



Building Professional Excellence- Part 1 Session 2: Viktor Frankl: An Intimate Portrait

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Alex Vesely

Question from Andrew Adler

Have there been extensions of his theory or more recent adaptations?

Answer from Presenter

Not in the theory, but the applications are extended and refined constantly by various groups and individuals around the world. For an overview on publications go to www.viktorfrankl.org.

Question from Anna Froustis

How can we use logotherapy with clients without asking them what's their meaning of life?

Answer from Presenter

Frankl suggested engaging in a “Socratic Dialogue”- the therapist asks questions which lead the client to have to come up with his/her own answers.

Question from Bernadette Hansen

How would Frankl address persons who lose sight of their purpose??

Answer from Presenter

Losing sight of purpose from time to time is natural, not trying to find a new purpose can become a problem and resulting in what he called an “Existential Vacuum”. Searching for a new meaning can itself be the meaning of the moment. In contrast to Freud, who stated that a person questioning the meaning of life is sick, Frankl regarded asking oneself this question as a “sign of maturity”, as only human beings have the capacity to ask such existential questions – and find their own answers.

Question from Carol Maxey

I connect with an existential perspective, but am working with children, what is a good way to conceptualize a child through the mind of an existential therapist? Especially regarding issues like oppositional defiant disorder and ADHD



Answer from Presenter

A “Will to Meaning” can be seen in children as well. Several works have been published about the use of Logotherapy with children.

Question from Charles McLafferty

Alex, where would a counselor go if he/she wanted to get training in logotherapy? And would you comment on the upcoming "Future of Logotherapy" conference in Vienna in May?

Answer from Presenter

Logotherapy Institutes and training exist in many countries, but the quality of the education varies significantly. The Vienna Institute is in the process of establishing standardized quality guidelines for affiliated institutes. The upcoming conference will be yet another step towards the goal of a standardized curriculum for Logotherapy training in the next years.

Questions from Don Hillyard

1. Where did his bible knowledge come from? 2. Did his being a medical doctor contribute to his treatment in the camps? 3. Did Frankl and Carl Rodgers collaborate at all? 4. Is interest in logotherapy growing today?

Answer from Presenter

1. Frankl was a devout Jew and well familiar with religious texts. 2. How much he might have been treated differently in the camps is speculation. 3. Frankl and Rogers met and respected each other’s work. They did not collaborate, as their ideas differ significantly. 4. Yes, interest in Logotherapy is on the rise, especially in the USA, Japan and China. It has always been strong in Latin America, especially Argentina.

Question from Edward Colozzi

If happiness and self-actualization is a by-product of discovering real meaning, and an immersion into one's purpose, one’s true self and natural energy to BE, even one's calling(s) in life (self-transcendence) why wouldn't depression really be a by-product of the blocking of that natural energy to discover one's meaning and to BE?

Answer from Presenter

The connection between lack of meaning and depression is a central topic in Frankl’s work. If a lack of meaning is the main cause of a depression, Frankl spoke of a “noogenic depression.” Logotherapy then is the treatment of choice. However, depression is often a multifactorial phenomenon. One has to be very precise in looking at an individual’s situation when evaluating the main cause of a depression and choice of therapy. Often the lack of meaning may or may not be the direct cause of a depression, but meaning may well have prevented it from forming. Therefore Logotherapeutic techniques can usually aid in a therapy.



Questions from Ellen Rebman

1. Was Viktor Frankl afraid that Dr. Freud would not speak to him if he admitted he was as a student of Adler?
2. There were many dark days in the early years of mental health, but it sounds as though Viktor Frankl was a bright light during that time. I wonder how he found the inspiration and motivation to be different from others.

Answer from Presenter

1. Afraid may be too strong a word. I think he did not want to unnecessarily hurt Dr. Freud's feelings. That would be my personal guess.
 2. Freud as a person was one inspiration for him. In his time, Freud and his theory were often ridiculed, yet he did not succumb to criticism. Frankl respected and admired his attitude.
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Question from Jayson Zeller

Did he write any books on his spiritual life?

Answer from Presenter

Yes, "The Unconscious God," now also called "Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning."

Question from Joyce Kinnard

What was Frankl's view of the captured Nazis after the war? Was he more angry or compassionate?

Answer from Presenter

He believed in personal, not collective guilt. Facts, circumstances, as well as the individual's choice of how to deal with his or her past, was the basis on which he judged a character.

Question from Kristine Gile

What books would you recommend reading?

Answer from Presenter

For professionals: "The Doctor and the Soul," "The Will to Meaning," "Theory & Therapy of Mental Disorders." For non-professionals: "The Unheard Cry for Meaning," "Psychotherapy and Existentialism," "Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning."

Question from Madonna Pool

Where can I get a translation of his play "Synchronization in Buchenwald?"



Answer from Presenter

The Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, write to: logos@ap.univie.ac.at

Question from Maria Averza

What was Frankl's opinion about mental illness?

Answer from Presenter

While body and mind can become ill, there is a part in every human being which will always remain intact. Communicating with the healthy human person underneath the dysfunction is of special interest in Logotherapy. (In that sense Logotherapy transcends the level of being merely a “psycho”-therapy, as it enters the specifically human dimension, which he called the “noetic dimension”)

Question from Natalia Silva Harwood

In thinking about realizing meaning, how does the presenter conceptualizes increasing dependency on technology, thus "perceived" decrease in opportunity to notice "meaning"?

Answer from Presenter

Modern technology and lifestyle allow for much distraction from deeper existential voids, by increased intensity, activity or speed to “cover up” the feeling of meaninglessness. Any technology can be used meaningfully, or misused in meaningless ways...

Question from Rebecca Siegel

How does forgiveness fit into logotherapy?

Answer from Presenter

As human beings we are always free to decide what attitude we adopt, for example towards our own and other people's choices. Forgiveness respects the freedom of an individual (and oneself) to change.

Question from Richard Leider

What is the distinction between purpose & meaning... or would Viktor see them as the same?

Answer from Presenter

He used both words. I think purpose is a more tangible, concrete meaning in a situation, while he referred to meaning as a broader concept.



Question from Tayler Shannon

Did Viktor ever speculate on his decision to let his Visa lapse in relation to his incarceration? Did he express regrets or write about what his life could have been like if he had come to the U.S.?

Answer from Presenter

No. He did not spend much time contemplating “what if,” as he was always more interested in the present and future.

Question from Thelma Copeland

What might get you out of depression?

Answer from Presenter

It depends on the cause of your depression. A precise diagnosis is necessary to answer this question, but consciously orienting yourself towards meaning will generally provide a good basis for keeping mental strength and resilience.

Question from Thomas Barhorst

Did Viktor know Elie Wiesel when he was at Auschwitz? Both have presented views of humanity based on their experiences, did their ideas have any influence on each other?

Answer from Presenter

No, they did not know each other then, and there is no direct influence to my knowledge.

Question from Valorie Hoppenworth

If possible, I'd like to know the book the speaker referenced wherein Victor Frankl spoke of the fact that people who thought of who they needed to live for were more likely to survive. Please.

Answer from Presenter

Man’s Search for Meaning.

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