

Adventures with Viktor Frankl and Advances in Logotherapy (AEPP01)

Lesson 6: Logotherapy Techniques

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Lesson 5 Recap

Lesson 5 focused on the hidden power of self-transcendence in terms of the seven principles and four hidden treasures of self-transcendence (see below).

<p>THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE ♦ DR. PAUL T. P. WONG</p> <p><i>The first five principles are proven strategies of overcoming and transcending suffering...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept life as it is with gratitude. 2. Believe in creating a better future with help from Providence. 3. Commit to worthy goals and a life purpose. 4. Discover the hidden treasures by digging deeper. 5. Enjoy inner peace and harmony. 6. Love others as yourself. 7. Fear God and obey his commandments. <p><i>...The last two principles are the moral foundations of caring and doing no harm.</i></p>	<p>THE 4 HIDDEN TREASURES OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a seed, we need to die to ourselves in order to rise again. 2. As a farmer, we need to have the existential wisdom to sow in the fertile soil of suffering. 3. As a soldier, we need to be willing to endure hardships and make the ultimate sacrifice. 4. As an athlete, we need to strive forward and upward to our highest calling. <p>♦ Dr. Paul T. P. Wong</p>
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The benefits of pursuing self-transcendence as a way of life are summarized in the following figure. In short, self-transcendence is essential for living a meaningful and spiritual life by rising about all constraints and reaching beyond ourselves to serve people we love or causes we care about.

The Best Possible Life Is A Deep Life

Here are the 7 reasons why:

1. At the deepest level, we are all the same: We all share the same DNA and the same human nature.
2. At the deepest level, all roots are connected because they share the same nutrients.
3. A tree can grow tall when it has deep roots.
4. Anything genuine or valuable is hidden below the surface.
5. You can have deep conversations or a deep relationship only with a deep person.
6. A deep person can see the light even in the darkest hour.
7. A deep life shines and flourishes in all circumstances.

◆Dr. Paul T. P. Wong

“Truth is a deep kindness that teaches us to be content in our everyday life and share with the people the same happiness.”

– Khalil Gibran

Abstract

Lesson 6 focuses on the How of meaning. More specifically, it is about how to apply logotherapy principles and techniques to meet the communal mental health needs and to heal individuals struggling with existential crises beyond the medical model. I first demonstrate how the basic principles of self-determination, self-distancing, and self-transcendence are the building blocks for mental health. Then I introduce the major logotherapy techniques such as Socratic Dialogue, Paradoxical Intention, and De-reflection, as well as Appealing and Attitude Modification to treat various kinds of mental disorders. I conclude that a faith-based and meaning-centered approach can contribute to positive transformation for both individuals and society.

Introduction

Many years ago, Viktor Frankl pointed out that the world was suffering from the mass neurotic triad of “aggression, addiction, and depression,” which could be traced to the “existential vacuum” (i.e., the perception that one’s life appeared to be meaningless). This existential vacuum is still a widespread phenomenon in the 21st Century.

Just witness the increasing incidents of mass killings, random violence, and inter-racial conflicts and hate crimes. Why is there so much hatred and anger that erupts into violence?

What account for the increase of substance abuse and addiction (National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, 2023)? What contribute to the opioids overdose epidemic (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023)? Is addiction driven by the need to find escape from a painful existence? Is it primarily motivated by the desires for happiness in a meaningless life?

Why are young people (15-24) more affected by mental illness and/or addiction than any other age group? Is COVID-19 the main trigger of an increase in depression and anxiety (World Health Organization, 2022)? Is financial stress a determinant of depression (Guan et al., 2022)?

We have already learned the mental health benefits of quest for meaning (Wong, 2012). “A strong will to meaning promotes human health, both physically and mentally, and prolongs, as well as preserves, life” (Graber, 2004, p. 65) Likewise, Lukas (2015) points out logotherapy’s unique contribution of providing positive meaning and healing in times of suffering.

At a deeper level...

[END OF LESSON PREVIEW]

