



Additional English

Continuous Internal Assessment 3
Introduction to Viktor Frankl





Viktor Emil Frankl

- 26 March 1905 – 2 September 1997
- Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist – Holocaust survivor
- Survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Kaufering and Türkheim
- Best-selling book *Man's Search for Meaning*
- Chronicles his experiences as a concentration camp inmate
- Became one of the key figures in existential therapy and a prominent source of inspiration for humanistic psychologists

Life before 1945

- Frankl was born in Vienna into a Jewish family of civil servants (*Beamtenfamilie*).
- His interest in psychology surfaced early. For the final exam in *Gymnasium*, he wrote a paper on the psychology of philosophical thinking.
- After graduation from *Gymnasium* in 1923, he studied medicine at the University of Vienna. In practice he specialized in neurology and psychiatry, concentrating on the topics of depression and suicide.

Physician, Therapist.

- During part of 1924 he became the president of the Sozialistische Mittelschüler Österreich, a Social Democratic youth movement for high school students throughout Austria.

Life before 1945

Prisoner, Therapist

- September 1942 - Frankl and family deported to Nazi Theresienstadt Ghetto in occupied Czechoslovakia
 - “Model Community” of Jewish middle class to fool Red Cross representatives
 - General practitioner, lecturer - appointed to regulate psychohygiene & controversial suicide watch
 - Conducted lectures on “Sleep and Sleep Disturbances”, “Body and Soul”, “Medical Care of the Soul”, et al
- October 1944 - Deported to Auschwitz death camp
- When infected with typhoid, he moved to rest camp in Türkheim
 - In charge of 50 men with typhus
 - Rose to “senior block warden” and wrote his book anew until liberation in 1945
- Frankl lost his entire family in the Holocaust except his sister who had emigrated to Australia from Austria

Life after 1945

- Liberated from concentration camps and returned to Vienna.
- Published '*Trotzdem Ja Zum Leben Sagen: Ein Psychologe Erlebt das Konzentrationslager*'
- **1946** - appointed to run the Vienna Polyclinic of Neurology
- **1947** - married his second wife Eleonore Katharina Schwindt
- **1948** - earned a PhD in philosophy
- **1955** - awarded a professorship at The University of Vienna
- **1985** - awarded the Oskar Pfister Award
- **1997** - died of heart failure

Frankl's Deception

- In the time periods before Frankl's internment, Frankl voluntarily requested to perform unskilled lobotomy experiments approved by the Nazis on Jews who had attempted suicide to prevent arrest
- Frankl was held close in the "depot prisoner" area of Auschwitz and for no more than a few days
- Frankl's amoral focus on "meaning" that could just as equally be applied to Nazis "finding meaning in making the world free from Jews"
- None of Frankl's works, have ever been on sale in the bookstore of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C

Existential Analysis

- Viktor Frankl was responsible for spreading existential psychology throughout the world. He went to over 200 universities worldwide and accomplished over 80 journeys to North America alone, and was first invited by Gordon Allport at Harvard University.
- Existential psychology is a form of psychology that regards human experiences such as anxiety, alienation and depression as natural stages in the normal process of human development and maturation instead of implying the presence of mental illness.
- Frankl's approach to Existential Analysis is based on three philosophical and psychological concepts:
 - Freedom of Will
 - Will to Meaning
 - Meaning in Life

Logotherapy

- Victor Frankl developed a form of therapy called the logotherapy during his time in concentration camps
- Frankl believed that humans are motivated by something called a "will to meaning," which equates to a desire to find meaning in life.
- Frankl wrote:

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances.
- This opinion was based on his experiences of suffering, and his attitude of finding meaning through the suffering. In this way, Frankl believed that when we can no longer change a situation, we are forced to change ourselves.
- The concept of logotherapy with reference to the holocaust can be understood through the award-winning movie, 'The Pianist'.

Frankl's idea of Man Search for Meaning

- **Man's Search for Meaning** is a 1946 book by Viktor Frankl chronicling his experiences as a prisoner.
- The plot is about the Nazi concentration camps during World War II, and describing his psychotherapeutic method.
- Identifying a purpose in life to feel positively about, and then immersively imagining that outcome. According to Frankl, the way a prisoner imagined the future affected his longevity.
- The book intends to answer the question "How was everyday life in a concentration camp reflected in the mind of the average prisoner?"
- Part One constitutes Frankl's analysis of his experiences in the concentration camps, while Part Two introduces his ideas of meaning and his theory called logotherapy.

Legacy

- Frankl's logotherapy and existential analysis is considered the third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, among the broad category that comprises existentialists.
- He has coined the term noogenic neurosis, and illustrated it with the example of Sunday neurosis. It refers to a form of anxiety resulting from an awareness in some people of the emptiness of their lives once the working week is over. Some complain of a void and a vague discontent. This arises from an existential vacuum, or feeling of meaninglessness, which is a common phenomenon and is characterised by the subjective state of boredom, apathy, and emptiness. One feels cynical, lacks direction, and questions the point of most of life's activities.

Notable works

- Guest professor at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Guest professorship at the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. Based on his lecture manuscripts Frankl publishes "THE WILL TO MEANING", which he regards as his most systematic book in English.
- Guest professorship at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.
- The "Viktor Frankl Institute" is founded in Vienna by a number of academic friends and family members.
- The autobiography "WAS NICHT IN MEINEN BÜCHERN STEHT" (What is not in my books) is published. The English translation is published in 1997 as "VIKTOR FRANKL – RECOLLECTIONS".

AWARDS

- The US International University in California installed a special chair for Logotherapy.
- Recipient of 29 honorary doctorates from universities around the world.
- 151 books have been published about Frankl and his work in 15 different languages.
- The Statue of Responsibility Award was named in his honour.
- He got 13 more awards other than doctorates.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [Man's Search for Meaning](#). *An Introduction to Logotherapy*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 2006.
- [The Doctor and the Soul](#), (originally titled *Ärztliche Seelsorge*), Random House, 1955.
- [On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders](#). *An Introduction to Logotherapy and Existential Analysis*, Translated by James M. DuBois. Brunner-Routledge, London-New York, 2004.
- [Psychotherapy and Existentialism](#). *Selected Papers on Logotherapy*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1967.
- [The Will to Meaning](#). *Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*, [New American Library](#), New York, 1988
- [The Unheard Cry for Meaning](#). *Psychotherapy and Humanism*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2011
- [Viktor Frankl Recollections: An Autobiography](#); Basic Books, Cambridge, MA 2000.
- [Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning](#). (A revised and extended edition of [The Unconscious God](#); with a Foreword by Swanee Hunt). Perseus Book Publishing, New York, 1997;