

On the practice of the “art of living” by Bohdan Dziemidok

Abstract

The article is a reconstruction of the basic elements included in the “art of living” proposal, which Bohdan Dziemidok presented and summarised in his last book, *Filozofia i sztuka życia* (Philosophy and the Art of Living). Philosophy and art have an explanatory and argumentative function here, while the “art of living” is in the centre of attention. The basic concepts for building the art of living proposal are: realism, happiness, hedonism, love, friendship and freedom. At the top of these concepts comes happiness, which plays the role of a central category. The author is not talking about a reliable recipe for being happy (which is doomed to failure), but points to common mistakes made on the road to happiness. In addition, I point to the area that the author omitted in the “art of living” – bodily fitness, which as the years pass, for each of us, becomes more and more of a challenge.

Abstrakt

Artykuł jest rekonstrukcją podstawowych elementów wchodzących w skład propozycji „sztuki życia”, którą Bohdan Dziemidok przedstawił i podsumował w swojej ostatniej książce *Filozofia i sztuka życia*. Filozofia i sztuka pełnią tu funkcję eksplanacyjną i argumentacyjną, zaś „sztuka życia” stoi w centrum zainteresowania. Podstawowe pojęcia budujące propozycję sztuki życia to: realizm, szczęście, hedonizm, miłość, przyjaźń i wolność. Na czoło, wśród tych pojęć, wysuwa się szczęście, które pełni rolę centralnej kategorii. Autorowi nie chodzi o niezawodny przepis na to by być szczęśliwym (co jest z góry skazane na niepowodzenie), ale o wskazanie na powszechnie popełniane błędy na drodze do szczęścia. Ponadto wskazują na obszar, który został pominięty przez Autora w „sztuce życia” – sprawność cielesną, która w miarę upływu lat, dla każdego z nas, staje się coraz większym wyzwaniem.

Słowa kluczowe: szczęście, hedonizm, miłość, przyjaźń, wolność, somaesthetics

Keywords: happiness, hedonism, love, friendship, freedom, somaesthetics

The aim of this article is to reconstruct the basic elements that make up the “art of living” proposal which Bohdan Dziemidok presented and summarised

in his last book *Filozofia i sztuka życia (Philosophy and the Art of Living)*¹. Following in the Author's footsteps, philosophy and art have an explanatory and argumentative function, while "art of living" is the centre of attention. The basic elements which contribute to the main area of interest are: realism, happiness, hedonism, love, friendship and freedom.

Bohdan Dziemidok is the author of many books devoted to, amongst other things, the issues of the comical, Polish aesthetics of the interwar period, major controversies in contemporary aesthetics, American axiology and twentieth century aesthetics, some of which have been translated into other languages. He also has numerous articles in Congress languages (English, German, Spanish, Italian), as well as in Slavic languages: Bulgarian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian and Slovenian. A list of these publications can be found in the jubilee book published for the 50th anniversary of the scientific and didactic work of prof. B. Dziemidok titled: *Estetyka i filozofia sztuki. Tradycje, przecięcia, perspektywy (Aesthetics and philosophy of art. Traditions, intersections, perspectives)*, edited by M. Bokiniec, P. J. Przybysz, UG Publishing House, Gdańsk 2009.

This author is widely known for academic erudition and competence as well as the accuracy of the presented decisions, combined with the logical discipline of argumentation. The second sphere of his activity, which enjoys popularity firstly among his students but also readers, was the practical philosophy of life, understood as a reflection on the art of living. In this area, the author has a rich experience and magical power to attract the attention of the audience, control and shape emotions, using examples that apply to each of us and revealing universal truths. I had the opportunity to experience this, among others, in lectures on aesthetics, during the inauguration of the academic year, at the presentation of the Jan Heweliusz scientific prize of the city of Gdańsk, at an open lecture at the Naval Academy on happiness, as well as in many other situations. The book *Filozofia i sztuka życia (Philosophy and the Art of Living)* is an ordered collection of those reflections that have become fixed and clarified.

Dziemidok not only practises philosophical aesthetics, but also develops, especially during his lectures on ethics, the issues that he called the "art of living" in his last book. It is not, as one would expect, a continuation of the ethical concept of a good life, understood as an aesthetic life. He does not follow the decisions of Richard Rorty² or Richard Shusterman³. He does not mean private perfection or self-creation, which Rorty postulates. These suggestions are, as the author of *Philosophy and the art of living* claims, radically individualistic and elitist. According to Rorty, "Human life created like a work of art would be marked by a radical novelty, achieved by a constant «aesthetic

1 See B. Dziemidok, *Filozofia i sztuka życia*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2017.

2 See R. Rorty, *Freud and Moral Reflection*, [w:] *Pragmatism's Freud: The Moral Disposition of Psychoanalysis*, edited by J. H. Smith, W. Kerrigan, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1986; R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989.

3 See R. Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life*, Routledge, New York, London 1997; R. Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, Oxford 2000; R. Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London 2000; R. Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2008; R. Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2012.

search for new experiences and a new language»⁴. It is in the practice of our everyday life, shared with another person, that I think it is difficult to achieve and would probably be implemented at its expense. According to Dziemidok, the 'aesthetic aspects of life' that Rorty writes about, such as 'self-enlargement', 'self-enrichment' or 'self-creation', do not have to be implemented during one's life understood as a work of art. Shusterman's proposal seems closer to him because of a more realistic view of the aestheticisation of life. "A more traditional understanding of aesthetics and hedonistic motives makes the concept of aesthetic life as proposed by Shusterman more pluralistic and less one-sided, and thus more realistic, feasible in the lives of ordinary people"⁵.

The art of living, which is part of the title, in my opinion more importantly, brings associations with the work of Erich Fromm, *O sztuce miłości (On the art of love)*. Fromm embeds this sphere of our activity and mutual relations in art understood as it was understood in ancient Greece – *téchnē*. It was not about artistic inspiration, nor about the intuitive ability to make right choices in artistic creativity, but about the craft: "[...] it requires knowledge and effort"⁶. Producing according to the rules, an ability to produce, knowledge enabling production. Fromm's analogous assumption is that love also requires rules, skills and knowledge. "The first step to take is to become aware that love is an art, just as living is an art; if we want to learn how to love we must proceed in the same way we have to proceed if we want to learn any other art, say music, painting, carpentry, or the art of medicine or engineering"⁷. In addition, to improve your level in this sphere of life one should work on skills, apply its proper rules as well as broaden knowledge on the subject. "The process of learning an art can be divided conveniently into two parts: one, the mastery of the theory; the other, the mastery of the practice. [...] The mastery of the art must be a matter of ultimate concern; there must be nothing else in the world more important than the art"⁸. The level we are dealing with in practice, starts from clustering, through reliable craftsmanship, to artistic skills. Similarly, life can be considered as such art. I believe that Bohdan Dziemidok uses the word in this sense.

The concept that is key in the "art of living" is happiness. The author does not undertake to define what happiness is. He is instead in favour of the understanding proposed by Władysław Tatarkiewicz, where happiness is "full and lasting satisfaction with the whole of life"⁹, where the balance of successes and failures that we have had in life is positive¹⁰.

4 B. Dziemidok, *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 310.

5 Ibid, p. 311.

6 E. Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, Ruskin House, London 1957, p. 1.

7 Ibid, p. 5.

8 Ibid.

9 W. Tatarkiewicz, *O szczęściu*, PWN, Warszawa 2008, p. 31.

10 The texts on happiness are: B. Dziemidok, *Teoretyczne i praktyczne kłopoty ze szczęściem*, „Akcent” 3(117) 2009, s. 55-73; B. Dziemidok, *Teoretyczne i praktyczne kłopoty ze szczęściem*, [in the same] *Teoretyczne i praktyczne kłopoty z wartościami i wartościowaniem, słowo/obraz terytoria*, Gdańsk 2013, p. 49-100; B. Dziemidok, *Czy dążenie do szczęścia może być moralnie podejrzane?* [in the same] *Filozofia i sztuka życia*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2017, p. 77-111.

Many works are devoted to happiness from the perspective of the history of ideas, philosophy, sociology, psychology, religious studies or pedagogy. The author draws from this rich source, but what is the centre of his interest can be called "practical tips". The initial decision regarding the answer to the question seems to be apt: what attitude towards life should be prudently addressed? Attitude, understood as an approach towards the world, life, people and current events. His foundation is not only a worldview, but what seems more important to him in terms of happiness "typical emotional response for us"¹¹. I understand at this point that this is a remarkable matter: being happy or not is a matter of subjective desires, feelings and choices. There are two extreme attitudes in this matter. First of all, with unfounded and unceasing optimism (if possible) or with pessimism, which with the passing of time and more experience comes to dominate. What prompts Dziemidoka not to fall into these extremes is a recommendation to maintain the hierarchy and proportion of matters. Why? Because, as he aptly writes, radical pessimism poisons the lives of its followers, and hence is harmful. While radical optimism "is simply naive and stupid. The image of human nature and life drawn by this optimism is false"¹². The author, I think, is in favour of moderate optimism. On the one hand, he does not exclude the feeling of happiness, while on the other, he warns against the naive perception of himself and reality. Realism is a way to avoid going too far. The second lifesaver that can guard against the extremes of optimism and pessimism is to develop an ability to look at things from different angles. Seeing various aspects in them: both the bad and the good. So, a defensible attitude towards life that does not rule out happiness and is not stupid, is a realistic vision of human nature and life. In practice, I consider realism as a character trait, which is also a skill. Like every virtue (*virtus*, *areté*), it requires one to work on it and is itself a reward.

It's hard when talking about happiness, not to touch the issue of sadness, this feeling leads us to the opposite pole. In a polemic with Roger Scruton¹³, Dziemidok admits that he must be worried by a person who cannot feel sad in any situation. However, glorification of sadness combined with suffering is, in his opinion, suspicious of trying to manipulate us. The claim that suffering ennobles is "in my view, erroneous, and in addition quite often lined with hypocrisy. Suffering most often humiliates, and quite often debases [...] The hypocrisy of this view is manifested in particular when a person who does not suffer convinces the one who suffers that his suffering makes sense"¹⁴. Only those who experience this suffering can decide about the sense of suffering. This is not disputed. Dziemidok calls into question the possibility of combining the currently felt sadness (after the loss of a loved one) with happiness: "I don't quite understand, Roger, how this sadness can be combined with happiness. I hope that I will still have the opportunity to ask you in person"¹⁵.

11 B. Dziemidok, *Filozofia...*, cit., p. 11.

12 Ibid, p. 32.

13 The polemic concerns the article: R. Scruton, *Gloom merchant*, "New Humanist" vol. 125 2010.

14 Ibid, p. 33.

15 Ibid.

Love and friendship play a key role in happiness in an important relationship with another person. The author undertakes prudent reflection and formulates some important guidelines on this matter. Firstly, he does not speak of love as such, but limits its scope to marital love. Secondly, he doesn't think that marriage has anything to do with being happy. On the contrary, despite surviving one divorce and two marriages with one person, he says it is at his fingertips. All you need is an efficient ability to move (in a relationship with one partner) from infatuation through falling in love to mature (marital) love. In my opinion, the author adopts a rather specific, but also attractive perspective, as someone who has experienced these phases of marital love and can point to its component that does not wear off over time. This is "authentic friendly relations between spouses"¹⁶. These relationships allow you to go to the next phases of love: from aesthetic-erotic enchantment, or psycho-erotic, where the relationship functions beyond fulfilment, and draws its energy from the aesthetic or intellectual-personality fascination with another person. This can not last forever and therefore love passes into the phase of falling in love, which apart from mental intercourse "requires erotic intercourse and sexual desire"¹⁷. When these relationships cease to play such an important role (usually with the appearance of children), love goes into the phase of "friendly love"¹⁸. And if it does not pass, then we are dealing with varieties of "an empty relationship", which is based on mutual obligations. I don't think it would be possible to go through the next phases without friendly ties that are not dominant at first, but are cultivated and sustained. According to Dziemidok, a realistic attitude towards marital love requires understanding that the difficulty in mutual relations results from the difference between male and female nature. "It's about the difference of mind. We have different tastes, different sensibilities, different value systems, other phenomena may satisfy or irritate us"¹⁹. I think it's worth thinking about it and trying to construct some examples similar to those given by the author. His remarks regarding marital betrayal, what its essence is, and what does not matter, as he writes, have happened and "have passed" are accurate and worth considering"²⁰.

An important relationship with another person who can support the feeling of happiness in friendship, but out of wedlock. The author belongs to such a group for whom life without friends is considered less happy. In addition to many apt decisions about what friendship is or what we can expect from it, he emphasises that its foundation is reciprocity and honesty. So "platonic friendship" as opposed to "platonic love" is unsustainable. What is surprising is that you can tell who your true friends are in poverty, but the real test for them are the successes one of them has. This is, paradoxically, a deeply true statement, and it applies especially to those whose lives are not filled with successes: either legitimate or quite accidental ones (e.g. a million zloty in a lottery). Despite the

16 Ibid, p. 63.

17 Ibid, p. 66.

18 Dziemidok borrows this term from Bogdan Wojciszke Ibid, p. 70.

19 Ibid, p. 67.

20 Ibid, p. 70.

fact that friendship was quite widely appreciated by philosophers, e.g. Aristotle, Kant, Nietzsche, Henryk Elzenberg, Barbara Skarga, today we are dealing with its different generational valorisation. The new generation, according to Ewa Woydytło²¹, treats friends as a foster family, they become a substitute for it. The generation of 50-year-olds, as Magdalena Środa diagnoses, does not value friendship, because it is an expression of immature naivety. The generation represented by the author is deeply convinced that this is one, but not the only, condition for leading a happy life.

Another issue that seems crucial from the point of view of happiness is the relationship between happiness, pleasure and goodness. The author in the "art of living" rightly devotes a lot of space to these issues and presents many theoretical solutions and practical indications (recommendations).

The central place in Dziemidok's considerations of happiness is occupied by the issue of the relationship of happiness with hedonism and practical indications that should be taken into account so as not to make yourself miserable and be happy. The basis is to distinguish between extreme hedonism, which cannot be defended when confronted with the theory of happiness (because happiness is not just pleasure), and moderate hedonism, which considers Epicurus a lack of suffering as happiness. "When I learnt during my studies that [...] a break in pain and suffering is a great pleasure, I thought: «What is this wise Epicurus talking about?»". Now I know. Thanks to old age [...]"²². The second distinction is theoretical hedonism in contrast with practical hedonism. Where in literature on the subject the first was widely rejected, the second, in modern times (the consumer society of postmodern culture), has transformed into use. Advertising, the causative force of marketing, brings happiness into use, providing pleasure. It is one-time, intense and temporary. This is a significant difference in contrast to the happiness that we find in permanence. Dziemidok aptly indicates that what gives us pleasure runs out quickly, we get used to it and we become indifferent to it. One way to maintain pleasure is to intensify it in different ways. And this is a trap that is difficult to avoid. So the conclusion is obvious that "the pursuit of pleasure in the long run does not make you happy, it can even make you miserable"²³. To carry out the art of living sensibly in this matter, pleasures should be dosed in moderation and it is worth learning to savour them. This is a fairly high bar in a consumer society, where limiting oneself and abstinence are attitudes poles apart. Hedonism practised practically can be one (but not the only) way to feel pleasure, to which happiness is reduced. However, Dziemidok does not stop at this rather obvious conclusion. For the sense of happiness is not associated with pleasure, but in his opinion with the sense of our own lives, where our individual activities form a larger whole²⁴. All of these have value not only for us, but also for others. Anyone who gives meaning to his own life or is aware that he has managed to give meaning to his own life can have a sense of happiness. The foundation for this

21 See E. Woydytło, *Buty szczęścia*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2011, p. 146.

22 B. Dziemidok, *Filozofia...*, cit., p. 121.

23 Ibid, p. 82.

24 Ibid, p. 83.

assumption is that existence precedes the essence. So it is our responsibility to make life have sense. It was arranged in an understandable and valorised whole with order given to it.

As for happiness in practice, the author, in my opinion, is in a position of moderate optimism²⁵. He believes that attempts to increase one's happiness are pointless and fruitless. The only thing we can do about it is to prevent misery. This is what the 15 points constructed by the author serve to do, necessary conditions which, even so, he considers insufficient to either achieve / or deprive the feeling of happiness. It is a set of recommendations (practical indications), whose source lies in the careful observation of people and his wealth of accumulated experience. Dziemidok is fully aware that compliance with the 15 points does not guarantee a feeling of happiness. However, he claims that during the implementation of these points we can get an answer to the important question: "How can we live to be satisfied with life and avoid or minimise the negative sense of life balance?"²⁶. In my opinion, these guidelines follow the principle that we interfere in situations we have an influence on – this is a stoic practice. "I suppose, however, that it is much easier to make oneself happy – writes Dziemidok – than others [...] Even harder to make the community happy – humanity, the nation or society. Several attempts of this kind have already been made. They turned out pathetically and terribly at the same time"²⁷. Second, the hints point to common mistakes that stand in the way of being happy. It can be a mistake to take up a professional job, which "is [...] only a way of obtaining a means of subsistence for yourself and your loved ones"²⁸. There are also no alternative classes outside of work (hobbies / passions) which can be a trap for us. On the one hand, because they are "needed to maintain an internal balance and well-being"²⁹, while on the other, "they can also at least partially compensate for the lack of professional success"³⁰. It is difficult to imagine the entire period of a professional career as a continuous string of successes, promotions and awards. As in any activity, there better periods (good partners, interesting ideas, new opportunities) and worse (a boss who does not value our commitment or ideas, a period of exhaustion or discouragement). A passion / hobby is a way of not giving in to such situations, to frustration and having an "emergency exit". You can also make yourself miserable: "You can't be the best or number 1 in everything you do or participate in"³¹. Sooner rather later, it just doesn't happen. And experiencing such situations even brings about a lack of self-esteem and self-resentment that you didn't do what you should have. According to Dziemidok, the trap in enjoying a happy life is also setting a high bar for others. Expecting from them "sainthood, heroism and unlimited sacrifice"³² is unjustified. "It should be remembered, however, that even decent and fairly honest people can occasionally behave indecently or

25 Ibid, p. 87.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid, p. 110.

28 B. Dziemidok, *Teoretyczne i praktyczne kłopoty ze szczęściem*, cit., p. 68.

29 Ibid, p. 69.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid, p. 70.

32 Ibid.

hurt someone. However, if someone did the dirty on us, it does not mean that all people are mean³³. Realism, not going to extremes and moderation in formulating expectations for oneself and those close to us, is the compass that protects us from making ourselves miserable. Feelings that we have within us may also be mistaken. Without doubt it is envy. It is hard to be happy in such a situation, where others are successful, are richer, more famous, have prettier houses, cars and wives. "Envy is a self-destructive feeling, poisoning the lives of those who experience it"³⁴. It's hard to be a happy person when at the same time you are poisoning your life. Another trap that surprises people is entering into relationships with people who are pathologically ambitious and who have not achieved successes in line with their dreams, expectations and aspirations. According to Dziemidok, they are people "mostly frustrated, aggressive and dangerous for their environment"³⁵. We usually become victims of such people, because each of our successes (even an inconspicuous one) is unbearable for them. Not only the envy we have in ourselves can be an obstacle to happiness, but the envy of others must also be taken into account. Dziemidok advises us "not to provoke human envy with our virtues and successes"³⁶. If you have no known vices (e.g. you do not cheat on your wife, do not drink too much), then it is high time to invent and promote such vices because "relatively innocent weaknesses and vices, and all kinds of failures will allow you to win the affection of those around you"³⁷. The problem with others is even more complex regarding personal happiness. Not only should their envy be taken into account, but in one's own self-interest, they should be shown kindness. According to the author of the "art of living" it simply pays off. "If you show kindness to ten people, it is likely that five, or maybe six or seven will return the favour"³⁸. You can become unhappy when you expect such gratitude from people. The principle that applies here is that you should not expect reciprocity: "You don't deserve anything but your own satisfaction, this is the only and fair reward"³⁹. The last tip is about enjoying small joys and a sense of humour. Not seeing small joys and enjoying what you have can also be an obstacle to happiness. On the other hand, constant reflection on failures, disappointments and suffering also stands in the way of achieving it. As a result, Dziemidok suggests, that it is worth being able to laugh at yourself and your own life. Be the one who "takes life with humour" and not the one who "takes it tragically". Humour, as Dziemidok repeats from Władysław Tatarkiewicz, "is the ability to not care about anything, not even failures and turn them into a joke. Whoever has this ability undoubtedly has more opportunities than others to be happy"⁴⁰.

A contemplation on freedom and old age completes this reflection on happiness. In the common understanding, it is difficult to feel happy if you are not free. Dziemidok, in the "art of living", encourages you to ask yourself the

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid, p. 71.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid, p. 72.

39 Ibid.

40 W. Tatarkiewicz, *O szczęściu*, cit., p. 114.

question of what you understand when you use this concept. First, freedom is not an absolute value, or at least universal. There are fundamental doubts when we want to subordinate freedom, e.g. safety or justice. The author begins by presenting the main ways of understanding this concept, before moving on to practising the freedom associated with its implementation, the struggle for its autonomy and individual rights. The most attractive, in the eyes of Dziemidok, are the proposals which contain existential and personalistic philosophy. The decisions of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre are key. So freedom is a choice, and choice defines me. You can and should choose. First, as Dziemidok points out, there are no reliable criteria for selection. Secondly, the choice entails giving up what I don't choose. Thirdly, we do not know the full and final consequences of our choices, but we bear the responsibility for the consequences of these choices. Fourthly, freedom makes us want to escape into the "peace of the stone," as Heidegger writes. This means that freedom forces us to constantly transcend ourselves, which is tiring and frustrating. It makes us aware of our smallness, powerlessness and limitations. The way out from this uncomfortable experience of freedom, as Fromm wrote, is to "escape from freedom" by identifying with others, merging with the world of others, freeing oneself from individual responsibility⁴¹.

The fact that Dziemidok does not recognise freedom as an absolute value implies that he recognises it as an instrumental value. This means that it is only in relations with other values that it achieves the right proportions. This applies to, among others, safety, equality and happiness. Another important issue arising from exercising your own freedom is taking responsibility for it. Dziemidok is not in favour of indeterminism in this matter, which, according to Sartre, is a way of facing the truth. Nor does he choose determinism, which transfers our existence to the best world possible. He defines himself as a moderate determinist. This has consequences for happiness. In extreme conditions, happiness does not flourish. Cultivated in a world of freedom without borders, he struggles with anarchy, while where freedom is memory, he dies under the pressure of tyranny. So culture (in the strict sense of the word) requires happiness in both the individual and collective cultivation of order and sense that does not go to extremes.

Does old age have anything to do with happiness? First of all, I will share my suggestions on this matter (as a young man – sixty years old, from the point of view of periodisation of old age proposed by Dziemidok). Secondly, old age can be happy, but it concerns spiritual happiness – says the author. Thirdly, old age is an increasingly common social phenomenon and is associated with ageism. That is a discriminatory and dismissive attitude towards old people. We no longer live in the society that valued old age because it was associated with experience. The experience that is valued now is based on current scientific, technological and social progress. Old age, therefore, is a break in contact with the constantly accelerating world. Values such as the ability to make contact with other people, clarity and precision in translating human affairs

41 See. B. Dziemidok, *Filozofia...*, cit., p. 48-49.

that we have struggled with for generations, or understanding ourselves and others is the skill of specific professions. This is offered to us, among others, by a psychotherapist, coach, personal trainer or PR specialist. In fact, in these cases we are dealing with trained skills, methods and forms that are used in various combinations. Into the darkness of history goes what is associated with the experience of all life, based on a deep understanding and awareness of the diversity of paths that human life travels. Today, in my opinion, we are dealing with a service that meets market expectations. It is about the economic effect, in contrast to the outgoing model, where the relations were subjective. According to Dziemidok, old age does not ennoble because it is associated with suffering, fatigue and "hopelessness"⁴². The fact that in the twenty-first century more than two billion people will live to be over the age of eighty results, in my opinion, from them becoming an important segment of the market. Lost keys to the house and mailbox or hidden false teeth will soon inform their elderly owners of their whereabouts. Products that facilitate and meet the needs of this age group are appearing and will appear. The Japanese are systematically improving androids and "animal-like" devices that are programmed to fill the void associated with old age and loneliness. I believe that these attempts are a way out of the important problems that an old person must face. It has, and probably will have, the value of a prosthesis, which to a better or worse degree replaces (reduces) the absence of something.

In old age, in my opinion, an important problem is the ageing corporeality and its progressing dysfunction. It affects intellectual performance and emotional states experienced. It is a process that cannot be stopped and cannot be avoided. Therefore, it is natural that the attractiveness of life decreases (weakens) along with the deepening of old age. Dziemidok aptly writes about this: "It is [old age] that puts us off our lives, so that we weaken the will to live so that we will stop being afraid of death, because death will free us from the troubles of existence"⁴³.

What, in my opinion, slows down this process is raising / maintaining one's physical fitness and activity, which Dziemidok does not undertake in the "art of living". We should avoid a sedentary lifestyle, which is a distinctive feature of the current level of development of our cultural circle. A body that ceases to function at a satisfactory level needs, at this age, conscious stimuli. Compensating for defects in the functioning of the body through professional work, scientific work, etc. is not a solution to the problem, but simply remaining on a known path, on which sooner or later a sign with the inscription end will appear. Why is it difficult to change the way of life we have cultivated for decades? Because it was satisfying and delivered many successes, moreover, achieving it was associated with authentic work and commitment. In addition, by cultivating it for decades, we have checked many solutions and the ones we use work. Change involves starting this path from the beginning. On this path (I am talking about practising road cycling and MTB) I have suffered injuries (torn a cruciate

42 Ibid, p. 120.

43 Ibid, p. 125.

ligament, broken forearm bones and broken a collarbone). These are analogous experiences to failures in professional work, but as we know well, there is no magic recipe for avoiding them. What do you get in return? A gradual and very slow increase in the efficiency of your body, learning the language that the body uses to communicate with us, more efficient and reliable use of the body, and with this comes better intellectual dexterity⁴⁴. These activities are drainage (improving), as Richard Shusterman describes them. They form part of a larger whole, which Shusterman calls somaesthetics. It seems that this is an attractive, while at the same time demanding, proposition, which can be a way to enter old age. I expect that my happiness during this period of my life will not be limited only to a lack of suffering, or maybe it's anticipating something too soon?

Dziemidok's considerations have an invaluable quality in practical indications, but they also leave no illusions as to "how things are going". It does not try to arouse naïve optimism in the reader, but rather suggests solutions that result from looking "truth in the eye". He focuses on "spiritual" issues, and more specifically on axiological and worldview issues: "On our attitude to our lives and those of other people, on the way we respond emotionally, interpret and evaluate situations and events in which we are involved in our lives"⁴⁵. It omits, as indicated in the last fragment of this text, several important aspects of human life: health and physical fitness. I think that the author is talking about transferring the skills to properly shape our own life. Avoiding the pitfalls that it brings, among others, through thoughtless pursuit of happiness or lack of justification for an optimistic or pessimistic attitude towards oneself and the world. The "art of living" can be particularly useful for people entering adult life who are looking for answers to questions about such things as: happiness, love, friendship and freedom.

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⁴⁴ An important role on this path is played by the successes which we have managed to achieve. On the one hand, they confirm the effectiveness of the work that has been done, while on the other, they motivate us to further achievements. My achievements on this path this year (2019) include: III team place at the XC MTB Polish Academic Championships among universities e.t.c.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 108.

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