

I, the Second, in the Presence of the First's Death. An Existential Perspective on Accompanying in Dying – Based on *the Story with Raspberries*

Dorota Draczyńska¹

¹Akceptacja4FM.Lab, Warsaw, Poland

With gratitude to Agnieszka Nowakowska 🐧 – without her, this article would never have been written.

ORCID: 0000-0003-0249-1002

To my Father.
With gratitude for life.

“being a body I am beside You
and how am I to be with You,
who are leaving from and in the here and now?”
(Walczak, A. W-obec śmierci. Studium intymności sytuacji granicznej, s. 159)

Abstract

This article presents a personal perspective on participating in a boundary situation – the Second accompanying the First in dying. It is a record of an intimate experience, seen through the eyes of the Second – a “study of the intimacy of the boundary situation” (Walczak, 2023). It portrays the experience of being in the presence of a boundary situation, framed phenomenologically, which guides the path of accompanying someone in dying and leading the Second towards life after the death of the First. In this process, a “transformation” occurs – the Second, in the presence of the First's death, becomes the First in the presence of her own mortality. The intimate experience of dying does not so much bring one closer to death, but – through awareness of one's own transience – draws one nearer to life, becoming a source of authentic existence.

Keywords: passing away, phenomenology of death and life, accompaniment, relationship, being-in-presence, authenticity of existence

From Theory to Practice

“We know only as much about ourselves as we have been tested,” wrote Szymborska (2022). When I was traveling to my hometown, I thought I knew much about myself. And yet, I did not know how to accompany someone in passing away. How to be in a boundary situation – there and then? Or perhaps even more – how to be *in the presence* of that situation (Walczak, 2023), which, transcending time and place, also demands my participation and presence? *Being-in-the-presence-of* a situation is an existential experience. It requires accompaniment that is tied to a sense of agency, arising from participating in it. It is also a confrontation with oneself in the presence of a situation in which “*the I is summoned, in the name of this unlimited responsibility, to also care for oneself*” (Walczak, 2023; Lévinas, 2000) – and for Others.

Before this happened, I used to enjoy talking about death as a teacher of life. Now I found myself in a situation where I was to accompany someone in passing away. I, the Second, accompanying the First, did not connect this with a sense of my own freedom towards this being (Walczak, 2023). I am free in the presence of a situation in which *being in-presence* relates to factuality, wherein the meaning of situationality becomes rooted. At the same time, being in a situation is not identical with *being-in-the-presence-of* it, which would be based solely on my will, expressed in the alternative: I want or do not want to be in this particular situation (Walczak, 2023). It is closer to what Jaspers wrote: “*I want, but I might not want to want*” (as cited in Walczak, 2023).

Hartmann (2023) notes that the human being, in an existential situation, is confronted with values to which they respond in the Pascalian order of the heart – associated with the feeling of values that goes beyond intellectual reasoning (Walczak, 2023). For Hartmann, as for other phenomenologically oriented philosophers, the feeling of value is not a cognitive act – it is a centrifugal act in relation to that which is recognized as value, toward which an “act of stance” is taken. The feeling of value thus becomes my personal positioning *in-the-presence-of* that which I encounter in my being (Walczak, 2023).

One can find themselves in many situations that do not “require” *being-in-the-presence-of* them – and these are usually the ones that saturate the factuality of life. However, the situation I find myself in – carrying within it an “existential charge” – renders being in its presence a unique and incomparable

act, distinct from being in the presence of any other situation. In this situation, where I am the Second, I first “stand” before myself – before the one who found herself within it. I stand before myself as Other. This standing before myself in this situation is a being that demands an answer: “*How am I to be with myself – now, here, in this very situation?*” (Walczak, 2023).

Searching for a Method

In searching for an answer, I turned to the teachers from whom I had learned about attitudes toward death. Now I was attempting to translate that knowledge into the practice of being the Second *in-the-presence-of* the death of the First (Walczak, 2023). The first step – Yalom. I was captivated by his narratives of conscious living and dying. In *Creatures of a Day: And Other Tales of Psychotherapy* (Yalom, 2021), he wrote:

“*The final gift a parent can give their children is to teach them by their own example how to die with serenity and dignity.*”

I thought that my being the Second is not only a question of: “*How am I to be with myself?*” but also: “*How am I to be for my sons in the presence of the death of the First?*” What posture should I assume in this role, in the face of this situation in which we are saying goodbye to the First – irreversibly? When my being *in-the-presence-of* death is experienced through the prism of being *in-the-presence-of* the First’s death – encountered for the first time – as I (the Second), and simultaneously as the mother of my sons, who are also encountering it, as Seconds, Others than I, for the first time in their lives. Heidegger, in *Being and Time* (as cited in Walczak, 2023, p. 6), wrote about the possibility of only accompanying someone in their passing away. I understand that I can only accompany – because, for me as the Second, the “*loss of being as such, experienced by the one who is dying*”, is inaccessible.

It is this boundary that defines my being as the Second *in-the-presence-of* the here and now – shared with the First *in-the-presence-of* death. You, the First – are *in-the-presence-of* your own death. And I, the Second – am *in-the-presence-of* your passing, in and with the here and now (Walczak, 2023). Beyond myself – the Second – I am also a mother, who, standing *in-the-presence-of* the First’s death, is tasked with teaching my sons how to accompany someone in passing away. In saying goodbye to a parent whom they now experience with me – as Seconds, Others than I – and whom one day they will experience as Seconds *in-the-presence-of* me, the First.

Yalom wrote:

“Carlos gave his children a wonderful example. His dying was not a dark, hidden, conspiratorial event, as it so often is. Until the very end, he spoke openly and honestly with his children about his illness – they even laughed together when he went cross-eyed and mispronounced the name of his disease: lyyyymphoma” (Yalom, 2021).

Being *in-the-presence-of* that situation, I returned to this and decided that I would speak with my sons about the First’s dying in the best way I could: authentically and simply, adapted to the age of each of them (Draczyńska, 2024).

How to be a parent – to be the Second (I) *n-the-presence-of* the passing away of the First? Gradually, it becomes apparent that it is only through the answers we give ourselves that meanings begin to emerge – for me, the one responding – and with them, a sense of responsibility. I feel responsible, committing myself to the answers I give. Does this happen every time a human being is in a situation and *in-the-presence-of* it? (Walczak, 2023). Marilyn Yalom, from the perspective of the First in the presence of death, writes in *A Matter of Death and Life* (Yalom, 2022):

“Everyone, including Irv, admires my calm. Yes, I am usually calm. Fear only reveals itself in dreams. Nevertheless, overall, I have accepted the thought that I will soon die. The sorrow – the great sorrow of saying goodbye to family and friends – does not affect my ability to perform simple daily tasks in a cheerful mood.”

She later adds:

“Robert Harrison, one of Stanford’s most respected humanities professors, called death the culmination of life. He may have meant that in the Catholic sense – as reconciliation with God and receiving the last rites. But does the idea of culmination make sense for a non-believer?” And she answers: *“If I can be free of unbearable physical pain, if I can enjoy simple pleasures in daily life, if I can say goodbye to friends – either in person or in writing – show them love, give them the best of myself, and accept my fate with dignity, then maybe death truly is a culmination.”* (Yalom, 2022; Draczyńska, 2024)

Maybe. It is certainly a part of life – and perhaps even its emanation (Draczyńska, 2024). Death follows from the fact that we are alive. I know this, but I also know that knowing is not the same as experiencing – and thereby

understanding. The First's being *in-the-presence-of* death surprises and astonishes me, the Second – even though it had been anticipated. It is an event that carves itself into the lived everyday not only for him, but for me as well. Being beside him – and with him – contains no predetermined premise – neither proper nor improper, preferred nor unpreferred – for how one should respond to his passing (Walczak, 2023). I can ask myself: *How to be with myself? How to be with the First – in the presence of his passing and of my being with him – in the presence of this passing, as the Second?* (Walczak, 2023) And still – search for answers.

What is the capacity to respond? Hartmann (as cited in Zwoliński, 1974) wrote that the situation has no causal power to dictate to the human being what they should do while within it (Walczak, 2023; Zwoliński, 1974). In a boundary situation, the person experiences both what lies within the range of their capabilities and the non-presence of their own possibilities. It is a situation in which one experiences the limitation of possibilities – a consequence of being closed within specific ways of experiencing being-in-the-world (Walczak, 2023). Yet, in confrontation with death – and *in-the-presence-of* it – the person inevitably expands their experience of being-in-the-world. Frankl (2011) observed that death gives life meaning and constitutes the human being as a self-reflective being. Through this, one learns more about oneself – knowing oneself through the test and becoming oneself *in-the-presence-of* transience. In this way, one attempts to find personal meaning. By adopting a specific life stance – *in-the-presence-of* the First's passing away, which strikes at my own presence as (still) the living witness, attesting by being beside the First – with him and by him – to his presence “fractured” by absence (Walczak, 2023). Is it so that in the relationship with the First – *in-the-presence-of* death – I, the Second, simply feel obligated to be *in-the-presence-of* the First's passing away here and now, sharing in his existential drama, which thus becomes mine as well? My commitment – as the Second – seems to be derived from the situation I found myself in, and at the same time, it is something I introduce into that situation – my will to be with the First – beside him and for him – and also for Others (Walczak, 2023).

The 4FM Perspective

Finding oneself in a boundary situation – singular (for it cannot repeat itself) and necessary (for it cannot be avoided) – and going through it (Walczak, 2023), is not easy. It requires a conscious, though first-time – both the first and the last – assumption of a stance *in-the-presence-of* the situation. From this perspective, nothing can be done better than it was – because it is done for the

first and last time, being *in-the-presence-of* a boundary situation. From the existential viewpoint, taking a stance toward reality – and also *in-the-presence-of* a situation – is grounded on four foundations: groundedness in the world, relation to life, being oneself, and the search for meaning. These Four Fundamental Motivations (4FM) sustain our existence – and, along with the questions they pose, help us seek individual answers that lead to the discovery of inner consent and acceptance, in the sense of acknowledging the conditions of reality – without denying them (Nowakowska et al., 2023). Here, the key is to adopt a phenomenological stance, which allows one to remain open to the Other – so that the Other may retain their individuality – so that they may emerge from within themselves. The outcome of such an attitude is understanding the Other. Accompanying in passing away, mourning, and grieving aim at restoring the Other to life after the loss of the First – a kind of allowing to be what has happened – or is still happening – also in the state of mind: “*I want, but I might not want to want*” (Walczak, 2023).

Taking a Stance Toward Reality

I, the Second, travel to Bydgoszcz on Thursdays, where the First lives. There, I accompany what is becoming, searching for inner consent. Through this, I allow the experience to reach me (1FM) and let a feeling arise (2FM). I say goodbye and witness the “lasts” – those that belong to the First and the things he will never do again. He will never again enter the store where he used to shop and where I shop now; he will never again see the neighbors’ house on the hill – the one he passed... always – the always that is now coming to an end. I drive to meet Karolina, my friend, in his car – and it strikes me that he will never drive it again. He has not yet allowed this to reach him. The next day, he signs the last document of his life – consent for admission to home hospice care. The final act of will. A fragment of agency. That much he can still do. Sadness appears – and I am within it (Draczyńska, 2024). Feelings may be. Tears may flow. I allow the memories to flow. I remember that it was he who taught me to drive, and that he took my older son to the Bydgoszcz East station – for the last time. And that they waved goodbye (Draczyńska, 2024). Longing appears. Joy appears. I view what is passing with dialectical awareness. Aware that the boundaries of the field of presence in the situation are defined by what we are currently feeling – the dynamics of experiencing – and by what we are currently doing – the dynamics of action. I – Am (3FM).

In this situation I am accompanied by Aga, and also Zośka, Asia, Karolina (2FM), as well as Yalom, with *Existential Psychotherapy*, whose first chapter is titled “Death” (4FM).

Accompanying in Dying

We roll a suitcase into my parents' house. The First no longer gets up, he lies in bed. He's pleased. He asks my younger son how the trip went. He recognizes him. He's present. *Maybe it's not that bad* – I think. I walk into the room. He doesn't recognize me. Then he does. I sit beside him. I read about the signs of death. I observe him. I try to read what we are not saying. I text Aga. Aga wants to raise my vibration, but doesn't know what to say. I don't know either (Draczyńska, 2024). Perhaps – not knowing is appropriate.

After all, sharing spacetime doesn't have a purpose, it doesn't arise from a cause – not from the question “Why?”, but from the response that goes: “Because.” “Because” – you are the First *in the presence* of death, and I become the Second, finding my being *in the presence* of death in the glimmer of yours. It is different, because I have not yet experienced it – as the next First (First One) *in the presence* of death – the one from the future, but already foreshadowed (Walczak, 2023). How is the Second to be attentive to herself in the spacetime shared with the First *in the presence* of death, so that she may be attentively beside him, with him, near him, and for him? (Walczak, 2023)

I go to buy scratch cards (1FM for the First, 2FM for the Second). He asked me a week earlier – and I forgot. Now, thanks to Asia's reminder, I buy them and give them to him. He's in touch with reality again. Checks on his phone. “*I didn't win again,*” he says. I'm happy to watch him in that moment. But he also hallucinates, sees people who aren't there. Zośka says: “I think he's passing away.” I know that. “And do you have the space to talk to him about it?” – Aga asks. “I do,” I reply (Draczyńska, 2024). We talk.

Being in a boundary situation is a confrontation of being oneself – with oneself different, other, foreign. The aporetic nature of being oneself undermines the meaning of identification as self-recognition and allows for the identification with oneself as (also) the one whom I (already or not yet) recognize. There is a gap between me – myself – and me different, other, foreign, from which I reveal myself in a new “quality” – and by crossing the boundaries of self-recognition (Walczak, 2023) – I become a different me. But how to be attentively with myself in the spacetime shared with the First *in-the-presence-of* death, so that I can be attentively beside him, with him, near him, and for him? (Walczak, 2023) This thought keeps returning. For Jaspers (2007), in a boundary situation, the ground is lost beneath one's feet. It is not just that one has nothing to lean on – one has nowhere to stand. The obviousness of being in its factuality – I live because I am – disappears. I try to find ground (1FM). “I'm

parading around for the second day in your skirt, I feel good in it, and my mother likes it – she says it has very nice box pleats,” I text Aga. The First sleeps more and more. Eats very little. He likes apple-pear juice. The past blends with the present. Sometimes he looks with a surprised expression. We run out of medication, so I call the on-call doctor. He gives me a prescription. I notice it's becoming harder for the First to take the medication. I also notice it's hard for me to accept that it's not there. I go to the pharmacy. And while I'm at it, I do the last Christmas shopping. I cook, I bake. I go buy a Christmas tree (Draczyńska, 2024).

In the evening, the First is agitated and confused. He spins a handgrip, like the one on a bus, hanging above the bed. He tells some story. He spins it so hard it breaks – and he comments in such a way that my mother and I look at each other... and burst out laughing. Laughter through tears, but it brings a moment of relief. It connects me with my mother. Aga writes: *“If one has to die – then in good company”* (Draczyńska, 2024).

I, the Second, experience being beside You – the First – *in-the-presence-of* death. We can share what happens to us, what touches us et cetera, but the way we experience it “divides” us within the experience itself. Co-presence does not mean being in the situation the same way. It means being together in the here and now (1FM, 2FM, 4FM) – in relation to oneself (3FM) – where the here and now is saturated with the personal equivalents of the First *in-the-presence-of* death and me, the Second (3FM). The First experiences his being *in-the-presence-of* death. And I, the Second, experience his being *in-the-presence-of* death indirectly – through empathizing with it (Walczak, 2023).

I am exhausted.

The First stops eating. Sleeps through most of the day.

“Dorota, I'm going home, to my home,” he says.

A priest arrives.

To want to be *in-the-presence-of* a boundary situation, I understand as stepping toward the existential drama of the First in the presence of death in his final act, but above all – my own drama as the Second, because it is I who ask – usually not articulated in words – the question: *“being a body, I am beside You – and how am I to be with You, who are leaving from and in the here and now?”* (Walczak, 2023).

It is still Christmas Eve.

Borscht, vegan bigos, carp in cream sauce with mushrooms.

Gingerbread cookies baked by my younger son.

Aga baked bread and gingerbread for us.

Someone, whom I haven't identified, baked cheesecake.

I prepare the Christmas Eve dinner (Draczyńska, 2024).

I ask myself how to be *in-the-presence-of* this situation, on this day – *in-the-presence-of* myself, *in-the-presence-of* Others, *in-the-presence-of* the First. The Heideggerian principle of reason obliges me, the Second, to myself and to the First in the presence of death, as well as to Others in the presence of the First's death, to find ways of responding – to myself, to the First, and to Others – where the response “reaches toward” the First, whose condition is worthy of response and answering (Walczak, 2023).

I feel I need to express it in words other than my own. To draw on some ancient wisdom... I find my old Bible, the British edition, and I ask Karolina where I should look. “*In the Book of Ecclesiastes,*” she replies. I search and find, and I read.

It brings comfort (Draczyńska, 2024). Before we sit down to dinner, in which for the last time – still present, but no longer fully – the First participates, I read for myself, the Second, for them, the Others, and also for the First:

“One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever. The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to its place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north; the wind whirls about continually, and comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, there they return again. All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun... To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted...” (Eccles. 6–8, Warsaw Bible, 1975) (...)” (Kazn. 6–8, Biblia Warszawska, 1975).

We eat.

We enjoy the gifts.

We watch a movie together.

The First fell asleep, and so did my mother beside him (Draczyńska, 2024).

What matters is whether the Second has something to say – in the sense: whether they have something to offer of themselves to the First

in-the-presence-of death. Openness begins with the “acknowledgment” of the potential to give of oneself (Walczak, 2023). That’s all I can do.

The hospice doctor arrives.

He discontinues the medications.

Want to know...

I ask the doctor.

I can see it’s hard for him, but he says: “*He will die within a few days.*”

I am grateful to him.

I knew it – but I wanted to hear it.

I say goodbye to him.

I wish I could enchant the world, to make it different... but I know that is not possible. I remain with this desire – and with Aga, who is quietly accompanying me. “*I want, but I might not want to want.*” (Walczak, 2023)

I reflect on existential guilt.

I go with my older son to pick up his girlfriend from Bydgoszcz East station. When she gets off, for a moment the sun shines beautifully. The three of us admire two beautiful rainbows that have appeared in the sky (Draczyńska, 2024).

In the morning, the parents’ house is quiet.

The First breathes in a distinct way.

His skin changes color.

I cook dinner.

We eat together (Draczyńska, 2024).

Being beside the First – with him, near him – I, the Second, feel the existential weight not only of this being, but of being *in-the-presence-of* death. It is connected to a kind of astonishment – the wonder of me, the Second – not at what I, the Second, understand from the First’s situation *in-the-presence-of* death and can explain, but at what is within my reach, and yet beyond my grasp – beyond “articulation” (Walczak, 2023). I, the Second, am in an inseparable, subtle, and thus invisible – because bodily – entanglement with the First *in-the-presence-of* death. In the emergence of primordial, vital, archaic, archetypal processes of daily life – beyond intentionality and structuralization (Walczak, 2023).

The house is filled with the smell of good food. I think to myself that maybe the First can sense it – and that he is leaving in a house filled with the aroma of a nourishing meal.

I watch him.
And then it reaches me...
I know it instinctively – these are the final moments.

I am with him when he takes his last breath.
The First dies – and ceases to exist as a person.

We pause for a moment.
I observe myself.
Death – does not terrify.
Death – is (Draczyńska, 2024).

“Astonishment means the model form of opening the eyes, the first seeing, which establishes distance, a seeing that liberates from distraction, which directs attention not to this or that, but to the dominants, the contexts, the totalities of what I, as the seeing one, now see. This astonishment – that your time of life – yours alone – has come to an end, that you have gone away from (and out of) life forever. And my, the Second’s, seeing of the image of you, the First in the presence of death – where your Face appears in the foreground – this seeing, which begins with ‘the first seeing,’ is also the last seeing in the sense that it will not repeat itself, except perhaps as a ‘seeing memory,’ which in any case is not a replicating vision of what once occurred. And that astonishes me too, the Second.” (Walczak, 2023)

We say goodbye to the First’s body.
We choose a place at the cemetery.
The sun is shining, it is beautiful (Draczyńska, 2024).

Not being You, and not in Your place, I, the Second, am fully real – just as You were – but I am also fully unreal as the one who is *in-the-presence-of* death. The thread that stitches me, the Second, to the unreality of the position *in-the-presence-of* my own death is the irreversible condition of the First *in-the-presence-of* death – already being in a “placeless” and “timeless” realm, which I share with him, truly experiencing being with him, after him, here and now. And so it becomes the factuality of my position in the situation, in which I become the First *in-the-presence-of* my own death someday; here and now, I am no longer the Second *in-the-presence-of* the First’s death (Walczak, 2023).

My older son turns 18 on Saturday. Today we’ve planned a shared celebration, in which the First wanted to participate. “A birthday does not diminish grief – these are two separate entities” Aga writes. And I know she’s right.

We celebrate together.

We watch a chronicle of my son's 18 years of life – a life in which the First was also present (Draczyńska, 2024).

In silence, we speak to each other without words. And then, one can speak of dialogical silence, which begins with hearing and listening to what has been spoken – and what remains unspoken. Silence is a language that does not seek words and finds the non-words to be able to speak-through. We are silent to be able to speak-through to one another beyond words (Walczak, 2023).

The funeral.

A ray of light.

The sermon and the priest who speaks of the First: of his life, his family, his grandchildren, his work. He speaks of *Him*, the First – not of no one, not of anyone. He speaks of the coffee we drank together the day before, and of the ray of light that just then entered through the window (Draczyńska, 2024).

Speech that “gives” hearing (Walczak, 2023).

Gratitude arises – toward the human being – the priest – for treating the First as a person. Just as I was the Second *in-the-presence-of* the First, now I am the First.

Then there are no words.

The absence of words is strange.

Strange that in my thoughts I have to remind myself that he is no longer here – even though he has always been... (Draczyńska, 2024)

What has departed into the boundless past with the First *in-the-presence-of* death is what was “somehow” known. The Second now finds herself after the death of the First – finds herself *in-the-presence-of* life, with the First's death “behind,” and another, different First – including herself – “ahead.” How, still being the Second (but also no longer), to find oneself *in-the-presence-of* life after the death of the one who came before me? (Walczak, 2023) What is it like to be the First?

In the morning I receive a new message. From my partner. I check. “Tato” – *Domowe Melodie* (Domowe Melodie, 2012). I hadn't known it before – I listen to it for the first time. The words flow, and so do the tears.

*And when there is no more time
to be and to be silent with you, dad*

*I will find all the important words
that you were so afraid of
that you wanted to hide
And they will live on with us
in sweet stories with raspberries
And no one will cry anymore
Your absence does not mean you are gone*

Thank you, I reply. (Draczyńska, 2024)

Silence is never a lack of relation – but the establishment of a different one – a relation beyond the spoken word. Being present with the First *in-the-presence-of* his death, just as he once sang – I too now “sing the song of life” – but in a different voice. As the second voice in a melody sung together, I am this voice because of the voice of the First. I could be the Second only because You were the First *in the presence* of death (Walczak, 2023).

Now I, as the First, will “sing life” (Geppert & Kroke, 2007).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Anna Walczak for her book *In the Presence of Death: A Study of the Intimacy of the Boundary Situation*, which became an important source of reflection and inspiration for me.

Author's Note

This article is the English translation of the originally published Polish version: Draczyńska, D.. (2025). *JA Druga w-obec śmierci Pierwszego. Egzystencjalna perspektywa towarzyszenia w przemijaniu - na podstawie opowieści z malinami*. Analiza Egzystencjalna i Fenomenologia Życia. Nr 1 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.63867/4e8njt41>. Both versions were prepared and approved by the author. The translation retains full content and meaning of the original publication.

References

1. Draczyńska, D. (2024, 9 marca). *Śmierć jako emanacja życia, opowieść z malinami* [wystąpienie konferencyjne]. W: *Empatia a umieranie i śmierć. Aby godnie umrzeć, potrzebna jest cała wioska*. Okręgowa Izba Lekarska w Warszawie z Instytutem Dobrej Śmierci.
2. Domowe Melodie. (2012, 3 listopada). *Tato* [film]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mt46V7IrxHw>

3. Frankl, V. (2011). *Człowiek w poszukiwaniu sensu*. Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.
4. Geppert, E., & Kroke. (2007). *Śpiewam życie. I Sing Life / Aide Jano* [album]. Oriente Musik OHG. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3OdqSUc5pY>
5. Hartmann, N. (cyt. w: Walczak, A., 2023). *W-obec śmierci. Studium intymności sytuacji granicznej*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
6. Heidegger, M. (1994). *Bycie i czas*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
7. Jaspers, K. (2007). *Rozum i egzystencja*. Wydawnictwo KR.
8. Lévinas, E. (2000). *Inaczej niż być lub ponad istotą*. Aletheia.
9. Nowakowska, A., Draczyńska, D., Anczewska, M. (2023). Analiza Egzystencjalna jako metoda pracy z pacjentami z doświadczeniem traumy relacyjnej. *Psychoterapia*, 206(3), 41–54.
10. Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu. (1975). *Biblia Warszawska. Księga Kaznodziei Salomona*, 6–8. Towarzystwo Biblijne w Polsce.
11. Szyborska, W. (2022). Minuta ciszy po Ludwice Wawrzyńskiej. W: *Wołanie do Yeti*. Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak.
12. Tyburski, W. (2007). Śmierć człowieka w ujęciu filozoficznym (szkic do tematu). *Udar Mózgu*, 9(1), 1–7. Via Medica.
13. Walczak, A. (2023). *W-obec śmierci. Studium intymności sytuacji granicznej*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
14. Yalom, I. (2021). *Kat miłości. Opowieści psychoterapeutyczne*. Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.
15. Yalom, I., Yalom, M. (2022). *Sprawa śmierci i życia*. Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.
16. Zwoliński, Z. (1974). *Byt i wartość u Nicolaia Hartmanna*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

About the Author

Dorota Draczyńska is a psychologist, certified cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist (certificate no. 1674), and existential psychotherapist certified by NEST. Graduated from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Dominican University in River Forest (Illinois, USA), and SWPS University in Warsaw. Professionally, affiliated with the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology and the Dialog Therapy Center. Her scientific and clinical work focuses on relational trauma, Complex PTSD (CPTSD), and the development of therapeutic methods that support acceptance and living in alignment with oneself. She is the co-author of the *4FM Acceptance Training*. She teaches a co-designed elective course at SWPS University and leads clinical training workshops at the Dialog Therapy Center. For many years, she has conducted training and research-development projects related to mental health. Privately – a woman, a partner, a mother. In her free time, she most enjoys... doing nothing. Lifelong learning is her way of being in the world.

Dorota Draczyńska
e-mail: akceptacja4FM@gmail.com

Received: July 30, 2024
Accepted: May 18, 2025
Published: May 22, 2025