem to lead to the same – a sense of accomplishment and meaning. Intentionality and will structure experiences and give meaning to people's acts (Kozielecki, 1997; May, 1993). At some point of awareness, a person is able to choose the goal and recognize the motivations behind own behaviors (Obuchowski, 1983). The decisions are bringing to life initially, mental concepts. It is a subject of logotherapy to help people find their meaning in life, as lack of it might be a source of existential frustration that leads to noogenic neurosis or psychiatric distress (Frankl, 2010). Therefore, such therapy makes people capable of finding meaning in their actions and, consequently, in life (Frankl, 2009).

Meaning in life can be distinguished based on objective and subjective criteria. The first refers to the quality of subjects a person engages in with his or her behavior. Those subjects should be worthy of engagement and love, e.g., raising children is

perceived objectively as a descend goal (Wolf, 2018). Setting goals beyond own being (Fromm, 2008), transcending own self in selfless actions (Frankl, 2010), and love affirmation (Heidegger, 2010) are examples of goals, meaningful from an objective point of view.

The second focuses on a person's subjective experiences when engaging in some activities. Then, activities that a person is intensely involved in and that are a source of positive emotions of satisfaction are meaningful from a subjective point of view, e.g., passion for the sport (Wolf, 2018). Hence, creative work and passions (Frankl, 2010) are subjectively meaningful, as those activities are significant from an individual perspective.

Most sensible would be when both criteria are met in a goal (Wolf, 2018). Possible areas that fulfill both these criteria are engaging own cognitive and emotional potential in activities that are aimed at: expanding knowledge and search for truth (cognitive orientation), self-expression through any art (expressive orientation), creation of new concepts concerning general functioning of society, e.g., ideologies, political systems (political orientation), lastly, taking care of others (caring orientation) (Kozielecki, 1996).

It is not a goal of this thesis to discuss if there are criteria that allow us to assess what acts or subjects are enough to be called meaningful. Here, it is assumed that a person who tries to pursue an authentic being can engage in a meaningful behavior process, even if a single action might not be perceived as purposeful for others. The most important is a person's awareness, assessment, and emotional intuition of meaning. Unmeaningful from an objective point of view behaviors might be significant for self-regulation, e.g., proper rest, which is essential for the long run. Alternatively, meaning might not be understood yet by the majority of society or authorities. Therefore, it is assumed that fulfilling a unique individual calling is a mission to accomplish (Frankl, 2009), a significant goal of the process of becoming the self. However, to reach it does not necessarily mean to be

egocentrically focused on self-development, as being is created best when not anchored to own self. Furthermore, this process can be occupied with struggle and unpleasant emotions, but searching for existential goals motivates people, not simply wanting pleasant emotions and avoiding unpleasant ones (Frankl, 2009).

At this point role of suffering and will do come as subjects to reevaluate. Earlier in this paper, the discussion considers existential struggles within areas of influence (e.g., society) in everyday situations where freedom of choice is respected. Unpleasant emotions and experiences are treated as the cost or burden of existential struggles that coexist with being. What can happen when physical freedom and freedom of choice are limited entirely? What is the status of suffering and unpleasant feelings in the process of being? The situation of being completely oppressed underlines the significance of meaning and will in life — as the creation of being is a constant process that happens under any given circumstances. It also helps better understand the role that suffering plays in a person's being. Based on logotherapy, suffering is treated as an inevitable part of human existence, simultaneously as another significant sphere where a person can find meaning (Frankl, 1984, 2010). Experience of suffering may be an impulse to reevaluate own being or a trigger for human creativity (Kozielecki, 1996). Therefore, that existential burden that is part of everyday being is accepted as natural. The suffering resulting from an unusual chain of events, where a person experiences negative emotions beyond normal functioning, can be seen as meaningful. How a person handles suffering on behavioral and conceptual levels makes a difference in creating a being.

The reflection of former extermination camp prisoners gives spectacular insight into these subjects. The psychological condition of prisoners was a result of conscious decisions. Directing oneself to a chosen meaningful goal was the only way to survive (Frankl, 2009). The being could be secure in the enriching inner world of imagination,

reflection, and memories of the past (Frankl, 2009; May, 1981). Therefore, the catastrophic circumstances of abuse in death camps would not reach the true essence of a person since this essence was submerged in the inner being and transgressed into meaningful goals.

Throughout the discussion, I focused more on being as a process experienced by a person and is the subject of self-assessment. Less attention was put on a description of a person as a subject. However, at the beginning of this chapter there was a question of identity and qualities essential for recognizing one person by others and by oneself. Therefore, I want to get back to these issues.

Personal nature, defined through stable qualifiers that capture whole personhood (Ingarden, 1987), or character, defined as a group of personal dispositions that help to distinguish and identify a person (Ricoeur, 2018), are just examples of answers to given questions. The unique configuration of relatively stable dispositions, unifying aspirations (Allport, 1988), patterns in behavior in changeable, dynamic inner structure, lastly, awareness of a latter (Allport, 1961; Pervin & Cervone, 2012), are aspects that are repeated in the context of the description of human nature. Those conceptualizations are operationalized in psychology with the concepts of personality (wider perspective) and identity (self-qualities that are recognized by a person as crucial). Regardless of the theory that defines them, they can be used to describe the person. Personality as a concept allows one to objectively measure aspects such as relatively stable dispositions, specific patterns of adaptations, and a framework of personal meaning. At the same time, identity features a subjective understanding of what is the essence of the self (Batory et al., 2016). Identity, whether discovered or formed, is a task a person is born with (Bauman, 2007). This implies that identity cannot be formed automatically nor as a result of genetic

program of development; rather, individuals must actively engage in the deliberate process of determining their own sense of identity.

The person builds up self-knowledge through specific mental processes: the aspect of psychological perception concerning knowledge about inner functioning (Pacholik-Żuromska, 2011). It might be associated with what Carol Rogers calls a phenomenological field of experience, a subjective sphere of a person's widely understood inner processes and subjective perspective (Pervin & Cervone, 2012). Those processes serve two purposes: allowing the personal experience of being and considering oneself. Self is the aspect of phenomenological experiences that captures an integrated insights framework. It is relatively stable and under constant change simultaneously (Pervin & Cervone, 2012). There are two aspects of self, what a person expect from himself or herself as an ideal outcome (ideal self) and what is the actual, exhibited self (real self) (Pervin & Cervone, 2012). Then, self-regulation (Baumeister & D.Vohs, 2004) is a process that serves controlling functions over the process present in the phenomenological field, for example promoting actualization of the self or helping to a achieve the ideal self.

In humanistic psychology, the issue of becoming the self and creating a being is reflected in the concept of self-actualization (Maslow, 1954, 2014), or actualization of the self (inner potential), (Maslow, 1954, 2014; Rogers, 1980). Self-actualization is the need and embodiment of the tendency that functions as an essential human goal, value, and duty, as self-actualization in this approach is set as the primary fuel for people (Pervin & Cervone, 2012). As the highest need in the hierarchy of needs, it is aimed at personal self-growth, fulfillment, and maximization of self-potential (Maslow, 1954), or (Maslow, 1954, 2014; Rogers, 1980). Through motivation of growth, an authentic, spontaneous, and creative being can be achieved (Maslow, 2014).

In the humanistic approach, self-affirmation and living according to own nature is considered a realistic, approachable opportunity and at the same time as a pattern of human development. According to psychology – not only existential philosophy – to reach ideal self is almost impossible for human development considered from existential (but not positive) perspective follows the metaphor of the distant horizon. Nevertheless, people who can be described as self-actualizing ones express specific types of behaviors: they express authentic, integrated being, capable of empathy, honesty, and accurate perception of social reality, making them feel an inner bond with other people and creating in-depth relationships (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1980). They have a specific perception that allows easy detection of ambiguities in any intellectual domain, and the gift of a fresh perspective on reality (Maslow, 1954). Self-acceptance of one's whole nature (positive and negative), autonomy, and humor help self-actualized people to achieve a healthy distance from oneself and resistance to social and cultural impact (Maslow, 1954). Therefore, their behavior is consistent, spontaneous, and creative in their daily duties (Maslow, 1954), their self-concepts are flexible and inspired by current experience and they can be described as spontaneous and authentic (Rogers, 1980).

This reflection leads to the primary goal of humanistic psychology, which is answering the question of what a good life is and how to achieve it. Positive psychology is founded on almost the same assumptions; however, while humanistic psychology takes a rather phenomenological, qualitative approach that focuses on an individual's experiences, positive psychology looks for quantitative measures (Trzebińska, 2012).

Therefore, functioning of self-actualizing people on the grounds of humanistic psychology can be contrasted with Carol Ryff's concept of psychological well-being. This multidimensional phenomenon verifies aspects of functioning that build up an overall sense of fulfillment (Ryff, 2018). Six elements constitute this phenomenon: autonomy,

environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 2014).

While going through life, a person may have a sense of main purpose, to which she or he adjusts behavior – purpose in life, or there might be a lack of such a purpose. A person's decisions may be self-guided and independent – autonomy – or made according to other people's expectations. Environmental mastery and positive relations with others concern attitude toward external context. A person can feel competent to manage and effectively use resources of the environment (environmental mastery) and create satisfactory, beneficial relations with others (positive relations with others). In contrast, a person may feel lost in the environment. Therefore, everyday duties or improvement of current situations may feel impossible. Creating meaningful relations might seem too difficult task, and thus person gets isolated and frustrated. A sense of fulfilling own potentialities and having constant, adequate self-growth (personal growth) may be present in a person's life. Otherwise, the person experiences a feeling of stagnation in personal self-realization. Finally, self-assessment may have a positive result, giving a person satisfaction (self-acceptance) or otherwise (Ryff, 2014).

The matters of good life can be also associated with existential dimension of life. Therefore, existential struggles for true, authentic being are embodied with a multicomponent operationalization of authenticity. This questionnaire touches on aspects of authenticity such as awareness of own being (knowledge, feelings, motivations), level of unbiased processing of self-knowledge, cohesion in own behavior (whether consistent with own values and resistant to external impact or otherwise), and orientation in relations (honesty and openness to perform authentic self in relations) (Kernis & Goldman, 2006).

To summarize, the experience of being and self-realization do coexist within intellectual discussion. Their meaning and importance are bonded with the experience of

the good life. Therefore, the question arises as to how self-realization is connected to these issues.

At first, I want to clarify what picture of being I gained throughout this whole reflection. To simplify, I understand being in four significant ways. First, as a subject, it is a noun of human existence that can be described and defined, giving a picture of a person. Therefore, when the person gives a self-description, he or she refers to being as a noun. Secondly, being is a process, an adjective, the way a person experiences life as the person he or she is. Thirdly, being is an attitude a person takes to own being as a noun and adjective. Finally, being expresses itself through actions.

Some psychological variables and theories can be seen as descriptive or explanatory when it comes to the concept of being. This is my understanding of the intersection between philosophy and psychology in this context. Refocusing on the question of being and self-realization, I propose a shift towards a more psychological perspective. What is the role of self-actualization within the personal framework of meaning? If a fulfilled existence is connected to leading a good life, can the pursuit of self-growth or self-actualization be considered an obligation towards oneself?

Transgression from awareness to commitment to oneself

The question of conscience

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the conscience as "the part of you that judges how moral your actions are and makes you feel guilty about bad things that you have done or things you feel responsible for" (*Conscience*, n.d.). Dwelling on this short definition will reveal the interpretation area needed for this paper.

Firstly, in this chapter, the *act* is extended with omission. An omission is an act of neglecting or failing to do something necessary (e.g., not helping victims of a car crash that we cause). The actions and omissions are subjects of conscience. However, to be

considered moral, they must meet some criteria (Keen, 2015). The act must be initiated by a person and impact the external environment and inner psychological condition of the person (Trzópek, 2009). The type of motivation and level of awareness of possible consequences are significant determinants, alongside the freedom of choice a person had at the moment of the act (Ricken, 2001). Those are initial conditions considered while assessing an act in moral terms. The other question is how conscience might be experienced.

Kant gives feelings of obligation and duty prior role and makes them both as only reasonable causes of morality (Kant, 1785/2002). The conscience then is the tool of a reason. In contrast Schopenhauer claims that a strong need to avoid hurting others is an essential motivation for ethics, as others are treated as part of my own self (Schopenhauer, 1840/2019). With such an attitude, morality is emotional and passion-driven, as Hume claims in his works (Hume, 1748/2001). It is consistent with naturalism, the approach that explanations for philosophical issues search in the natural properties of the issue (Tulibacki, 1998). Emotions such as guilt, regret, relief, remorse, satisfaction, or joy can be considered self-evaluative sentiments (Vujošević, 2014). Thus, the emotional state has an informative function, simply making a person feel bad or good, depending on the evaluation of their actions in moral terms. Therefore, is morality a function of emotions and passions? Do people behave morally to feel good about themselves or to fulfill laws that are essential for the functioning of society?

Considering, reflections from previous subchapter, it is essential, now to find thread that connects self-realization and conscience. Spinoza, in his ethics, underlines the importance of flourishing an individual potential in harmony with nature as a path to well-being (Spinoza, 1677/2006). Therefore, being ethical is consistent with maximizing own potentials. Similarly, in personalism, an ethical approach, an individual is put in the

center of reflection (Burgos, 2010). However, it differs from individualism by the underlying value of coexistence, importance of self-creation through communication with others, as this creates a new reality of being (Mounier, 1960). The person is a unity, capable of self-awareness; self-identifies its being within its being and beings of others and, through action, achieves dynamic self-perfection (Gacka, 1996). The emphasis on social aspects of self-fulfillment in this context can be likened to Spinoza's idea of realizing one's own potential in harmony with nature. However, in this case, nature is confined to social relationships. In summary, it is an ethical objective to fulfill one's own potential in relation to others.

On the grounds of neuroscience, morality is a product of brain functioning and hormonally induced attachment and empathy transferred into social relations (Churchland, 2011). Apart from the emotional aspect, unique human decision-making is involved in the process of conscience (Gazzaniga, 2008). Therefore, the intellectual capability for reasoning and concluding is considered essential. It allows a person to verify consistency between actions and moral values.

Therefore, ethical behaviors have a sort of hedonistic motivation (avoiding negative emotions and striving for positive ones in the context of moral decisions) and motivation of obligation (respect for higher values essential for the proper functioning of society). Thus, conscience has both cognitive and emotional sides. However, it is not this paper's role to prioritize each of these elements. The question is whether psychology concerns conscience in a way to relate it with being and self-realization.

Conscience, by Allport, was treated as a key tool in creating a person, as it harmonizes impulses to achieve future goals consistent with self-concept (Buksik, 2003). Existential and humanistic psychology discuss and connects qualities of human nature to strive for self-growth with the burden of responsibility for own decisions. Existential guilt

is the reaction to the situation a person is in, because of awareness of freedom and responsibility for own choices (May, 1995). A healthy individual with satisfied basic needs begins to function at a higher level. They become more self-aware, recognize their potential (Rogers, 2014), and strive for self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). However, they are confronted with the impossibility of fully realizing their potential (Boss, za: Oleś, 2011), due to inevitable mistakes and the fact that choosing one path closes off other possibilities. Each choice presents opportunities in one direction while limiting them in others. Consequently, individuals find themselves immersed in an awareness of their potentialities for which they bear responsibility. This is the notion of virtue-based ethics, where who a person becomes and what qualities the person develops is a moral issue (Żylicz, 2010).

Those considerations are best reflected in Fromm's humanistic conscience. The subject of this conscience is the subjectively perceived adequacy of own development. It is an inner voice that verifies the functioning of a person as a whole and implements adequate generalized reactions of a personality (e.g., feelings and thoughts) (Fromm, 1996). When development internally is assessed as a right or wrong, internal feeling of approval or disproval is the reaction of the humanistic conscience (Fromm, 1996).

Conscience of Becoming the Self

A healthy person is aware of personal potential (Rogers, 1980), tends to actualization of the self (Maslow, 2014), and is able to evaluate its effects. Taking all this together, there can be this kind of 'humanistic' conscience that deals with the process of becoming a person (Fromm, 1998) or has much to do with existential guilt (Boss, za: Oleś, 2011). The question is in what form a psychologically grounded conscience that concerns the level of self-growth and adequacy of development exists. Subsequently, what are the manifestations of this phenomenon? How do people experience this kind of

conscience in their life? Therefore, in my master's thesis, I conducted preliminary research on this subject (Dubas, 2016). A qualitative approach was chosen to extract manifestations of the phenomenon from people's individual experiences. 30 Polish participants took part in the interview. Based on this qualitative material, the definition and manifestations of this phenomenon were formed The concept of self-actualization strongly inspired this study; therefore, initially, searched phenomenon was named *conscience of self-actualization[1]*. However, data analysis revealed a broader spectrum of functioning and more complex relations that the conscience would consider. Therefore, *self-actualization* might limit understanding of the concept, as the sphere concerned by it touches the whole functioning of being. For this reason, the final name is the *conscience of becoming the self*, defined below.

> **Conscience of becoming the self** (COBS) recognizes the experience of an ongoing process of shaping/developing personality as moral/existential duty towards the self. Therefore, through self-observation and self-monitoring, the person controls the degree of adequacy between how and what has been pursued and what is sensed (intuitively and reasonably) as the optimal realization of individual potential in respect to personal values and adjustable to external circumstances person's lives and emerged in life span.

In the definition of Conscience of Becoming the Self, reference to values is underlined. A person should not only maximize potential but also be able to find higher meaning and adjust their behavior to it (Opoczyńska, 2002). The higher meaning is not necessarily, associated with God or any spiritual matter. In this context, it is the ability to

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[1] All names related to the Conscience of Becoming the Self or the categories identified through data analysis are italicized to enhance readability.

recognize significant values and follow them in the process of becoming (Frankl, 2009). Values are not only guidelines in this process (Popielski & Mamcarz, 2015); values are what a person needs for self-growth and healthy development (Popielski, 2008). Reflection on the hierarchy of values might not be a common and aware practice. However, this intellectual dimension of human existence seems necessary for self-actualization (Oleś & Bartnicka-Michalska, 2022).

Coming back to the result, of primarily research, the categories captured based on qualitative analysis were divergent; however, in further investigation, two significant dimensions were included in the conscience of becoming the self: behavioral and inner (Dubas, 2016). Both dimensions have their positive and negative form. The whole structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self is presented in Table 1.

As the name suggests, the behavioral dimension is how Conscience of Becoming the Self manifests itself through actions. Those actions vary from progressive to non-progressive in the context of the productivity of own behavior in creating a being. Each category refers to a specific aspect of development, such as the level of engagement and effort put into development, attitude towards external circumstances, the tendency to create and pursue goals, and how a person evaluates their being. Subsequently, *progressive* behavior describes a person who puts much effort and engagement in their own development (*dynamics*) when difficult, inconvenient circumstances appear, takes the approach of overcoming challenges, and taking advantage of opportunities (*supple adaptation*); their own behaviors try to form into plans and goals to achieve (*sensible adaptation*) and finally, when evaluating own being, concludes it as an overly optimistic result (*positive self-being evaluation*). The *non-progressive* behavior is just the opposite and, in detail, is described through categories like *stagnation* (low engagement and effort, motivation)*, passive adaptation* (struggling with difficulties,

being easily driven by circumstances, conformism)*, non-purposive*

activity (inconsequence in goals achieving, reckless choices, making no plans)*, negative*

self-being evaluation (low feeling of self-accomplishment, unsatisfactory life spheres).

Table 1

Structure of Conscience of becoming the self based on preliminary studies (Dubas, 2016).

Dimension	Positive	Negative
	Progressive	*Non-progressive*
	dynamics	Stagnation
Behavioral	supple adaptation	passive adaptation
	sensible adaptation	non-purposive activity
	positive self-being evaluation	negative self-being evaluation
	Motivational force	*Remorse*
	Cognitive	cognitive
Inner	psychological	psychological
	emotional	Emotional
		somatic

The inner dimension is most similar to the experience of conscience. It is the reaction to own quality of development that happens on three levels of experience: *cognitive*, *psychological, and emotional.* All these experiences have a positive function of motivation, which is why they are called *a motivational force,* and negative, experienced as *remorse.* In *motivational force,* Conscience of Becoming the Self manifests through productive analysis of own behavior to plan own development and to not make mistakes in the future *(cognitive),* intuition, sort of feeling of need to make one decision over another in order to achieve fulfillment *(psychological)*, positive, rewarding emotions when remembering the success of own development *(emotional).*

Remorse is the opposite. *Cognitive* manifestations are thoughts and analyses that become overwhelming and may even take the form of self-blame. *Psychological* manifestations are experienced as feelings of unsure, frustration, and discomfort in the context of reflection about self-growth. Subsequently, the emotions experienced are

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negative, mostly anger, sadness, and fear *(emotional)*. Lastly*, somatic* manifestations are present only in the remorse dimension of Conscience of Becoming the Self. That is physical experiences of pain in the chest or stomach or difficulty in breathing when thinking about lost chances or when self-growth is assed as not sufficient (Dubas, 2016).

However, what are the consequences of not following the path that Rogers, Maslow, or Frankl outlined? While being aware of one's potential and understanding what is important and valuable is one thing, actively engaging in behavior aimed to proceed rightful path of development is another. Existential guilt, described in previous chapters, might be a reaction to decisions that do not fit an inner sense of development (May, 1989). Psychologically, meta-pathologies such as depression and neurosis might result from not following the rightful path (Maslow, 2006; Oleś, 2011). The essential notion is to be in contact with oneself and stay consistent with it (Oleś, 2016).

Conscience of Becoming the Self can be seen as a psychological tool that guides the process of personal growth, optimizing the fulfillment of one's potential and aligning it with a sense of inner meaning. Following this path designed by the Conscience of Becoming the Self should lead to a sense of fulfillment and happiness in life.

Chapter II Qualitative study: A deeper exploration of the Conscience of Becoming the Self

The theoretical approach of humanistic and existential psychology focuses on the phenomenological experience of an individual. Therefore, to fulfill the aim of this study, recognition of the personal framework of meanings and understandings was needed. This would allow extracting experience of Conscience of Becoming the Self in people's lives. Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen, as its methodology is designed to describe and understand an individual's subjective perspective (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2011), allowing exploration of new areas of research, while on the contrary, the nomothetic approach aims for an explanation of already known problems and phenomenon with use of psychometric or statistical analysis (Straś-Romanowska, 2008).

The significant shift from generalization to individualization is embodied in hermeneutics, which can be explained as the art of understanding (Trzópek, 2006). Intentionality and reflection, those aspects of human nature, are essential for hermeneutic search for meanings (Dilthey, 1987). People's narrations in spoken word and written documents are materials, sources where meanings can be found (Ricoeur, 2003). The interview is a tool that extracts content searched in a qualitative paradigm. The respondent is the creator and author of the narration; however, the questions prepared by the researcher guide this narration in a certain direction. Therefore, provoked by the questions, the participant simultaneously discovers areas of their own functioning in question and constructs meanings and senses interconnected with those areas. In this way, the interview's final narration result is in some way constructed by the researcher and participant (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2008). In traditional interviews (semi-structured, open-structured), where the participant and researcher are in direct contact, the influence that the researcher may make is even more visible (Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2011). The

significant assumption in qualitative studies is the belief that the participants can express truth about themselves (Dębska, 2004).

However, a person is never an isolated entity, as humans are inherently social beings. Consequently, individuals construct their own beings within a broader social, cultural, and historical context (Żurko, 2008). This perspective of social constructionism generally views phenomena as being shaped by their social and historical contexts, in contrast to positivist assertions, where phenomena are considered objective, independent, and subject to mathematical estimation (Straś-Romanowska, 2004). This is why the nationality of the respondents is considered in this study.

While gathering candidates for the study, one premise was crucial: searching for a wide variety of experiences obtained from diverse individuals capable of deep reflection about self-development in lifespan. Therefore, the minimum age to be considered in the study was 18. Secondly, the interview quality had to be sufficient to conduct the phenomenological analysis procedure. In the context of this study, "sufficient" means that the answers to the open questions from the interview should be expanded beyond one-word answers. The major clue was the integrity of the interviews, enough to allow the creation of reasonable themes.

Expending concept: Research problem and questions

Considering the broad understating of being based on theory and initial results about the conscience of becoming the self, the following problem appears. What range of experience may Conscience of Becoming the Self have if verified in a larger population group? Can nationality affect the way Conscience of Becoming the Self is experienced? It is a significant question as the theory and concepts Conscience of Becoming the Self is inspired by are entirely rooted in Western philosophy and culture.

Therefore, the first aim of this research is:

Exploration of how the conscience of becoming the self is experienced in individual perception of people from different countries.

Subsequently, the research questions are:

1. What are the manifestations of Conscience of Becoming the Self?

2. Will manifestations of Conscience of Becoming the Self extracted from preliminary research reappear in a broader group of participants?

3. Do manifestations of Conscience of Becoming the Self differ, depending on the cultural background of the person?

Being consistent with theoretical approach and methodology of humanistic psychology, the question of how Conscience of Becoming the Self is experienced is answered with use of qualitative methodology, to underline importance of individual experiences. Method chosen for this study is an interview with open questions. Inspecting phenomenological existence of the Conscience of Becoming the Self, is the task, therefore Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis - a method created based on existential philosophy - was chosen as the fittest for extracting manifestation of the researched phenomenon.

Methodology

Measure: Online Written Interview (OWI)

The tool of this study is a structured interview, with only open questions. In his book, Earl Babbie (Babbie, 2008) explains broad forms of conducting interviews, such as a phone interview or interview using a discs, where the participant filled in an interview in digital format. Nowadays, discs are not in use anymore. However, the possibility of interviewing in a nontraditional way is still present in form of online interviews e.g., video calls, emails, blogs (Salmons, 2012). Email Interviews are examples of technological usage in qualitative studies, were the answers have written form (Burns,

2010; Hawkins, 2018). The interview is then based on the email exchange between the participant and the researcher.

In this study, the interviews had written form but were not conducted by email. Using google docs features, the interview text had a digital form. Thus, it was possible to open it on the participant's personal computer. That is why the measure's name is an online written interview to distinguish it from an Email Interview or Online interview (where the interview is conducted using Skype or other visual tools). I decided to use this interview form as it is convenient for participants. A participant could fill in the interview at any moment, for how long he or she wanted to. The interview was easy to access. However, crucial was that reflection of the participant was not biased by the interviewer.

The interview of this study is a modified version of the interview I used for my master thesis, where research on Conscience of Becoming the Self was initialized. At first original version (see Appendix 5) was studied to extract the most helpful question but also to find aspects the original interview did not cover. Therefore, a modified interview of 10 questions has been created in parallel Polish and English versions. The Polish version has been read by three judges (native Polish speakers with higher education major in social science) to assess the understandability and clarity of the questions. In the following step pilot study with five participants was conducted, allowing further slight modifications. The author first translated an English version, then put it into verification by a native English speaker (American, with higher education) and a non-English and non-Polish user (Italian, with higher education). The help of non-English, non-Polish native speakers was essential to test the usefulness of an interview for non-English speaking groups planned to be part of the research.

The interview is designed to open and guide the respondent's reflection on self-realization and the possible appearance of Conscience of Becoming the Self

manifestations in their life. Questions revolve around the subject of how a person perceives and describes oneself, encouraging respondents to think through their path of self-realization, success, downfalls, and the biographical circumstances of this process. The critical point was to not ask directly about Conscience of Becoming the Self or its manifestations but to give respondents free space to contemplate their own process of creating self unbiasedly. A few questions initialize a more specific reference to the Conscience of Becoming the Self. Those questions draw respondents' attention to the consistency (or discrepancy) between their actions and their personality or personal values, as well as lost chances in life and experiences associated with those moments. Finally, there are direct questions about respondent's understanding of the inner standard of being, the vision of self, and "special conscience concerning self-development". Table 2 explains the types of reflection each question may trigger in a participant.

Table 2

Interview questions and adequate areas of reflection

Questions	Area of reflection
1. *How would you describe yourself?* - *Begin with general characteristics.* - *Which are the most essential characteristics of your personality?* - *List characteristics and achievements you are most proud of.* - *Name a characteristic you are not satisfied with.* - *List characteristics you would like to change.*	Who Am I? This set of questions provides participants with the opportunity to describe themselves openly. It begins with a free reflection, followed by guided narration through follow-up questions.
2. *Do you feel good with who you are?* - *What (if any) changes would you do to feel more like yourself?* - *Does feeling more "you" a source of comfort or otherwise (explain why)*	How do I feel about myself? This set of questions makes participants reflect on how they experience themselves.
3. *How did you manage to be at this point in your life?* - *What did you consider important?*	What has been my life path up to this day?

- What were your costs (sacrifices) to get to this point? *- What difficult choices did you have to make?* *- What were your achievements?* *- What did you find easy to do?* *- What would you do differently?*	This set of questions aims to make participants reflect on their past and how they created their life path. Furthermore, these questions make it possible to extract manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self in people's behavior.
<u>*4. How has the process of creating "you" as a person changed over time?*</u> *- How were your priorities formed?* *- How would you describe this process during the various stages of your life?* *- Can you point out and describe the most crucial circumstances that led to this?*	What has shaped me into the person I am today? These questions prompt participants to reflect on the process of shaping them as a certain person. Furthermore, these questions make it possible to extract manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self in people's behavior.
<u>*5. Have you ever experienced a situation where you did something significant and was suitable for your personality?*</u> *- Describe that situation* *- How often do you recollect those moments?* *- What pushed you to do it that way?* *- How did you feel before and after that experience?*	Positive achievements of my development These questions explore potential positive manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self through personal experiences of success and achievements in self-development.
<u>*6. Do you remember unfinished plans, dreams, or situations where you could have done something significant for your personal development, but hesitated and felt bad afterward?*</u> *- How frequently do you recall these memories?* *- Describe what you experience when recalling these moments? (Do you feel guilty about those situations)* *- Do you think those situations could have changed who you are now? (if yes, explain how)* *- Can you give example of such a (memorable) unfinished plans, dreams or wasted occasions **	Failures and losses in my development These questions explore potential negative manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self through personal experiences of losses and failures in self-development.
<u>*7. Can you recall situations where decisions were made that were unsuitable for your personality?*</u> <u>*What are your experiences in a situation of making not suitable for your character decisions?*</u> *- How frequently do you think about these moments?* *- What impact does retrospective reflection of those moments have on you?*	Me, being inconsistent with myself. These questions explore potential negative manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self through personal experiences of inconsistency between personality and made decisions. The other aspect considered is the experience of inauthenticity.

- What do you feel when there is lack of authenticity in your life?	
8. Have you ever experienced a feeling of inconsistency between who you are and who you ought to be?	How do I experience the difference between who I am and who I desire to be?
- How would you describe these feelings? *- In what kind of situation, it appears?*	These questions investigate possible manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self by delving into personal experiences of the gap between one's current self and one's desired self.
9. Have you ever experienced sort of "vision of yourself" according to which you would make your decisions? *- How would you describe this experience?* *- Describe circumstances of its' appearance* *- How would you understand and define such a term as "inner standard of being"?*	What accompanies me while making decisions concerning self-development? These questions prompt participants to recall if they envision themselves when making decisions or how they define their 'inner standard of being.
10. What do you think: who we become can be subject of sort of special conscious? *- Imagine what function this phenomenon would take /what difference would it make in people's life* *- What forms could it take* *- Have you ever experienced such a phenomenon*	What importance does self-development have for me? Does self-development have a universal importance? These questions indirectly acquaint participants with the core concept of the Conscience of Becoming the Self. On one hand, participants are encouraged to share their experiences with this phenomenon. On the other hand, they are asked to elucidate how this phenomenon would manifest and what its purpose would be.

Both language versions of the interview are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Interview: Polish and English versions

Polish version	English version
1.W jaki sposób opisałbyś(opisałabyś) siebie?	*1. How would you describe yourself?*

- Zacznij od ogólnej charakterystyki.
- Jakie cechy/ właściwości są najbardziej kluczowe dla Twojej osobowości?
- Z jakich własnych cech/właściwości oraz osiągnięć jesteś najbardziej dumny(a)?
- Z jakich własnych cech jesteś niezadowolony(a)?
- Co w sobie chciałbyś(aś) poprawić?

2.Czy dobrze czujesz się z tym jaki/jaka jesteś?

- Jakie zmiany (jeżeli jakiekolwiek) wprowadziłbyś(aś) żeby poczuć się bardziej sobą?
- Czy bycie bardziej sobą jest źródłem komfortu, czy przeciwnie? Wyjaśnij, dlaczego

3.W jaki sposób udało Ci się dotrzeć do tego momentu w życiu?
- Co było ważne?
- Jakie były Twoje koszty (np. Wyrzeczenia)?
- Co nastręczało najwięcej trudności?
- Jakie były Twoje zyski?
- Co było stosunkowo łatwe?
- Co zrobiłbyś(aś) inaczej? Opisz

4.W jaki sposób przebiegał proces kształtowania Ciebie jako osoby?
- W jaki sposób formowały się Twoje priorytety?
- Jak opisałbyś(opisałabyś) proces stawania się osobą taką jaką jesteś w różnych okresach życia?
- Czy możesz wskazać najbardziej kluczowe okoliczności oraz je krótko opisać?

5.Czy przypominasz sobie sytuację, w której zrobiłeś(aś) coś bardzo znaczącego i (w Twoim odczuciu) adekwatnego dla własnej osobowości?
- Opisz tą sytuację.
- Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty?
- Co popchnęło Cię (było motywatorem) żeby postąpić w taki a nie inny sposób w tej sytuacji?
- Jak się czułeś(aś) przed i po tej sytuacji?

- Begin with general characteristics.
- Which are the most essential characteristics of your personality?
- List characteristics and achievements you are most proud of.
- Name a characteristic you are not satisfied with.
- List characteristics you would like to change.

2.Do you feel good with who you are?

- What (if any) changes would you do to feel more like yourself?
- Does feeling more "you" a source of comfort or otherwise (explain why)

3. How did you manage to be at this point in your life?
- What did you consider important?
- What were your costs (sacrifices) to get to this point?
- What difficult choices did you have to make?
- What were your achievements?
- What did you find easy to do?
- What would you do differently? Describe

4. How has the process of creating "you" as a person changed over time?
- How were your priorities formed?
- How would you describe this process during the various stages of your life?
- Can you point out and describe the most crucial circumstances that led to this?

5. Have you ever experienced a situation where you did something significant and was suitable for your personality?
- describe that situation
-how often do you recollect those moments?
-what pushed you to do it that way?
-how did you feel before and after that experience?

6.Czy przypominasz sobie nie zrealizowane możliwości, plany, marzenia lub takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub zrobić coś ważnego dla rozwoju własnej osobowości, a jednak zaniechałeś(aś) tego, a potem było szkoda?

- Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty?
- Opisz czego doświadczasz, kiedy przypominasz sobie takie momenty (czy czujesz wyrzuty sumienia).
- Czy myślisz, że te sytuacje mogłyby zmienić to kim jesteś teraz (jeśli tak opisz w jaki sposób)?
- Możesz podać przykład takich niezrealizowanych planów, marzeń, czy niewykorzystanych okazji (takich które zapadły Ci najbardziej w pamięć)? *

7.Czy możesz przypomnieć sobie w jaki sposób doświadczasz sytuacji w których podejmujesz decyzje niezgodne z własną osobowością?

- Jak często pojawiają się wspomnienia takich sytuacji?
- Jaki wpływ te sytuacje oraz refleksje na ten temat mają na Ciebie?
- Jak się czujesz w chwilach braku autentyczności w swoim życiu?

8.Czy kiedykolwiek doświadczyłeś(aś) poczucia niespójności między tym kim jesteś a kim powinieneś(powinnaś) być?

- Jak opisał(a) byś to poczucie?
- W jakich sytuacjach się ono pojawia?

9.Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwałeś(aś) "wizję siebie", zgodnie z którą podejmowałeś własne decyzje?

- Jak opisał(a) byś to doświadczenie?
- Opisz warunki w jakich pojawia się to doświadczenie.
- Gdyby istniało pojęcie "wewnętrzny standard stawania się", jak rozumiał(a) byś to pojęcie?

6. Do you remember unfinished plans, dreams, or situations where you could have done something significant for your personal development, but hesitated and felt bad afterward?

- How frequently do you recall these memories?
- Describe what you experience when recalling these moments? (Do you feel guilty about those situations)
- Do you think those situations could have changed who you are now? (if yes, explain how)
- Can you give example of such a (memorable) unfinished plans, dreams or wasted occasions *

7. Can you recall situations where decisions were made that were unsuitable for your personality? What are your experiences in a situation of making not suitable for your character decisions?

- How frequently do you think about these moments?
- What impact does retrospective reflection of those moments have on you?
- What do you feel when there is lack of authenticity in your life?

8. Have you ever experienced a feeling of inconsistency between who you are and who you ought to be?

- How would you describe these feelings?
- In what kind of situation, it appears?

9. Have you ever experienced sort of "vision of yourself" according to which you would made your decisions?

- How would you describe this experience?
- Describe circumstances of its' appearance
- How would you understand and define such a term as "inner standard of being"?

10.Jak myślisz: czy to jacy się stajemy w toku naszego życia może podlegać swego rodzaju sumieniu?	10. What do you think: who we become can be subject of sort of special conscious?
- Jakie pełniłoby funkcje/jakie miałoby znaczenie takie sumienie?	- Imagine what function this phenomenon would take /what difference would it make in people's life
- Jak mogłoby się przejawiać takie sumienie?	- What forms could it take
- Czy doświadczałeś(aś) działania takiego sumienia (jeśli tak, opisz w jaki sposób)?	- Have you ever experienced such a phenomenon
Czy doświadczyłeś/doświadczyłaś jakiegoś traumatycznego wydarzenia w niedawnym czasie?	Did you experience serious traumatic events in recent times?
Tak	Yes
Nie	No

Important to note is that the study started within the Polish group. Therefore, based on the initial results of the Polish group, an additional question was added to the English version of the interview. This question is marked with an asterisk (*) in Table 3. It is the last sub-question in question 6. The Polish version of the interview remained unchanged as it is presented in Table 3.

Procedure

Data collection

The study was conducted entirely online. Participants had to answer the questions by writing. Using Google Workspace features, two separate forms were created for Polish and non-Polish participants. The link to the study was spread via social media websites such as Facebook and free websites aimed to help collect data, such as Survey Circle, and distributed with the help of students. Interviews were gathered from 5th May 2020 to 8th October 2021.

Researcher's Role: Examining the Potential Influence of the Researcher's Perspective on the Study

From the standpoint of a qualitative approach, the researcher becomes an integral part of the social reality under investigation (Urbaniak-Zając & Piekarski, 2022). In dealing

with qualitative data, a researcher's involvement is inevitable, both in conducting procedures and in the analysis process. Acknowledging this reality, it is considered good practice to incorporate the researcher's personal perspective, especially when it may impact the study's conduct (Żylicz, 2010). This practice serves as a means to maintain the study's objectivity. On one hand, it provides readers with insight into the researcher's subjective viewpoint on the study's subject. On the other hand, it enables the researcher to better identify and control any potential biases within themselves (Soroko, 2009). Hence, I have chosen to position myself as a researcher within the context of the central issue of this study, which revolves around the experience of adequate self-growth as a moral duty towards oneself.

The stimulus to engage in this particular topic originates from my personal experience and observation of inspirational examples from my family. At the beginning of my educational adventure, I was diagnosed with severe dyslexia, which made the learning process a tragic experience. My mother's confession best describes the situation: at that time, her primary hope was for me to graduate from primary school. This is quite an accurate illustration of the heavy burden parents carry when having children with difficulties. Moreover, it also gives a glimpse of how a child might feel about her capability to achieve anything if every skill is challenging to master.

In addition to my personal experiences, the narrative of my father has been a source of inspiration and guidance. He came from a working-class family, where the need to supply six children made living conditions barely tolerable. The struggle to meet basic needs significantly influenced him and his siblings, limiting their perspective on development. The innate sense or intuition for development was present within him, but he became fully aware of it when he encountered my mother—an educated and ambitious woman. Through her example, he consciously directed his actions. Consequently, he

successfully passed the mature exam as an adult. Then, at 30, he started his first year of law and administration studies; simultaneously, his seven-year-old son started attending primary school. Determination and consistency were crucial in completing his studies while fulfilling the responsibilities of his own family. A similar narrative unfolds with two other siblings of my father, who achieved higher education at an unconventional age, such as 50.

Finally, I would like to recount the story of my grandmother, who was acknowledged as a skilled and intelligent pupil. Unfortunately, due to environmental circumstances, she could not cultivate her intellectual abilities, resulting in her having only a primary education. Nevertheless, as a single mother working as a dressmaker, she remarkably provided for and supported her three daughters, enabling them to pursue and attain a university education.

Those were the most influential for me histories to start to wonder what place self-growth has in people's priorities. What impact (positive or negative) does the perception of insufficient self-progress have on people? Overall, I became pretty attentive to issues of troubled self-growth.

Considering this, I anticipated that individuals might not be deeply engaged in reflecting on self-growth and their own decisions, even if they have encountered the Conscience of Becoming the Self in their lives. Moreover, I aimed to avoid inadvertently influencing their thoughts. I sought unbiased responses, recognizing that participants might misunderstand or grapple with the question's intentions. Additionally, I suspected that the Conscience of Becoming the Self might center primarily on self-actualization, defined as the mastery of skills and abilities. These were the considerations guiding my approach throughout the study.

Qualitative data analysis: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (shortly IPA) is a qualitative method of interview analysis, designed to capture a person's individual perspective. It has its theoretical foundation on phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches where the major aim is to study the human experience within a world and the significance of interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). This method of analysis has a broad area of usage in psychology, where individual experience of a person is essential e.g., health care, psychotherapy, psychiatry (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Davidsen, 2013; Dima & Bucuță, 2016; Pańczak & Pietkiewicz, 2016; Papagiannaki & Shinebourne, 2016).

The steps of the analysis are as follow:

1) capturing the overall meaning by reading, rereading, making notes;

2) initial coding: identification of significant elements of participant's answer, that capture essence of his/her experience;

3) creating emergent themes: recognizing similar code and grouping them together;

4) searching for connections and patterns within created themes;

5) arranging themes and subthemes, creating superior categories (Smith et al., 2009).

All steps from 1-5 are conducted individually in each interview. Special attention is put to analyze each interview with a fresh mind, not biased by interpretations from other interviews. When all interviews go through the procedure (steps 1-5), steps 6-7 were conducted:

6) crossover analysis: comparing categories from every interview, rearranging, and creating new superior categories;

7) theoretical explanation of the results (Smith et al., 2009).

In this study manual approach was used. Further, I will describe how I approached the procedures of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

First step. I started with a simple reading of the interview. The second reading was more intentional and required free notes. The third reading was not only reading the text but also reading notes and improving them. This process could be repetitive, e.g., repeated three or five times (reading, rereading, and changing notes). The more complex and diverse answers, the more repetitions in this step. The notes could be made directly in WORD using comments or on a separate sheet of paper.

Second step. In the previous step, the goal was to understand the narration. In this step, I tried to find significance within participant's responses. For example, answering on the following question:

4. How has the process of creating *you* as a person changed over time? How were your priorities formed?

Kasia (26 years), wrote: *Na początku bardzo ważna była nauka, gdyż zawsze chciałam się dalej rozwijać. Później kariera, jednak w jej trakcie uświadomiłam sobie ze warto pielęgnować znajomosci czy to z pracy czy z innych etapów życia i teraz staram się otaczać ciekawymi ludźmi. Staram się aby w swoim życiu jak najbardziej pomagać i być wsparciem dla innych.*

The text of the interviews was analyzed line by line in search for meaningful phrases. In this example, the underlined parts are assessed as significant in this person's development. Therefore, codes are: *nauka* (education), *dalej się rozwijać* (constant development), *kariera* (carrier), *pielęgnować znajomości* (taking care of friendships), *pomagać i być wsparciem dla innych* (being helpful and supportive for others). As it can be seen, codes emerge from data and are not arbitrarily made. In some cases, the language used by participants was precise enough to name code using the exact phrase

from the interview[2]. In other cases, I had to give the name for the code. Analogically, codes were made for the whole interview.

Third step. After that, I analyzed all created codes in the context of similarities and grouped them adequately. This allows to make themes that capture a sense of each group of codes. Therefore, the theme from the codes above could be *significant areas for the process of becoming the self.*

Fourth step. When themes were created for the whole interview, I analyzed their associations. This analysis leaded to the *Fifth step*. The example categories and subcategories are below:

The foundation of self-development

- constant aspects of self-development: need of constant development, need of planned development, constant work on character

- personal recipe for success**:** assiduity, self-confidence**,** reasonable planning, faith in set goal**,** humility

-meaning of carrier: goal, success, source of development, stabilization, source of confidence

- utility: being useful/helpful for others

The foundation of self-development is a superior category for themes such as *constant aspects of self-development.* The elements after the colon are subthemes for the former theme.

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[2] Similar code-extracting procedure in grounded theory: *in vivo codes* (Charmaz, 2009)

Sometimes I used code – a phrase from the interview - as the name for the theme. That were cases when the participant's choice of wording was very accurate.

This whole procedure, from steps 1-5, can be nonlinear. For example, rereading might be repeated throughout all steps for a better understanding of themes. It was already mentioned that the complexity of the interview required more intellectual effort from the researcher. An interview where participants answered questions with simple, few-word statements would take around two hours of interpretation. Thus, analyzing the interviews with average complexity would take around 6-20 hours. There were cases, however, when narrations gave a unique perspective or were incoherent. Therefore, creating synthesized themes took much work. This kind of interview could take even one week to analyze.

These analyses were made directly in WORD file from the interview, below the text of the interview. On sheet of paper, manual analysis were made, as it is easier for example to visualize, move elements from themes, or giving self-notes. In the WORD file, the final result was written, in a form as in an example of *the foundation of self-development.*

This 1-5 steps procedure was repeated with every interview, with special attention to not search for already made themes (in previous interviews). This state of fresh mind is not easy to acquire. However, this is an essential guideline for this method.

Therefore, when all interviews went through a 1-5 step procedure, step six was conducted.

Step six. All subcategories and themes were printed. In smaller samples, probably, it is possible to reflect on the material by reading page after page. However, with 61 participants, it was impossible to memorize and thus analyze categories by reading traditionally, e.g., like a book. Finally, all the material took 82 pages.

The data appeared enormously rich with content and possible ways of interpretation. To allow crossover analysis, themes and categories printed on paper were put on the floor, so it could be possible to see them all at once by walking and glancing above them and making notes. This way, ideas for meta-categories were initially made. Furthermore, I started grouping pages that have similar content. After that, I focused on analyzing categories on each page. Those which would not fit were cut out and moved to groups more convergent with content.

Initial meta-categories created on that stage of analysis were:

- actualization of the past

- basic needs

- Conscience of Becoming the Self

- foundation for authentic self

- position to emotions

- position to social context

- quality of the interview

- significant factors of development

- strategy and patterns of development

In the next step, I made separate docs files for each meta category. In each file, I copied all themes and subthemes that belonged to each meta category. Each file started with the name of the meta-category (bolded and underlined). Below were themes (bolded and underlined) and subsequent subthemes (regular font). Example below. This way, nine files were created, varying from 2 to 18 pages.

In files, I was searching if, in one meta category, might be content that also fits into other meta categories. I did it by marking content with adequate colors. Each color represented a specific meta-category.

- actualization of the past: blue

- basic needs: green

- quality of the interview: grey

- significant factors of self-development: orange (letters)

- position to social context: pink

- Conscience of Becoming the Self: purple

- strategy and pattern of development: dark yellow

- the foundation for authentic self: red

- position to emotions: bordeaux

Therefore, each color would symbolize a particular meta-category. Below I pasted an example of this work.

<u>Significant factors of self-development</u>

<u>Progress pushers</u>

- curiosity

- stubbornness

- dreams

- goals

- discovered passion: music

- consequence

- always being authentic

- vision of self(vision of self and goal to achieve) present when making decisions

Positive resources

- faith in future

- faith in the kindness of people

- finances resource

- independency

- job as source of stabilization

- set goals: studies and job (though difficulty in deciding priorities)

+ <mark>importance of material goods and leisure time</mark>

This procedure helped visualize the data and connections within the content.

The final step was rearranging all data into tables and models to capture the meaning of extracted processes and their connections. These models and tables are a form of theoretical coding and, simultaneously, the final result of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis conducted in this study. All 15 tables and four figures are presented in the Result section, divided into three subchapters: *Quality of the interviews*, *Constructing of being, perceiving being*, *Structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self.*

In subchapter *Quality of the interviews*, technical aspects of interviews are gathered, mainly based on content from the "quality of the interviews" meta-category, including consistent issues from the other eight meta-categories (Table 12).

Subchapter *Construction of being, perceiving being*, grasps complex processes concerning being. Those issues reappear in all meta-categories through different lenses, thus giving different perspectives. However, the content of five of them is taken into main consideration. Those meta-categories are actualization of the past, basic needs, the foundation for the authentic self, position to emotions, and position to social context. The content of the last two meta-categories is self-explanatory by their title. However, the first three need some words of explanation. Actualization of the past meta-category captures

content that relates to comparisons people make between current and past actualization in their narrations. Basic needs meta-category refers to aspects of neglected needs that were present in narrations. Lastly, Foundation for authentic being meta-category, reflects significant elements that people included while reflecting on their authenticity, personality, identity.

Content from these meta-categories was broad and finally was divided into two main theoretical perspectives: construction of being (what and how content described in meta-categories is involved in this process) and perceiving being (what is the phenomenological perception of being based on emerged meta-categories). That is why this subchapter is named as it is. Elements that could be assigned to constructing being are split into two slightly different but complementary paths: distinguishing self and personality (Table 13) and gaining awareness (Table 14, Table 15, Table 16). While for perceiving being, attention was focused on the phenomenological experience of authenticity and inauthenticity (Table 17, Table 18, Table 19, Table 20).

Subchapter *Structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self* presents models (Figure 2, Figure , Figure) and tables (Table 21, Table 22, Table 23, Table 24, Table 25, Table 26) with content from meta-categories mainly related to the subject. Primary sources of data for this issue are meta-categories: Conscience of Becoming the Self, significant factors of development, strategy and pattern of development. However, as explained before, content from other meta-categories was also considered if relevant.

I initially conducted an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Polish interviews (steps one to six). Subsequently, when analyzing British groups and individual cases from other countries, I found that the data aligned with the models created for the Polish interviews. As a result, I supplemented the Polish models with additional data from individual analyses of British groups and individual cases from other countries.

The group size in this research is quite large compared to the usual participant number in studies where Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used, i.e., around 10 participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Therefore, conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in this study appeared as a challenging task. From March 2021 to August 2022, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis procedure was conducted on gathered data. The last step of the analysis, explaining findings with existing theories, is presented in the *Discussion*.

Participants

Polish group. From the initial 66 participants ($N_F = 31$), five were excluded from the study because they did not fit criteria of minimum age, except for one participant who was not Pole. Therefore, this interview was analyzed within the foreign group.

Finally, 61 ($N_F = 28$) participants were considered for further analysis. The average age of the Polish group was $M = 28.34$ ($M_F = 23.14$, $M_M = 32.76$), and the standard deviation was $SD = 9.453$ ($SD_F = 3.62$, $SD_M = 10.62$), with a minimum age of 19 and a maximum age equaled 72. A demographic description of the group is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Demographical structure of the Polish group: a qualitative study

Demographic variable	*N*	*%*
Gender	61	100
Female	28	46
Male	33	54
Total	61	100
Marital status		
Single	24	39

Informal relationship	18	30
Married	18	26
Divorced	1	2
Widowed	0	0
Total	61	100
Employment status		
Employed	29	48
self-employed	5	8
student, employed	9	15
Student	15	25
Retired	1	2
Unemployed	2	3
Total	61	100
Education		
less than a high degree school diploma	1	2
high school degree or equivalent	20	33
bachelor's degree	16	26
master's degree	23	38
Doctorate	1	2
Total	61	100
Religious status		
practicing believer	20	33
non-practicing believer	21	34
atheist	20	33
Total	61	100

The distribution of marital and religious statuses is well-balanced. Approximately 30% of participants fall into one of three categories: single, in an informal relationship, or married. This distribution is mirrored in the three categories of religious status. Furthermore, a majority of the participants were employed and held higher education degrees. Finally, less than half of them were students at the time of the study.

British group and individual cases from other countries. From 18 gathered interviews, two that did not meet the criteria of this study were excluded from further analysis. Therefore, in this section there were 16 participants. This section considered interviews with participants from various countries. Most of the respondents were native English speakers (10 participants) from countries like the United Kingdom (5 participants), Australia (3), the USA (2), and Canada (1). The rest of participants consist of a single case from Hungary, Italy, Romania, Thailand, and Vietnam. As the group sample is small, demographical data was calculated for all 16 ($N_F = 14$) participants together. The average age of the whole group was $M = 30$, $SD = 10.63$ with minimum and maximum ages respectively 21 and 53 years old. Detailed demographic data can be verified in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographical structure of the foreign group: a qualitative study

Demographic variable	N	$\%$
Female	14	88
Male	2	13
Total	16	100
Marital status		
Single	9	56
in informal relationship	2	13
Married	5	31
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Total	16	100
Employment status		
Employed	6	38
self-employed	1	6
student, employed	3	19

Student	6	38
Retired	0	0
Unemployed	0	0
Total	16	100
Education		
less than a high degree school diploma	0	0
high school degree or equivalent	3	19
bachelor's degree	6	38
master's degree	6	38
Doctorate	1	6
Total	16	100
Religious status		
practicing believer	4	25
non-practicing believer	5	31
atheist	7	44
Total	16	100

The majority of participants were female. Approximately half of the participants were single, while the other half were in relationships, with a significant portion being married. A similar distribution was observed regarding religious status: half identified as believers, while the other half were atheists. The majority of participants were actively employed, and there were no cases of unemployment. Additionally, most participants held higher education degrees.

Chapter III Results and discussion

Results: Personal meanings analysis

The structure of the results section needs to account for the substantial sample size in this study. Therefore, to maintain efficiency and conciseness, three interviews will be selected as representative examples to illustrate how meaning was derived from the qualitative material. Analyzing all 61 interviews in detail would lead to an impractical length for this dissertation.

That is why, the first subchapter, takes a bottom-up approach, offering an insight into the qualitative analysis process from the perspective of individual interviews, encompassing steps one to six of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Subchapter *Final product of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* delve into abstract meta-categories that surfaced after the cross-over analysis, providing a comprehensive presentation of the final outcomes of the IPA analysis carried out in this study.

Finally, in subchapter *Reverse analysis*, the reverse analysis will showcase how the categories developed in subchapter Final product of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis align with the content of the interviews.

Analysis bottom-up. In this section, I will recreate the process of Imperative Phenomenological Analysis I conducted in this study. However, it is difficult to provide the exact substitute for each step. For example, for the first step, it is impossible to recreate reading and rereading. Therefore, I had to use an adjustable approach for the reader and, in a reasonable way, provide insight into my methodological workshop.

Therefore, in the first step, in a narrative way, I am describing participant answers, at the same time paying attention to subjects that appear frequently. This step aims to capture meaning through interview description.

During the second step, I aim to elevate the level of abstraction. I summarize what I have learned about the participant in the first step. In this stage, providing a detailed description becomes less crucial. The primary focus is on highlighting recurring motifs and themes, as well as indicating the corresponding interview content that supports these findings. Additionally, I may incorporate any overall impressions conveyed by the interview.

In this dissertation, I combined steps third and fourth to report them more effectively. In these two steps, propositions for themes are given more directly. However, it is still in the form of narration.

The fifth step involves sharing the working notes I made during the analysis of each interview. These notes include the final categories and the corresponding content derived from the interview.

The final step, the sixth one, involves cross-analysis. In this step, a comparison of categories from all interviews aims to identify meta-categories that encompass broader themes and meanings. As outlined in the methodology, I will now provide a reminder of the meta-categories that were created:

- Actualization of the past

- Basic needs

- Quality of the interview

- Significant factors of self-development

- Position to social context

- Conscience of Becoming the Self

- Strategy and pattern of development

- The foundation for authentic self

- Position to emotions

In the following section, I will begin by indicating how each category was assigned to its respective meta-category. Subsequently, I will illustrate how I verified the presence of other meta-categories. To streamline this process, the initial assignment places a category within one of the nine meta-categories. However, it is essential to note that some aspects within a category may also align with other meta-categories. To highlight these associations, I have employed a color-coding system. For instance, a specific element may belong to the *Actualization of the past* meta-category even if the entire category is primarily assigned to *Strategy and pattern of development*. The colors used are described below:

- Actualization of the past: blue

- Basic needs: green

- Quality of the interview: grey

- Significant factors of self-development: orange (letters)

- Position to social context: pink

- Conscience of Becoming the Self: purple

- Strategy and pattern of development: dark yellow

- The foundation for authentic self: red

- Position to emotions: bordeaux

I distinguish meta-categories from categories by capitalizing the initial letter of meta-categories. These categories are directly extracted from the interviews, whereas meta-categories emerge from cross-analysis, encompassing all categories from each interview.

As the analysis progresses, there is a gradual increase in abstraction. I transition from the specific, raw data to categories, which, while less specific, offer a broader

contextual understanding. This progression allows for a more comprehensive perspective on the data.

<p style="text-align:center">Wojtek[3], Polish, men, 33 years old (Appendix 1_Interview)</p>

Step 1: Capturing the overall meaning.

Wojtek is a 33-year-old man with a master's degree in economics. At the time of the interview, he was married and employed. He identified himself as a non-practicing Catholic. Prior to the interview, he had not undergone any traumatic experiences.

In the first question, Wojtek describes himself as self-confident, brave, and reliable, with the ability to overcome obstacles in new situations. He expresses a desire to enhance his self-organizing skills, but he is also aware of his difficulty in finding rest. This paints a picture of a strong, hard-working individual. However, as the narrative unfolds, Wojtek emphasizes the significance of empathy and his family. For him, achieving a good position at work is equally important as the happiness of his own family and being a positive role model for his children.

When confronted with the question, How do I feel about myself? Wojtek responds succinctly and directly, stating that he feels comfortable with himself and does not need to change anything. Furthermore, for Wojtek, authenticity is a source of comfort, as it allows him to make decisions without limitations and without the need to pretend in front of anyone.

Reflection on the life experiences that have brought Wojtek to this moment leads to the following conclusions. Once again, characteristics associated with strength in decision-making, such as determination, hard work, and wise life management through careful planning, emerged as significant. Furthermore, Wojtek highlights a mindset that

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[3]All participants in interviews have fictional names.

has aided him in overcoming difficulties – the ability to accept challenges while simultaneously striving to improve his life conditions. This aligns with what Wojtek had previously described about how he manages difficulties. Additionally, Wojtek notes that he was able to identify a suitable career path easily.

Question four triggers reflection on what has shaped me into the person I am today. In Wojtek's response, two primary elements emerge: family and personal independence. On one hand, his family has significantly influenced his priorities. On the other hand, family situations in the past (family of origin) and the present (immediate family) are considered crucial circumstances. Simultaneously, Wojtek describes the process of self-realization as self-directed, driven by his own goals.

What was Wojtek's perception of his development: positive (achievements and success) and negative (failures and losses) aspects? He depicted a successful project at his work as a significant achievement in this matter. It allowed him to gain self-confidence in his knowledge and abilities regarding his career. Again, the motif of taking the future into consideration appeared. This time, as a motivator for positive developmental changes. Wojtek declared that he rarely reminds himself of such positive self-achievements. It is significant to mention that Wojtek, wrote that it is a pity that memories of positive developmental success are not more frequent. This contrasts with failures and losses, which Wojtek recalls often. However, he thinks that those lost chances have a small, if any, impact on his life.

In the interview, Wojtek declared that he always tries to ensure he makes consistent decisions with himself. As acting against himself would have a terrible effect on him. Consistently to previous answers, Wojtek states that inauthenticity is a source of discomfort for him. Thus, he tries to avoid inauthenticity in his life. Furthermore, Wojtek declared that he has not experienced feelings of inconsistency between who he is and who

he desires to be. Wojtek agreed that he experiences a vision of self while making decisions. In his narration, this concept is connected with making independent decisions. Therefore, the motif of unlimited decision-making reappears.

When introduced to questions about the "inner standard of being" and the Conscience of Becoming the Self, Wojtek expressed uncertainty, stating that he might not fully grasp these concepts yet. Consequently, his responses regarding the role and manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self were not concrete. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that this type of conscience could have significant implications.

Step 2: Initial coding: identification of significant elements of the participant's answer that capture the essence of his/her experience.

Some motifs and themes recur throughout the interview. In Wojtek's case, family and carrier are two significant elements of his framework of interpretation. What does it mean? It means that Wojtek's answers about matters presented in the interview were made regarding these two elements. The other aspect of Wojtek's narration was focused on his way of approaching tasks, thus, self-determination, making independent decisions, and being consistent. When reflecting on self-development, he underscored the more significant impact of negative events compared to positive ones. Notably, Wojtek found it challenging to respond to questions about the Conscience of Becoming the Self, acknowledging the potential significance of this concept but admitting his lack of awareness about it. Overall, Wojtek adopted a concise yet concrete style when answering questions.

Step 3: Creating emergent themes & Step:4: Searching for connections and patterns withing created themes.

Analysis of Wojtek's interview shows that family would deserve to be a category. On the one hand, he considers it as a significant element in his process of creating self

(forming priorities, crucial circumstance). On the other, he mentioned family in the self-description (Wojtek said he is proud of his family and wants to be an excellent example for his kids). Therefore, a <u>family</u> takes an essential space in Wojtek's mind.

Carrer appears less frequently; however, it also seems essential. For example, it appeared in the context of self-development.

In nearly all responses, there is an implicit revelation of an <u>attitude</u> or <u>behavioral style</u>. Wojtek's behavioral style can be described as resolute, self-directed, and unwavering. Therefore, it is necessary to consolidate these elements into a single category.

Finally, Wojtek's contemplation on matters related to the Conscience of Becoming the Self was uncertain. It intrigues me, as he could either deny the existence of such a phenomenon or assert its insignificance. Nonetheless, Wojtek acknowledges the potential existence of this concept, though he lacks awareness of its actual existence or manifestations. This would necessitate the creation of a separate category to encompass the <u>status of his awareness</u>.

<u>Step 5: Arranging themes and subthemes, creating superior categories.</u>

At this stage, the topics discussed in the previous steps have been organized into distinct categories and themes, detailed in Table 6. This table is a faithful representation of my working notes. For this participant, four main themes were created: family creation/ life breakthrough, career: significance in development, fate in own hands, not yet awareness. There are no subthemes in this example of analysis.

Table 6

Categories created for Wojtek's interview – working notes.

Family creation/ stage of life brake trough	Career: significance in development	Fate in own hands	Not yet awareness
- wish to be good role model for his children as significant in self-description - key characteristic: empathy - proud of happy family - cots: early adult life, need to support himself financially in young age, lost fun time during studies - would work harder before starting own family - priorities formed under influence of family of origin and his own, current family - key circumstances: situation in family of origin and own family	- proud of job position, likes his job - need to improve even more organization and learn to relax - adequate for personality decisions: success in important project/ frequency: rare - unrealized plans: neglected language learning, it was difficult to get back to it and took much more time/ often reflection, little impact on who he is	- self-confidence - motto: taking from life as much as possible - key characteristics: bravery - key characteristics: be precise (*dokładność*) - proud of ability to overcoming obstacles - proud of ability to adapt to new environments - feels himself, do not need to change anything - being self, source of comfort, no not need to pretend, does what he wants - important in life: determination, thinking about future - achievements: achieved what he had dreamed since childhood, life on good level - easy in finding what he wants to do in his life - process of becoming the self: leaving own life on own rules, guiding own goals, doesn't care about opinions of insignificant people - motivator for adequate for personality decisions: thinking about the future - gaining higher self-confidence after successful project (adequate decision) - vision of self: making own decisions, good feeling, allows to feel free, appear every day when he does what he wants - acceptance of troubles (difficulty in acceptance of problems, of fact that life is not perfect / he can try to make it better) - tries to always act in coherency with himself and to be authentic so doesn't experience inconsistent with personality decisions and reflection about it - lack of authenticity: feels uncomfortable - doesn't experience reflections about inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: declares he is happy	- rare frequency about adequate for personality decisions/ wish to have higher frequency of this reflection - inner standard of being- declares he does not understand this term yet - COBS as having possibly significant meaning, though difficult to describe it's manifestations - COBS: possibly he had experienced, however he is not aware of it yet - doesn't describes impact of reflection about unrealized plans - tries to always act in coherency with himself so doesn't experience inconsistent with personality decisions and reflection about it - doesn't experience reflections about inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: declares he is happy

<u>Step 6: Crossover analysis: comparing categories from every interview,</u>
<u>rearranging, and creating new superior categories.</u>

This step was possible to make after analysis of all interviews. Therefore, at this point, I will show how categories made for Wojtek's interview were submitted to the nine main meta-categories.

- Family creation/ stage of life brake trough → Position to social context

- Career: significance in development -> Strategy and patterns of development

- Fate in own hands -> Strategy and patterns of development

- Not yet awareness -> Basic needs

The primary objective here was to elevate the level of abstraction.

For cross-analysis (as I already explained in methodology), I was searching if some elements from one category are not suitable for another. Each color represents each meta-category. Cross-analysis for categories of this interview is presented in a Table 7. *Family creation/ stage of life breakthrough*, in general, was classified as part of *Position to social context* category. However, elements such as being a good role model for children and empathy as a critical aspect of self-description are also suitable for *Significant factors of the development* category. On the other hand, Wojtek's wish that he had worked harder before having a family might be associated with *Conscience of Becoming the Self.* Two categories *career: significance in development* and *fate in own hands*, belong to *Strategy and patterns of development.* Nevertheless, information about frequencies of memories of positive and negative event in context of development, belong to *Conscience of Becoming the Self.* As well as Wojtek's understanding of this concept, caught in *not yet awareness* category.

Finally, in *the fate in own hands* category, there are significant elements for *The foundation for authentic self,* e.g., awareness concerning being consistent with self,

authenticity, and inauthenticity. Also, elements that Wojtek used for self-description that appear in *fate in own hands* category can be assigned to *Significant factors of self-development*.

Table 7

Crossover analysis for Wojtek's interview – working notes.

Family creation/ stage of life brake trough	Career: significance in development	Fate in own hands	Not yet awareness
- wish to be good role model for his children as significant in self-description - key characteristic: empathy - proud of happy family - cots: early adult life, need to support himself financially in young age, lost fun time during studies - would work harder before starting own family - priorities formed under influence of family of origin and his own, current family - key circumstances: situation in family of origin and own family	- proud of job position, like his job - need to improve even more organization and learn to relax - adequate for personality decisions: success in important project/ frequency: rare - unrealized plans: neglected language learning, it was difficult to get back to it and took much more time/ often reflection, little impact on who he is	- self-confidence - motto: taking from life as much as possible - key characteristics: bravery - key characteristics: be precise (dokładność) - proud of ability to overcoming obstacles - proud of ability to adapt to new environments - feels himself, do not need to change anything - being self source of comfort, no not need to pretend, does what he wants - import in life: determination, thinking about future - achievements: achieved what he had dreamed since childhood, life on good level - easy in finding what he wants to do in his life - process of becoming the self: leaving own life on own rules, guiding own goals, doesn't care about opinions of insignificant people - motivator for adequate for personality decisions: thinking about the future - gaining higher self-confidence after successful project (adequate decision) - vision of self: making own decisions, good feeling, allows to feel free, appear every day when he does what he wants - acceptance of troubles (difficulty in acceptance of problems, of fact that life is not perfect / he can try to make it better) - tries to always act in coherency with himself and to be authentic so doesn't experience inconsistent with personality decisions and reflection about it - lack of authenticity: feels uncomfortable - doesn't experience reflections about inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: declares he is happy	- rare frequency about adequate for personality decisions/ wish to have higher frequency of this reflection - inner standard of being- declares he does not understand this term yet - COBS as having possibly significant meaning, though difficult to describe it's manifestations - COBS: possibly he had had experienced, however he is not aware of it yet - doesn't describes impact of reflection about unrealized plans - tries to always act in coherency with himself so doesn't experience inconsistent with personality decisions and reflection about it - doesn't experience reflections about inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: declares he is happy

<u>Chris, Polish, men, 26 years old (Appendix 2_Interview)</u>

<u>Step 1: Capturing the overall meaning.</u>

Chris, a 26-year-old Pole, was single and employed at the time of the interview. He identified as having a belief in the Christian faith, though he also expressed that he was not actively practicing his religion and leaned towards atheism. As a result, his stance on religion was not firmly established. He holds a master's degree in aviation and cosmonautics.

Chris begins his self-description by acknowledging some personal challenges. He mentions having low self-confidence, being unassertive, and feeling shy in interactions with the opposite sex. These are areas he recognizes as areas for improvement. In social situations, he tends to label himself as a fool in order to set lower expectations. On the positive side, Chris acknowledges his strengths in learning, analytical thinking, and keen observation skills.

While confronted with questions concerning how well he feels about himself, Chris again underlines the need to improve assertiveness. He wrote that being self is not necessarily a source of comfort. The social context of the situation determines whether being self is a source of comfort or otherwise. For the questions where Chris needed to reflect on his life and what has shaped him, an ease in grasping knowledge reappeared. This skill was significant and made his life easier. He also described his past social conditions as fairly convenient, allowing him to navigate life without excessive sacrifices. However, for Chris, adapting to entirely new social groups and finding his own style of living was difficult. The ability to collaborate within social groups is something he highly values. Therefore, he expressed the wish that he had initiated the process of learning healthy adaptation earlier in life. Chris's priorities, as he outlined, are influenced by a blend of his personal desires and environmental expectations. In response to question

four, he depicted his personal growth trajectory as a flat line until a pivotal point during high school. While he did not provide precise details, he noted that his development experienced a rapid and smooth progression midway through high school. Once more, he attributed this to the influence of his environment, emphasizing the importance of openness and flexibility in facilitating his personal growth.

When reflecting on the fluctuations in his self-development journey, specific patterns emerge. Chris's recollections of negative events are not only more frequent but also more detailed compared to positive experiences. Consequently, it is easier to discern the impact of challenges on his self-development. As significant achievements, Chris highlighted his success in securing a suitable job and forming relationships during high school. It was difficult for Chris to say what motivates him in this kind of situation. However, when asked about his motivations in these situations, he had difficulty to answer. He wrote that the driving force might be subconscious.

When contemplating lost opportunities, Chris experiences regret. He believes that some of these missed chances could have potentially altered his current circumstances. Overall, Chris has a negative perception of inner inconsistency. To begin with, making decisions incongruent with his true personality is the other reason to blame himself for his low assertiveness. Furthermore, Chris's motivation for development is discouraged when he lacks authenticity. Finally, Chris feels lost when he experiences differences between who he is and who he ought to be. Chris had such a moment when he had difficulty making future decisions after graduation.

From the response, it is difficult to say whether the vision of self has a positive or negative impact on Chris. He experiences it in sleepless nights, giving him a feeling of grim satisfaction and anger.

Chris has his unique interpretation of concepts like the "inner standard of being[4]" and the "Conscience of becoming the self". To him, the "inner standard of being" is closely tied to using social interactions to shape one's personality. As for the 'Conscience of Becoming the Self,' he sees it as a mechanism that draws upon self-development experiences to either encourage progress through positive memories or facilitate learning from mistakes using negative memories. For Chris, this form of Conscience plays a role as a guiding force in significant life decisions. It may manifest practically through the creation of lists outlining what to do or what to avoid. Chris openly acknowledges experiencing this type of Conscience in his life.

Step 2: Initial coding: identification of significant elements of the participant's answer that capture the essence of his/her experience.

Initially, the interview appears to carry a somewhat negative tone. Chris highlights his shortcomings during self-description, and in his reflection on self-development, the negative aspects are more detailed and well-thought-through. Notably, some recurring motifs emerge throughout the interview. On the one hand, Chris emphasizes his high learning ability and ease of knowledge acquisition, recognizing these skills as valuable assets in life. On the other hand, the influence of social factors is a consistent theme. Chris connects this influence to his lack of assertiveness, mentioned in the self-development context (inconsistency with one's personality), the process of creating self and self-description.

Moreover, the ability to adapt and cultivate healthy relationships is yet another facet of the social impact discussed. The practical application of the social environment in

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[4] The term 'inner standard of being' is enclosed in quotes because it explicitly denotes a concept the participant was asked to reflect on. Therefore, at this point, 'inner standard of being' does not refer to a category or meta-category (which are written in italics).

shaping one's personality, what Chris refers to as the 'inner standard of being,' adds another dimension. Lastly, for Chris, social circumstances play a crucial role in the context of comfort in authenticity.

Some aspects of the interview are difficult to assess, for example, religious status, vision of self, and source of motivation for significant, positive actions in self-development, and experience of authenticity.

Although the interview seems to be shifted in a negative tone, the answer about the Conscience of Becoming the self is quite balanced, combining both positive and negative forms. Chris admits he did experience such a phenomenon.

Step 3: Creating emergent themes & Step:4: Searching for connections and patterns withing created themes.

My objective was to create categories that efficiently encompass the data while maintaining balanced content. The aim was to avoid overloading a single category or having one with just a few elements. Therefore, I focused on highlighting the most enriched topics.

One such category was dedicated to Chris's most significant strengths, including his exceptional general learning skills and analytical thinking. These abilities had and have played a pivotal role in his life and have a notable impact on his behavior.

Another crucial and readily identifiable category centered on the role of social factors in Chris's life. However, this aspect could be approached from various angles, encompassing effective social engagement, its role as a modifier of personality, and its implications for self-development, particularly in relation to self-awareness. Consequently, these categories were structured to capture this broad spectrum of meanings.

Lastly, uncertainty in some answers should also be taken into consideration.

<u>Step 5: Arranging themes and subthemes, creating superior categories.</u>

Finally, four main categories were created: analytical development, unclear point, finding own way of being, and awareness of the environment. For clarification, the latter category refers to Chris's awareness of the effect the environment has on him. There were no subcategories. The categories and their content are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Categories created for Chris's interview – working notes.

Analytical development	Unclear point	Finding own way of being	Awareness of environment
- good memory	- doesn't answer question about being self as source of comfort or not	- feeling of being lost	- easiness in making new social connections
- high learning abilities		- lack of self-confidence	- need to improve shyness in male-female relationships
- smart		- make himself a fool to lower expectations towards him	
- declares analytical attitude towards life	- easy in making new relationships but difficulty with male-female relationships	- need to be more assertive and resistance to other opinions	- perfect observer
- self-control		- relentless	- to be more self need for higher assertiveness
- intellectual abilities allowed him to finish difficult studies without any sacrifices	- sometimes no clear answers	- being self depends on the social circumstances person is at the moment	- process of becoming the self: high school as significant moment of development (crucial moment, before no development, great jump, and balanced development)
		- describes finding own characteristics style of life as difficult	
		- priorities formed dependently from his own desires and social expectations	
- COBS function: remembering about failures to not repeat them, remembering successes to be inspired by them , experienced	- cannot describe what was his motivator for significant for personality decisions – subconscious	- significant for personality achievements: finding adequate job despite low self-belief, how often: average?	- university as important time
		- reflection about unrealized plans: very?, self-regret (żal do siebie), possibly would change who he is	- learning an important ability of healthy adaptation to new environments (learnt in high school, wish to had learnt in earlier in gymnasium)
		- reflections about inconsistent with personality decisions appear very often	- ability to make new friends
- manifestation of COBS: in form of list *what to do* and *what not to* do, while making significant decisions	- in time he learns significant achievement make him better	- lack of authenticity brings unwillingness for development	- crucial circumstance: opening himself for opinion of environment and learning to be good observer of environment in order to asses own expectations
		- feeling of inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: brings feeling of lost, example of the moment: after studies he didn't know what to do	- inner standard of being: using interaction with outside world to form own personality
		- vision of self described as anger and grim satisfaction, appear when he cannot fall asleep and nothing concerns him	

<u>Step 6: Crossover analysis: comparing categories from every interview, rearranging, and creating new superior categories.</u>

The categories established in the previous steps were grouped under the following meta-categories:

- Analytical development -> Significant factors of development

- Unclear point-> Quality of the interview

- Finding own way of being -> Foundation for authentic self

- Awareness of the environment-> Position to social context

Similarly, to the first case (Wojtek's), I conducted cross-analysis to determine the compatibility of elements between categories. Table 9 displays this analysis.

I will begin with the meta-category *Strategy and patterns of development*. While none of the categories created for this interview were directly assigned to this meta-category, its elements are evident in both *analytical development* and *awareness of the environment*. Precisely, the analytical approach, practical usage of intellectual skills and social resources, and adaptive adjustment collectively form a pattern that Chris employs in his personal development.

Category *finding own way of being* has quite a few points that also fit to *Position to social context,* for example, issue of assertiveness or social impact in forming priorities.

Awareness of the environment belongs to the *Foundation for authentic self* meta category. Nevertheless, components of the *Foundation for authentic self* can be identified in all three categories. One such component is assertiveness, which is vital for Chris to express his true self, as evident in the "Awareness of the Environment" category. Another element involves the role Chris assigns to the "Conscience of Becoming the Self" in self-

creation, specifically through adaptive learning and inspirational influence. Lastly, Chris's position in social relationships plays a significant role in his pursuit of authenticity.

The content related to the *Conscience of Becoming the Self* meta-category is evident in both *awareness of the environment* and *finding own way of being*. Within the *awareness of the environment*, manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self are reflected through Chris's analytical style. Conversely, the journey to discover one's authentic self includes elements such as lost opportunities and the struggle with inconsistencies that are closely associated with the *Conscience of Becoming the Self* meta-category.

Lastly, in *finding own way of being* category, there is a single element from the *Position to emotions* meta-category category and a single element of *Significant factors.*

Table 9

Crossover analysis for Chris's interview – working notes.

Analytical development	Unclear point	Finding own way of being	Awareness of the environment
- good memory - high learning abilities - smart - declares analytical attitude towards life - self-control - intellectual abilities allowed him to finish difficult studies without any sacrifices - COBS function: remembering about failures to not repeat them, remembering successes to be inspired by them , experienced - manifestation of COBS: in form of list *what to do* and *what not to* do, while making significant decisions	- doesn't answer question about being self as source of comfort or not - easy in making new relationships but difficulty with male-female relationships - sometimes no clear answers - cannot describe what was his motivator for significant for personality decisions – subconscious - in time he learns significant achievement make him better	- feeling of being lost - lack of self-confidence - make himself a fool to lower expectations towards him - need to be more assertive and resistance to other opinions - relentless - being self depends on the social circumstances person is at the moment - describes finding own characteristics style of life as difficult - priorities formed dependently from his own desires and social expectations - significant for personality achievements: finding adequate job despite low self-belief, how often: average? - reflection about unrealized plans: very?, self-regret (żal do siebie), possibly would change who he is - reflections about inconsistent with personality decisions appear very often - lack of authenticity brings unwillingness for development - feeling of inconsistency between who he is and ought to be: brings feeling of lost, example of the moment: after studies he didn't know what to do - vision of self described as anger and grim satisfaction, appear when he cannot fall asleep and nothing concerns him	- easiness in making new social connections - need to improve shyness in male-female relationships - perfect observer - to be more self need for higher assertiveness - process of becoming the self: high school as significant moment of development (crucial moment, before no development, great jump, and balanced development) - university as important time - learning an important ability of healthy adaptation to new environments (learned in high school, wish to had learnt in earlier in gymnasium) - ability to make new friends - crucial circumstance: opening himself for opinion of environment and learning to be good observer of environment in order to asses own expectations - inner standard of being: using interaction with outside world to form own personality

Step 1: Capturing the overall meaning.

At the time of the interview, Kasia was a 25-year-old woman identified as single and employed. She noted her affiliation with the Catholic Church, although she mentioned that she was not actively practicing her faith. She holds a bachelor's degree in automation and robotics.

Kasia's self-description paints a picture of an optimistic, open, and curious woman. However, she also acknowledges a tendency towards disorganization and chaos in her behavior. While her career stands out as her most significant achievement, she expresses difficulties in pursuing her goals and feeling dissatisfied with being overly concerned about other people's opinions. Kasia aspires to become more self-organized and gain better control over her chaotic tendencies.

Contemplations on how she feels about herself start with Kasia's aspiration to become more assertive and resolute in her responses to societal opinions. Her thoughts about authenticity are multifaceted. Kasia draws a crucial distinction between situations where authenticity brings comfort, and it aligns with her will, precisely decision when it is appropriate to be authentic. In Kasia's opinion, sometimes it is necessary to follow social conventions as being self, regardless of any circumstances, may be a source of conflict. Kasia's answer focuses on the issue of appropriateness rather than comfort.

Kasia gives the following description of her life journey. On the one hand, Kasia wrote that being persistent and having faith in her abilities were the most significant and, at the same time, most challenging to maintain. On the other hand, her effectiveness and bravery in taking risks were other vital assets – easy for her to perform. Again, optimism reaper as crucial in her life. She admits she had struggled with health issues due to stress. The latter and the loss of some relationships were, for Kasia, noticeable sacrifices. Her

current job, which fulfills both financial and self-growth needs, is recognized by Kasia as a significant achievement. However, given a second chance, she would have made her career path more guided. Perhaps it might be connected with her desire to be more organized, expressed in her answer to the first question.

Question four triggers reflection: What has shaped me into the person I am now? It brings the most evaluated and detailed responses so far. The descriptions given by Kasia allow me to see how some processes have been changing over time. Regarding priorities, Kasia draws a path, depicting at what stage what elements were significant. In the beginning, learning was a driving element in her life, resembling her desire for self-development. With time, the career took the place of learning. This shows that at the beginning, self-development was high in her hierarchy. However, later, creating and cultivating relations became important for its own. Therefore, at this moment, Kasia declares that for her, it is essential to be helpful to others.

Kasia's self-description provides a rich account of her personal growth. Notably, themes of self-development and social relations reoccur throughout her narrative. In her school years, she grappled with the challenge of balancing self-confidence in her knowledge with the need for peer acceptance. This often resulted in a perceived contradiction between being knowledgeable and being accepted.

Her transition to university life allowed her to connect with like-minded individuals who shared her values. Here, she felt more at ease with her authentic self and learned the importance of humility and respecting others' perspectives. Simultaneously, she recognized the breadth of intellectual abilities in her peers, which tempered her initial high regard for her knowledge.

A turning point came when Kasia secured her first job in a highly stimulating and supportive environment. This experience restored her self-confidence. Ultimately, these

events have shaped Kasia into the person she is today. Someone focused on self-improvement to better assist others, as she believes that personal growth enables her to provide more meaningful support to others. It is evident in her narrative that changes in her environment have been pivotal triggers in her ongoing process of self-development.

What are Kasia's perspectives on her self-development? What pivotal successes and setbacks have shaped her life? Question five elicits an unexpected response from Kasia. She identifies the decision to end a loving relationship as crucial in her self-development. Kasia provides thoughtful reasoning for the significance of this choice, explaining that even though she was emotionally content, the relationship held no long-term prospects and would eventually yield negative outcomes for both parties. Occasionally, she reflects on how she might have handled the situation with more consideration for her boyfriend's feelings. This scenario exemplifies how Kasia navigates the delicate balance between social relationships and her personal development.

Losses and incomplete plans have a significant impact on Kasia. Memories of these events often resurface, and during these moments of reflection, she feels ashamed for not having the strength to pursue those goals. This theme consistently recurs throughout the interview. Despite these moments revisiting her thoughts, Kasia does not believe her life would be substantially different if she had succeeded in her unfulfilled goals.

It seems that Kasia's answers are more detailed and descriptive when the questions concern the status of her 'self,' specifically addressing authenticity and inconsistencies in decision-making. Questions seven and eight reflect on these subjects. Kasia's answers show deep reflection and her reasoning on this matter. She replies that she rarely thinks about moments she made inconsistent with her personality decisions. Nevertheless, she has a pretty elaborate and rational answer on what effect those moments can have on her.

On the one hand, she emphasizes that these moments can happen, and most of the time, she has a logical explanation for why they had to happen. For that matter, Kasia even uses the word "rationalization."

On the other hand, if there is no logical foundation to be inconsistent with her personality, she tries to push away these thoughts and accept that she made a mistake. That suggests that these reflections do appear in her head, even though she wrote that recalls of this sort are rare. Nevertheless, her answer shows that Kasia is aware and sensitive to these subjects. Otherwise, she may not be able to give such complex answers.

Reflection about inauthenticity has a similar tone. Kasia explains that there are situations where being inauthentic may be beneficial for others. Therefore, she will feel good (about being inauthentic) if inauthenticity can be justified that why. She admits that, at times, avoiding confrontation, even if it means sacrificing authenticity, is a path she prefers over embarking on a solitary mission of authenticity. In essence, Kasia is comfortable fulfilling the roles that society expects of her.

Kasia shares that she takes a rather practical and reserved approach when faced with inconsistency between who she is and ought to be. It can be summarized like this: if she has resources and feels capable of fulfilling such a vision, she proceeds. Otherwise, she resigns, knowing that she can fit in anyway. These feelings of inconsistency in that matter often appear in social contexts, e.g., group work and confrontations. So far, the consideration of social effect is quite present in Kasia's narration.

For Kasia, the "vision of self" plays a pivotal role in significant life decisions, shaping into a complex and challenging-to-grasp bigger picture that she aspires to attain. In defining the "inner standard of being," Kasia suggests that it could be viewed as an amalgamation or an average representation of self-development journey patterns for all individuals. Kasia acknowledges that she has encountered the "Conscience of Becoming

the Self," and she envisions its role as the setter of ideals for people. This type of conscience would influence people's emotions, making them feel discomfort in response to failures and satisfaction when success draws them nearer to their ideals.

Step 2: Initial coding: identification of significant elements of the participant's answer that capture the essence of his/her experience.

Kasia's writing style generally seems rational, logical, and descriptive, yet to the point. As a reader, I can see her train of thought and feel guided by her narration. Therefore, I can see how processes concerning self-growth have been changing in her life.

In Kasia's narration, the motif of social impact emerges as a recurrent theme. Indeed, it is a pervasive element in most of her responses. In summary, it becomes evident that Kasia is deeply intertwined with society, striking a balance between her personal development and the influence she may wield on society, all the while recognizing the reciprocal impact of society on her. On the one hand, Kasia places great importance on serving and assisting others. Therefore, in her perspective, self-development is not only vital for her but also for the betterment of others. Conversely, she might occasionally compromise her authentic self to avert conflicts. Furthermore, she discovers comfort in fulfilling societal roles.

To sum up, her behavior can exemplify a conformist approach to life or a reasonable adjustment to society. Depending on which interpretation is chosen, Kasia's point of view on authenticity, inconsistencies regarding self, and her attitude and behavior in society may give very different stories. For the first interpretation, Kasia takes a conformist approach, as she prefers the comfort of social roles and submission at the cost of pursuing her authentic self and fears embracing her individuality. For the second

interpretation, Kasia highly regards kindness, agreeableness, and peace. Thus, she tries to resolve social tensions. She may not be a person who likes to take part in confrontations. Therefore, suppressing her authenticity might be, in fact, adequate for her, as it embraces her need for balance and peace.

Indeed, only Kasia can determine which interpretation holds true. The key is to discern whether her rationale is authentic or, at some level, a form of "rationalization". If the latter is the case, Kasia might be less at ease suppressing her true self than her responses indicate or that she is aware of. In fact, in the interview, difficulty with assertiveness is present. This may be a sign that Kasia is cognizant, to some extent, of her inclination to yield to other's opinions.

The other prevalent theme in Kasia's narrative is her somewhat ambivalent stance on goal pursuit, which plays a pivotal role in her personal growth. However, she finds it challenging. There are moments when she feels ashamed for not exhibiting sufficient persistence in achieving her goals, particularly when memories of unfulfilled plans resurface. This struggle might be connected to her self-described tendency to be disorganized and chaotic. On the flip side, Kasia's unpredictable yet spontaneous and courageous behaviors often enable her to confront challenges. Furthermore, optimism is a vital component to consider in forming a comprehensive understanding of Kasia's character. She frequently references this quality, which is an integral part of her personality, something she genuinely values.

Kasia's interpretations of the "vision of self" and the Conscience of Becoming the Self have one common element. Both refer to an ideal that a person should aim to achieve. For Kasia, the vision of self is, in fact, a presence of such a bigger picture in her mind. At the same time, the Conscience of Becoming the Self is a tool that, by emotional manipulation, helps achieve this inner ideal.

The last two concepts have relatively personalized meanings. In contrast, Kasia took a different approach regarding the "inner standard of being." Although the term "inner" might typically suggest personal connotations, Kasia defined this concept as a sort of summary of self-development journey patterns applicable to all individuals. Hence, she emphasized the <u>universality or commonality of this concept rather than its individuality.</u>

<u>Step 3: Creating emergent themes & Step:4: Searching for connections and patterns within created themes.</u>

The role of society in Kasia's life seems to be an essential issue and proper inspiration for the category name. However, this kind of theme would absorb most of the interview's content at this analysis stage, resulting in an overloaded category that would distinguish nothing. That is why I was trying to use different key to extract well-balanced categories.

Taking a different perspective, I began to notice other noteworthy themes. Among these was Kasia's perspective on authenticity and her thought process regarding this concept. Another significant theme was her contemplation of what holds importance for her and how she maintains a balance between self-development and its impact on society. It is essential to elucidate her strategies and identify her most significant guiding principles.

Lastly, I aimed to grasp her thought processes related to self-development, both in terms of setbacks and achievements, and her way of defining terms like 'Conscience of Becoming the Self' and 'inner standard of being.

<u>Step 5: Arranging themes and subthemes, creating superior categories.</u>

Finally, to address essential interview issues, five categories were created: boundaries of authenticity and its meaning, foundation of self-development, regulation of own self-progress behavior, personal self-progress pattern, and understanding of

Conscience of Becoming the Self. Table 10 shows these main five categories and

adequate content from the interview.

Table 10

Categories created for Kasia's interview – working notes.

Boundaries of authenticity and it's meaning	Foundation of self-development	Regulation of own self-progress behavior	Personal self-progress pattern	Understanding of COBS
- attitude towards social context: conformism, being easily influenced, playing a role, social context as a source of inauthentic being - conditional being yourself - personalities compromise - being self only alone - awareness of authentic/inauthentic being - authenticity – subject, authenticity - object	- constant aspects of self-development: need of constant development, need of planned development, constant work on character - personal recipe for success: assiduity, self-confidence, reasonable planning, faith in set goal, humility -meaning of carrier: goal, success, source of development, stabilization, source of confidence - utility: being useful/helpful for others	- visualization as form of self-regulation: while madding important decisions, visualization of future self, visualization of goal - a shame when lack of assiduity - being self not always as source of comfort - rationalization of inauthentic behaviors	- cots of self-progress: health, stress, relations - desire to learn as first impulse - re-evaluation of meaning of relationships (appreciation) - personal characteristics: optimism, chaotic, openness, luck of assertiveness - need of change as impulse - easy with making decisions and taking risk	- an inner standard of being as general pattern off self-development (not unique) - COBS: determines ideals to achieve - positive/negative general sensation as sensor of distance between person and ideal to achieve

Step 6: Crossover analysis: comparing categories from every interview, rearranging, and creating new superior categories.

In this step, five categories created for Kasia's interview were subjected to one of nine meta-categories.

- Boundaries of authenticity and its meaning-> Foundation for authentic self

- Foundation of self-development -> Strategy and patterns of development

- Regulation of own self-progress behavior ->Foundation for authentic self

- Personal self-progress pattern -> Strategy and patterns of development

- Understanding of COBS-> Conscience of Becoming the Self

Those five categories are, in fact, subjected to three meta-categories as *Foundation for authentic self* and *Strategy and patterns of development* reappear twice. At this point, I searched for interconnections using colors representing each meta-category.

It seems evident that the *Position to social context* meta-category appears within *boundaries of authenticity and its meaning*, as the content of the latter concerns authenticity. In Kasia's responses, those two aspects (society and authenticity) appear together. *Position to social context* meta-category also appears in the *foundation of self-development*, and this is consistent with Kasia's belief in the significance of interconnecting self-development with the well-being of others. This belief is also essential when Kasia contemplates her authenticity. Thus, the meta-category *Foundation for authentic self* can also be found in the *foundation of self-development* category.

Conscience of Becoming the Self meta-category is evident in both the *regulation of own self-progress behavior* and *personal self-progress pattern* categories. This presence is due to the content within these two categories, which encompasses self-regulation in the context of goal pursuit (such as the vision of self, visualizing during decision-making, and the need for change as a driving force for development) and the subsequent experiences

of this process (including feelings of shame when Kasia is aware of not being persistent enough).

The *personal self-progress pattern* category includes significant characteristics from Kasia's self-description, such as optimism, openness, chaotic behavior, and lack of assertiveness. These elements can also be attributed to the *Significant factors of self-development'* meta-category.

Finally, the *Quality of the interview* meta-category is reflected in the *understanding of COBS* category, as the content of the latter provides insights into Kasia's response style and her reflective approach.

Table 11

Crossover analysis for Kasia's interview – working notes.

Boundaries of authenticity and its meaning	Foundation of self-development	Regulation of own self-progress behavior	Personal self-progress pattern	Understanding of COBS
- attitude towards social context: conformism, being easily influenced, playing a role, social context as a source of inauthentic being - conditional being yourself - personalities compromise - being self only alone - awareness of authentic/inauthentic being - authenticity – subject, authenticity - object	- constant aspects of self-development: need of constant development, need of planned development, constant work on character - a personal recipe for success: assiduity, self-confidence, reasonable planning, faith in set goals, humility -meaning of carrier: goal, success, source of development, stabilization, source of confidence - utility: being useful/helpful for others	- visualization as form of self-regulation: while madding important decisions, visualization of future self, visualization of goal - a shame when lack of assiduity - being self not always a source of comfort - rationalization of inauthentic behaviors	- cots of self-progress: health, stress, relations - desire to learn as a first impulse - re-evaluation of the meaning of relationships (appreciation) - personal characteristics: optimism, chaotic, openness, lack of assertiveness - need for change as an impulse - easy with making decisions and taking risk	- inner standard of being as general pattern off self-development (not unique) - COBS: determines ideals to achieve - positive/negative general sensation as a sensor of the distance between person and ideal to achieve

Final product of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. As for an introduction to this chapter, I would like to present important guidelines that I followed while conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Considering the enormous qualitative data and the fact that the concept of Conscience of Becoming the Self has been only briefly investigated, I was trying to fully explore the given material and include in the analysis all the information I found.

In a synthesized way, reflection in the result section guides the reader through the qualitative material. Models visualize findings in this study, while tables show more detailed content of categories. Presented tables and models have a wide range of content. Perhaps, excluding some themes that did not fit would make the whole result part more transparent. However, at this stage of research about Conscience of Becoming the Self, it is difficult to make decisions about what is important or not. I did not want to overlook any possible significant data. What is more, I had to consider that even the definition or already described manifestations of Conscience of Becoming the Self might still change. The same as names for manifestations or for processes, which I treat as draft versions, with a possible chance for improving them.

The main goal of qualitative analysis is to capture the phenomenon and describe it (Kvale, 2010). In contrast, to quantitative approach, were calculating occurrence is significant (Trzópek, 2006). The result section of this study focuses on the qualitative description of the phenomenon. However, I tried to ad information about frequency if that was possible. The complexity of the answers or some categories were always taken into consideration. Therefore, any calculations in this paper are given very carefully with respect with the spirit of qualitative research.

Examples of statements given by participants are direct copies from the written-interviews. As such, they are presented in the original language of the answer with all mistakes, if there were any.

Lastly, the interview's construction allowed insight into how people perceive their development or how they create the self. Therefore, the process of becoming the self is also considered in the results because these processes are deeply connected with Conscience of Becoming the Self.

Quality of the interviews. Vast qualitative data gathered in this study gave an opportunity for in-depth and complex reflection and analysis of how the Conscience of Becoming the Self may function in people's lives. However, although this subchapter may not reflect the actual subject of this study directly, it is still important to mention.

While working on synthesizing substantive themes apparent in the data, I concluded that the way respondents write, or generally how they approach the questions, deserves a separate and unique investigation. The quality of the interviews varied much with sort of formal aspects of the interview, which may imply few conclusions.

The basic aspects, such as whether responses were short, neglected with many mistakes, or carefully written and thematically developed, demonstrate the reliability level of the answers. The length of the responses varied from one-word answers to even 171 words answers. The effort and involvement put in the interview show what kind of motivations participants had while filling in the interview, whether it was an open, eager to reflectively answer the questions approach or a forced, visibly neglecting type of writing.

On the more substantive level, there were also differences between people's narrations about creating self, self-development, and Conscience of Becoming the Self.

The first refers to continuity and accuracy reflected in the responses. The second indicates differentiation within knowledge about self-growth.

In the context of self-growth and the process of creating self, specific knowledge and wisdom are created. People individually define a set of terms concerning their development. If these subjects are present in their everyday reflection, they referred to this knowledge in the interview. Therefore, in some cases, for example, the values, goals, and dreams of respondents were easily detected. However, some interviews had no such insightful narration, as questions seemed to be answered automatically, sometimes even rephrasing the text of the questions. In some cases, it seemed as if a person had not been thinking about these subjects before.

From another perspective, the whole interview might give the impression of an authentic narration, where some meta idea of development could be seen (as a point of reference for participants). While in contrast, there were interviews, which could be perceived as answers to the set of questions.

In some cases, it was possible to recognize the leading motif of narration. For example, being a mother or developing a carrier were such motives. However, the most frequent motives in narration could also have a negative character. Personal struggles were also leading motives in some interviews. For example, if the person was obese, she or he would refer to this problem in the whole interview. Therefore, I classified motives in narrations into three main categories: social, individual, complexes, and disorders.

Lastly, it gained my attention that some participants would make a description of themselves made of only negative or positive aspects while others combined the two.

To summarize, the quality of the interview may give some initial information assumption on how motivated participants were to take part in the study and what their possible level of reflection and awareness about development was. However, it is

important to mention that people in speaking and writing have their specific styles. Therefore, short answers do not necessarily indicate low motivation or lack of reflection. Apart from style, short or neglected answers may suggest that the interview touched the delicate sphere of a person's life. So these participants actively neglected the interview, to not open up about these subjects.

All the aspects mentioned above should be carefully considered altogether. Most of the time, the quality of each interview differs.

A short description of these aspects of the analysis is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Quality of the interview

	Length of the answers	
	Length of the answers	
	short	long
	Level of detail	
Formal aspect	general answers, laconic answers, tautologies, no answers at all	answers featuring details from own life story, detailed manner of expression
	Level of diligence	
	numerous grammar and syntax errors	occasional errors
Quality of the reflection	**Level of understanding of concepts concerning self-development**	
	answers that seem off-topic or focused on the current situation. No wider reflection concerning life events with some inner awareness of self-development. No references to the meta-level of understanding the concept of development. No answers to development questions. Completely unexpected interpretations of questions resulting from a lack of understanding of the concept of self-development	referring own life experiences to the developed understanding of the concept of self-development.
	The clarity of the answer and its consistency	
	difficult to understand the respondent's reasoning. There is no logical connection between themes in the narrative. Inconsistency and self-contradictions in the interview	ease to following the train of thought of a correspondent who is consistent in his statements

	Forced	Open
A possible motivation for the interview	short, evasive responses, inconsistent answers, blocking (avoiding specific questions), no answers to questions	a sincere attempt to answer questions to the best of the respondent's abilities

	The proportion of negative and positive aspects in the descriptions		
	Negative	Positive	Positive and negative
Specific aspects of self-description	describes himself mainly with negative aspects even when asked about strengths or achievements.	describes himself mainly in positive aspects	describes both positive and negative aspects of own personality

	Most important motives
	individual, social, complexes and disorders or others

Constructing of being, perceiving being. The interview was designed to awaken and guide participant's reflection about their own path of self-development. Broad experiences described by people seem to constitute a process of creating the self. However, those experiences fall into two categories. First is *experiencing*, which I understand as engaging in actions and interactions that allow one to distinguish oneself and personality.

These interactions can function within a person on substantially different levels. A person must face and take an approach toward own physicality and psychological construction. These aspects are explored in actions, personal analysis, and social responses people receive.

Dużo obserwowałam, słuchałam i bardzo dużo czytałam. Lubiłam dyskutować na lekcjach polskiego i starać się rozumieć innych ludzi. I myśleć samodzielnie, ale nie odrzucać jakiejś idei tylko dlatego, że wszyscy tak uważają, po prostu myśleć i analizować.
(Women, age 23, Polish)

With emotions being a detecting tool and means of expression simultaneously, a person recognizes what brings satisfaction or pain. Furthermore, it is also decided which emotions constitute personality and which are just responses. Struggles help with self-rediscovering, while socialization gives a frame to which people can refer.

przeprowadzić się do innego kraju, bo wtedy musiałam sama jakoś poradzić. Nikt nie znal mnie, więc nikt nie osądzi jak mam sie zachować. Problemem zawsze dla mnie był

to, że zbyt dużo wątpiłam o swoje pomysły

(Woman, age 25, Italian, filled in an interview in Polish)

Radzenie sobie z problemami, przeżywanie kryzysów, wygrywanie z przeciwnościami
(Man, age 44, Polish)

Through daily reflection and dreams, a person may create more or less conscience guidelines for life.

All these actions are considered as *experiencing* (also presented in Table 13, which allows for distinguishing personality and self. Although the line is very thin, *experiencing* is more of acting and interactions than becoming aware of who we are and how it happened. Even though these processes might happen simultaneously, gaining awareness is one step behind. Therefore, a person can describe self when asked or even share what important values or goals are. However, explaining the reasoning and motivation behind own behavior might be very difficult if the awareness (of own development and being) still needs to be developed.

Nie wiem, nic nie osiągnęłam, mam wrażenie, że życie płynie bez mojego wpływu….
Chyba żadne, bo w zasadzie nic nie starałam się osiągnąć, na niczym mi nie zależało
tak bardzo by coś poświęcić
(Woman, age 24, Polish, answering questions about what was considered as important, and as a struggle)

Table 13

Distinguishing self and personality

			Experiencing			
Physical condition	Psychological Condition	Struggles	Socialization	Analysis	Dreams	Emotions
- attitude towards own physical condition - facing own physical limits and strengths	- attitude towards own psychological condition - experiencing own personality characters in action and in reflection -being self as a source of comfort if a healthy personality -psychiatric and psychological problems suppressing the natural ability to find own self, forcing biased thinking e.g., seeing own self mainly through own sickness or complexes -psychotherapy experienced as essential in the search for true self -getting self-awareness during therapy -getting self-awareness through a fight with psychological problems e.g., social phobia -need for psychological health may block developmental reflection	- experiences - will to change -to feel more self, she or he needs to go out of her or his comfort zone -coping with problems, experiencing crises, wining with obstacles -intensive way of experiencing -experiencing failures and drawing conclusions	-discovering "me" through being different people - establishing oneself in relationships -seeking freedom through socialization and being spontaneous -exceeding personality through socialization and being spontaneous - social effect as modifier of own behavior	-searching for meaning in life -setting priorities, values - setting goals -observation -being faithful to own ideals -acts according to own system of values -analysis of own mistakes and opinions of others about us and drawing conclusions -forming self through independence: observation, listening, reading, discussing, and being open to ideas -a process of creating self as achieving a higher level of self-development, simultaneously revealing a new sphere of abilities - becoming self through extremes and analysis	- often reflection about "who am I" - night reflection on own self - goals created through dreams -forming worldview and priorities through achieving dreams and goals	-being consistent with own temperament -discovering passion and love -expressing own emotions -emotional tension and/or stress making it difficult to be/search for self -creating self through emotions -emotions as an expression of an authentic being -experienced the costs of being an emotional person -to be more self-need to control anger -taking a position towards own emotions e.g. in the process of becoming the self-eliminating, suppress own emotions to "become no one" - being unable to be himself appear in the moment of sadness, lower mood - overcoming difficult emotions e.g., anxiety

That is why *gaining awareness* (Table 14) is the second aspect, which constitutes the process of creating a being. If distinguishing the self and personality through *experiencing* is like building a constantly changeable structure. Then, *gaining awareness* can be compared to an architect with plans and projects for the building, so he or she knows why and what some building elements were built for. At the same time, while working on the construction, an architect upgrades his own qualifications. Therefore, he or she is the one who evaluates what needs to be improved and how to manage it. Subsequently, an architect has a knowledge of the history of construction and the ability to reform it (often to improve it).

There were found various shades of *gaining awareness* in the qualitative data. Through the analysis, it seemed to me that, this process can be explained through three functions it fulfills.

In some cases, multifaceted elements of self-development are combined with a subtle line of reasoning. Participants would recognize some life events as significant moments of realization when the existing state of being was challenged by a certain moment in life. Therefore, the whole development process became more aware as self-questioning started. There are many examples of events that may have such an impact. From particular moments such as the death of a relative or the birth of a child to longer periods of time when a person faces environmental change, e.g., moving abroad or studies.

Poczucie samotności i alienacji
(Man, age 24, Polish)

Śmierć rodziców, brak pieniędzy na studia, narodziny dziecka, wypadek żony
(Man, age 72, Polish)

Nagłe zmiany środowiska, np. zmiana lub skończenie szkoły - wtedy weryfikowały się wszystkie przyjaźnie, a w nowej grupie można było zacząć od zera budować relacje, korzystając z doświadczeń.
(Man, age 30, Polish)

nie zdanie studiów i pierwsza wizyta u psychologa
(Man, age 26, Polish)

Stanie się ojcem zdecydowanie zmieniło mój pogląd na życie
(Man, age 38, Polish)

However, not only changes are forming reflections. As a type of upbringing or childhood, a person received can be identified as crucial for later self-awareness.

Liberalna rodzina
(Man, age 28, Polish)

Considering all, while analyzing interviews, it could be assumed what level of awareness a person had. To be precise, the level of awareness concerns not only the exact moment of the study (so the moment of answering the interview) but also the level of awareness a person had had in the past events described in the study. Therefore, some people would create narration, where it was possible to extract motivations or inspiration behind actions taken in the past, or a person was able to conclude what present guidelines in life are at this very moment. What is more, some participants were able to catch how their perspectives and awareness were changing over time. Additionally, in some cases, respondents were able to declare that their current level of awareness was not enough to completely answer the questions, hoping to improve it in the future.

For example women, age 21, Australian, shared such reflection:

very self-reflective and as I have gotten older the process has become more genuine and also informed. As I have grown up I have also become more aware of my own flaws and other's and how they can actually be problematic. I am also aware of how my behaviour can impact the broader community and environment.

Na zasadzie eliminacji. Gdy nie odnajdywałem się w czymś - szukałem czegoś innego.
(Man, age 24, Polish, forming priorities)

Therefore, described above elements build up a *sphere of self-awareness* (Table 14) where all life elements can be connected thanks to a rising sense of self-development. Sphere – because it is not a moment when awareness of self-development starts. It is rather a space where reflection starts to become even more aware and self-guided.

As already mentioned, a *sphere of self-awareness* is about rediscovering and finding a unique line of reasoning about self-development. The second function of *gaining awareness* is recognizing a *workspace*. That means issues recognized by a person as necessary to deal with to make the process of becoming self-adequate.

Based on the results, the *workspace* (Table 14) is divided into two main groups: *spheres of learning* and *process of acceptance*. *Spheres of learning* is understood in the context of self-perception on the one had. That is, finding ways for self-expression and reflecting on how to feel good about oneself. On the other hand, self-constitution in a social context is perceived as a learning need. Therefore, within a reflection setting, significant aspects of life. Also, learning to understand social impact and taking a position to it, e.g., creating distance.

Process of acceptance has similar content to the previous aspect. However, while analyzing data, issues considering acceptance seemed deserving to be separately considered. Accepting the self may be a struggle. This process refers to own

psychological constitution (e.g., psychological traits) and physical features appearance, condition). It is also an attitude a person takes to their own life journey, including personal features, gains and losses, or accepted and unaccepted personal features like for example self-esteem.

poczucie własnej beznadziejności i zagubienia w świecie, nadzieja na lepsze jutro, wiara w ludzi i ich dobro

niska samoocena

(Woman, age 20, Polish, self-description and difficulties)

What is accomplished in the process of *distinguishing self and personality* is the subject of the *acceptance process*. Whether there is acceptance or a need to improve, simultaneously and accordingly, personality is changed.

Nie poddawanie się, optymizm i wiara w swoje umiejętności
(Woman, age 25, Polish)

Akceptacja bądź zmiana na lepsze tego, co chciałam zmienić, pogodzenie się z nieszczęsnym losem
(Woman, age 22, Polish)

Therefore, *distinguishing self and personality* and *gaining awareness* do cooperate. In Table 14, content from the interview is synthesized in thematical categories, reflecting *gaining awareness*.

Table 14

Gaining awareness

Workspace		Sphere of self-awareness			Tools rising awareness	
Spheres of learning	*Process of acceptance*	*Circumstances*	*Breakthrough events*	*Now/then self-experience*	*Inner standard of being*	*Vision of self*
Comfort - need to learn to feel comfortable with oneself - need to learn to feel comfortable with self under different circumstances **expressing** - finding own way of expressing self - own way of living **self-recognition** - own values - own needs - own priorities **distance** - learning to create a healthy distance to social	- being in reasonable contact with own emotions - finding peace with myself - attitude towards own journey -acceptance of own physical appearances - physical health and acceptance of own physical appearance as important background for unbiased search for own self e.g., not describing oneself	- observation of other people and self-comparison - analysis of causes "what happened and why." - time e.g., aging - realization of the impact society has on her/his self	- drastic change of priorities, worldview, and life goals e.g., wanting to be a teacher since childhood, but having serious doubts now, burnout - dramatic, traumatic experiences as a moment of enlightenment e.g., suicide attempt, death of relative, war - recent foundations of self-falling apart e.g., lost faith, while it was a major life motive in the past	- less acting now in comparison to the past - the process of becoming the self with age becomes more genuine and informed -from some moment in time, more reflective being, reasonable progress - perceiving true self now (more than in the past) - pleasing, adjusting to	- a practical function of creating and pursuing goals - signaling level of accuracy between actions and own self, values, priorities - general interpretations, natural processes - self project	- circumstance of its appearance - faced with the thought " I am not what I could have been." - negative - function

impact - recognition of "me, myself" from/in society and reality - healthy egoism e.g., putting myself first **assessing influences** - assessing what impact things can have on a person - learning to stand for own needs - learning to work, learning to rest	through complexes. -psychological health as an important background in searching for own self, helping in recognition of own self - accepting own personality traits	- therapy, psychotherapy - significant health issues - being in the wrong place e.g., the wrong job	- diagnosis - life change e.g., birth of a child, moving to another country - significant changes in relationships e.g., breaking the toxic relationship - a significant change of the social environment	social expectations in the past, experienced negatively e.g., feeling empty, isolated, and alone in a group of people - a rising reflection of what I don't understand yet, getting interested in the self-actualization concept in the context of my own development	- creating a healthy distance between self and society

However, a third element of *gaining awareness* still needs to be explained. It is called *tools raising awareness*. At this point, I want to refer to one question from the interview:

"Have you ever experienced sort of "vision of yourself" according to which you would made your decisions?

- *How would you describe this experience?*

- *Describe circumstances of its' appearance*

- *How would you understand and define such a term as "inner standard of being"?*

The answers to these questions were very divergent. Trying to understand them, I realized that the concepts in question serve mainly one goal: being a mental tool for *gaining awareness*. I captured meanings from the data into themes. However, the content of the inner standard of being and vision of self may coincide, as the difference between them is not very strong. Therefore in Table 15, the content of the inner standard of being is presented. While Table 16 reflects the participant's understanding of the vision of self.

Shortly, the inner standard of being would help recognize and achieving goals, ideas, and priorities. Furthermore, it was adjusting a person's behavior to be consistent with the inner standards a person creates. The inner standard of being was also recognized as a sort of self-project. If it were a self-driven project, then inner standard would help to achieve individual, unique self-development. If it was understood as a social scheme, then the inner standard would work as a frame for creating an adjustable but not unique personality. The inner standard of being was also considered important in balancing the self within society.

Table 15

Inner standard of being

Practical function of creating and pursuing goals	Signaling level of accuracy between actions and own self, values, priorities	General interpretations, natural processes	Self-project		Creating a healthy distance between self and society
			Personal project - self-driven	Social self-scheme - socially -driven	
- way to achieve goals: setting goals high standard - closer to goal, low standard -further to goal, - contact with "future self"(one needs to know who he wants to be in a future, and behave as his "future self") - reflections thanks to which desires become reality - influencing who we become: deciding what action to undertake	- as conscience signaling that person is doing something against himself -truthfulness - doing things in accordance with himself - guidelines thanks to which we become themselves - individual, very silent inner voice giving the right answers -coherency with own values, modification, and control of behavior adequately to own priorities -having ethical standards and following them, becoming a person who can bring	- self-actualization - growing up - a process of self-awareness started in childhood - maturity to some things, behaviors, etc. - in a life span our experiences form our standard -a creation of own self -inner development, emotional -being defined as space for the evolution of the psyche	- creating own person - my own expectations of self -frame which contains a perfect or better version of self to which everyone should (doesn't have to) aim for -cannot be defined before a person knows who she/he should become -fulfillment of minimum self-expectations -aiming for a better self, working on self-weaknesses -being a person, you are not ashamed to see in the mirror -creating character and personality based on deeply embodied ethical values and hierarchy of values - who I am at the core/ own values, morals, beliefs, feelings	- the way I am naturally and the way I would be if all other circumstances, people, or other was not taken into consideration -a general pattern of self-development (not unique) -construct created through cultural and social standards, not harming own personality -schema of each stage of psychological and mental development common for everyone/,	- fight between who you are and what people expect from us - fight for own opinion - using interactions with the outside world to form own personality -expectations from herself/himself

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-leaving comfort zone in order of self-development
-being consequent
-defined as a need for pursuing chosen ideal
- self -developed standards, a person refers to while making a decision

something good to other people
-defined as becoming one, we are, avoiding acts against our will
-necessary values which are later base for creating own personality
-who I am at the core/ own values, morals, beliefs, feelings

-possessing some characteristics but in some range
- self-aware
- true, inner personality

- an inner sense of what your expectations are for yourself, others and boundaries you have, an ethical stance on a situation which are driven by values
- being your truest and most authentic self as possible
-like an inner mantra that has the goal to remind me who I am, who I want to be, what are my values
- who I am?

however, it is a small part of the process of creating a person's personality
-a standard which helps to fit in, to become e certain type of person, which is a flat, extremely mediocre type of person that doesn't exist

Table 16

Vision of self

Circumstance of its appearance	Faced with the thought " I am not what I could have been"	Function	Negative
- goals, life goals	-somatic sensations	- life goal	- experienced
- future plans, reflections on where a person would like to be at certain points of life or when something in the present is inconvenient	-psychological manifestations: remorse, shame, insecurity, need to run away, frustration, a feeling of	- way to achieve authenticity - self-confirmation in decisions requiring leaving the comfort zone, but important for the development	as anger and grim satisfaction
- dreams, in-depth reflections, night reflections	inside pain, fear, resignation	-giving inner peace, inner harmony	- brings anxiety
- decisions small, significant decisions	-lost sense of meaning	- approval and excitement, energy for change and for plans	if a long time
- inner dialogs	-thoughts: many thoughts in the mind	realization	ago chosen
- satisfaction	(why, what for)	-faith, belief in herself, feeling of confidence	vision of self is
- free actions	-inner conflict: a feeling of being lost,	-feel self-fulfillment and a sense of purpose/	now
- acting against own rules and own will	pain	-chosen role e.g., Being a traveler	questionable
- being consequent	-being suppressed by social impact	-perfect version of self but not accepted by society	- dreadful
- therapy sessions	-lack control in life, uncertainty	-giving positive emotions: feeling of warmth and happiness	experience
- experiences	causing tenseness, stress	-doing things as he wants, pursuing more challenges,	
- being socially competent	-experienced as lack of self-	-positive motivator, powerful motivator	
- being suppressed by society	fulfilling, aversion to everything,	-awareness	
- fear of the unknown and determination to prove something to herself and others	experienced when reaching a goal is too difficult	-feeling of consistency -allows feeling free	
-appear when stable self-esteem and empathy for others	-doing something consistent with personality (conformist) but against	-helps making decisions consistent with own values, reminds values, reminds values we want to follow	

- while acting accordingly to own personality e.g., while being extrovert, loud, careless
- appeared as a kid growing up, hiding my true self through fear
- appear at a safe place e.g., at home
- appears when a person sees someone she would want to be
- appearing when new tasks and problems come
- appearing when she compares herself to others

own hierarchy of values
-feeling as if she was a bad person who tries to repress the truth
-when comparing own achievement to achievements of people of own age/ also pressed by image spread by media
-the impulse to change
-a motivating belief in oneself

-experienced as a successful realization of the chosen idea
-escape from reality
- experienced as positive, inspiring
- no vision of self, more visualization of future scenarios during decision making
- "Ideal me", referring to the ideal self: what I would do? How would I look like (be like)
- positive, gives her drive to continue pursuing it
- exciting time, love to dream and envision things, it makes goals
- experienced as feeling confident
- who I want to be

There was a diverse understanding of the function vision of the self has. Some are coherent with what had been said about the inner standard of being, e.g., help to achieve goals. Other functions were focused on becoming more autonomous or sticking to chosen role. Circumstances, the vision of self appears varies from mental activities (e.g., inner dialogs, dreams) through decision-making and experiences. Finally, a vision of self appears as a reaction to social impact, e.g., social pressure.

An interesting category is a *vision of self* in a context of reflection that person is not what she or he is supposed to be. Within this theme, participants would describe inner, negative sensations as a response to this reflection. Lastly, a vision of self may be a source of negative sensation when goals to achieve are too high. Therefore, visualizations bring frustration and negative emotions.

Detailed examples from the study are presented in Table 16, as a vision of self has been only briefly presented.

Figure 1: Process of creating being
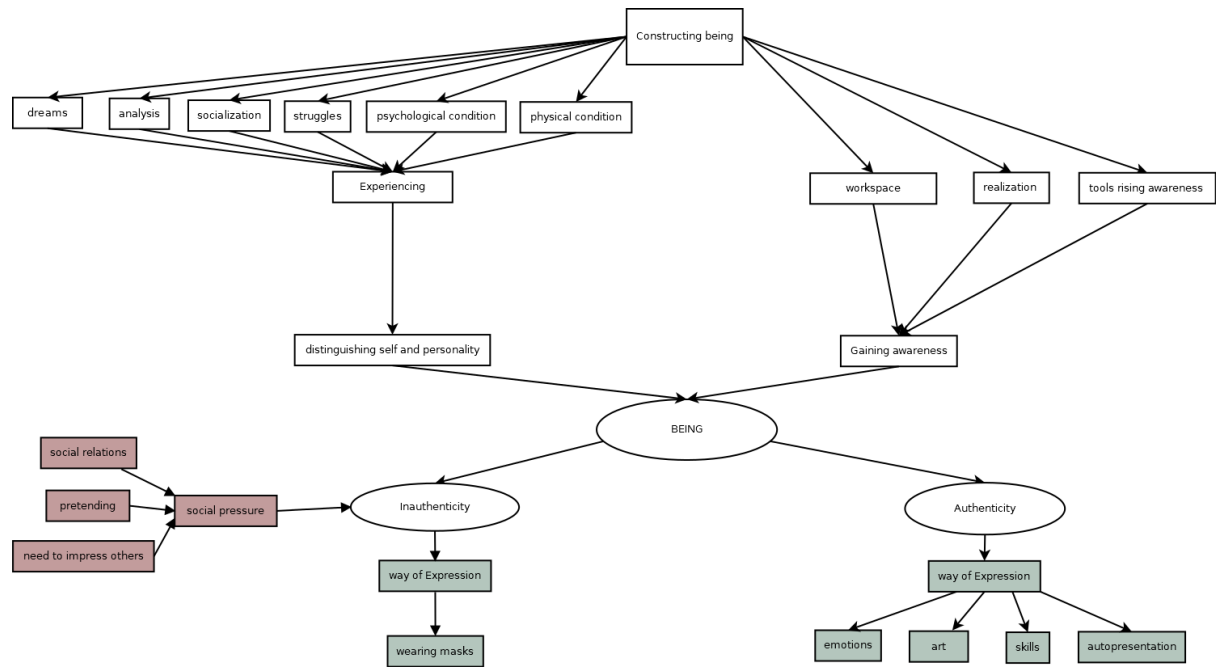
Summarizing, *distinguishing self*, and *gaining awareness* are similar, in some cases overlapping processes, both constituting Being. In Figure 1, it is visualized in what relationships these processes might be to each other. For example, *experiencing* is located higher than *gaining awareness* to visualize that *gaining awareness* is more advanced. It requires self-reflection, while experiencing is associated with action.

The way this subchapter is constructed is coherent with the relations shown in Figure 1. The description goes, from constructing being (top) to perceiving being (down: authenticity, inauthenticity). This subchapter started with constructing being, and now we move (as in Figure 1) to perceiving being.

Perceiving being is an oversimplified statement capturing an understanding and experience of authenticity and inauthenticity. Thus, the interview also explored how these issues were exhibited in the participant's life. Being can be perceived as a constantly morphing product of a self-development process. Therefore, it can be questioned whether the crystalizing being is authentic or not. The answer to this question was a wide and complex issue to reflect on. Apparently, not only the definition of authenticity is in question and varies on each person's experiences. The way people experience authenticity in life can be very different as well. Inner definitions people create are closely related to the experiences they had and have.

Through data analysis, necessary conditions emerged, allowing people to be authentic. It depends on them whether a person feels authentic or inauthentic. Therefore, conditions have inner and external differentiation.

To make it easier to follow, I will start first with the experiences people may have in a state of authenticity. No external conditions to be authentic are recognized. However, there is a set of inner conditions. Therefore, participants would declare that a specific

inner state must be acquired to feel authentic. It concerns psychological health and stability alongside widely understood self-acceptance and autonomy (details in

Table 17)**.**

Moim zdaniem komfortu po to jest życie żeby go przejść na własnych zasadach nie na cudzych każdy ma swoje i tylko jedno i trzeba to zrobić po swojemu
(Women, age 19, Polish, answering the question whether being self is a source of comfort or otherwise)

Acceptance concerns the self, therefore it implies acceptance of own psychological traits, flaws, advantages, and disadvantages, desires, and additionally – one's own choices, decisions, and paths one went through must be accepted to make it possible to feel authentic.

Jest źródłem komfortu. To trochę jak prysznic po treningu albo ściągnięcie szpilek albo jakiegoś "galowego" ubrania po całym dniu. Jeśli zgadzamy się z tym, kim jesteśmy, to bycie sobą jest źródłem komfortu; jeśli akceptujemy siebie. Nie potrafię inaczej wyjaśnić, dlaczego; po prostu.
(Women, age 23, Polish)

Significantly, there were cases when people who declared feeling authentic did not perceive this state as conditional. For them, authenticity is the state perceived regardless of any conditions. Therefore, the current state of being was described as it should be.

Nie miewam takich momentów.

(Woman, age 24, Polish, answering the question about moments of inauthenticity)

Nie mają, bo zawsze robię to, co jest zgodne ze mną i tym, co myślę

Zawsze czuję się autentyczna

(Woman, age 24, Polish, answering the question about moments of inauthenticity)

Zawsze staram się żyć w zgodzie ze sobą, tak by takich sytuacji nie doświadczyć, nie

pamiętam ich

(Man, age 33, Polish)

Perception of authenticity is quite different if a person is in a state of inauthenticity. Therefore, what does being authentic mean for people who know they are not authentic?

As mentioned before, here are also recognized conditions to be authentic. However, they are of an external kind. External conditions generally refer to the environment as essential to make authenticity possible. Thus, a tolerant, accepting, and supportive society would create a safe space for authentic being. Therefore, in this context, acceptance takes the form of the necessity to be accepted or to have permission to be authentic. While authentic people require self-acceptance. Therefore, some reason for inauthenticity is fear and concern about being rejected (see

Table *19)*.

It is comforting knowing I can be myself especially under different circumstances and

around different people without fearing judgement

(Women, age 21, Australian)

Therefore, it seems that authenticity by authentic people is perceived as an unconditional, smooth state or state requiring fulfilling psychological conditions of stability and self-acceptance. While for inauthentic people to be authentic, external conditions must be met, concerning mainly the perception of psychological safety within an environment.

Authenticity can also be contemplated, whether this state is a source of comfort or not. Based on data analysis, the comfort that authenticity gives is mostly concerned with a feeling of liberty, freedom, and a sense of an unforced, natural way of behavior (see Table 18).

Tak. Kiedy nie trzeba udawać kogoś kim się nie jest nie trzeba uważać na każde słowo.

Wszystko jest swobodne

(Man, age 30, Polish)

Jest źródłem komfortu ponieważ nigsy nie zakładam że osiągnąłem szczyt lecz punkt z

którego widzę dalszą drogę w górę

(Man, age 23, Polish, answering the questions about whether being self is comfortable or not)

Yes it is a source of comfort because there have been times when I have not. It is important to me to not have to act like someone else as this does not bring me joy, whereas being myself has brought be peace and comfort

(Woman, age 23, British, answering the question about whether being self is comfortable or not)

Yeah being true to yourself, personality-wise is comfortable because I think faking a personality is draining and confusing for yourself, like you don't even know how to act no more

(Woman, age 24, Ukrainian leaving in Britain for 20 years)

yes. it makes me feel aligned

(Woman, age 23, Vietnamese leaving 10 years in the USA, answering the question about whether being self is comfortable or not)

However, authenticity can also be a source of discomfort. It depends on the negative self-evaluation a person makes. The negative evaluation can differ in a few ways. One way is when a participant declares himself as a bad person or having a bad influence on others. Therefore, being authentic was seen as expressing harmful but essential parts of own personality, e.g., hurting other people through being self.

Przeciwnie, jestem złym człowiekiem

Bez problemu

(Man, age 25, Polish, answering questions about whether being self is comfortable or not, and how lack of authenticity is experienced)

The second way is if a person does not receive or predicts low acceptance from society.
Then being self is expected to be painful.

Myślę że to zależy od tego jaki jesteś. Czasami lepiej jest nie być sobą.
(Man, age 24, Polish, answering the questions about whether being self is comfortable or not)

It is incredibly stressful and often unsafe.
(Woman, age 21, British, answering the question about whether being self is comfortable or not)

Thirdly, negative evaluation appears when a present way of being is unsatisfactory. Therefore person's "authentic behavior" exhibits insufficient being. Lastly, authenticity was described as a possibly dreadful experience if a person struggles with addiction. Therefore, authenticity was understood as a moment of self-awareness, a painful connection to reality.

Bardzo źle, ale czasem ciężko być naprawdę sobą kiedy czujesz to spięcie w sobie
(Man, age 19, Polish)

I think feeling more "me" (perhaps be being sober) is a scary prospect sometimes. I enjoy feeling "numb" and disconnected from myself sometimes because otherwise things feel a little too "real" and I start to get anxious. On the flip side, feeling disconnected from myself can also be quite distressing and I want to be in touch with the real me.

(Woman, age 27, Australian)

The subject of feeling discomfort with authenticity is still not fully developed in this thesis. The explanations above touch mainly on the problem of negative self-evaluation. Therefore, authenticity in those cases was perceived as an unpleasant expression of an insufficient personal state. Therefore, authenticity was, in fact, perceived negatively. However, by some participants, authenticity was also defined as a precious privilege, requiring constant fighting for oneself and overcoming obstacles and limitations. I decided that "fighting" is associated, in fact with an unpleasant emotional state, even if the cause to fight for is highly significant. Therefore, I considered statements about fighting for authenticity or being self as expressions of discomfort rather than comfort. Lastly, some participants would not directly decide whether being self is a source of comfort or not.

I think you mean "Is feeling more "you" a source of comfort..." Anyways, no, not particularly. There are things about myself I like and those are comforting but there are other things I don't like. There are times when feeling more "me" is comforting, but there's times where things I struggle with that are also "me" (very natural struggles for me...the way I am when I'm not trying to be better) are not a comfort, because that's not how I would like to be.
(Woman, age 45, American, answering the question whether being self is comfortable or not)

Nie zawsze. W niektórych względach które dotyczą tylko mnie wole robić co chce i być sobą, natomiast zdaje sobie sprawę ze nie zawsze jest to optymalne wyjście podczas

życia w społeczeństwie, gdyż bezwzględne bycie sobą mogłoby doprowadzić do

niepotrzebnych konfliktów. Dostosowywanie siebie do pewnych konwencji społecznych

i przyjmowanie określonych ról jest moim zdaniem konieczne

(Woman, age 25, Polish)

To summarize, on the one hand, being self is a source of freedom, liberty, and self-directed behavior. While on the other, it can be understood as a privilege worth fighting for, a sphere of nearest development. Finally, if the current being or certain characteristics of a person are negatively evaluated or unaccepted (by a person or society), then being self is a source of discomfort (Table 17, Table 18).

At this point, I want to move to the analogical contemplation of comfort and discomfort in the context of inauthenticity (Table 20).

Discomfort concerning inauthenticity was associated with unpleasant somatic sensations and a low emotional state. Various negative psychological variables, e.g., low self-esteem, were creating a basis for insecurity, a sense of being lost, alienated, and misunderstood by self and others. Pretending, playing, and wearing masks were experienced as absorbing energy, exhausting. Being entangled within the social web was also another means of discomfort. Ranging from social subordination to acting to impress others or to fit in, later resulting in remorse and stress due to the notion of cheating other people and self. Lastly, being deprived of own self, self-objectified with no will for self-growth.

Jakoś tak szaro, nijako, jakbym musiała robić coś na pozór by zadowolić innych
(Women, age 25, Polish)

Jakbym oszukiwała samą siebie - gram w teatrze. Dla kogoś nie dla siebie

(Women, age 23, Polish)

Czuję, że samą siebie oszukuję, ale czuję też, że tak muszę
(Women, age 25, Polish)

Nieszczęśliwa, zmęczona, bo muszę robić coś, czego nie chcę.
(Woman, age 22, Polish)

Ashamed of myself

(Women, age 30, British)

Exhaustion, anxiety

(Woman, age 21, British, answering a question about how inauthenticity is perceived)

Those are forms of discomfort people express due to inauthentic behavior. However, the same as in the case of authenticity, inauthenticity also was, in some cases, perceived as a source of comfort.

Being conformist or playing roles was also recognized as part of being. The way people wear masks can be accepted as part of their identity. Therefore, the interpretation goes, whatever I do, comes from me. Therefore, moments of inauthenticity are also part of me.

Ja tworzę ten brak autentyczności w którym czuje się jak ryba w wodzie
(Man, age 23, Polish)

Carefully estimating, most participants declared authenticity as a source of comfort, while 18 experienced it as discomfort. Analogically, more than half of the group declare inauthenticity to bring discomfort, and only four participants, seem to reason otherwise.

Following Figure 1, conditions for authenticity and inauthenticity were discussed alongside how these two states can be experienced. Therefore, I want to focus shortly on ways authenticity and inauthenticity can be expressed in people's behavior. Through data analysis, authenticity in people's behavior was expressed on personal and social levels. Personal is when a person declares to feel more authentic while being creative or mastering own skills and potential. At the same time, social level refers to expressing authenticity within social interactions, e.g., fulfilling social roles, being socially useful.

Expressions of inauthenticity were limited to wearing masks or playing roles in social contexts.

All concepts and processes in the discussion are captured in Table 17 and Table 18 for authenticity, while Table 19 and Table 20 for inauthenticity. In both tables, there is a section with *general interpretation*. It consists of analysis results for authenticity and inauthenticity that did not fit into any general categories but might be interesting to get familiar with.

There is also a category concerning social impact interpretation, present in both tables; however, in Figure 1, visualized only for inauthenticity. Shortly, I would like to explain how social impact is experienced from the perspective of discussed concepts. Some aspect will be repeated, as social element appears throughout the whole result analysis within this section.

In a state of authenticity, on the one hand, it is essential to create a healthy and safe distance between self and society. On the other, social relations and interactions are

means of expression for authenticity, e.g., being authentic through fulfilling a significant for a person social roles.

For inauthenticity, social context works as background, which allows actual recognition of own inauthenticity. The social impact, however, has, from this perspective, mostly negative influences on a person's expression of being.

To summarize, the description of the whole process of creating being started with constructing being (Figure1), which then splits into *distinguishing self and personality* and *gaining awareness*. As a self-updating product of both, *being* is created. *Being,* then, can be perceived as authentic or inauthentic. Depending on people's understanding and interpretations (e.g., conditional or unconditional, social impact), both states might bring feelings of comfort or discomfort and can be differently expressed.

Table 17

Authenticity – phenomenological structure: part 1 Ways of interpretation

Way of interpretation			
Conditions to be authentic		Social impact	General interpretation
Unconditional	Conditional		
- always being authentic with self no matter what - being exactly the person, she/he wanted to be since childhood - no changes to feel more self	Inner - need to be more resistant to social impact (higher assertiveness, care less about other people's opinions) - psychological stability - psychological health - acceptance of the world - high self-esteem - acceptance of own decision - acceptance of own self - acceptance of own personality - acceptance of own flaws - understanding of own desires - inner peace - healthy distance - reaching own way of leaving - autonomy	- being self as being resistible to social pressure and social influence - defending own opinion, defending own personality - an important part of own being: being useful for others, being kind - utility: being useful/helpful to others - sociable characteristics as significant for own self - the quality of social relations as an important part of self - an important part of being, fulfilling social roles e.g., Being a good parent - being self as a source of comfort, however a feeling of low acceptance of some own characteristic - being self as a source of comfort coz there is no need to pretend. Pretending may bring around people who do not truly accept us	- searching for goals, values - being consistent with own temperament -being self as inner harmony, inner peace -being authentic self as a positive aspect of functioning, giving peace, balance, and happiness -getting your own way -living according to own rules -authenticity – subject, authenticity - object -need for personal transgression -being self as a natural part (flow) of life -acting vs. Being: self-reflection that being self is a source of comfort for people who need a sense of security, being self is being honest and it protects from being discovered of playing some else/the other way round is for people who like to "act" and "pretend." -honesty -privilege, demanding constant fighting. Not always a possible way of expressing own alterity. -constant pursuit to be a true self -being self as a constant state, being not self as effortful acting -being honest as being self -being self is good for psychological health -characteristics a person poses are no advantages or disadvantages prior. They are just qualities that can be used in a positive or negative way. -focus not on how to feel more self but how to be a better self -flexible authenticity to feel comfort

Table 18

Authenticity – phenomenological structure: part 2. Experiencing

Experiencing		
Level of comfort		*Way of expression*
Comfort	Discomfort	
-being self as a source of comfort coz he can behave as he feels, do what he wants -a source of liberty -a source of (if successful) pride, happiness, and satisfaction -being self as a source of comfort coz pretending is exhausting -being self as a source of comfort coz there is no need to prove anything to anyone -being self as a source of comfort coz he feels good in his skin (feels comfortable with himself -being self – less stress, more comfort in life -improves relations with others -being self makes a person happy -takes benefits from own abilities and own experiences	- dissatisfaction with the present way of being, wanting of *different* being - negative evaluation of own person e.g., discomfort when a person thinks he/she is a bad person - a source of fear before acting authentic - vision of authentic self as frustrating, impossible to achieve goals - being self may be toxic for other people, being self at any cots may give apparent comfort, with time bringing trouble - claims that her whole personality needs to be improved -authenticity as a privilege, demanding constant fight. Not always a possible way of expressing own alterity. -way to be self-perceived as very difficult -fighting for oneself and overcoming emotional crises -no self-acceptance brings frustration and auto-destruction - being self a scary prospect when a person is addicted: being sober experienced as being close to reality, disconnection with self (too close: burden of reality, too far: losing a sense of reality and own self completely)	- expressing self through auto presentation - being self is to express himself and using his own advantages in the presence of others - creativity as means of expressing self - expressing self through mastering own skills - expressing self through social relations, being socially useful

Table 19

Inauthenticity – phenomenological structure: part 1 Ways of interpretation

Way of interpretation		
conditions to be authentic	*social impact*	*general interpretation*
Conditional		
External	- feeling less authentic in a social context	-rationalization of own inauthentic behavior
- the necessity of getting permission to be authentic	- awareness of being subordinated to society	-accepting inauthenticity behavior as part of own being
- need to be accepted	-social pressure as a source of inauthentic behavior	- awareness of own authentic and inauthentic being (mask, playing roles)
- depends on the social circumstances person is in at the moment	- a creation of being strongly influenced by romantic relations (adjusting to the needs of the partner)	-personalities compromise
-being self, only when a person is alone	-feeling of greyness, and blandness, as if she should create appearances for other people	-hopelessness due to lack of awareness of self (what I really want)
- fear of being rejected when authentic	- awareness of own authentic and inauthentic being (mask, playing roles)	-no point of preference, no clear self, therefore difficulty in making consistent with personality decisions
-being split between being authentic and conformist	-experienced as playing in theatre for someone, not for her/himself	-inconsistent with personality decisions treated as a lesson on what *not to do*
-tolerant society	-being inauthentic: feels like a slave who sells own ideals and values	-lack of authenticity treated as an accidental mistake
- social acceptance		-acting not according to own personality do not bring him a feeling of lack of authenticity
-being self conditionally source of comfort, when some characteristics of a person may be badly interpreted by other people		
-need for more free time		
-being appreciated by others		
- being comfortable for self-situations		

Table 20

Inauthenticity – phenomenological structure: part 2. Experiencing

Experiencing		
level of comfort		*way of expression*
Comfort	Discomfort	
-conformist, being easily influenced, playing a role -personalities compromises -taking masks as part of being	-somatic sensations: a sense of smothering. stomachache, problems with breathing, chest tightness -psychological: a feeling of instability, a feeling of being lost, a feeling of insecurity, a feeling of misunderstanding, feeling remorse because (sort of) cheating "other', feeling of uneasy, hopelessness due to lack of authenticity (with inner location of control of actions), anger, lower his self-esteem, frustration, a feeling of emptiness, a feeling of no energy, self-disappointment, a feeling of being limited and foggy, often reflection, gives her frustration, lack of assertiveness, pain, and remorse, makes a person vulnerable, low sense of control, she feels as timid - bad emotional state -unsure, tense, stressed, upset, feeling tired, unhappy because she is doing not what she wants, submissive with low self-confidence -social: a feeling of subordination to others, "acting" consumes energy, pretending is exhausting, a feeling of greyness, blandness, as if she should create appearances for other people, wearing various masks as a source of discomfort, pretending is exhausting, a feeling of insecurity, a feeling of misunderstanding, feeling remorse because (sort of) cheating "other', brings stress cos she feels needs to impress others -feeling objectified, feeling bad, feeling deprived of own selfhood, feeling alienation -brings unwillingness to development	- wearing masks - playing, acting

Structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self. In this subchapter, I will introduce the structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self that emerged from Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of data gathered in this study. The aim of this analysis was an exploration of the Conscience of Becoming the Self phenomenon with an unbiased approach, thus open coding was used.

First, I want to introduce a structure that seemed mostly adequate to the data I had received in this study. It is visualized in Figure 2 and will be subsequently described in this chapter.

Figure 2: Conscience of Becoming the Self structure
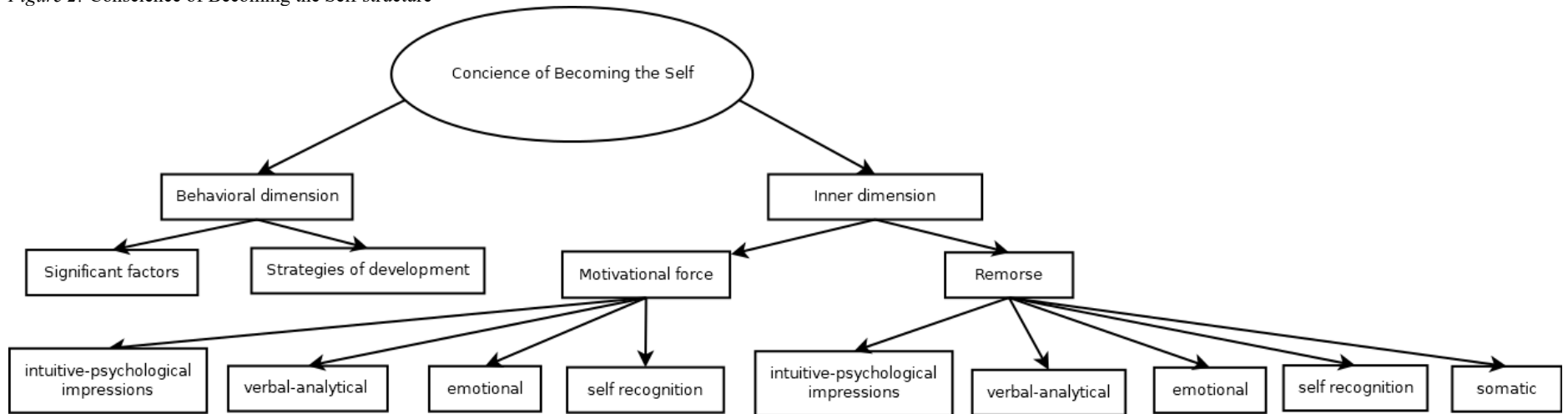
I will start with the behavioral dimension, as its content is closely related to the process of becoming the self. In Figure 2, the behavioral dimension is divided between the *significant factors* and *strategies and patterns of development*. As such, the behavioral dimension is in-between Conscience of Becoming the Self and the process of becoming the self, like a bridge.

Through the interview, participants were given an opportunity to describe themselves. In the beginning, they could give undirected descriptions. Later, the interview structure would guide them to reflect on what their characteristics are essential, positive, or negative. Self-descriptions and what characteristics people chose as important varied much among participants. The self-description in an interview is actually a description of the *being* person created—a self-updating product of the process of becoming the self captured in the interview. Conscience of Becoming the Self concerns the quality of self-development and the process of creating self. That is why *significant factors* are part of Conscience of Becoming the Self in the behavioral dimension.

Therefore, these characteristics can be divided into two major groups: *inner* and *physical*. *Inner* characteristics, as the name suggests, concerns characteristics that originate from a person. *Personal* and *social* refer to personality and character. However, *personal* ones capture characteristics correlated with individual qualities of a person, e.g., intelligence, ambition, creativity, and neuroticism. At the same time, *social* characteristics interact within a social context, e.g., kindness, extraversion, and shyness. Lastly, inner characteristics are those of a personal choice in the sphere of values, priorities, or beliefs. They function under the name of *own standards*. A good exemplification of this category is when a person strongly identifies with own faith and includes it in his/her self-description. Similarly, nationality can also be such an element. *Physical* type of characteristics are those of *personal* and *material* nature. In this

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case, *personal* considers the physicality of own body, e.g., appearances, body type. While *material* covers up the belongings person possesses or wants to possess. All these characteristics are also presented in Table 21 and Table 22.

Apart from all characteristics – the sort of content that a person chooses as self-description- the true significance lies within understanding and perception of this content. From an objective point of view, any feature can be sorted as positive or negative. In some cases, neutral. However, it is a person who then expresses how she or he feels with some of the own characteristics. Therefore, the right part of

Table *21* and

Table *22* includes a level of satisfaction that person can experience with each feature. Following intuition, objectively positive features should be associated with satisfaction, while negative ones should be with dissatisfaction. That seems like a general rule. However, an exception to it is when a positive characteristic is perceived as a burden, e.g., high intelligence, conscientiousness which may limit spontaneous behavior, or agreeableness, which may allow other people to invade personal space. For the perception of negative features, the situation is similar. In some cases, the negative feature is part of self-image; therefore is accepted and brings satisfaction, e.g., being mean as a behavior style.

With a physical constitution, the situation is similar. The delicate sphere of appearance is deeply connected with the way of interpretation. A neutral feature may be

subject to various interpretations, e.g., the same high can be a problem or source of satisfaction. Material belongings may be a source of pride, but lack of them might also be significant; therefore, dissatisfaction or satisfaction with this state might be included in the content of the self-description.

Apart from the type of characteristics a person can use for self-description, there are also other elements of *significant factors.* This matter concerns the process of becoming the self, particularly elements of it recognized and assessed by participants (Table 23). While sharing their own stories, participants differentiated whether some elements of their life were a resource or a struggle. This interpretation was dependent on experiences that a person had. It was also significant to depict crucial circumstances, any type of moments in life referred to as crucial for self-development. The questions concerning achievements did stress the context of the process of becoming the self and the adequacy to own personality. Therefore, achievements have a broad way of understanding. On the one hand, on the ground of personality, overcoming own flaws or embracing positive traits was recognized as an achievement alongside mastering own skills. On the other, the process of emancipation was also considered a significant achievement. In a social context, creating fulfilling and sportive relations and satisfaction from social roles were, in some cases, experienced as success. Lastly, material goods that person had acquired, could be associated with success and achievement. All these elements are also described in Table 23.

Summarizing, on the one hand, *significant factors* capture the content of self-description, with its evaluation in the context of satisfaction. On the other, it reflects how participants recognized elements present in their life history and whether each element belongs to categories such as crucial circumstances, resources, difficulties, or achievements. *Significant factors* category is visualized in Figure .
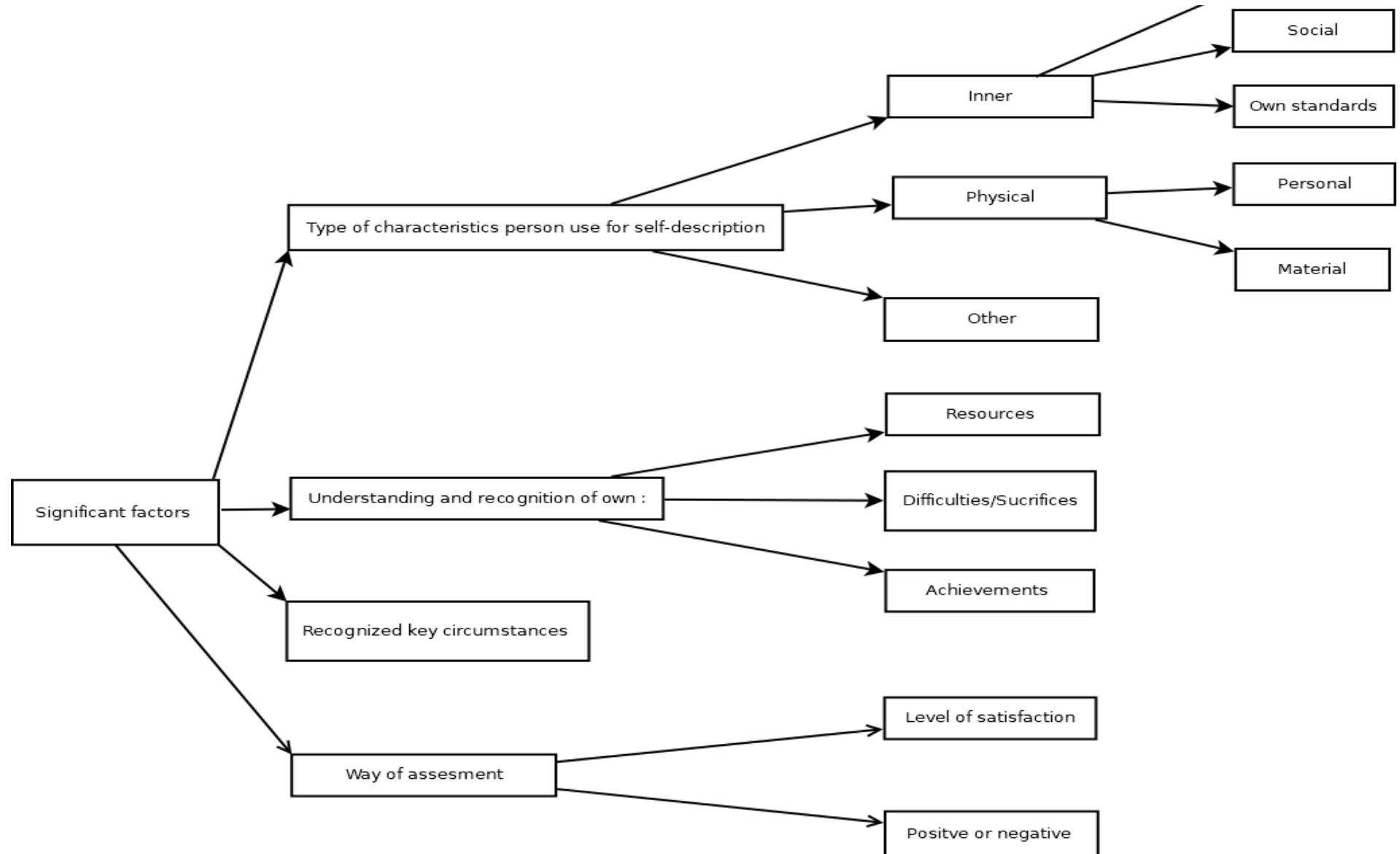
Figure 3 Significant factors

Table 21

Significant factors: type of characteristics a person uses for self-description. Part 1

		Assessment of positive or negative		Level of satisfaction and acceptance	
		Positive	Negative	Dissatisfaction/not accepting	Satisfaction/accepting
Inner	Personal	usually, objectively assessed as positive or admirable personality characteristics e.g., ambition, intelligence, creativity, well-organized	personality characteristics most often considered as negative e.g., emotional, nervous, unreliability	mostly concerning characteristics considered negative but also positive characteristics a person struggles with e.g., an ambition which overwhelming or not accepted as a key for her/his personality e.g., being well-organized	most concerning positive characteristics but also negative once that person accepts or is proud of as part of her/his image e.g., being pessimistic
	Social	personality characteristics that are important in social context e.g., kindness, being socially active, being helpful	personality characteristics that make experiencing social relations difficult e.g., shyness, rudeness	characteristics that are negative in social relations but also those which are positive but may bring an experience of losing control in social relations e.g., being helpful but at the cost of own good	characteristics that are positive and those which are negative but perceived as a significant part of self-image e.g., being rude as part of behavior
	Own standards	standards that are perceived as self-created, adequate for current development, well-thought through	standards perceived as imposed on a person or perceived as inadequate to the current situation	-	-

Table 22

Significant factors: type of characteristics a person uses for self-description. Part 2

		Assessment of positive or negative		Level of satisfaction and acceptance	
		Positive	Negative	Dissatisfaction/not accepting	Satisfaction/accepting
Physical	Personal	elements of physical appearance usually perceived as positive or neutral e.g., height, hair color	elements of physical appearance that person asses as negative or have complexes about e.g., weight	negative elements of physical appearance, complexes or neutral/positive characteristics a person struggles with	positive elements a person is proud of
	Material	own belongings considered desirable e.g., house, car	belongings a person does not have and feels a strong desire to have	mostly lack of desired belongings or properties person has but consider not enough	belongings a person is proud to have
Other		other elements a person includes in self-description that are considered positive	other elements a person includes in self-description that are considered negative	-	-

Table 23

Significant factors: understanding and recognition.

Key circumstances	Resources and Difficulties/Sacrifices	Achievements
specific, social, and personal circumstances positive or negative that person named as significant social e.g., parent's help, personal e.g., health problems	depending on interpretation, anything can be perceived as a resource or difficulty e.g., family as significant support (resource) or family as a source of sacrifices	personality: overcoming flaws of own character, bringing positive characteristics out. skills: mastering recognized own potentialities and talents e.g., getting a master degree, learning languages emancipation: independent acts, behaving accordingly to own will e.g., being financially independent, making independent decisions, living own life in own style. social: building satisfying, supportive relationships, achieving desired social status. material: belongings that a person achieved with significant effort

The next part of the behavioral dimension is *strategies and patterns of development* that are presented in Table 24 and Table 25. Manifestations of behavioral dimensions presented in the theoretical part were also found in this study, and Table 24, directly describes those. Behavior from a self-growth perspective can be assessed depending on five aspects, each having adaptive and maladaptive expression.

The approach to struggles may be a progressive way to adjust and interpret difficulties as challenges to overcome and learn from. Analogically the unprogressive approach in this study, called *passive adaptation*, is contrary to its adaptive form. The positive form of this manifestation was much more frequently declared among participants (50 participants) than negative form (six participants).

Z tego, jak umiem pokonywać przeszkody, jak odnajduję się w nowych sytuacjach, jestem dumny z mojego stanowiska w pracy oraz ze szczęśliwej rodziny

Zrozumienie, że problemy się zdarzają i muszę zaakceptować, że nie zawsze jest idealnie, ale mogę starać się żeby było lepiej

(Man, age 33, Polish)

Radzenie sobie z problemami, przeżywanie kryzysów, wygrywanie z przeciwnościami

(Man, age 28, Polish)

The level of hard work and determination in self-growth determine whether progress is classified as *dynamic* or *stagnation*. The vast majority of participants would refer to

elements of the positive form of this manifestation, while only four would refer to its negative form.

Determinacja oraz myślenie o dalekiej przyszłości, a nie tylko o kolejnym dniu

(Man, age 33, Polish)

wytrwałością, bardzo pomagała rodzina, żona i dziecko

(Man, age 45, Polish)

Purposiveness in own actions refers to how much a person creates and depends on his own goals and how consistent with priorities and values a person is. This determines whether a behavior is purposive or no purposive. Furthermore, *purposiveness in action* with its content is close to *a sense of control* and *level of awareness*[5]. *Sense of control* refers to the perception of a person's position in life. A person may feel like the one in control of life or that life is in control of a person. *Level of awareness* concerns the quality of reflection about own self-growth. If the complexity of reflection is enough, a person mentally creates a meta-level of understanding of own development; therefore, development is well-thought-through. If not, behaviors are less sensible, for that matter. Considering the frequencies of all three manifestations, the progressive form was experienced by half of the participants, while the non-progressive form was less frequent (between 20-25 participants).

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[5] These two aspects were not part of the behavioral dimension, depicted in the theoretical background section.

Raczej byłem pewien swoich celów już gdzieś w szkole podstawowej

(Man, age 28, Polish)

Żyłem własnym życiem i kierowałem się zawsze swoimi celami, nie przejmowałem się co pomyślą osoby na których mi nie zależy

(Man, age 33, Polish)

Na początku bardzo ważna była nauka, gdyż zawsze chciałam się dalej rozwijać. Później kariera, jednak w jej trakcie uświadomiłam sobie ze warto pielęgnować znajomości czy to z pracy czy z innych etapów życia i teraz staram się otaczać ciekawymi ludźmi. Staram się aby w swoim życiu jak najbardziej pomagać i być wsparciem dla innych.

(Woman, age 25, Polish)

uczenie się na błędach swoich ale i cudzych, w 70% życie dorosłego człowieka jest z determinowane przez pierwsze lata wychowania i duży w tym udział rodziców – ich zachowań, w późniejszym okresie życia duży wpływ mają rówieśnicy / osoby z którymi mamy częsty kontakt – ale to moim zdaniem wpływa na charakter i osobowość w mniejszym stopniu. Posiadanie mentora/ mentorów albo jego brak również jest bardzo istotne

(Man, age 32, Polish)

Apart from the five aspects described above useful in differing own development as progressive or not, some other indicators emerged from the data. They can be identified as elements of self-regulation in a self-growth context (Table 25).

Analysis of interviews revealed that people differ based on constructing and understanding the leading motif or motifs for self-development. There were two levels of differentiation detected. First, considers the type of motive, and second: the number of motives. Therefore, a person can perceive as there is one leading motive of development or a few significant ones. Regardless of the number of motives, they can be implemented in a healthy and balanced way or otherwise.

The type of motives was divided into three main categories: *self-development, social relations,* and *basic needs.* The names of the first two are self-explanatory. However, shortly, the first considers the growth of strictly individual potentialities, while the second aims for fulfillment in a social context. Therefore, dedicating whole life to own carrier will be choosing a *self-development* motive. While being a good mother, or the importance of being useful and helpful for own society, will be an expression of *social relations* motive. *Basic needs,* however, is the motive that appears when some basic needs are not fulfilled; therefore, fulfilling them becomes a major motive for development. This category is strongly associated with health and psychological condition, thus diseases, disorders, etc. An excellent example of such a motive is when a person is obese and desperately wants to lose weight. The other example is when a person struggles with sex identification. Being faced with a medical or psychological struggle may result in absorbing developmental reflection completely. Therefore, in this study, in those cases, participants were not able to get on meta-level of reflection because all the questions were answered, completely biased by a current struggle that person had. Lastly, there were interviews where no motifs at all could be recognized.

Apart from motives-regulation, there were also other indicators of development. One was *leading ideology,* exhibited by some participants as a specific way of interpreting reality, that could be captured as a motto, e.g., being positive is always good. Some participants also would show the presence of an *analytical* style, a term describing developmental behaviors that strongly highlight analysis and reflection.

The other aspects that regulate development are *acceptance* and *stability, and balance.* The first one is acceptance of own path and self or not. The second refers to balancing a person performs with own duties and pleasures. Whether a person can accomplish such harmony or not. Furthermore, *attitude towards society* was also noticed as a regulating aspect. Its effective form is the ability to use social resources practically, and create satisfactory relations and reasonable distance. While ineffective, it is expressed by being too much influenced by society or being too distant from society, therefore not effectively using its resources.

Table 24

Strategies and patterns of development

|	Sense of control	Strategy towards obstacles	Level of engagement	Purposiveness in actions	Level of awareness
Adaptive	Inner sense of control	Offensiveness	Dynamic	Purposive	High awareness
	taking actions in own hands, autonomous decisions	adapting to new environments, fighting obstacles, treating difficulties as new challenges not being afraid to the leave comfort zone, sacrificing free time, keeping moving forward, will power	hard-working, determination	pursuing goals, or/and being consistent with own ideals, acting in a sort of planned way, thoughtful planning, being consequent, systematic, making decisions coherently to own values or/and goals, self-discipline, strong task orientation	Meta-level of reflection, a person can abstract from single acts to build a meaningful explanation of own development
	External sense of control	Passivity	Stagnation	Non-purposive	Low awareness
Maladaptive	drifting through stages of development no sense of control	fear of new things, avoid leaving a comfort zone	low engagement, low determination	no planning, no major goals, difficulty in making goals or choosing a path, lack of consequence, uncertain priorities, and values	unreflective behavior, acting as it is, no reflection about own development

Table 25

Strategies and patterns of development: self-regulation in a developmental context

Regulation of motive of development	Type of motive	Self-development	e.g., career, independency, skills development, artistic path, hobbies, body strength
		Social interactions	e.g., fulfilling social roles, utilitarianism (being useful for others), good attitude towards others (being kind)
		Basic needs	focus on unfulfilled needs or psychological/physiological problems a person is facing at the moment e.g., social phobia, depression, poverty, complexes, disease
	Extraction of motive	One motive	one leading motive can be carried in a healthy way or absorbing whole life in an unhealthy way
		Few important motives	differentiation of a few important motives which are harmoniously fulfilled. or unbalanced which can bring frustration.
			also, can be difficult in deciding the importance of each motive
		None	a person is unable to name any motive
Leading ideology			individual for each person way of interpreting the world, events, development, life motto
Level of acceptance			accepting own life history and the fact that the world is not perfect. Healthy acceptance of own characteristics.
			difficulty in accepting some parts of own history, complexes, and dissatisfaction with own personality traits
Level of stability and balance			a stable and consistent way of acting, balancing duties and free time, balancing pursuing goals, regularity in life
			instability and being inconsistent in own actions, being overloaded with duties with little free time, focusing attention on one type of goal at the cost of other duties, irregular lifestyle
Attitude toward social context			practical use of social resources, ability to balance adequate distance between self and social impact, easy in recognition of own self at the same time creating supportive social relations.
			difficulty in recognition and use of social resources, the unbalanced distance toward social context ->too much distance, lack of relations, negative attitude towards society ->lost self in a social context, difficulty in abstracting own self from social context, adjusting to society in order to be accepted
Presence of an analytical style			learning from own and other's mistakes, drawing conclusions from own decisions, forming priorities and goals through careful analysis and reflection

In conclusion, *strategies and patterns of development* capture aspects of development that can be ranged from progressive to non-progressive. However, it also includes elements that are not assessed in this way, as they have more of an individual quality, e.g., *leading ideology* or *analytical style*. In Figure, this category is visualized.

Figure 4: Strategies and patterns of development
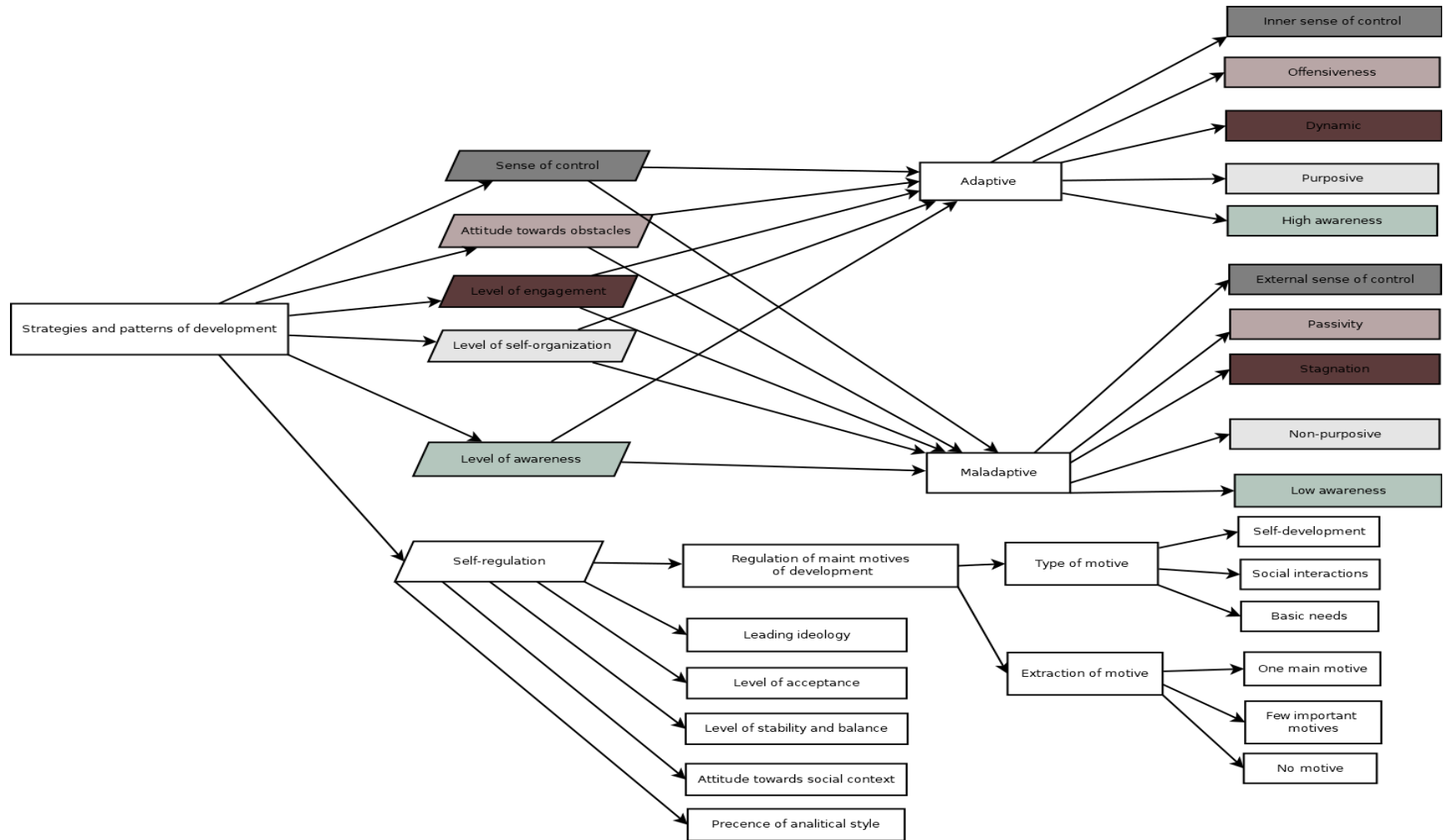
Finally, we reach the part of the results, most specific for Conscience of Becoming the Self. The right part of Figure 2 visualizes the *inner dimension* (in short: ID), while Table 26 shows its content. The inner dimension captures manifestations mostly related to what could be perceived as conscience.

Firstly, a clear distinction between positive and negative forms is made, as *motivational force* is positive, and *regret* is negative. Sub-manifestations within these two major groups are complementary except for *somatic* manifestations, which have only *remorse* form. I will start, with a description of this model, beginning with manifestations with the most explicit content. All the manifestations appear as a reaction to the current state of being within a self-growth context.

As mentioned, *somatic* manifestations are negative body sensations that participants described. Only the negative form was depicted. Those manifestations are also of minor frequency, as only five participants did mention them in the interview.

 It's like a tightening of the chest, a gnawing.
(Woman, age 45, American)

Zamulony i ograniczony. Odczuwam wtedy bóle żołądka. Mam problemu z oddechem i poczucie zapadnięcia klatki piersiowej
(Man, age 28, Polish)

Emotional manifestations range from positive in *motivational* form and negative in *regrets* form. More than half of respondents experienced negative emotions concerning self-development failure, while only 10 exhibited positive ones when having developmental success. Detailed examples are presented in Table 26.

Positively chanelling justified rage

(Woman, age 30, British)

Czuje wyrzuty sumienia, złość, smutek i poczucie straconej szansy. Smutek, obejmujący mnie swoimi zimnymi ramionami.

(Man, age 22, Polish)

Wstyd ze nie zebrałam w sobie tyle siły żeby to popchnąć.

(Woman, age 25, Polish)

Jestem trochę smutna, ale no było minęło

(Woman, age 20, Polish)

straszny lęk, panika, uczucie że nie dam rady lub że nie jestem warta

(Woman, age 25, Italian)

Excited

(Woman, age 22, British)

Good about myself.

(Woman, age 27, Australia)

Verbal-Analytical[6] refers to the cognitive reasoning process of analyzing the situation from a self-actualization perspective. In motivational form, it has a productive and informative role when through reflection and analysis person learns from mistakes, plans development, or expands self-growth reflection through, e.g., inner dialogs. It also has a motivating role when a person reminds himself/herself own success in the matter of self-development.

Zwykle jeśli takie sytuacje maja miejsce to istnieją logiczne argumenty na wytłumaczenie, wiec staram sobie racjonalizować te decyzje. Jeśli nie widzę konstruktywnych wniosków z rozpamiętywania, wówczas staram się odpychać takie myśli i po prostu zaakceptować ze mleko się rozlało.
(Woman, age 25, Polish)

myślę co by było gdybym postąpiłabym inaczej

(Woman, age 19, Polish)

Bardzo, bardzo często niestety zaprzątają moje myśli. Na pewno kilka razy w skali miesiąca

Bardzo irytujące, wywołujące ruminacje.
(Woman, age 34, Polish)

When analysis of situations (of, for example, lost chances) or reflections loses its

---

productive impact and starts to be perceived as intoxicating and overwhelming for a person, then *verbal-analytical* manifestations take the negative form of *remorse*. Explanations (rationalizations) of own failures at the cost of finding a solution for a problem are also part of *remorse*. Half of the participants declared experiencing a motivational form of this manifestation, while less than half experienced the negative form.

Intuitive-Psychological Impressions[7] in *motivational force* are exhibited as intuitive, less aware psychological sensations, concentrated, and perceived as guidance or hints of what is right or wrong for self-development. Nearly half of the respondents experienced those manifestations.

Instinct

(Woman, age 23, Vietnamese, lives 10 years in the USA)

On the contrary, *remorse* form is reflected through negative psychological states such as frustration, lack of motivation, and stress on one hand. On the other, the actual experiences of guilt, pangs of conscience, and remorse were depicted by participants as reactions to developmental failures.

Yeah I feel guilty and angry

(Woman, age 24, Ukrainian, lives 20 in the UK)

Regret most often

---

[7] In introduction referred to as *psychological*

(Woman, age 21, Thai, lives two years in Netherlands)

Czuję wtedy ogromne wyrzuty sumienia, marzę o tym, żeby cofnąć się w czasie

(Woman, age 34, Polish)

Discomfort

(Woman, age 32, Canadian)

Another function of *intuitive-psychological impressions* in *remorse* form is avoiding

reflections concerning developmental failure to lower any negative psychological impact.

The vast majority of participants experienced this form of *remorse*.

Unsure, I don't like to think back like that

(Woman, age 22, British)

Analysis of the current study showed me that the original four manifestations did

not capture the whole spectrum of the phenomenon of the inner dimension of Conscience

of Becoming the Self. Therefore, *self-recognition* was created as the fifth manifestation. It

refers to the state of *being* directly and through *motivational force* is expressed as a series

of sensations that push for action for better self-development. Those actions mainly

concern the need to change the current state by, e.g., leaving the comfort zone, gaining

new experiences, and creating own autonomy. Here also, positive visualizations of future

goals and self are included.

Mental contact with *being* may take a negative turn if, in any respect, its

assessment is negative. Comparing self to others or the ideal self is one of the

manifestations of *remorse* form of *self-realization.* Especially if the *being* is perceived as not enough or fake oneself. Responding to this reflection, participants would experience a lack of sense in life, helplessness, inner conflict, insecurity, feeling deprived of oneself, etc. Half of the participants experienced a positive form of *self-realization,* while less than half experienced a negative form.

I'm relieved I've changed to know myself and take care of myself more
(Woman, age 53, Australian)

If we are talking about inconsistently between who I am and what people want, it causes hopelessness, depression, anxiety, and occasionally anger. If we are talking about who I am and who I want to be, it causes hopelessness and motivation to keep trying to get the treatment I need
(Woman, age 21, British)

Kiedy wybieram rzeczy, które finalnie mnie uszczęśliwią i pasują do mnie, nawet jeśli początkowo będą wymagać ode mnie wyjścia ze strefy komfortu.
(Woman, age 34, Polish)

Udręka, rozpacz, poczucie straconego czasu, że pomimo 28 lat moje życie się skończyło-dotarło do granicy. Zniechęcenie i brak motywacji do dalszych działań. A nawet frustrację i lękka nienawiść do samego siebie
(Man, age 28, Polish)

As this manifestation is new, Table 26 captures all content suitable for *self-*

recognition. Therefore, elements that appeared in other parts of the result section are also present here. I made it that way, with a thought of a possible chance for rearranging and reconstructing the structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self in the future.

Summarizing, five major manifestations of *the inner dimension* of Conscience of Becoming the Self were extracted. *Emotional, self-recognition, intuitive-psychological impressions,* and *verbal-analytical* each have positive (*motivational force)* and negative *(remorse)* forms complementary to each other except for *somatic* manifestation, having only a negative form.

Table 26

Conscience of Becoming the Self: inner dimensions

	Motivational force	Remorse
Intuitive-Psychological Impressions (in original: psychological)	hunch, inner voice, intuition, signaling when similar circumstances of earlier mistake occur now, awareness-impulse evoking rapid change in own behavior, sense of justice, guts, (increase self-esteem, increase self-confidence)	regrets, blockades, avoiding reflection about development, frustration, resignation, remorse, negative flashback, feeling subdued, feeling uneasy, need to avoid negative feelings, fear of new things, lack of motivation, pangs of conscience, powerlessness, feeling of sucking in quicksand, quilt, a feeling of injustice, stress decreasing self-esteem, decreasing self-confidence.
Emotional	positive: happiness, satisfaction, liberty	negative: sadness, anger, irritation, nervous, fear, panic, anxiety, shame, timid, torment, despair, sorrow, hopelessness, loss, jealousy, unfairness, embarrassment
Verbal-Analytical (in original: cognitive)	looking for better solutions, learning from mistakes, productive analysis, thought "what could have been", inner dialogs, list of "what to do" and "what not to do", thinking about the future, thinking about how to achieve goals, thinking about own success.	ruminations, thoughts concerning wrong decisions, self-blaming thoughts, rationalization, repetitive and overwhelming analysis of the situation, intrusive thoughts about own behavior
Self-recognition	need to change, need to leave the comfort zone in order to develop, need to experience new things, fight for own autonomy/need for own autonomy, a vision of self as a positive visualization of future self or goal a person wants to achieve, acceptance of self and past in order to move forward, need for breaking own limits, self-motivating with good memories, assessment of own behavior in the context of possibilities and rules, being proud of own achievements, need to maximize abilities, recognized certain motive for development e.g., artistic talents, recognition of a level of own actualization in life span, recognition of actualization of the past (positive evaluation)	no sense in life, self-cheating, inner conflict, uncertain life goal(no chosen goal, need to change goal), negative comparison to other people, feeling of subordination to others, acting to satisfy others, being excluded from life, disappointed of own behavior helplessness that person cannot be oneself, feeling deprived of own selfhood, lack of assertiveness, being submissive, insecurity, strong need to turn back, a feeling of lost time, self-hatred, lack of self-acceptance bringing self-destruction, a feeling of being on the wrong way of self, fear of having unhappy life, recognition of inadequate actualization level in life span, recognition of actualization of the past (negative evaluation), feeling of waste of time
Somatic	None	inside pain located in the chest or head, hot stomach, pain in the ass, somatic sensations,

Summary. The results of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis were divided into three main sections.

The *interview quality* concerns formal elements of the participant's responses, such as length or level of details that might give initial recognition of the participant's approach to taking part in the interview about self-development. The interview, as a whole, can be an insightful, reflective narration or just a set of answers.

Within the subchapter, *constructing being, perceiving being*, and the process of becoming the self are described. Based on the analysis of this study, a model for this process is presented in Figure 1. Although the involved processes are illustrated as subsequent, they coexist and update each other simultaneously. The *experiences* are exposed as the initial process of constructing being. Where through actions and interactions person *distinguishes self and personality. Gaining awareness*, one step more advanced, set established personality and self in the sphere of recognition in terms of self-development. This recognition concerns self-analysis of own life to identify meaningful circumstances that initialized, creating a sphere of self-realization, which allows more guided self-reflection. Subsequently, *a workspace* for improving and exploring being can be created. In it, a person can consider subjects such as healthy and productive distance, how to feel good about oneself, how to express self, and acceptance of the self. In the help for the process of *gaining self*, *tools rising awareness* were depicted, i.e., *a vision of self* and *standard of being.*

The result of constructing a being is the *being,* which is never stagnant, but rather a self-updating product. Which then can be the subject of self-perception from an authenticity perspective. Firstly, how much *being* is authentic, and what does it mean to be authentic? Secondly, whether being self is perceived as comfort or not. Perception of

authenticity and inauthenticity is strictly a result of people's experiences. Both of them can bring comfort and discomfort.

The structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self was presented as the last one. Thanks to this strategy, it is easier to make comparisons and reference Conscience of Becoming the Self to the process of creating being. It is significant because COSB supposes to interfere with the process of creating self. Conscience of Becoming the Self has two main dimensions: *behavioral dimension* and *inner dimension.*

The first one, with its content, overlaps with the process of creating the self and consists of two manifestations. *Significant factors* capture how participants describe themselves and some aspects of their development. *Strategies and patterns of development* presenting progressive and nonprogressive ways development can be described in some respects, e.g., whether development is sensible and goal-achieving or chaotic.

The *inner dimension* is most similar to conscience. Therefore, it is the most specific aspect within the whole structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self. It consists of five major manifestations with complementary negative (*motivational force)* and positive *(remorse)* forms. These are *emotional, self-recognition, intuitive-psychological impressions,* and *verbal-analytical; the* last one*, somatic,* has only a negative form.

Reverse analysis. In this section, I will perform a reverse analysis to demonstrate how the established themes and categories (as described in previous subchapters) can serve as a framework for understanding an interview. Essentially, I will use the end product of the IPA analysis as a structured framework or interpretive schema to apply to the interview.

I will do it following the sequence in which results have been shown in subchapters *Final product of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. That is starting

with *Quality of the interviews*, then *Constructing of being, perceiving being*, followed by *Structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self*.

<u>Tom, Polish, man, 30 years old (Appendix 4_Interview)</u>

<u>Quality of the interview</u>

Tom exhibits a relatively balanced approach in terms of answer length. Depending on the topic, he can provide concise responses with just a few words or deliver more elaborate, paragraph-length answers. His approach to the interview suggests an open and engaged individual who responds to questions thoughtfully and reflectively. Consequently, his answers are notably free from errors or oversights.

Tom's narrative incorporates personal details and exhibits an individualized reflection style. Through his responses, Tom shares his distinct perspective on self-development and related concepts. Moreover, his narration maintains a neutral tone, carefully considering positive and negative aspects without a noticeable bias.

Nonetheless, there are instances where his narrative might appear somewhat detached, resembling a third-person perspective rather than a first-person one. His responses tend to be quite broad, leaving room for various interpretations.

<u>Constructing of being, perceiving being</u>

Constructing being in this study is subdivided into two main components: *distinguishing self and personality* and *gaining awareness. Distinguishing self and personality* is fueled by *experiencing,* defined as discovering one's characteristics through action. While *gaining awareness* is taking a stand toward the outcome, the personality that person has created, it is also self-knowledge regarding the process of creating self.

While telling a story of what Tom went through to get to this point of his life and how he was shaping himself, it resembles more with *gaining awareness* meta-category.

Tom identifies his motivations, significant circumstances, and the effects that those had and still have on him. Circumstances are part of the *sphere of self-awareness.* In Tom's case, relationships and rapid environmental changes have played a predominant role in shaping his personality.

Nagłe zmiany środowiska, np. zmiana lub skończenie szkoły - wtedy weryfikowały się wszystkie przyjaźnie, a w nowej grupie można było zacząć od zera budować relacje, korzystając z doświadczeń.

In the example above, Tom depicts rapid changes as significant in the process of creating him as a person. However, he also includes an explanation of how these changes affect him. Therefore, this element of explanation indicates reflection adequate for *gaining awareness* meta-category.

Moving on, Tom also emphasizes the necessity of the acceptance process. The latter was assigned as a *workspace* for *gaining awareness.*

Bardzo ważne, jeśli nie najważniejsze - stanąć w prawdzie ze samym sobą - pogodzić się z wadami, zrozumieć swoje pragnienia, przeanalizować popełnione błędy i opinie innych na swój temat i wyciągnąć z tego wnioski.

In fact, Tom identified gaining self-acceptance as one of the significant achievements he is most proud of.

akceptacja siebie ze świadomością wad

Later on, self-acceptance will reappear as a necessity for authenticity.

Overall, Tom's responses often focus on why and how something happened rather than just what happened. The following response illustrates this distinction.

Na początku życia motałem się wśród otaczających mnie informacji, gdzie największy wpływ miało to, co pokazywali rodzice. Potem coraz większy wpływ mieli znajomi (zarówno przyjaciele i kumple, jak i wrogowie). Bardzo szybko zacząłem coraz bardziej poszukiwać własnej, indywidualnej drogi i coraz bardziej świadomie dobierać ludzi wokół siebie

This citation shows Tom's style of narration. He lists what was important, with a background explanation of what used to have a prime effect (parents) on him and how it shifted (social relations), finally leading to searching for his own path as his primary motivation.

Considering all, Tom's narrative primarily aligns with categories in the *gaining awareness* meta-category. However, aspects of the process of *distinguishing self and personality* can also be extracted from his responses.

Based on the given examples of responses, *experiencing* in Tom's case took mainly a form of *analysis, socialization,* and *struggles.* All of them are subthemes of *experiencing. Socialization* refers to the effect that society may have. On the one hand, it may be following examples of significant others.

na różnych etapach wpływ mieli: rodzice, ulubieni nauczyciele, znajomi, środowiska (harcerskie, szkolne, kościelne, muzyczne), czasami popkultura.

On the other, it is experiencing one's self while engaging in social relationships.

Na pewno ludzie, których spotkałem na swojej drodze. Oprócz tego książki, filmy i historie, które inspirowały i pokazywały, że "da się". Bardzo ważne, jeśli nie najważniejsze - stanąć w prawdzie ze samym sobą - pogodzić się z wadami, zrozumieć swoje pragnienia, przeanalizować popełnione błędy i opinie innych na swój temat i wyciągnąć z tego wnioski.

The second sentence of the citation refers to *analysis* – another subtheme of *experiencing.* It is the process of engagement with cultural artifacts that shapes worldview. In Tom's case, reading books and watching movies would provide inspiring stories that gave him psychological space of possibilities in his mind. The remaining citation was already assigned as part of the acceptance process. From a different point of view, however, it also contains *analysis.* Tom refers here to the process of understanding one's priorities and analysis of mistakes and opinions of others, overall resulting in self-improvement. Lastly, *experiencing* through *struggles* can also be seen as experiencing difficulties, and drawing conclusions from them.

Perceiving being is a complex theme encompassing authenticity and inauthenticity, and Tom's responses to these topics are detailed and explanatory, aligning with his writing style mentioned earlier. The question of whether being oneself is a source of comfort does not yield a simple yes or no answer for Tom. Instead, he makes crucial distinctions in his response. Tom begins by differentiating between being oneself and self-acceptance. He explains how these two concepts are interconnected.

Trzeba by rozdzielić bycie sobą i akceptację siebie. Idealna sytuacja to taka, w której jesteśmy sobą - czyli robimy to co lubimy i co sprawia nam przyjemność, i akceptujemy to. Wtedy jest to źródło komfortu i poczucia harmonii wewnętrznej. Jeśli jedna z tych rzeczy nie jest spełniona, możemy dążyć do autodestrukcji lub się frustrować. Uważam, że każda cecha człowieka nie jest ani wadą, ani zaletą - tylko cechą, którą da się wykorzystać pozytywnie lub negatywnie. Ważne jest, żeby znaleźć kierunek w swoim życiu, który sprawia, że czujemy się dobrze na wszystkich płaszczyznach swojego życia, który akceptujemy i który zgodny jest z naszymi wewnętrznymi pragnieniami.

In simpler terms, self-acceptance is a prerequisite for Tom to feel comfortable with himself. Interestingly, in this response, Tom maintains a certain distance from the question. His approach gives the impression of offering a piece of personal wisdom lacking personal references. Towards the middle of the response, he finally adds, "In my opinion."

In essence, Tom's perspective revolves around the idea that characteristics are neutral, and individuals attribute value to them through self-acceptance and self-guidance. When this balance is achieved – and for Tom, it seems that he has achieved it as he sees no need for changes to feel more like himself – a lack of authenticity brings about feelings of energy depletion.

wypompowany z energii

In summary, Tom's viewpoint suggests that being authentic can provide comfort when specific internal conditions are met, such as self-acceptance and self-

guidance. In this scenario, a lack of authenticity is associated with negative emotions, symbolized by energy depletion. Conversely, being oneself can be self-destructive without the foundation of self-acceptance.

Structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self

Two main structures build up the Conscience of Becoming the Self: the *behavioral dimension* and the *inner dimensions*. The analysis of the interview will start respectively.

The *behavioral dimension* falls into two categories: *significant factors* and *strategies and patterns of development*.

The first category helps to identify self-description and assessment of it by a participant, alongside meaning given to certain elements of self-development history. Tom's self-description consists only of *inner* type of characteristics.

Prosty człowiek z wadami i zaletami, wielkimi marzeniami i dobrym sercem.

This description is short and quite general. Although it shows focus on *inner* characteristics of *personal* and *social* type. This is more evident in the following responses when Tom points out more concrete characteristics.

Pozytywne myślenie i szukanie rozwiązań zamiast rozmyślania, jak zły jest świat.

brak systematyczności (czasem niekonsekwentność), oraz trudność w decydowaniu się na jedną drogą (trzymanie kilku srok za ogon, rozdrabnianie się)

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Both citations cover *personal* characteristics. The first citation refers to Tom's positive approach to life. As a characteristic, it can be named positivity, and Tom sees it as an advantage.

The second citation alludes to qualities of disorganization and unpredictability, which Tom regards as negative traits he finds dissatisfying. These characteristics may be linked to Tom's challenge in prioritizing and determining where to direct his energy.

umiejętność skupienia się na jednej rzeczy

(What Tom desires to improve in himself)

decydowanie, z czego zrezygnować

(What Tom perceives as difficulty)

Niektóre decyzje podjąłbym szybciej. Skupiał się na jednej rzeczy i ją doprowadzał do końca, a inne zostawiał na później, zamiast robić wszystko na raz.

(What Tom would do differently)

Consequently, this approach is perceived as a *difficulty* on his journey of self-improvement.

Based on the entire interview, social impact is essential in many respects for Tom. Rapid environmental changes and engaging in relationships were already assigned as crucial *circumstances* in *gaining awareness*. At this point, they are pointed out again as crucial *circumstances* in the context of self-development. Furthermore, the citation below exemplifies a *social* characteristic: empathy, which Tom is proud of.

umiejętność (albo przynajmniej próby) zrozumienia potrzeb drugiego człowieka

At the same time, the following citation shows that the loss of relations is, for Tom, a significant *sacrifice* in his self-progress path.

mało czasu dla znajomych, porzucenie niektórych zainteresowań

Finally, a *significant factor* also concerns what a person perceives as a crucial achievement in the context of self-development. On the one hand, Tom directly refers to finding passion as an achievement that gives financial stability and self-fulfillment.

znalezienie swojej pasji, która jednocześnie pozwala zapewnić byt i daje poczucie spełnienia osobistego

Therefore, this achievement refers to *skills*, that is, improving one's own potentialities and to *emancipation*, seeing success in the capability to provide for oneself. On the other, gaining self-acceptance was important for Tom, but he does not refer to it as achievement directly. Instead, he declares self-acceptance as a characteristic he is most proud of. Thus, self-acceptance can also be considered as an achievement assigned to the *personality* category, that is, overcoming flaws and bringing positive characteristics out.

The *behavioral dimension* consists of several categories. I will begin by considering the six development strategies that emerge from Tom's interview. First and foremost, Tom exhibits a strategy of *offensiveness* when faced with obstacles. He tends to

confront difficulties by seeking solutions rather than dwelling on the negativity of the situation. This exemplifies an adaptive approach:

Pozytywne myślenie i szukanie rozwiązań zamiast rozmyślania, jak zły jest świat.

pogodzenie się ze stratami, kiedy już podjęło się decyzję

Conversely, Tom faces challenges in organizing priorities and channeling his energy into well-structured plans or a chosen path. This difficulty represents a form of maladaptive behavior and fits the category of *non-purposive* behaviors.

Tom's well-articulated responses throughout the interview indicate a *high level* of *self-awareness* regarding his personal development. Additionally, two categories, *level of control* and *level of engagement*, are not explicitly addressed in the interview. However, a comprehensive analysis of the entire interview suggests that Tom is deeply engaged in his activities, implying a dynamic approach. He does face challenges in deciding which activities to pursue, falling under the *non-purposive* behavior category.

Assessing the *level of control* is somewhat intricate. While the interview frequently alludes to the social impact and its influence on Tom's life, it is evident from Tom's narrative that he maintains a strong sense of control over his life and personal development. Tom recognizes the significance of external circumstances, acknowledging that both controllable and uncontrollable factors play a role in his development.

Znowu momenty, które były ważnymi zwrotami akcji w życiu, są raczej połączeniem przypadku, ambicji i szczęścia. Przykładem takiej sytuacji jest zgoda na współpracę na polu, w którym wcześniej nie miałem doświadczenia.

The other shade of *strategies and patterns of development* concerns self-regulation in the context of self-development. In Tom's case, *social interactions* serve as a prominent driving force, although *self-development* also emerges, though less frequently.

Chęć zrobienia czegoś nowego, potrzeba przygody. Trochę też chęć pomocy drugiej osobie i podzielenia się swoim doświadczeniem czy szczęściem.

(a response that indicates what was a motivator for adequate personality decisions)

Based on this interview, it is challenging to determine whether *social interactions* take precedence in motivation or if Tom skillfully balances it with *self-development*. On the one hand, analysis of the interview suggests that Tom does have a problem with sensible prioritizing and energy management. However, this might pertain to lower-level objectives, simple tasks like what course to take or whether to participate in some volunteering actions or not. While considering more abstract motivations, such as social engagement and self-development on a broader scale, he appears to strike a suitable balance that aligns with his personal needs. It remains challenging to assert the adequacy of this interpretation conclusively.

In some interviews, it is possible to identify a *leading ideology*, and for Tom, a positive attitude when facing challenges serves as his guiding principle. Additionally, it is evident that he has achieved self-acceptance and acceptance of the path he has gone through and that he effectively uses social resources.

Finally, I will extract manifestations of the *inner dimension from the interview*. The most prevalent manifestations fall into the *Verbal-Analytical* category, characterized by productive analysis, drawing conclusions, and reevaluation to avoid future mistakes.

Czasami, w rozmowach lub podczas głębszych przemyśleń o przeszłości

ale z czasem po prostu chęć niepopełniania więcej takiego błędu i akceptację, że to już się stało. W miarę osiągania sukcesów w życiu coraz częściej staram się analizować i wyciągać wnioski przy podejmowaniu kolejnych decyzji, niż mieć żal do siebie

Kiedy po dłuższych przemyśleniach i gorszych dniach znajduję sposób, by wyjść z kłopotów (wewnętrznych lub zewnętrznych).

Raz częściej, raz rzadziej. Są okresy, kiedy często (nawet codziennie), ale potem przez dłuższy czas skupiam się na pozytywach.

I natłok myśli - co dlaczego i po co.

All the above are responses to questions about difficulties in self-development and what impact it has on Tom.

Although most of these responses are of a positive nature, aligning with the *Motivational force* category, the last two can be considered as *remorse*, that is, overwhelming thoughts.

Intuitive-psychological impressions primarily take the form of a *motivational force*, representing a sense of inner harmony and a self-guiding voice. However, *remorse* appears as inner anxiety, not in an emotional sense, but as a psychological disagreement with the choices made.

Poczucie wewnętrznej harmonii, zgody, połączonej z ekscytacją i energią do zmian lub realizacji pomysłu.

jako indywidualny, bardzo cichy wewnętrzny głos podpowiadający właściwe rozwiązanie.

Jako wewnętrzny niepokój, brak zgody na podjęte decyzje

Tom declares that the *emotional* manifestations of *remorse* are a thing of the past, making space for *Verbal-Analytical* manifestations of *motivational force*.

Kiedyś żal do siebie, ale z czasem po prostu chęć niepopełniania więcej takiego błędu i akceptację, że to już się stało. W miarę osiągania sukcesów w życiu coraz częściej staram się analizować i wyciągać wnioski przy podejmowaniu kolejnych decyzji, niż mieć żal do siebie.

Tom experiences one of the rarest manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self' – a *somatic* manifestation.

coś jakby ból wewnętrzny, nie fizyczny (choć można by go umieścić w klatce piersiowej lub głowie).

Finally, manifestations of *self-recognition* type can be found in both *motivational force* and *remorse* form.

mobilizują do zmiany, czasami dołują.

Kiedy zabrnąłem w życiu w ślepą uliczkę, oszukując się, że to jest dobre dla mnie, a okazało się, że popełniłem błąd.

That is the need to change, but also the feeling of being in the wrong place.

According to Tom's perspective, the Conscience of Becoming the Self plays a crucial role in compelling individuals to enhance themselves and rectify errors made in their interactions with others. As a result, Conscience of Becoming the Self encompasses elements related to both social and self-development, with a more prominent emphasis on the former.

Discussion and critical reflection

Reflection on Conscience of Becoming the Self

This research aimed to investigate and explore **how people experience Conscience of Becoming the Self**. Participant's experiences were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to find manifestations of this phenomenon. The unexpected result was also in-depth material for analyzing the process of becoming. Therefore, how people build self-knowledge, gain awareness of self-realization, and perceive being in the context of authenticity was also described in this dissertation.

However, the main discussion will focus on Conscience of Becoming the Self. This phenomenon was present in the participant's narrations. Though not to refer to it directly, but rather through their experience, it could be seen that this phenomenon did occur. This term is not established on scientific grounds or in common knowledge. Still, when confronted with the question, do you think such a conscience concerning self-development exists? Some people would say: Yes indeed, this is what I have been experiencing.

The aim to explore the Conscience of Becoming the Self was achieved through the following research questions, which examine **the manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self** and **whether the structure identified in preliminary results is replicated in this study**. The structure found in the preliminary study did replicate in this study. However, there were some changes and modifications, resulting in the creation of a new, expanded model. The results section, in detail, explains each element of this structure. However, some names were changed, and some contents were shifted to different structural elements. Hence, the revised structure of the Conscience of Becoming the Self will be discussed in conjunction with the alterations made in comparison to the preliminary studies' structure. The final research question addressed **potential differences**

based on nationality. However, individual cases among participants from non-Western

cultural backgrounds did not provide sufficient data for the development of distinct

models. Consequently, at this stage, models were created without considering nationality.

Model of Conscience of Becoming the Self that emerged from the Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis, consists of two dimensions: *behavioral dimension* and *inner*

dimension. Behavioral dimension refers to behavior in context of self-actualization. *Inner*

dimension describes inner process that appear in relation to issues of self-realization.

This general distinction remains consistent in the preliminary model (Figure) and

the current model (Figure 2). However, the *behavioral dimension* has been expanded in

the present model of the Conscience of Becoming the Self (Figure 2). It now comprises

two elements: *significant factors* (Figure ,

Table *21*,

Table *22*, Table 23) and *strategies and patterns of development*

(Figure 4). The latter partially incorporates manifestations described in the preliminary

model (Figure , left part), utilizing a positive-negative continuum (Table 24).

Furthermore, the *strategies and patterns of development* have been broadened to include

content related to self-regulation within the context of self-realization (Table 25).

Figure 5: Conscience of Becoming the Self: preliminary study
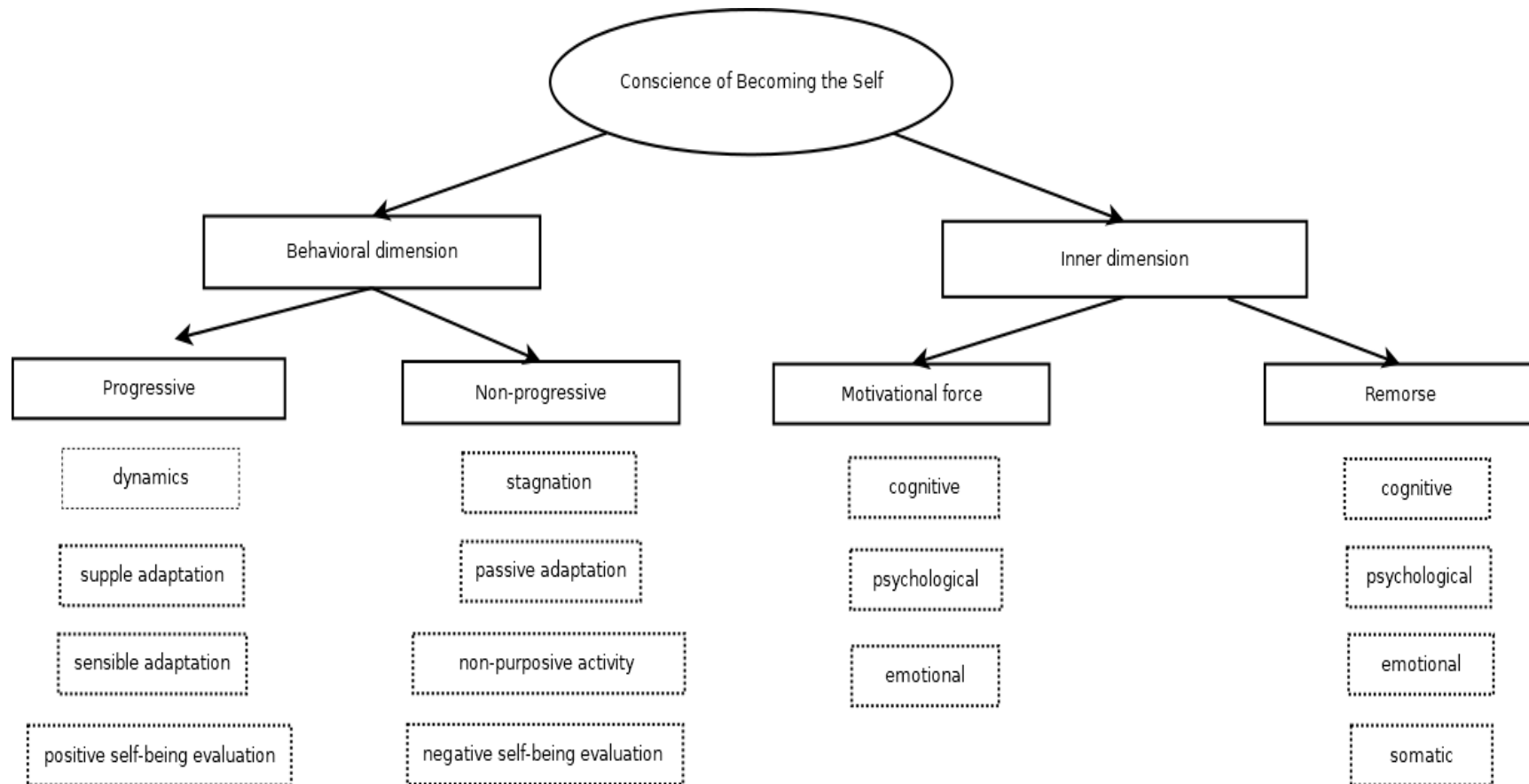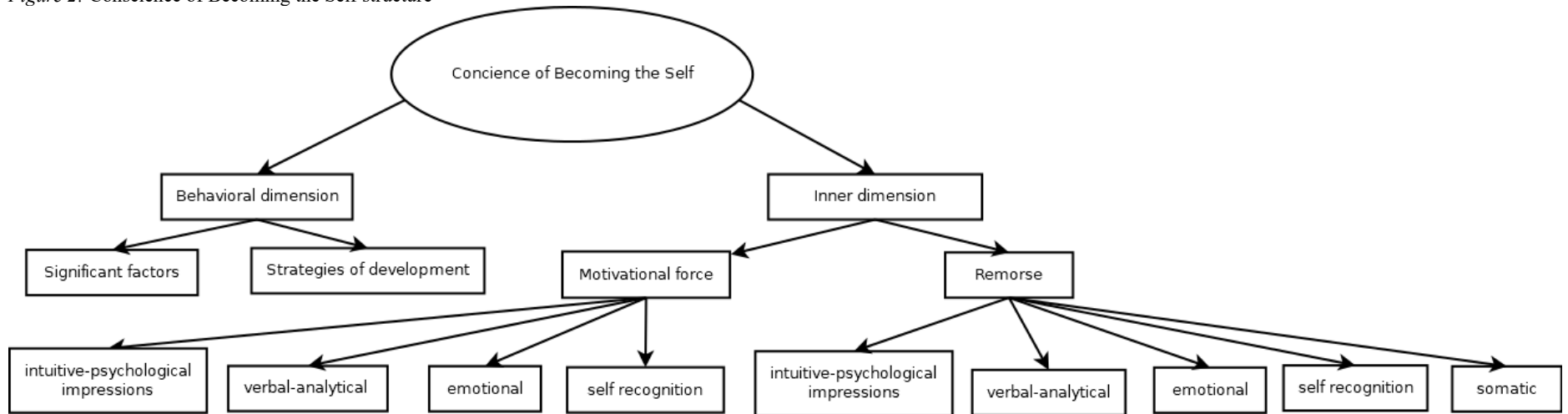

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Figure 2: Conscience of Becoming the Self structure

In the current model, manifestations within the *inner dimension* have been expanded to include an additional category, namely *'self-recognition*,' and certain labels have been revised for greater specificity.

In continuation for more details, *the behavioral dimension* has descriptive character as it gives categories and terms to describe the process of becoming. Whether a person puts much engagement in their self-realization or not. How much sensible and self-directed a participant's decisions were. This dimension is enriched with categories that help to understand how motives for self-realization can be regulated Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was very useful in extracting this content from participants' narrations, allowing to arrange a sensible model.

Significant factors that are one of the major elements of this dimension is reflecting the actual result of the process of creating a being, a self-updating product, or being treated as an object. This category captures the framework of possible qualities a person can describe being. The characteristics depicted as *inner* embody some part of personality definition: relatively stable dispositions: *inner* and *social;* framework of personal meaning: *own values.* However, *the significant factors* category also includes the possibility of identification through physical qualities in two-fold ways. One is the physicality of own body; the second is identification through possessions. Those aspects were conceptualized with Fromm's modus of "having" (Fromm, 1999) or Belk's extended self (Belk, 1988). Both these concepts assume quite a wide range types of possessions that a person can include in their own self, e.g., knowledge, products, places, brands, body parts, or even other people. However, in this study, the *physical* element of *significant factors* is limited to body e.g., weight, height, hair color; and possessions that seem to be requirement of adulthood, e.g., car, flat, and house.

Significant factors also capture a self-questioning aspect of self-knowledge in the following respects: attitude towards being in the context of satisfaction and acceptance of own characteristics; understanding and recognition of biographical elements concerning being. Those elements are essential because they directly refer to the personal framework of interpretation. The person is the one that creates inner definitions of objective terms. Defining might not start as an aware process. However, it makes anchors to which a person adjusts his/her behavior and personality. With time, this process might become more conscience, with the help of education and self-reflection. Therefore, the initially intuitive process is expanded with cognitive reasoning. The overall picture, drawn with *significant factors*, can be subjected to an authenticity experience. The in-depth analysis then can capture the sense between the being as an object and its perception of authenticity.

While *significant factors* still revolve around matters of being, *strategies and patterns of development* are a step closer to development and self-growth consists partly of behavioral dimension elements presented in the theoretical section of this study, except for *self-being-evaluation.* However, the latter is absorbed by *significant factors.* Therefore, aspects such as *level of engagement (dynamics, stagnation), strategies towards development (supple adaptation, passive adaptation),* and *purposiveness in action (sensible adaptation, non-purposive)* did repeat themselves in this study. New to model are categories concerning *the level of awareness* and *sense of control. Sense of control* can be explained with the concept of the locus of control similarly as conditions for authenticity (that will be explained in subchapter concerning process of becoming). The *level of awareness* refers to narrative integrity concerning biographical elements of history about own self-development. The *level of awareness* from this study might be treated as specific, limited to the self-development part of narrative identity, which by

McAdams refers to the whole life story (McAdams & McLean, 2013), while the *level of acceptance* couches attitude a person takes towards history and leading ideology is the interpretation of the world.

The other part of the *behavioral dimension* describes how the motive for self-growth might be regulated. This element is an improvement to the Conscience of Becoming the Self model. Social fulfillment is an equally valid motive as the development of individual potential. Therefore, both are treated as major motives for development. However, a third primary motive directly references Maslow's concept of basic needs. It is the situation when an issue of an unfulfilled sphere entirely takes self-development. Maslow's intuition is reflected here quite well, as people who struggle with psychological or physical problems were not able to conduct a reflective narrative about self-growth.

An element in the *behavioral dimension* is effectiveness in using social resources. Therefore, the latter and attitude towards obstacles could be associated with psychological well-being (Ryff, 2018): environmental mastery and positive relations with others. The quality of relations, that is, being authentic within relations with others and positive usage of social resources, can also correspond with *relational orientation* of multicomponent operationalization of authenticity (Kernis & Goldman, 2006).

The *inner dimension* of Conscience of Becoming the Self is the last to discuss. It is frequently mentioned throughout this paper that it is the most similar to the conscience part of the Conscience of Becoming the Self structure. It is divided into two major parts: motivational force and remorse, in line with the preliminary model (Figure 2, Figure). However, the original names of manifestations, such as psychological and cognitive, were changed, as they had too broad meaning. That is why, psychological manifestations are changed for *Intuitive-Psychological Impressions, and cognitive for Verbal-Analytical.*

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In the context of missed opportunities or neglected areas of development, the *inner dimension* became particularly evident in the participants' narratives. As mentioned earlier, these dimensions can take both positive (*motivational force)* and negative *(remorse)* forms.

The positive manifestations provide a sense of guidance, enabling individuals to identify their self-development goals and assess their progress in the process. They serve as signals indicating the necessary steps to be taken in the future. On a practical level, these steps translate into specific plans or tasks to be accomplished. In a broader sense, these signals act as catalysts, motivating individuals to make changes in their environment, explore new opportunities, or venture outside their comfort zone if it holds the potential for personal growth and self-realization. Through cognitive analysis, they can practically approach these goals, determining what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. Furthermore, the experience of positive emotions related to success in self-realization serves as a motivator for further growth and self-comforting.

Participants positively experienced *motivational force*. Through the lens of a positive *inner dimension,* even lost chances or developmental losses can be identified as valuable if a person draws proper conclusions for the future. However, the line to negative form of *inner dimension* is very thin and lays deeply in consistency with self and framework of interpretation. Mistakes are inevitable, alongside difficulties that person have no control over. Being aware of own core, constant transfiguration of goals and being flexible allows to pursue chosen path. However, lack of those, may shift *motivational force* into *remorse.*

The remembrance of lost chances loses its practical usage and starts to fulfill only the purpose of self-blame or blaming others. This effect is strong with negative emotions that come along, the same as unfavorable self-realization when a person feels inferior

compared to others. The fact of being in the wrong place in the context of self-development may bring even somatic manifestations.

The remorse form of *the inner dimension* is overwhelming and non-productive for participants. In this study, psychological problems such as depression, low motivation, low self-esteem, frustration, and feeling lost were depicted by participants as a result of acting against oneself. This is consistent with notion, that not following path of progress can be harmful also in psychological way e.g. meta-pathologies (Maslow, 2006; May, 1989; Oleś, 2011). Introducing the concept of the Conscience of Becoming the Self to individuals can assist them in recognizing and neutralizing the impact of *remorse*. This approach could prove beneficial in the context of psychotherapy.

The negative manifestation of the *inner dimension* of the Conscience of Becoming the Self can be likened to existential guilt. However, in Boss's understanding, existential guilt pertains to the inability to fulfill all potential (Oleś, 2011), whereas *remorse* in the context of the Conscience of Becoming the Self relates to not fulfilling a path that a person has already chosen. In simpler terms, the process of becoming oneself is a task where an individual senses and chooses a goal but experiences failure along the way. It is in these instances that *remorse* arises.

Conscience of Becoming the Self, therefore might be related with Ryff's psychological-well being. *Motivational force* of *inner dimension* should improve psychological well-being, while *remorse* would give an opposite effect. The assumption is that the goal of human existence is to achieve self-affirmation and happiness. Thus, Conscience of Becoming the Self, would seem to serve this purpose by helping a person, creating oneself, and controlling the process of becoming.

With the general understanding of *inner dimension.* I aim to delve deeper into each manifestation and elucidate their functioning.

The *emotional* and *verbal-analytical* manifestations seem to reflect, respectively, the passion-driven conscience of Hume (1748/2001) and, in some respect, Kantian's (1785/2002) take on conscience. Therefore, emotional manifestations occur as result of own actions, that concern self-growth decisions (positive, when success, negative when otherwise). *Verbal-analytical* manifestations are based on cognitive process of thinking and reasoning, that anticipate the action, to draw conclusions and regulate own behavior and relations with environment (Falkowski et al., 2020). However, in case of Conscience of Becoming the Self, *verbal-analytical* manifestations regulate the process of self-development using analogical process as described above. Therefore, analysis and planning in terms of self-development do fit category of cognitive process.

The process of creating self and self-development is associated with the burden of choice (Heidegger, 2010; Sartre, 2001a). This issue could be analyzed on the grounds of dialogical self-theory. It assumes the existence of multiple selves in the inner domain; taking positions and repositioning by these selves constitutes a sense of one unified identity for a person (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Self-conflict is the term capturing tension between selves. The subjects of self-growth and authenticity may create specific sphere of psychological activity.

Self-conflict on this ground may reflect an issue that Heidegger raised: with a choice, we lose some potentialities, some beings that will never be (Heidegger, 2010). Those are moments of making significant life decisions that will shape people's future. Therefore, self-conflict on the grounds of Conscience of Becoming the self is a battle of potential selves. The *intuitive-psychological impressions* may reflect this conflict in the form of voices, guidance, and frustrations, which are not precisely aware processes. Explanation of blocking or rationalizations on the ground of an unfavorable self-growth process (remorse form of intuitive-psychological impressions) might be explained

with self-deception: an unaware or intentional pursuit of false self-beliefs (Piłat, 2013). Perhaps facing the uncomfortable truth might be anticipated as a source of psychological burden. Thus, self-deception protects well-being. In Kierkegaard's reasoning, this might be where false self-affirmation appears.

Self-recognition in Conscience of Becoming the Self might capture the difference between the ideal and actual selves in Carl Roger's understanding (Pervin & Cervone, 2012). Concerning dialogical self theory, *self-recognition* refers to selves engaging in self-criticism, where acts are contrasted with personal standards (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Personal standards might directly refer to a hierarchy of values and goals. Thus, Conscience of Becoming the Self induces needs to change, to leave the comfort zone, or experience of being submissive, dependent, and less worthy.

Somatic manifestations¸ are challenging to explain as they are rear and only have *remorse* form. Perhaps, it can also have some evolutionary explanation, where losing life chances is perceived as a danger to life.

An essential issue to consider is the fact that *the remorse* part of Conscience of Becoming the Self is relatively more frequent than *the motivational force.* In human development in general, there is a negative emotional bias, possibly due to evolutionary adaptive function (Vaish et al., 2008). Analogically, when self-development goes smoothly, less aware activities are required. In contrast, difficulties in this process trigger higher awareness of own actions. Thus, in interviews, people will have a better memory of negative manifestations. Eventually, negative manifestations will appear more frequently in narrations. Learning from negative experiences might be more adaptive than an in-depth reflection on self-affirmation and the adequate process of creating a being.

The decision to embark on research on the Conscience of Becoming the Self originated from a humanistic belief in people's inherent sense of inner potential. Based on

this premise, individuals should have an understanding of what is beneficial or detrimental to their self-realization. Right decisions on this matter should bring a person closer to her authentic being. Over time, one's behavior should reflect heightened functioning correlated with rising psychological well-being. (Maslow, 1954, 2014; Rogers, 2014).

However, the correspondence of scientific terms concerning being is a questionable subject. How much authenticity is associated with self-actualization? Self-actualization aims to master the potential of an individual. How authentic are people who self-actualize? Those are some inconsistencies that, may create interesting area for reflection. Humanistic psychology described self-actualizing individuals as those who display a particular positive behavior, which is theoretically linked to a sense of fulfillment of being. The findings of this dissertation also identified behavioral expressions of authenticity and inauthenticity. While Maslow's descriptions and the behaviors observed in this study share similarities, the emphasis is placed differently.

The difference appears in results and in the given definition of Conscience of Becoming the Self. The concept of the Conscience of Becoming the Self emphasizes that individuals are interconnected with society and may find their purpose for realization within these social relationships. However, social relations had different status in humanistic psychology.

Referring to Maslow, fulfilling self-actualization need affects the person's behavior on a multilevel dimension. One of these aspects is the social sphere. At first need for love and belongingness is a requirement to engage in self-actualization properly, without fear of loneliness and desperate attempts for attention from significant others (Maslow, 2006). In contrast, when motivation functions on a higher-needs level, self-actualizing people create independent, in-depth, valuable relationships. The point is that

engagement in the social sphere is treated as subordinated activity regarding self-actualization.

While in this study, engagement in the social sphere is recognized as an equally valuable way of realization of potential. Fulfilling social roles, being useful for society were a solid and significant aims for some participants. For example, sacrificing one's own carrier for being a mother was perceived as an accomplishment, not a failure. A person would feel satisfied with this decision if "being a mother" was considered essential. Thus, personality and all behavior are changed due to this decision. Therefore, self-actualization, a term for realizing potentialities, had limited usage in this study. Participants had a broader understanding of what is significant for self-realization.

In the humanistic field, Rogers spread the importance of social relationships and the qualities of these relations in his reflections on authenticity. Genuine relations where the person is actively listening and honestly open to another person are essential for self-development (Rogers, 2016). Free expression of authentic being should lead to authentic relations (Rogers, 2014). This notion was depicted in this study as well. Research showed that being in a state of authenticity recognizes the social sphere as an enriching field of possibilities for self-growth and self-expression. In contrast, the state of inauthenticity associates the impact of society with the oppression of true being.

Apart from different take on social relations, there is also one more difference between Conscience of Becoming the Self take on self-realization and humanistic approach on this matter. In the definition of Conscience of Becoming the Self, preceding self-realization is the creation of personal meaning, whereby individuals shape and align their behavior accordingly. Therefore, it entails not only realizing potentialities but also selecting a path that harmonizes the progression of potentialities with values and the surrounding circumstances. On two points this position is coherent with existential

psychology. First, significance of meaning is underlined and fulfills leading role, what is consistent with Frankl's take on this matter. The hierarchy of values is like a framework to which, development of potentials is adjust. Perhaps, the needs that an individual perceives as essential transcend themselves into values. The values are operationalizations of beliefs and goals people strive to achieve (Schwartz, 2006). The values have a universal range (Rokeach, 2018); however, each value's importance differs among individuals, groups, and cultures (Russo et al., 2022; Schwartz, 2006). The unique set of values interfere with each other and, as a result, modify behavior (Schwartz, 2006).

Secondly, the impact of the environment is acknowledged to have a positive influence, so far as a person is able to derive meaning from their own experiences, even if those experiences are negative. Consequently, suffering and pain in life can serve as catalysts for personal growth and transcendence (Frankl, 1984; Opoczyńska, 2002). This stands in stark contrast to humanistic psychology, which often views environmental inconveniences as hindrances to self-actualization.

Therefore, the set of potentialities is developed depending on the personal framework of interpretations and hierarchy of values a person has rather than simply aiming for mastering individual potential. Provided narrations showed that participants broadly understood success, accomplishment, significant goals, resources, or difficulties. These interpretations were shaped by their experiences. This underlines how individual perspective on self-realization is crucial. These findings prove and reflect Roger's notion of the importance of the phenomenological interpretation area within every person (Rogers, 2014). That is why this aspect was considered in the definition of Conscience of Becoming the Self and then was found within qualitative material. Moreover, engaging in social relations or being useful to society can be as significant as mastering individual potential.

All these aspects encompass the concept of the Conscience of Becoming the Self, and they align with the experiences reported by the participants.

Another aspect to consider is the use of the word "self" in the Conscience of Becoming the Self. In the Polish translation, it is rendered as "Sumienie Stawania się Sobą," where "sobą" implies a closer alignment with the concept of a real, desired state of being. In contrast, "self" may be misconstrued as "jaźń," a psychological construct responsible for integrating an individual's functioning on both conscious and unconscious levels—inner awareness of own being, subject of cognition (*Jaźń*, n.d.-a; *Jaźń*, n.d.-b). The process of becoming is essentially interconnected with the latter understanding of self and indirectly is shaped by the Conscience conceptualized in this thesis. However, it appears that "oneself" might better align with the meaning assigned to the discussed Conscience. Therefore, substituting "self" with "oneself" could result in "Conscience of Becoming the Oneself," where "oneself" signifies the inner state of being that a person consciously and unconsciously desires to achieve most. The "one" in the word "oneself" might be understood as the chosen self, the self that belongs to a person in some way but is still a work in progress, not fully achieved and perhaps somewhat out of reach. However, the concept in question will be referred to by its original name to make dissertations easy to follow.

Further research is needed to fully understand the nature of the Conscience of Becoming the Self. Such research endeavors would provide valuable insights into the underlying structure of this phenomenon, offering improved explanations and a deeper understanding of its intricacies.

The quality of life has been rising considering basic element such as medical care, access to education, economic stability. Specialized knowledge is easily accessible through their mainstream, easy-to-understand versions and spread through the internet.

The subject of "being best version of self", or "being true self" is quite present in public domain, alongside with "leaving comfort zone" for better self-realization and self-discovery. Relatively stable socio-economic sphere, and higher level of knowledge concerning development, change the understating of self-growth and authenticity. Simple fulfilling daily tasks may not be enough. Conscience of Becoming the Self is the internalized reaction to experienced quality of own self-development. It treats "process of creating being as moral/existential duty towards the self". As full definition states:

>Conscience of becoming the self (perhaps Conscience of becoming the Oneself) recognizes the experience of an ongoing process of shaping/developing personality as moral/existential duty towards the self. Therefore, through self-observation and self-monitoring, the person controls the degree of adequacy between how and what has been pursued and what is sensed (intuitively and reasonably) as the optimal realization of individual potential in respect to personal values and adjustable to external circumstances person's lives and emerged in life span.

At this stage of research, definition remains unchanged. Conscience of Becoming the Self is related to essential spheres of self-fulfillment, self-growth, authenticity, and psychological well-being. However, further investigation on Conscience of Becoming the Self may bring an extended sphere of interpretation of human functioning within the psychology of personality, psychology of the self, or positive psychology. As this study depicts, psychological difficulties may accompany inadequate self-development, e.g., low motivation, low self-esteem, and frustration. For example, the developmental crisis of integrity vs. despair, might be explained on Conscience of Becoming the Self ground, when person struggles with accepting the final effect of own being (Erikson, 2004).

Hence, the better-conceptualized Conscience of becoming the Self can be a source of therapeutical guidance in cases of the frustrated process of creating a being.

In terms of the Conscience of Becoming the Self, a person does create an individual set of norms concerning their own self-development. A person chooses the foremost goal, whether it is mastering talent or being helpful to the community, and forms own being adequately. The person choses what potential is key for his or her being. The adequacy between what people strive for, what is sensed as right, and own behavior is essential and can be assessed only by a person. Therefore, not mastering own potential, e.g., talent, might be a good decision if it brings a person closer to whom she or he wants to be. Being consistent with guidelines of own religion, or setting own individual, independent guidelines are both valid and meaningful as far as they help a person stay true to oneself. An ultimate sacrifice can be an idealized embodiment of the function Conscience of Becoming the Self should serve. The functional body is then destroyed, but the person's experience of fulfillment is transgressed beyond what is explainable on scientific grounds.

Reflection on process of becoming

While the primary focus of this study was not the process of creating self, the design of the interview provided a valuable opportunity to explore this aspect. As a result, an analysis concerning the process of creating self was included in the findings, warranting a brief reflection in the discussion.

The findings presented in the results section have been derived from in-depth interviews with participants and their subsequent analysis. Thus, the conceptual models presented herein represent the author's interpretation and organization of the participants' experiences. These models serve as a framework for comprehending and capturing the rich and diverse range of experiences shared by the participants.

The first element of the process of creating being was *distinguishing self and personality* (perhaps, also in this case, word "oneself" would fit better) and *awareness*. Described as separate processes, they are, in fact, coexisting together. Creating *personality and self* through experiences can be compared to creating self-knowledge. It is answering a question of what I am, or what qualities I have. However, this is not an aware search, but rather creating something in action.

Therefore, it is more like a task unconsciously performed by a person: creating content of own personality. This content is then subject to questioning, and the *self* is the one who asks these questions. *Awareness* described in the study reflects a process that constitutes *the self* and the struggles *the self* needs to verify to achieve a true being. Thus, *awareness* is more likely associated with self-regulation. Therefore, *distinguishing self and personality* and *gaining awareness* self-regulate and build up self-knowledge, and finally constitute personality and self. From this perspective, self and personality are indeed like a changeable but complete synthesis (Galarowicz, 2014; Toeplitz, 1980), a self-updating product. In my understanding of being, these two processes refer to being as an adjective (experiences of being) and attitude towards own being, both of which build-up being as an object.

This distinction was necessary because while some participants were able to describe themselves or their experiences concerning becoming, their narrations lacked a sense of self-awareness (described category *gaining awareness*). On the other hand, there were participants who exhibited both these aspects, demonstrating a clear understanding of the self and expressing self-awareness in their narratives.

At this point of discussion, I would like to contemplate over experiences of authenticity explored in this study.

The perceived final product of being is then experienced in a more advanced way in terms of authenticity. For this, an individual must have some inner idea, a sense of a true being to which the current being is compared. The difference between the two, then, is experienced and assessed.

Based on the result, authenticity can be perceived as a conditional state. However, those conditions vary from inner to external type. Authentic people experience those conditions as *inner*; thus, achieving psychological stability and acceptance is necessary. In contrast, inauthentic people set those conditions in the qualities of the environment. Thus, an accepting and tolerant society is necessary *(external conditions).* This distinction can be explained on the grounds of locus of control (Colman, 2009), which might predispose some people to find solutions within the self (inner control) or within external elements (external control). The other possibility is that objectively, participants' environmental backgrounds differed concerning tolerance and acceptance. It is probably a concern of future, deeper studies. Lastly some participants did not depict any conditions to be authentic, as this state is smooth and natural.

This brings us to another issue on this subject. Following intuition based on existential philosophy, being authentic is at the cost of a heavy, multifaceted burden. However, most participants declared that being self is the source of comfort, while 18 said otherwise. Therefore, there are some inconsistencies to reflect on. Do the majority part of participants just not blessed with Kierkegaard's gift of awareness yet? Consistent with Kierkegaard, it could be assumed that those participants did not really and deeply reflect on the subject of true being. The state that they perceive as authentic is not actually authentic. Likewise, the experience of unconditional authenticity could indicate a challenge in delving into profound reflections on the subject, revealing difficulty articulating it verbally.

However, this way of interpretation takes away credibility from participants—their ability to reflect and answer the questions of their phenomenological experiences reasonably. The assumption that an individual has his own truth is the foundation of qualitative research. Therefore, other explanations should also be considered.

Firstly, the existential philosophy perspective on being is profound and complex but associated with neurotic emotional states or emotional disturbance. At least, thinkers I referred to in theoretical introduction. Therefore, existential philosophy captures the whole issue of being, or just the part, that is most coherent with the personality structure of existential authors. If the second option is correct, that implies that the existential take on being is incomplete. This gives space for possible interpretations of true being as a source of comfort, for example, on the ground of positive psychology.

Firstly, there might be different psychological foundation of experiencing being and authenticity, rooted in different personality structures of individuals. Therefore, there should be search aimed to investigate whether people with different personality profiles exhibit authenticity is some unique way, or existential approach is universal, and being does concern existential burden.

Secondly, there was a change in society between the present and the 19th and 20th centuries when the existential approach in philosophy and psychology was born. Less oppressive and open for education, societies that focus on the needs of individuals and freedom of expression happen worldwide. There are still countries that do not fit the criteria of democracy; however, the general understanding of people's development is rising. Therefore, "being self" is possible as there is generally a higher level of tolerance and acceptance. That is why the existential approach might apply partially, or the range of emotional expression of being has changed.

Among 18 participants that declared authenticity as discomfort, some experienced it as a value, a state to achieve and fight for. That is more coherent with Nietzsche's will to power or Tillich's courage to be—the inner need to strive for an authentic being. However, the final state of being should bring self-affirmation, peace, and spontaneity (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008; Tillich, 1952)

Therefore, there is a question if there are different ways to experience authenticity or different stages of authenticity.

The other reason for experiencing authenticity as the discomfort was the negative evaluation of own being. There comes the question of why a positive picture of self is not present to refer to. Being a good person, or a perfect self, may not be coherent with being true self. Recognizing own personality flaws as significant for own identification might lead to the conclusion that pursuing true being is harmful to others or give troubles for a person, thus brings discomfort. On the contrary, being self might harm a person when society is not an accepting environment.

This is one of the reasons why inauthenticity is a source of comfort, as it allows one to be safe if expressing true being brings unnecessary attention. Therefore conformism (Fromm, 1998) might give an illusion of safety and even satisfaction (Kierkegaard, 1849/2008). Furthermore, inauthenticity is also an expression of being and, as such, a part of being (Heidegger, 2010). However, most participants associated inauthenticity with discomfort, as it is effortful state, of unnecessary pretending.

It is challenging to decide what is authenticity or true self-affirmation. Even conformism might be a way of protecting true being in the long run (Kozielecki, 1996). Reflection on this study's result shows how essential an individual framework of interpretation is. However, there is still an issue of how much credit is given to the

participant. How much of an answer depicts the experience, and how much do participants rationalize the narration?

Critical reflection of methodology

The aim of conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was to explore how the conscience of becoming the self is experienced in the individual perception of people from different cultural backgrounds. The exploration took place; however, the participant's group was not wildly divergent as most of them were Polish. There were 18 cases from other countries, including 10 participants from English-speaking countries. The models were created regardless of nationality, as the non-Polish group did not suggest different models.

The most important is that models were created mainly based on analysis of participants with Western cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the first significant application is to investigate representatives from Eastern culture in the future to verify and extend already existing models.

There is a reason why sample limits for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis are set for around 12 participants to prevent the possibility of data overload (Noon, 2018). The sample size of this study was 61 participants, and overload did occur. However, a year and a half time for analysis and putting data in models and tables did arrange the data. Nevertheless, the approach for future studies on the Conscience of Becoming the Self must be more efficient. That is why qualitative data analysis will include a search for already created Conscience of Becoming the Self categories and simultaneously new codes that might complete and extend the model. This approach will likely make data analysis more economical when considering the time of the procedure.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis allowed in-depth and multifaceted exploration of Conscience of Becoming the Self and the process of becoming the self.

Therefore, synthesized themes presented in figures and tables have quite a broad range of content. Some elements appear repeatedly throughout the analysis from different perspectives or as part of different phenomena. *Awareness* is an excellent example of a subject present throughout the result section. The reason for that is the aim of an open exploration. Therefore, I gave each subject a space for interpretation. As I mentioned, within the analysis process, I was open to rearranging and rethinking the structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self. As a result, extensive interpretation of the process of becoming the self, emerged alongside the updated structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self.

However, this study was not designed to explore some of the presented functions and phenomena deeply. Therefore, research directed precisely to explore one aspect or another would extend its content. For example, *tool-raising awareness* might have more elements than *the inner standard of being* and *vision of self.* Therapy could also be considered as such a tool. However, in this study, it was assigned to *experiences.* Experiencing authenticity and inauthenticity have more shades than described in this study. Concluding, created categories concerning the process of creating being do not couch the whole process, but its part that emerged through the interview. The interviews designed to explore each aspect individually (e.g., being in the context of authenticity) might bring a much broader context for interpretations. That is why this is another limitation of this study. What models tell about the process of becoming the self is possibly incomplete.

While conducting this research, I received suggestions to select a specific group to explore manifestations of the Conscience of Becoming the Self. It was proposed that the group should possess the capacity for deep reflection on complex questions pertaining to their lives, as random individuals might not grasp the meaning of such inquiries

adequately. For example, such a capacity could have artists. However, it was important for me to encompass a wide range of experiences. The diversity in participants' ability to reflect on self-realization was evident, and their engagement in this study pleasantly surprised me. However, it posed an intellectual challenge for some participants to engage in the interviews fully. This aspect serves as both a limitation and a positive aspect of the study, as it provided an opportunity to observe how individuals who initially struggled eventually approached the study. It is important to note that the responses from these individuals may represent readily accessible content for self-reflection rather than necessarily being the most significant. Therefore, with appropriate guidance, other pertinent subjects might come to light. Still, exploring connections between certain professions and the experience of the Conscience of becoming the Self is also an interesting path for future research.

The methodology employed in this study provided convenient access to the interview process. Participants were directed to a dedicated webpage by clicking on the provided link, where they could complete the interview and upload their responses. This approach offered flexibility, allowing participants to engage with the task at their convenience, whether it be at any time, from any location, and with the necessary amount of time they required.

The chosen methodology offered several advantages, including convenience and accessibility. However, it should be noted that the accessibility of the interview process was limited to individuals with devices capable of opening the provided link, such as a computer.

However, conducting interviews in this manner does lose some of the advantages of traditional face-to-face interviews. One limitation is that the researcher cannot guide the conversation or assist participants in understanding the questions. On the other hand,

participants may feel more at ease completing the interview in the comfort of their own homes, rather than engaging with a stranger on complex matters of self-development. While an interviewer can serve as a facilitator for the participant's reflection, their presence can also influence and shape the participant's responses. With approach in this study, the researcher has minimal control over the interview process, allowing participants to engage with the questions on their own terms. As a result, participant's reflections are solely their own and are influenced solely by their individual awareness.

The qualitative material collected in this study does not require transcription since it is already in written form. This eliminates the risk of data loss that may occur during the transcription process, which is typically the initial stage of data processing in qualitative methodology. Transcription can introduce changes to the original message, often due to technical limitations such as imperfect transcriptions from voice recordings or the need to reconstruct the interview from notes. Thus, the qualitative material analyzed in this study consists of pure, unaltered responses from the participants.

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List of figures and tables

Abstract in English

The objective of this study is to explore the meaning and impact of one's own development in individual experiences. Themes such as finding the true self, becoming the best version of oneself, and achieving personal growth are pervasive in mass media and the collective consciousness. The concept of Conscience of Becoming the Self operationalizes the intuitions found in humanistic and existential psychology, suggesting that individuals not only experience their own being but are also conscious of the quality of their self-growth, to the extent that an inadequate state of being may become a matter of conscience. Therefore, this study aims to explore the Conscience of Becoming the Self in people's experiences and describe its psychological manifestations. To achieve this, qualitative data were collected from 76 participants, including 61 Poles. The analysis method employed in this study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Based on this analysis, Conscience of Becoming the Self can be delineated into two primary dimensions: the *behavioral* and *inner* dimensions. The *behavioral dimension* pertains to behavior within the context of self-development. The *inner dimension* manifests positively as a *motivational force* driving individuals to pursue their desired way of being. Conversely, its negative manifestation is akin to conscience, termed *remorse*. This inner response surfaces when self-growth is perceived as inadequate.

In addition to elucidating the structure of Conscience of Becoming the Self, the analysis delves into the process of self-creation—how individuals experience distinguishing self and personality and the process of gaining awareness. Furthermore, categories were formulated to depict experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity.

Keywords: Conscience of Becoming the Self (COBS), Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), conscience, self-actualization, self-development, authenticity, being

Abstract in Polish

Przedmiotem tych badań była eksploracja znaczenia oraz wpływu jaki doświadczanie własnego samorozwoju ma na człowieka. Obecność w przestrzeni publicznej jak i indywidualnej zagadnień dotyczących „stawania się najlepszą wersją siebie, „bycia sobą", „drogi najlepszego samorozwoju", wskazują, na ważność tych kwestii w życiu człowieka. Koncept Sumienia Stawania się Sobą, jest operacjonalizacją intuicji obecnej w humanistycznej i egzystencjalnej psychologii, która to wskazuje, iż człowiek jest świadomym, doświadczającym siebie bytem. W obszarze tego doświadczenia istotne jest rozpoznanie poziomu swojego samorozwoju i adekwatności własnych działań względem pewnego prawdziwego, „ja". Założeniem tej pracy jest, iż powyższe aspekty uzyskują w perspektywie indywidualnej człowieka, ważność obowiązku etycznego względem samego siebie. Dlatego celem niniejszego badania jest eksploracja i opisanie w jaki sposób Sumienie Stawania się Sobą jest doświadczane przez pojedynczych ludzi, oraz jakie są jego psychologiczne manifestacje. Aby to osiągnąć zastosowano paradygmat badań jakościowych. Zebrano materiał jakościowy od 76 badanych, z których 61 było narodowości polskiej. Jako metodę analizy danych zastosowano Interpretacyjną Analizę Fenomenologiczną

Wynikiem tych analiz było wyłonienie dwuwymiarowej struktury zjawiska Sumienia Stawania się Sobą. *Wymiar behawioralny* odnosi się do rozwojowych i nierozwojowych strategii zachowania w kontekście samorozwoju. Z kolei *wymiar wewnętrzny* ma wyraźne dwa odcienie, pozytywne (*siła motywacyjna*) i negatywne (*wyrzuty*). *Siła motywacyjna* objawia się jako kierująca ku właściwemu - w postrzeganiu osoby -samorozwojowi. *Wyrzuty* z kolei to wewnętrznie doświadczana niespójność między rozwojem realizowanym a tym odczuwanym jako optymalny. Ponadto analiza IPA dała możliwość wglądu w percepcję osób badanych w kontekście kreacji swojego bycia poprzez

doświadczanie i proces uzyskiwania wglądu tj. świadomości samych siebie. Co więcej utworzono również kategorie, obrazujące jak badani doświadczają autentyczności i jej braku.

Słowa kluczowe: Sumienie Stawania się Sobą (SSS), Interpretacyjna Analiza Fenomenologiczna (IPA), sumienie, samoaktualizacja, samorozwój, autentyczność, bycie

Appendices

Appendix 1_Interview: Wojtek

<u>**Participant 52: Wojtek, men, 33 years old**</u>

1. W jaki sposób opisałbyś(opisałabyś) siebie?

Zacznij od ogólnej charakterystyki. *

Jestem pewny siebie, staram się czerpać z życia jak najwięcej, chce być dobrym wzorem dla moich dzieci

Jakie cechy/ właściwości są najbardziej kluczowe dla Twojej osobowości? *

Dokładność, empatia, odwaga

Z jakich własnych cech/właściwości oraz osiągnięć jesteś najbardziej dumny(a)? *

Z tego, jak umiem pokonywać przeszkody, jak odnajduję się w nowych sytuacjach, jestem dumny z mojego stanowiska w pracy oraz ze szczęśliwej rodziny

Z jakich własnych cech jesteś niezadowolony(a)? *

Z tego że bywam zachłanny

Co w sobie chciałbyś(aś) poprawić? *

Chciałbym być jeszcze bardziej zorganizowany oraz nauczyć się odpoczywać

2. Czy dobrze czujesz się z tym jaki/jaka jesteś?

Jakie zmiany (jeżeli jakiekolwiek) wprowadziłbyś(aś) żeby poczuć się bardziej sobą? *

Czuję się sobą

Czy bycie bardziej sobą jest źródłem komfortu, czy przeciwnie? Wyjaśnij dlaczego *

Komfortu, bo nie muszę nikogo udawać, robię to co chcę

3. W jaki sposób udało Ci się dotrzeć do tego momentu w życiu?

Co było ważne? *

Determinacja oraz myślenie o dalekiej przyszłości, a nie tylko o kolejnym dniu

Jakie były Twoje koszty (np.wyrzeczenia)? *

Szybko zacząłem dorosłe życie, musiałem sam się utrzymać w młodym wieku, straciłem studenckie lata zabawy

Co nastręczało najwięcej trudności? *

Zrozumienie, że problemy się zdarzają i muszę zaakceptować, że nie zawsze jest idealnie, ale mogę starać się żeby było lepiej

Jakie były Twoje zyski? *

Osiągnąłem to o czym marzyłem od dziecka, żyję na dobrym poziomie

Co było stosunkowo łatwe? *

Odnalezienie tego co chcę robić w życiu, lubię swoją pracę

Co zrobiłbyś(aś) inaczej? *

Pracowałbym jeszcze ciężej przed założeniem rodziny

4. W jaki sposób przebiegał proces kształtowania Ciebie jako osoby ?

W jaki sposób formowały się Twoje priorytety? *

Wyniosłem je z domu rodzinnego, to miało największy wpływ na ukształtowanie moich priorytetów

Jak opisałbyś(opisałabyś) proces stawania się osobą taką jaką jesteś w różnych okresach życia? *

Żyłem własnym życiem i kierowałem się zawsze swoimi celami, nie przejmowałem się co pomyślą osoby na których mi nie zależy

Czy możesz wskazać najbardziej kluczowe okoliczności? *

Sytuacja w domu rodzinnym gdy byłem młody oraz w mojej rodzinie teraz

5. Czy przypominasz sobie sytuację w której zrobiłeś(aś) coś bardzo znaczącego i (w Twoim odczuciu) adekwatnego dla własnej osobowości?

Opisz tą sytuację. *

Osiągnąłem sukces w ważnym projekcie i to bardzo zbudowało moją pewność siebie, czułem się bardzo dobrze w tym żywiole, gdy miałem dużo na głowie

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty? *

Rzadko, a szkoda

Co popchnęło Cię (było motywatorem) żeby postąpić w taki a nie inny sposób w tej sytuacji? *

Myślenie o przyszłości

Jak się czułeś(aś) przed i po tej sytuacji? *

Przed brakowało mi wiary w siebie, później było lepiej bo zauważyłem że i ja potrafię więcej niż myślałem

6. Czy przypominasz sobie nie zrealizowane możliwości, plany, marzenia lub takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub zrobić coś ważnego dla rozwoju własnej osobowości, a jednak zaniechałeś(aś) tego, a potem było szkoda?

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty ? *

Często

Opisz czego doświadczasz kiedy przypominasz sobie takie momenty(czy czujesz wyrzuty sumienia). *

Jako dziecko zaniedbałem naukę języków, po latach było ciężko do tego wrócić, zajęło to bardzo dużo czasu

Czy myślisz że te sytuacje mogłyby zmienić to kim jesteś teraz ? *

Myślę, że nie w wielkim stopniu

7. Czy możesz przypomnieć sobie w jaki sposób doświadczasz sytuacji w których podejmujesz decyzje niezgodne z własną osobowością?

Jak często pojawiają się wspomnienia takich sytuacji? *

Zawsze staram się żyć w zgodzie ze sobą, tak by takich sytuacji nie doświadczyć, nie pamiętam ich

Jaki wpływ te sytuacje oraz refleksje na ten temat mają na Ciebie? *

Na pewno miałyby duży, bo życie w zgodzie ze sobą jest dla mnie bardzo ważne, nie działam wbrew sobie

Jak się czujesz w chwilach braku autentyczności w swoim życiu? *

Niekomfortowo i staram się nigdy nie dopuścić do takich sytuacji

8. Czy kiedykolwiek doświadczyłeś(aś) poczucia niespójności między tym kim jesteś a kim powinieneś(powinnaś) być?

Jak opisał(a) byś to poczucie ? *

Nie doświadczyłem takich momentów, Jestem szczęśliwy

W jakich sytuacjach się ono pojawia? *

Nie pojawia się

9. Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwałeś(aś) "wizję siebie", zgodnie z którą podejmowałeś własne decyzje?

Jak opisał(a) byś to doświadczenie? *

Zawsze podejmuje własne decyzje, do bardzo dobre uczucie, pozwala czuć się wolnym

Opisz warunki w jakich pojawia się to doświadczenie. *

Pojawia się każdego dnia gdy robię to co chcę

Gdyby istniało pojęcie "wewnętrzny standard stawania się", jak rozumiał(a) byś to pojęcie? *

Nie rozumiem go teraz

10. Jak myślisz: czy to jacy się stajemy w toku naszego życia może podlegać swego rodzaju sumieniu?

Jakie pełniłoby funkcje/jakie miałoby znaczenie takie sumienie? *

Na pewno miałoby duże znaczenie

Jak mogłoby się przejawiać takie sumienie? *

Ciężko to określić,

Czy doświadczałeś(aś) działania takiego sumienia? *

Możliwe, ale nie jestem tego świadomy w obecnej chwili

11. Czy doświadczyłeś/doświadczyłaś jakiegoś traumatycznego wydarzenia w niedawnym czasie?

tak

nie

Appendix 2_Interview: Chris

<u>**Participant 36: Chris, men, 26 years old**</u>

1. W jaki sposób opisałbyś(opisałabyś) siebie?

Zacznij od ogólnej charakterystyki. *

Zagubiony, brak pewności siebie. Z drugiej strony w miarę lubiany i bystry. Przykleił sobie

łatkę błazna grupowego na własne życzenie, bo to zmniejsza oczekiwania wobec niego.

Jakie cechy/ właściwości są najbardziej kluczowe dla Twojej osobowości? *

Nieustępliwość, opanowanie, analityczne podejście do życia, doskonały obserwator.

Z jakich własnych cech/właściwości oraz osiągnięć jesteś najbardziej dumny(a)? *

Bez większego wysiłku zdałem studia uważane za najbardziej prestiżowe na swojej uczelni.

Doskonała pamięć krótka. Łatwość wchodzenia w nowe grupy towarzyskie.

Z jakich własnych cech jesteś niezadowolony(a)? *

nieasertywność, wstydliwość w kontaktach damsko-męskich.

Co w sobie chciałbyś(aś) poprawić? *

Powyższe cechy, z których jestem niezadowolony.

2. Czy dobrze czujesz się z tym jaki/jaka jesteś?

Jakie zmiany (jeżeli jakiekolwiek) wprowadziłbyś(aś) żeby poczuć się bardziej sobą? *

Asertywne podejście do życia. Niepozwalania na pomiatanie sobą. Nieakceptowanie

narzucanej woli innych, jeśli jest ona nieuzasadniona.

Czy bycie bardziej sobą jest źródłem komfortu, czy przeciwnie? Wyjaśnij dlaczego *

Odpowiedź nie może być zerojedynkowa. To zależy od wielu czynników. Człowiek inaczej

zachowuje się w sytuacjach towarzyskich ze znanymi sobie ludźmi, z nowo poznanymi

ludźmi czy też z ludźmi stojącymi wyżej w hierarchii społecznej (szef).

3. W jaki sposób udało Ci się dotrzeć do tego momentu w życiu?

Co było ważne? *

Łatwość w przyswajaniu wiedzy, wpływ środowiska, w szczególności w liceum i na studiach.

Jakie były Twoje koszty (np.wyrzeczenia)? *

Niewielkie/żadne. Sytuacja społeczna oraz umiejętność przyswajania wiedzy pozwoliła na dotarcie do tego momentu praktycznie bez wyrzeczeń.

Co nastręczało najwięcej trudności? *

Adaptacja w grupach społecznych całkowicie oderwanych od dotychczas znanych.

Znalezienie swojego, charakterystycznego stylu bycia.

Jakie były Twoje zyski? *

Ułatwione relacje międzyludzkie, zawieranie przyjaźni.

Co było stosunkowo łatwe? *

Nauka.

Co zrobiłbyś(aś) inaczej? *

Poszedłbym do innego gimnazjum, aby wcześniej wystawić się jak wpływ nowego środowiska i nauczyć przed liceum zdrowego procesu adaptacji.

4. W jaki sposób przebiegał proces kształtowania Ciebie jako osoby ?

W jaki sposób formowały się Twoje priorytety? *

W zależności od własnych pragnień i wymagań srodowiska

Jak opisałbyś(opisałabyś) proces stawania się osobą taką jaką jesteś w różnych okresach życia? *

Do połowy liceum praktycznie żadnego nie było, potem ogromny skok i płynny rozwój.

Czy możesz wskazać najbardziej kluczowe okoliczności? *

Otworzenie się na zdanie środowiska oraz nauczenie obserwacji jego reakcji w celu oceny własnych zachowań.

5. Czy przypominasz sobie sytuację w której zrobiłeś(aś) coś bardzo znaczącego i (w Twoim odczuciu) adekwatnego dla własnej osobowości?

Opisz tą sytuację. *

Znalezienie pracy, która mi odpowiada mimo braku wiary w siebie. Nawiązanie przyjaźni w liceum.

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty? *

Srednio

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Co popchnęło Cię (było motywatorem) żeby postąpić w taki a nie inny sposób w tej sytuacji? *

Nie jestem w stanie określić. Może własna podświadomość?

Jak się czułeś(aś) przed i po tej sytuacji? *

Podobnie, ale po czasie zdałem sobie sprawę, ze w życiu zaczyna mi być lepiej/latwiej

6. Czy przypominasz sobie nie zrealizowane możliwości, plany, marzenia lub takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub zrobić coś ważnego dla rozwoju własnej osobowości, a jednak zaniechałeś(aś) tego, a potem było szkoda?

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty ? *

Bardzo

Opisz czego doświadczasz kiedy przypominasz sobie takie momenty(czy czujesz wyrzuty sumienia). *

Żalu do siebie samego.

Czy myślisz że te sytuacje mogłyby zmienić to kim jesteś teraz ? *

Prawdopodobnie.

7. Czy możesz przypomnieć sobie w jaki sposób doświadczasz sytuacji w których podejmujesz decyzje niezgodne z własną osobowością?

Jak często pojawiają się wspomnienia takich sytuacji? *

Bardzo często

Jaki wpływ te sytuacje oraz refleksje na ten temat mają na Ciebie? *

Obwiniam się za brak asertywności.

Jak się czujesz w chwilach braku autentyczności w swoim życiu? *

Zniechęcony do rozwoju.

8. Czy kiedykolwiek doświadczyłeś(aś) poczucia niespójności między tym kim jesteś a kim powinieneś(powinnaś) być?

Jak opisał(a) byś to poczucie ? *

Zagubienie

W jakich sytuacjach się ono pojawia? *

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Po zakończeniu studiów w przeciwienstwie do wiekszosci rówieśników nie miałem dalej pojęcia co chciałbym robić w życiu.

9. Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwałeś(aś) "wizję siebie", zgodnie z którą podejmowałeś własne decyzje?

Jak opisał(a) byś to doświadczenie? *

Gniew i ponura satysfakcja

Opisz warunki w jakich pojawia się to doświadczenie. *

Gdy nie mogę zasnąć, gdy nic nie zaprząta mi głowy.

Gdyby istniało pojęcie "wewnętrzny standard stawania się", jak rozumiał(a) byś to pojęcie? *

Wykorzystywanie interakcji ze światem zewnętrznym do kształtowania swojej osobowości.

10. Jak myślisz: czy to jacy się stajemy w toku naszego życia może podlegać swego rodzaju sumieniu?

Jakie pełniłoby funkcje/jakie miałoby znaczenie takie sumienie? *

Przypomnienia o popelnionych błędach, aby ich nie powtarzac. Pamięci o sukcesach, aby z nich czerpać inspiracje.

Jak mogłoby się przejawiać takie sumienie? *

W trakcie podejmowania istotnych decyzji życiowych, w postaci listy to do/ not to do.

Czy doświadczałeś(aś) działania takiego sumienia? *

Tak

11. Czy doświadczyłeś/doświadczyłaś jakiegoś traumatycznego wydarzenia w niedawnym czasie?

tak

nie

Czy było to doświadczenie w związku z COVID-19?

tak

nie

Jeśli chcesz i uważasz że jest to ważne opisz to wydarzenie

Nie doswiadczylem

Appendix 3_Interview: Kasia

Participant 2: Kasia, women, 25 years old

1. W jaki sposób opisałbyś(opisałabyś) siebie?

Zacznij od ogólnej charakterystyki. *

Optymistyczna i otwarta ale przy tym chaotyczna

Jakie cechy/ właściwości są najbardziej kluczowe dla Twojej osobowości? *

Ciekawość i optymizm

Z jakich własnych cech/właściwości oraz osiągnięć jesteś najbardziej dumny(a)? *

Z kariery zawodowej mimo niełatwego startu

Z jakich własnych cech jesteś niezadowolony(a)? *

Z chaotyczności, obawy przed byciem ocenianą i słomianego zapału

Co w sobie chciałbyś(aś) poprawić? *

Być bardziej uporządkowana i mniej narwana

2. Czy dobrze czujesz się z tym jaki/jaka jesteś?

Jakie zmiany (jeżeli jakiekolwiek) wprowadziłbyś(aś) żeby poczuć się bardziej sobą? *

Większa asertywność, aby nie być podatna na wpływ otoczenia i opinie

Czy bycie bardziej sobą jest źródłem komfortu, czy przeciwnie? Wyjaśnij dlaczego *

Nie zawsze. W niektórych względach które dotyczą tylko mnie wole robić co chce i być sobą, natomiast zdaje sobie sprawę ze nie zawsze jest to optymalne wyjście podczas życia w społeczeństwie, gdyż bezwzględne bycie sobą mogłoby doprowadzić do niepotrzebnych konfliktów. Dostosowywanie siebie do pewnych konwencji społecznych i przyjmowanie określonych ról jest moim zdaniem konieczne

3. W jaki sposób udało Ci się dotrzeć do tego momentu w życiu?

Co było ważne? *

Nie poddawanie się, optymizm i wiara w swoje umiejetnosci

Jakie były Twoje koszty (np.wyrzeczenia)? *

Często problemy zdrowotne związane ze stresem, osłabienie starych znajomosci których życie
było zbyt różne od mojego.

Co nastręczało najwięcej trudności? *

Utrzymanie wiary ze będzie dobrze i ze warto

Jakie były Twoje zyski? *

Obecnie stabilna, ciekawa praca, która umożliwia nie tylko rozwoj, ale również komfort
finansowy, a co za tym idzie możliwość rozwijania innych pasji

Co było stosunkowo łatwe? *

Podjęcie ryzyka i zmiana swojego życia - bo lubię jak dużo się dzieje

Co zrobiłbyś(aś) inaczej? *

Bardziej ukierunkowalabym swoją karierę

4. W jaki sposób przebiegał proces kształtowania Ciebie jako osoby ?

W jaki sposób formowały się Twoje priorytety? *

Na początku bardzo ważna była nauka, gdyż zawsze chciałam się dalej rozwijać. Później
kariera, jednak w jej trakcie uświadomiłam sobie ze warto pielęgnować znajomosci czy to z
pracy czy z innych etapów życia i teraz staram się otaczać ciekawymi ludźmi. Staram się aby
w swoim życiu jak najbardziej pomagać i być wsparciem dla innych.

Jak opisałbyś(opisałabyś) proces stawania się osobą taką jaką jesteś w różnych okresach życia? *

W szkole byłam zawsze bardzo pewna siebie pod względem wiedzy, lecz bardzo starałam się przypodobać grupie, aby czuć się akceptowana. Po pójściu na studia zupełnie zmieniłam otoczenie, spotkałam ludzi bardziej podobnych do mnie i przy których mogłam czuć się swobodnie, wiec dzieki temu uzyskałam bardziej swoją tożsamość. Byłam tez otoczona głównie ludzmi inteligentniejszym ode mnie, dzieki czemu zyskałam większa pokorę i poszanowanie opinii innych. Moja wiara w siebie zmalała do momentu uzyskania pierwszej pracy, gdzie otrzymałam mnóstwo wsparcia i zachęty do rozwoju, również możliwość wielu wyzwań którym myślałam ze nie sprostam (a jednak się udało). Obecnie staram się dużo pracować nad swoim charakterem, aby również potrafić być wsparciem dla mojego obecnego teamu, który wg mnie potrzebuje takiego samego wsparcia jak ja kiedyś.

Czy możesz wskazać najbardziej kluczowe okoliczności? *

Myśle ze każda większa zmiana otoczenia miała na mnie kluczowy wpływ

5. Czy przypominasz sobie sytuację w której zrobiłeś(aś) coś bardzo znaczącego i (w Twoim odczuciu) adekwatnego dla własnej osobowości?

Opisz tą sytuację. *

Zerwanie z kochającym chłopakiem, dlatego ze związek w moim odczuciu nie miał przyszłości i chciałam zaoszczędzić bólu nam obojgu w przyszlosci

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty? *

Od czasu do czasu

Co popchnęło Cię (było motywatorem) żeby postąpić w taki a nie inny sposób w tej sytuacji? *

Dobro wspólne, myślenie o przyszłości, staranie zapobiec w moim odczuciu nieuchronnie złym wydarzeniom

Jak się czułeś(aś) przed i po tej sytuacji? *

Źle, mimo upływu czasu.Z jednej strony uważam ze było to konieczne, z drugiej strony obwiniam się i odtwarzam w głowie scenariusze co mogłam zrobić, by był troche mniej skrzywdzony.

6. Czy przypominasz sobie nie zrealizowane możliwości, plany, marzenia lub takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub zrobić coś ważnego dla rozwoju własnej osobowości, a jednak zaniechałeś(aś) tego, a potem było szkoda?

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty ? *

Czesto

Opisz czego doświadczasz kiedy przypominasz sobie takie momenty(czy czujesz wyrzuty sumienia). *

Wstyd ze nie zebrałam w sobie tyle siły żeby to popchnąć.

Czy myślisz że te sytuacje mogłyby zmienić to kim jesteś teraz ? *

Myśle ze tak, ale nie drastycznie.

7. Czy możesz przypomnieć sobie w jaki sposób doświadczasz sytuacji w których podejmujesz decyzje niezgodne z własną osobowością?

Jak często pojawiają się wspomnienia takich sytuacji? *

Rzadko

Jaki wpływ te sytuacje oraz refleksje na ten temat mają na Ciebie? *

Zwykle jeśli takie sytuacje maja miejsce to istnieją logiczne argumenty na wytłumaczenie, wiec staram sobie racjonalizować te decyzje. Jeśli nie widzę konstruktywnych wniosków z

rozpamiętywania, wówczas staram się odpychać takie myśli i po prostu zaakceptować ze mleko się rozlało.

Jak się czujesz w chwilach braku autentyczności w swoim życiu? *

jeśli zrezygnowanie z bycia autentycznym miało jakieś korzyści i nikomu nie szkodzi, wówczas nie mam z tym problemu. Dobrze się czuje przyjmując role, której społeczeństwo ode mnie wymaga, o ile widzę ze służy ona na plus większej grupie. Jeśli uważam ze grupa narusza moje poglądy wówczas raczej unikam konfrontacji lub próbuje logicznych argumentów i spokojnej dyskusji. Moim zdaniem bycie samotnym wojownikiem w takich kwestiach to misja samobójcza, wole wojnę podjazdową.

8. Czy kiedykolwiek doświadczyłeś(aś) poczucia niespójności między tym kim jesteś a kim powinieneś(powinnaś) być?

Jak opisał(a) byś to poczucie ? *

Jeśli czuje ze powinnam być jakaś i leży to w zakresie moich możliwości, wówczas staram się takie cechy w sobie wykształcić. Jeżeli czuje ze bariera jest nie do przeskoczenia, wówczas odpuszczam, ponieważ czuje ze zawsze znajdę sobie miejsce na ziemi gdzie będę potrafiła się wpasować.

W jakich sytuacjach się ono pojawia? *

Często podczas konfrontacji lub przy zarządzaniu grupa ludzi.

9. Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwałeś(aś) "wizję siebie", zgodnie z którą podejmowałeś własne decyzje?

Jak opisał(a) byś to doświadczenie? *

Tak, ale nie wiem jak to opisać, bo zwykle w swoich decyzjach kieruje się jakimś większym obrazem tego gdzie chciałabym dojsc

Opisz warunki w jakich pojawia się to doświadczenie. *

Przy wszystkich znaczących decyzjach - studia, kariera, a nawet wybór życiowych partnerów, który to wybór również będzie wpływał na te wizje.

Gdyby istniało pojęcie "wewnętrzny standard stawania się", jak rozumiał(a) byś to pojęcie? *

Być może jako pewne wzorce ścieżek samorozwoju, przez które może przechodzić człowiek, tj. wyselekcjonowanie pewnych utartych schematów, generalizując ścieżki rozwoju wszystkich ludzi.

10. Jak myślisz: czy to jacy się stajemy w toku naszego życia może podlegać swego rodzaju sumieniu?

Jakie pełniłoby funkcje/jakie miałoby znaczenie takie sumienie? *

wyznaczałoby ideały do których chcielibyśmy dążyć

Jak mogłoby się przejawiać takie sumienie? *

Czulibyśmy się zle w trakcie niepowodzeń oddalających nas od tego ideału, a dobrze gdy czulibyśmy ze się do niego zblizamy

Czy doświadczałeś(aś) działania takiego sumienia? *

Tak

Czy doświadczyłeś/doświadczyłaś jakiegoś traumatycznego wydarzenia w niedawnym czasie?

tak

nie

Appendix 4_Interview: Tom

Participant 35: Tom, men, 30 years old

1. W jaki sposób opisałbyś(opisałabyś) siebie?

Zacznij od ogólnej charakterystyki. *

Prosty człowiek z wadami i zaletami, wielkimi marzeniami i dobrym sercem.

Jakie cechy/ właściwości są najbardziej kluczowe dla Twojej osobowości? *

Pozytywne myślenie i szukanie rozwiązań zamiast rozmyślania, jak zły jest świat.

Z jakich własnych cech/właściwości oraz osiągnięć jesteś najbardziej dumny(a)? *

umiejętność (albo przynajmniej próby) zrozumienia potrzeb drugiego człowieka, akceptacja
siebie ze świadomością wad

Z jakich własnych cech jesteś niezadowolony(a)? *

brak systematyczności (czasem niekonsekwentność), oraz trudność w decydowaniu się na
jedną drogą (trzymanie kilku srok za ogon, rozdrabnianie się)

Co w sobie chciałbyś(aś) poprawić? *

umiejętność skupienia się na jednej rzeczy

2. Czy dobrze czujesz się z tym jaki/jaka jesteś?

Jakie zmiany (jeżeli jakiekolwiek) wprowadziłbyś(aś) żeby poczuć się bardziej sobą? *

brak zmian :)

Czy bycie bardziej sobą jest źródłem komfortu, czy przeciwnie? Wyjaśnij dlaczego *

Trzeba by rozdzielić bycie sobą i akceptację siebie. Idealna sytuacja to taka, w której
jesteśmy sobą - czyli robimy to co lubimy i co sprawia nam przyjemność, i akceptujemy to.
Wtedy jest to źródło komfortu i poczucia harmonii wewnętrznej. Jeśli jedna z tych rzeczy nie
jest spełniona, możemy dążyć do autodestrukcji lub się frustrować. Uważam, że każda cecha
człowieka nie jest ani wadą, ani zaletą - tylko cechą, którą da się wykorzystać pozytywnie lub
negatywnie. Ważne jest, żeby znaleźć kierunek w swoim życiu, który sprawia, że czujemy się
dobrze na wszystkich płaszczyznach swojego życia, który akceptujemy i który zgodny jest z
naszymi wewnętrznymi pragnieniami.

3. W jaki sposób udało Ci się dotrzeć do tego momentu w życiu?

Co było ważne? *

Na pewno ludzie, których spotkałem na swojej drodze. Oprócz tego książki, filmy i historie, które inspirowały i pokazywały, że "da się". Bardzo ważne, jeśli nie najważniejsze - stanąć w prawdzie ze samym sobą - pogodzić się z wadami, zrozumieć swoje pragnienia, przeanalizować popełnione błędy i opinie innych na swój temat i wyciągnąć z tego wnioski.

Jakie były Twoje koszty (np. wyrzeczenia)? *

mało czasu dla znajomych, porzucenie niektórych zainteresowań

Co nastręczało najwięcej trudności? *

decydowanie, z czego zrezygnować

Jakie były Twoje zyski? *

znalezienie swojej pasji, która jednocześnie pozwala zapewnić byt i daje poczucie spełnienia osobistego

Co było stosunkowo łatwe? *

pogodzenie się ze stratami, kiedy już podjęło się decyzję

Co zrobiłbyś(aś) inaczej? *

Niektóre decyzje podjąłbym szybciej. Skupiał się na jednej rzeczy i ją doprowadzał do końca, a inne zostawiał na później, zamiast robić wszystko na raz.

4. W jaki sposób przebiegał proces kształtowania Ciebie jako osoby ?

W jaki sposób formowały się Twoje priorytety? *

na różnych etapach wpływ mieli: rodzice, ulubieni nauczyciele, znajomi, środowiska (harcerskie, szkolne, kościelne, muzyczne), czasami popkultura.

Jak opisałbyś(opisałabyś) proces stawania się osobą taką jaką jesteś w różnych okresach życia? *

Na początku życia motałem się wśród otaczających mnie informacji, gdzie największy wpływ miało to, co pokazywali rodzice. Potem coraz większy wpływ mieli znajomi (zarówno przyjaciele i kumple, jak i wrogowie). Bardzo szybko zacząłem coraz bardziej poszukiwać własnej, indywidualnej drogi i coraz bardziej świadomie dobierać ludzi wokół siebie.

Czy możesz wskazać najbardziej kluczowe okoliczności? *

Nagłe zmiany środowiska, np. zmiana lub skończenie szkoły - wtedy weryfikowały się wszystkie przyjaźnie, a w nowej grupie można było zacząć od zera budować relacje, korzystając z doświadczeń.

5. Czy przypominasz sobie sytuację w której zrobiłeś(aś) coś bardzo znaczącego i (w Twoim odczuciu) adekwatnego dla własnej osobowości?

Opisz tą sytuację. *

Nie wiem, czy mam takie jednoznaczne, pojedyncze momenty. Kiedy ktoś prosi o pomoc, to nie zastanawiam się, czy to jest dla mnie dobre albo czy mam na to czas, tylko od razu szukam rozwiązania problemu lub innego sposobu, żeby pomóc. To robię często i jest to adekwatne dla mojej osobowości. Ale takich momentów jest dużo, nie wszystkie są znaczące. Znowu momenty, które były ważnymi zwrotami akcji w życiu, są raczej połączeniem przypadku, ambicji i szczęścia. Przykładem takiej sytuacji jest zgoda na współpracę na polu, w którym wcześniej nie miałem doświadczenia.

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty? *

Czasami, w rozmowach lub podczas głębszych przemyśleń o przeszłości.

Co popchnęło Cię (było motywatorem) żeby postąpić w taki a nie inny sposób w tej sytuacji? *

Chęć zrobienia czegoś nowego, potrzeba przygody. Trochę też chęć pomocy drugiej osobie i podzielenia się swoim doświadczeniem czy szczęściem.

Jak się czułeś(aś) przed i po tej sytuacji? *

To była dobra zabawa - połączenie dużego zmęczenia i satysfakcji z fajnie spędzonego dnia i udanej współpracy.

6. Czy przypominasz sobie nie zrealizowane możliwości, plany, marzenia lub takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub zrobić coś ważnego dla rozwoju własnej osobowości, a jednak zaniechałeś(aś) tego, a potem było szkoda?

Jak często przypominasz sobie takie momenty ? *

Raz częściej, raz rzadziej. Są okresy, kiedy często (nawet codziennie), ale potem przez dłuższy czas skupiam się na pozytywach.

Opisz czego doświadczasz kiedy przypominasz sobie takie momenty(czy czujesz wyrzuty sumienia). *

Kiedyś żal do siebie, ale z czasem po prostu chęć niepopełniania więcej takiego błędu i akceptację, że to już się stało. W miarę osiągania sukcesów w życiu coraz częściej staram się analizować i wyciągać wnioski przy podejmowaniu kolejnych decyzji, niż mieć żal do siebie.

Czy myślisz że te sytuacje mogłyby zmienić to kim jesteś teraz ? *

To kim jestem nie, ale to kim się czuję i jak podejmuję decyzję - na pewno tak

7. Czy możesz przypomnieć sobie w jaki sposób doświadczasz sytuacji w których podejmujesz decyzje niezgodne z własną osobowością?

Jak często pojawiają się wspomnienia takich sytuacji? *

czasami

Jaki wpływ te sytuacje oraz refleksje na ten temat mają na Ciebie? *

mobilizują do zmiany, czasami dołują.

Jak się czujesz w chwilach braku autentyczności w swoim życiu? *

wypompowany z energii

8. Czy kiedykolwiek doświadczyłeś(aś) poczucia niespójności między tym kim jesteś a kim powinieneś(powinnaś) być?

Jak opisał(a) byś to poczucie ? *

coś jakby ból wewnętrzny, nie fizyczny (choć można by go umieścić w klatce piersiowej lub głowie). I natłok myśli - co dlaczego i po co.

W jakich sytuacjach się ono pojawia? *

Kiedy zabrnąłem w życiu w ślepą uliczkę, oszukując się, że to jest dobre dla mnie, a okazało się, że popełniłem błąd.

9. Czy kiedykolwiek odczuwałeś(aś) "wizję siebie", zgodnie z którą podejmowałeś własne decyzje?

Jak opisał(a) byś to doświadczenie? *

Poczucie wewnętrznej harmonii, zgody, połączonej z ekscytacją i energią do zmian lub realizacji pomysłu.

Opisz warunki w jakich pojawia się to doświadczenie. *

Kiedy po dłuższych przemyśleniach i gorszych dniach znajduję sposób, by wyjść z kłopotów (wewnętrznych lub zewnętrznych).

Gdyby istniało pojęcie "wewnętrzny standard stawania się", jak rozumiał(a) byś to pojęcie? *

jako indywidualny, bardzo cichy wewnętrzny głos podpowiadający właściwe rozwiązanie.

10. Jak myślisz: czy to jacy się stajemy w toku naszego życia może podlegać swego rodzaju sumieniu?

Jakie pełniłoby funkcje/jakie miałoby znaczenie takie sumienie? *

Weryfikowałoby nasze nastawienie do innych (oraz do siebie) i zmuszało do zmian na lepsze czy do próby naprawienia swoich błędów czy wyrządzonych krzywd.

Jak mogłoby się przejawiać takie sumienie? *

Jako wewnętrzny niepokój, brak zgody na podjęte decyzje

Czy doświadczałeś(aś) działania takiego sumienia? *

chyba tak

11. Czy doświadczyłeś/doświadczyłaś jakiegoś traumatycznego wydarzenia w niedawnym czasie?

tak

nie

Appendix 5: Interview from master's thesis

Ew: + Czy w ostatnim czasie wydarzyły się jakieś istotne dla Pana/Pani wydarzenia? (Pyt. dodatkowe w sytuacji dużej odległości między wykonaniem testów a wywiadem)

1. Czy ma Pani/Pan poczucie osiągnięcia w życiu tego, co Pan(i) zamierzał(a)? - jakie są Pani(a) największe sukcesy?

- co pozostało niespełnione lub nieosiągalne? - czy przy większym zaangażowaniu były to rzeczy możliwe do realizacji?

2. Czy są jakieś plany, marzenia, których nie udało się Pani(u) zrealizować, a o których myśli Pan(i) czasem?

3. Czy przypomina sobie Pan(i) takie sytuacje w życiu, w których można było coś osiągnąć lub coś ważnego zrobić, a jednak Pan(i) zaniechał(a) tego, a potem było szkoda? Co to było, o co wówczas chodziło?

4. Czy ma Pan(i) poczucie winy z powodu jakichś nie zrealizowanych możliwości, planów lub marzeń? Jak można opisać te uczucia i w jakich okolicznościach się pojawiają?

5. Czy pojawiają lub pojawiały się u Pana(i) coś takiego jak wyrzuty sumienia w związku z zaniedbaniem rozwoju swojego talentu lub samoograniczeniem rozwoju osobistego? Jak można opisać te uczucia i jakich sytuacji dotyczą?

6. W jakim stopniu w swoim życiu był(a) Pan(i) wierny(a) sobie? I co Pan(i) czuje, kiedy brakuje tej wierności?

7. Jaki wpływ na życie człowieka może mieć poczucie winy z powodu zaniechania realizacji planów lub zaniedbania osobistego rozwoju?

8. W kontekście całej naszej rozmowy, jak ocenia Pan/Pani swoje zaangażowanie w swój rozwój w przeszłości i teraz?

9. Proszę sobie wyobrazić, że naprzeciwko Pani/Pana siedzi Pani/Pan z dzieciństwa. Proszę sobie popatrzeć na to dziecko. Proszę powiedzieć, przekazać sobie jakąś wiadomość, przesłanie, może coś ważnego, coś co przyjdzie Pani/Panu do głowy (czuje Pan/Pani największą potrzebę)? Proszę powiedzieć, to tak, żeby to dziecko mogło to zrozumieć.

10. Czy chce Pan/Pani coś dodać?