

# Existential Meanings of Experiences of Discouragement in Kindergarten Teachers

– The formation of an “unbreakable heart” –

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This study focuses on kindergarten teachers who have just embarked on their career and attempts to elucidate what type of experiences of discouragement they had, and if such experiences led the teachers to form an “unbreakable heart.”

Existential philosophy says that one would be able to begin a “fresh departure” as a human being when one is suddenly faced with an “existential crisis”—and if one is able to surmount it. In this study, the kindergarten teachers all had experiences of discouragement that caused such an “existential crisis.” When they made it through the crisis in their own way, they came to accept their feelings of distress as something normal. The individual experience of enduring and making it through a crisis brings about a higher psychological state than before, namely, a relative sense of an “unbreakable heart.” However, this unbreakable heart is not a perfect heart that can withstand anything, as everyone is part of a stream of possibility in which, at any time, a different and new crisis can strike.

It is hoped that this study can elucidate means of support for kindergarten teachers who have just embarked on their career.