

Abstract

Love is a term which in Western circles encompasses everything from sexual love through sibling, parental, peer and love of humanity. If we consider how much we think about love especially with respect to the arts, music, and popular literature, it is everywhere.

However within a psychotherapy environment the word is often treated with risk, at least historically and sometimes with good cause, and is only recently starting to gain a degree of acceptance. This is on the proviso we define this is not a sexual or romantic love, but one of Agape love, where the essence is goodwill, benevolence, faithfulness, and commitment. My belief is that when working with clients within a therapeutic relationship in order to truly provide a reparative process we have to show them the love they were often denied in earlier years. For me this is truly the therapeutic use of self and provides the basis for therapeutic change within our clients.

I will offer evidence of this by my rationale showing how my humanistic beliefs provide a basis for a trusting and loving relationship and that by using integrative relational psychotherapy I provide a reparative and loving process.

I will also review the literature on love with a focus on how love is viewed within the therapeutic relationship.

Finally I will present a case study where I will demonstrate how love has been of paramount importance within this relationship.

(236 words)