

## **Introduction to Part One: Milestones on the Long Journey to Mount Sinai**

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Paul is a trailblazer both by nature and by calling. He has told me all about his daring adventures in his youth, such as walking from Kowloon city to the New Territories through the mountainous terrains with just a bottle of water to test his capacity for endurance. As adults, I've also witnessed all his struggles to do the impossible, such as starting a church and a graduate program without any resources against all odds and oppositions. This section captures his intellectual adventures in search of the Holy Grail in psychology: Meaning and happiness.

His career path is very different from most people. He seems to follow a different drummer, away from the hit parade, and going to uncharted territories and deserted areas. As a scientist, he is more interested in searching for the truth than worldly success or fame.

The 15 chapters in this section were selected to represent different stages of his research and the milestones of the development of his important innovative concepts. They are by no means exhaustive because the scope of his research covers so many areas (Google Scholar, 2023). These chapters were selected to focus on the different facets of existential positive psychology (EPP). When interwoven together, they look like a tapestry of the best possible deep life in a broken world (Wong, 2022).

The last two chapters are particularly important because the first draft of these two papers were written during his emergency hospitalization at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. They reflect his latest thinking in times of despair. They were written on notebooks during his sleepless nights or waking hours, while struggling with all kinds of pain in various parts of his body, in addition to coping with sleep deprivation, hunger, and drug side effects. It is a miracle that a man in his terrible physical and mental condition could still write so creatively. What

motivated and sustained him was something more powerful than just self-determination and grit – he was compelled by his love of God through being connected with an invisible Higher Power.

During those darkest days at the Mount Sinai Hospital, Paul’s face was swollen with inflammation and his emotions were fragile and unstable, but his mind remained clear, and his faith remained strong. He never stopped writing because of his passion to glorify God and help the suffering people. By claiming this promise from God: “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9), he was able to carry on his mission in his darkest hours.

One final point: it would be remiss of me if I do not mention his struggles with English as his second language. All throughout high school, he was always top in his class in English, but as a professor in Canada, he was repeatedly criticized for his Chinese accent by some students, and for his written English by some reviewers and editors. All his adult life, he fights a losing battle against publication biases as an Asian minority and a Christian (Wong, 2017). In a secular, consumeristic culture, he does not mind standing alone and proclaiming the narrow path of living an abundant life in a world full of the trials and tribulations (John 10:10).

These 15 chapters can be considered an alternative history of positive psychology, because EPP has its roots in ancient Chinese wisdom as well as in Judeo-Christian values. In other words, EPP is spiritually oriented and it focuses on both existential universals and indigenous psychology, a far cry from Eurocentric or WEIRD psychology (Wong & Cowden, 2022). This collection may be used as a required reading for any course on EPP, because it provides not only the historical/cultural context, but also insights into Paul’s personal struggles in developing this emerging field.

It is his wish that his legacy can inspire many people to follow the less trodden path of human flourishing.

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