

## ABSTRACT

This study explored the felt experience of being loved. It was a phenomenological approach and a heuristic exploration, with the researcher involved and immersed throughout the project. The aim was to discover the effect, if any, on other co-researchers of the healing and transformational personal experience through being loved. This research was embedded within a Gestalt psychotherapy perspective and explored how the interpersonal experience of this therapy was related to the phenomenology of being loved. The conditions necessary for healing and growth to happen were considered. The methodology for this research evolved from a personal experience on being loved. It is both biographical and autobiographical. Out of ten volunteers, six self selected for interview. All the participants were Gestalt therapists, three being in the research phase of the Master's programme in Gestalt psychotherapy, three being more experienced. At all stages of this research, the participants were asked to comment and amend data if necessary. A heuristic analysis generated descriptive words, phrases and feelings, observations of behaviour and reflections of thoughts which were honed into what was described as pen portraits. These short lines looked like poetry. They were in free verse depending on the verbatim textural sound of the words; the significance of the words and phrases, and on their rhythm rather than rhyme. Most of the data from the co-researchers was verbatim. Some of the researcher's own felt experience and words were intentionally interwoven as pertaining to the heuristic process. Key findings were that love is a healing agent in human beings' lives. People seek psychotherapy to fulfil an unmet need of love. The experience of being loved in therapy is more likely to be found with a therapist who has already been transformed and grounded by being loved and is open to love in therapy.