

### Introducing: Logotherapy

1. Robert G. Blair, *Helping Older Adolescents, etc.* J. of Mental Health Counseling 26:4 (Oct. 2004)

On a weekly basis, over a 3-week period, this adolescent scored an average of 40 on the BDI [Beck Depression Inventory], indicating severe depression (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996; Burns, 1980). Reviewing his scores on the BDI and verbalizing his various problems, he further recognized the enormous weight of his depression. Following this 3-week period, after we had developed rapport, I assisted him in reframing the meaning of his depression by asking him to think about its possible meaning, and then asking: "Let's assume that your depression is purposeful, that it's trying to convey a message to you, telling you that some change needs to be made in your life. Your job is to figure out what that change is, and then to make it." After taking sufficient time to think, he responded that he had always wanted to read philosophy but had never taken the time to do so. We discussed some of the titles he wanted to read, and when the book *Atlas Shrugged* (Rand, 1996) was mentioned, he became excited and decided that was the book he would read. He purchased and read the book. Within a 2-week period, and with no additional interventions, his score on the BDI dropped to 10, indicating a normal mood range (Beck et al., 1996; Burns, 1980).

2. *Internet Addiction: A Logotherapeutic Approach*, Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling 33 (Apr. 2012) [Internet Addiction], particularly when it is related to social networking programs such as Facebook, Myspace, or Second Life, is indicative of the existential concept of escaping from the self, rather than reliance on self. Individuals feel the need to escape the self for different reasons. It (the self) may have become burdensome, empty, a source of embarrassment, or repulsive. Addictive behaviors are the pathological result of this dissatisfaction with or rejection of the self...

3. *Association Between Purpose in Life and Objective Measures of Physical Function in Older Adults*, JAMA Psychiatry, August 2017

Purpose in life was prospectively associated with a decreased risk of developing weak grip strength and slow walking speed, although the findings were more robust for walking speed than for grip strength. These findings suggest that a sense of purpose in life, a modifiable factor, may play an important role in maintaining physical function among older adults.

4. For a more extensive discussion: <http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/887884/>

### Defining Logotherapy

5. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

[Tasks] form man's destiny, which is different and unique for each individual. No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny. No situation repeats itself, and each situation calls for a different response.

6. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*

Certainly man is free, but he is not floating freely in airless space. He is always surrounded by a host of restrictions. These restrictions, however, are the jumping-off points for his freedom. Freedom presupposes restrictions, is contingent upon restrictions... If we wanted to define man, we would have to call him that entity which has freed itself from whatever has determined it (determined it as biological-psychological-sociological type); that entity, in other words, that transcends all these determinants either by conquering them and shaping them, or by deliberately submitting to them.

7. Rabbi Reuven Bulka, *An Analysis of the Viability of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as a Secular Theory*, pp. 5-6  
Freedom, to Frankl, demands no special proof. It belongs "to the immediate data of his experience." Freud once said: *Try and subject a number of very strongly differentiated human beings to the same amount of starvation. With the increase of the imperative need for food, all individual differences will be blotted out, and, in their place, we shall see the uniform expression of the one unsatisfied instinct.*

The concentration camps, in Frankl's view, proved Freud wrong. The camps proved that man cannot be reduced to a function of heredity and environment, for at the same time that some inmates degenerated into the innate camp bestiality, others exhibited the virtues of saintliness. A third variable, found only in the spiritual animal, man, is the decisive factor in human behaviour, choice or decision. "Man ultimately decides for himself."

8. R' Reuven Bulka, *An Analysis of the Viability of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as a Secular Theory*, pg. 11-12  
The human model, the properly functioning man, is directed towards meaning. If meaning were subjective, the dynamics of transcendence would be destroyed and existence would falter. Therefore, meaning must be objective...

Frankl does categorize three species of values contained in life. They are 1) creative values, or what man gives to life; 2) experiential values, or what man takes from the world in terms of his experience; and 3) attitudinal values, or the stand man takes toward an unchangeable aspect of his existence.

9. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*

[T]he job at which one works is not what counts, but rather the manner in which one does the work. It does not lie with the occupation, but always with us, whether those elements of the personal and the specific which constitute the uniqueness of our existence are expressed in the work and thus make life meaningful.

10. Rabbi Reuven Bulka, *An Analysis of the Viability of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as a Secular Theory*, pg. 10  
Man, like the decrepit arc, needs a pulling tension... Man oscillates between the subjective 'I am' and the objective 'I ought', and insofar as he strives for the ought he transcends his self and actualizes his responsibility.

11. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*

We must never be content with what has already been achieved. Life never ceases to put new questions to us, never permits us to come to rest.

12. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*

The spiritual crisis of retirement constitutes, so to speak, a permanent unemployment neurosis. But there is also a temporary, periodical one, the Sunday neurosis: a depression which afflicts people who become conscious of the lack of content in their lives - the existential vacuum - when the rush of the busy week stops on Sunday and the void within them suddenly becomes manifest.

13. Rabbi Reuven Bulka, *An Analysis of the Viability of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as a Secular Theory*, pg. 11  
There is, according to Frankl, no general, all-encompassing meaning of life. It is comparable to the question posed to a chess player, 'What is the best move?' There is no best move just as there is no universal meaning. Instead, meaning is detected in man's confrontation with his unique situation. Every man is unique, all situations are unique, hence all confrontations are unique. Each confrontation carries its own particular meaning; man detects the objective meaning in the subjectiveness of his situation.

14. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *The Concept of Man in Logotherapy*, *Journal of Existentialism* 6 (1965)

It goes without saying that meaning and purpose in life are no matter of prescription. It is not the job of a doctor to give meaning to the patient's life. But it may well be his task through an existential analysis to enable the patient to find meaning in life. And in my opinion meaning is something to be found rather than to be given.

15. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*, Chapter 6 (pp. 67-68)

The starting point was the basic phenomenological fact that being human is being conscious and being responsible... The second stage of development was reached when experiential analysis ventured into unconscious spirituality... the *unconscious* logos was disclosed with the discovery of a spiritual unconscious in addition to the instinctual unconscious.. Now, in its third stage of development, existential analysis has uncovered – within the spiritual unconscious – unconscious religiousness... a latent relation to transcendence inherent in man. If one prefers, one might conceive of this relation in terms of a relationship between the immanent self and a transcendent Thou...

### Is logotherapy rooted in Jewish ideas?

16. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in a pocket of the newly acquired coat a single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, which contained the main Jewish prayer, Shema Yisrael. How should I have interpreted such a "coincidence" other than as a challenge to live my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?

17. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

One day, a few days after the liberation, I walked through the country past flowering meadows, for miles and miles, toward the market town near the camp. Larks rose to the sky and I could hear their joyous song. There was no one to be seen for miles around; there was nothing but the wide earth and sky and the larks' jubilation and the freedom of space. I stopped, looked around, and up to the sky - and then I went down on my knees. At that moment there was very little I knew of myself or of the world - I had but one sentence in mind - always the same: 'I called to the Lord from my narrow prison and He answered me in the freedom of space.' How long I knelt there and repeated this sentence memory can no longer recall. But I know that on that day, in that hour, my new life started. Step for step I progressed, until I again became a human being.

18. Dr. V. Frankl in R' Reuven Bulka, *Denominational Implications of the Religious Nature of Logotherapy*, pp. 126-127

[A]s I see it religion tries to give answers by offering man various answers, in terms of myths and symbols, and it offers man a choice. By and large he is born into such a language. Remember what I say about languages, a system of symbols. Here I begin to pray, to put on in the morning my Tefilin, where I cannot find rational answers but have to commit myself, have to make my selection — I believe in this G-d, in this incomprehensible Deity. I am approaching Him by way of prayer, by way of rituals even, putting on the Tefilin, and in the evening reading the Psalms. This is my language when I address myself to G-d, and I abhor and would negate the right of anyone to say, "Viktor, why do you speak to Deity in this language? Why have you made it your habit, since the first day in concentration camp, to read in the Psalms each day? Why don't you accept the sacraments? Why don't you make confession to George (Vlahos) as a priest?"

19. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*

"If I don't do it—who will do it? And if I don't do it right now—when should I do it? But if I do it for my sake only—what am I?" If I don't do it..." This seems to me to refer to the uniqueness of my own self. "If I don't do it right now..." refers to the uniqueness of the passing moment which gives me an opportunity to fulfill a meaning. "And if I do it for my own sake only..." what here comes in is no more nor less than the self-transcendent quality of human existence. The question, "What am I if I do it for my own sake only" — requires the answer: In no event a truly human being. For it is a characteristic constituent of human existence that it transcends itself, that it reaches out for something other than itself.

20. Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Three Lectures on Logotherapy*

[T]he meaning of Shabbat may well consist in reaching beyond work. There are creative values, there are experiential values, there are attitudinal values. This means we may find the meaning in our lives through a deed we are doing, through a work we are creating, through an achievement and accomplishment, through creativity, six days. But also through our experience. Not through what we give to the world but what we receive from the world; what we take in.

### Is logotherapy consistent with Jewish ideas, and useful for believing Jews?

21. Talmud, Berachot 58a

Our sages taught: One who sees Jewish crowds says, "Blessed is the Wise One of secrets," for their intellects do not resemble each other and their forms do not resemble each other.

22. Talmud, Niddah 16b

He takes the drop and stands it before Gd and says, "Gd, what shall be with this drop? Powerful or weak, wise or foolish, wealthy or poor?" But he does not say "Wicked or righteous"...

23. Rabbi Yitzchak of Volozhin, citing his father in the preface to Nefesh haChaim

My father always used to rebuke me, as he saw that I would not experience the pain of others. This is what he always told me: "This is a person's entire purpose. A person is not created for himself. A person is created only to benefit others, with whatever power is in his possession."

24. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Commentary to Deuteronomy 1:17

Divine justice shapes human existence and gives it the form the Creator intended at the time of Creation, for a person is created only in order to freely make real the Divine desire.

25. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man* pg. 5

G-d takes man-animal into His confidence, addresses him and reveals to him His moral will.

26. Midrash, Kohelet Rabbah 3:10

One does not leave this world with half of his desires fulfilled. If he has 100, he wants to produce 200. If he has 200, he wants to produce 400.

27. Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (Netziv) (19<sup>th</sup> century Russia) to Numbers 24:6

Each garden has one central variety, and small quantities of other varieties are planted around it. So, too, each Jew is filled with the mitzvot of G-d, but each has one special mitzvah in which he is extra careful...

28. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook (20<sup>th</sup> century Israel), **אל הכי שופר**

We will not measure every acquisition by our personal measure.

We will know that each individual is only a unit,

one portion, a share of our community,  
and how could the whole judge but little?...

Each person toward his heart's desire will travel and succeed,  
and from the fruit of their hands, their nation will be elevated.

Each in his trade will breathe the breath of life;

when he builds for himself a home, the ruin of our people will be rebuilt.