

The Introduction to the Meaning Crisis Series

What follows here is a transcription of the above video by John Vervaeke (Sections added by MeaningCrisis.co)

What is the Meaning Crisis?

We are in the midst of a mental health crisis. There are increases in anxiety disorders, depression, despair, suicide rates are going up in North America, parts of Europe, other parts of the world. And that mental health crisis is itself due to and engaged with crises in the environment and the political system. And those in turn are immeshed within a deeper cultural historical crisis. I called the meaning crisis. So the meaning crisis expresses itself and many people are giving voice to this in many different ways, is this increasing sense of bullshit. Bullshit is on the increase. It's more and more pervasive throughout our lives and there's this sense of drowning in this old ocean of bullshit. And we have to understand why is this the case and what can we do about it? So today there is an increase of people feeling very disconnected from themselves, from each other, from the world, from a viable and foreseeable future.

What do we do about this crisis?

Let's discuss this. Let's work on it together. Let's rationally reflect on it. What can we do about the meaning crisis? These problems are deep problems that we're facing. Many people are talking about the meaning crisis, but what I want to argue is that these problems are deeper than just social media problems, political problems, even economic problems. They're deeply historical, cultural, cognitive problems, and we need to, we need to penetrate into them carefully and rigorously. Getting out of this problem is going to be tremendously difficult. It's going to require significant transformations in our cognition, our culture, our communities, and in order to move forward in such a difficult manner, we have to reach more deeply into our past to salvage the resources we can for such an amazing challenge.

What we'll be talking about

I'll be talking about a lot of people who have spoken in ways that will provide us the

resources we need. We'll talk about ancient figures like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, Jesus of Nazareth, Siddhartha, Gautama, the Buddha, but we'll also talk about modern pivotal figures. We'll talk about people like Carl Jung. We'll talk about Nietzsche. We'll talk about Heidegger. We'll talk about current work being done by psychologists, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists. We're going to cover a broad range of topics. We're going to talk about shamanism and altered States of consciousness related a modern things like psychedelic experience, mystical experience. But we'll also talk about existentialism, nihilism. We'll talk about AI, artificial intelligence. What's that telling us? But also what can our evolutionary past tell us about how we wrestle with the meaning crisis. So this is a complex and difficult problem. There are no easy answers. We need to go through this very carefully and rigorously. We got to get clear about what the problem is and clear about what our answer could be. So I want to bring all of this together in a coherent and clear fashion so that we together can discover how to awaken from the meaning crisis.

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