

Adventures with Viktor Frankl and Advances in Logotherapy (AEPP01)

**Chapter 9: From Logotherapy to Integrative Meaning Therapy:
A Blueprint for Better Mental Health**

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What is so Positive about Meaning Therapy?

- (1) It affirms the meaning and value of life.
- (2) It affirms the significance and uniqueness of every individual.
- (3) It is strength-based, empowering people to develop their potential.
- (4) It is optimistic, helping people build a better future.
- (5) It is transformative, turning failure & suffering into achievement.

- Paul TP Wong

Chapter 8 Recap

The last chapter can be captured by the following quotes:



As a spiritual therapy, Logotherapy is a meaning-centered, future-oriented and optimistic approach to psychotherapy and counselling. The above sevenfold path represents a holistic and self-transcendence model of mental health based on transcending the Ego, serving others, and glorifying God.

More specifically, the sevenfold path requires us to integrate the seven spiritual disciplines into our daily lives. We can achieve healing and mental health in spite of all the stress, anxiety and inner struggles by practicing the above guide to personal transformation.

Abstract

Frankl's logotherapy provides the foundation for Wong's integrative meaning therapy and existential positive psychology in two ways: 1) Research and applications on how to see the light in darkness, and 2) how to turn suffering into flourishing.

More specifically, Paul Wong expands Frankl's vision of creating a better future by learning how to meet the 3 basic human needs:

- (1) Practicing responsible Agency like Moses (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).
- (2) Sharing hope for the suffering Community like Job (Job 13:15).
- (3) Maintaining faith like Abraham in our quest for meaning and Spirituality (Hebrew 11:13).



Introduction



Image from Sherryann (2016)

The arrival of a new year means the dark night is over and the dawning of a new day. It also represents an opportunity for positive change. What is your new year resolution(s)? What kind of positive transformation do you want in your life?

If you are seeking spiritual direction for the future, you need to know at least (1) Who you really are, (2) Where you are right now, (3) Where you want to go, and (4) What changes you need to make in order to reach your new destination. It takes a lot of courage to make fundamental changes.

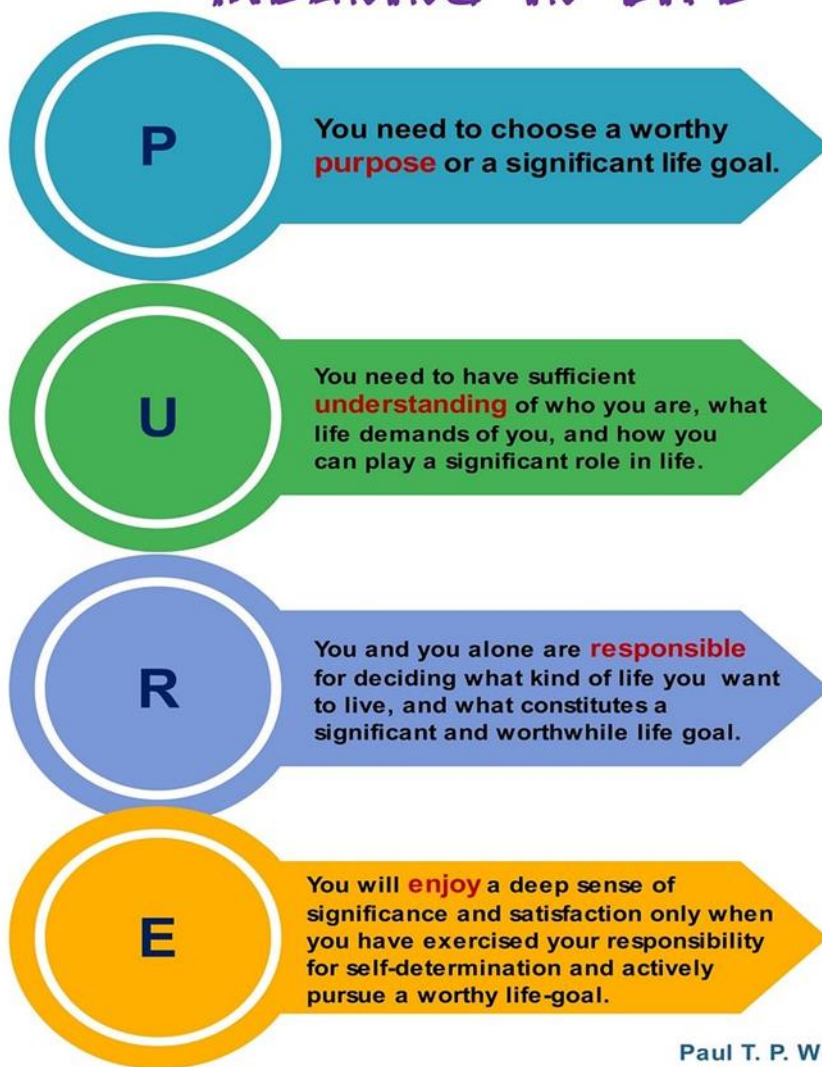
Yes, change is never easy. Giving up old habits is never easy. Some have even given up on making new year resolutions. But in some cases, staying the same may not be an option. According to Tony Robbins: “Change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change.”

Here are 4 proven ways which may help make your new year resolutions stick. These steps are supported by scientific research – from the empirical law of relief, to the intrinsic motivation of personal growth and self-determination to live a meaningful life:

- (1) Feel the EMOTIONAL relief and joy of being liberated from the unbearable pain of remaining the same.
- (2) Take RESPONSIBILITY for personal change: When you stop blaming others or circumstances for your misery and take ownership for your happiness, you will take steps to change.
- (3) When you examine your life and discover your true self and your place in the world, you will UNDERSTAND that without change you will always be miserable to be less than who you really are.
- (4) Discover a life goal or PURPOSE that can ignite your passion to pursue a preferred future; then you have something that is worth living and dying for.

Do you know that the above four steps of change are actually based on Wong’s teaching of the PURE model of living a meaningful life (stated in reverse order)? In other words, your New Year resolution is more likely to stick if it makes your life more meaningful as described in the following graph.

FOUR-COMPONENT SOLUTION TO THE QUESTION OF MEANING IN LIFE

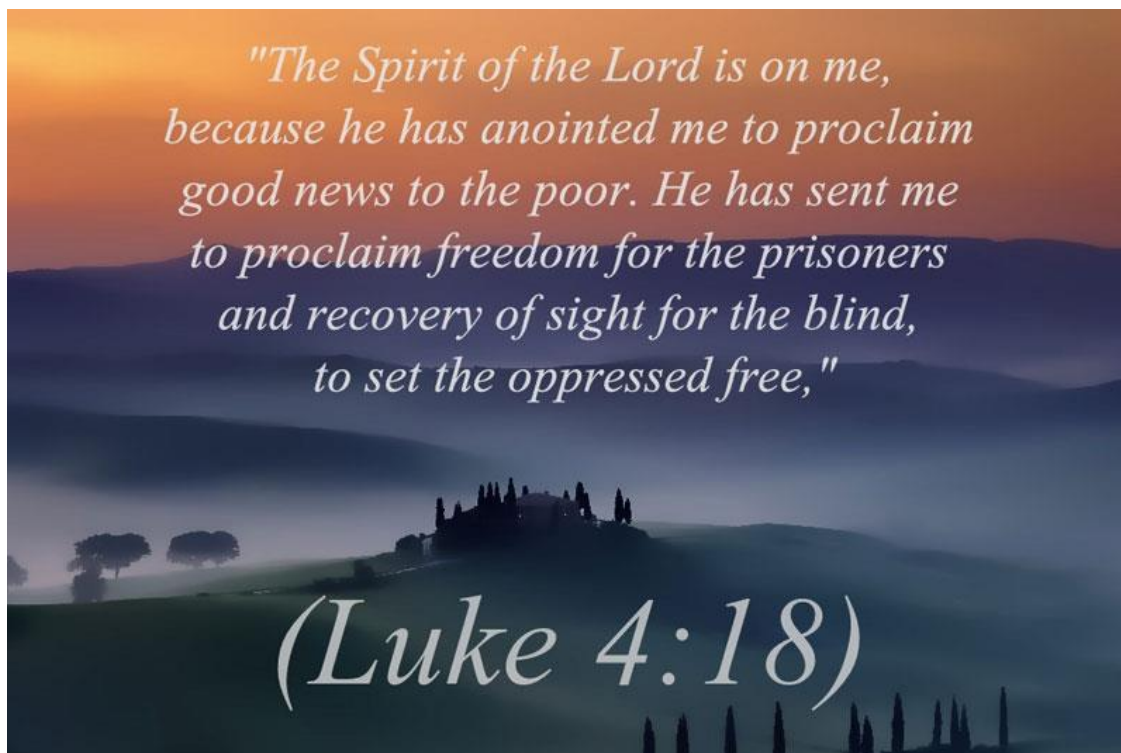


Paul T. P. Wong

Lasting change is a process that starts from within – a spiritual awaking, a re-orientation from ego to the soul, from self to transcendental values. It involves a change of value, a change of life attitude. Ultimately, we need to be awakened to the truth that the meaning of life is not about what we can get from life, but what life expects from us to contribute to the world. Once we see the light, we would be motivated to kindle a light in others crying for help in the darkness.

For myself, God saved from the dark pit of despair and set me free from the human bondage of suffering and depression as a young man. My fresh start began when received the calling to share the good news, as described in Luke 4:18, through psychology and the Bible.

The calling may vary from person to person, but the process is similar. It always involve beginning with awakening or enlightenment, followed by embarking on a journey of personal transformation from darkness to light, from suffering to flourishing.



The Hope of Turning Darkness Into Light

Instinctively, we love to hear the good news and have a good time. We want to know how to get rich and famous without going through self-sacrifice and suffering. In this holiday season, no one has the stomach for hearing a litany of woes and miseries.

But we need to know the cause(s) of our illness in order to find the effective cure(s). For example, if one simply ignores the cancer diagnosis, and believe that by living happily and fully one will prove the doctor wrong, one may end up dead. I have lost two older brothers because of this positive delusion.

For all of us, if we do not recognize our brokenness and our need for healing and rebirth, we will most likely repeat the same mistakes next year and going through the same miseries. That is why we need to review and reflect on the human condition to find out who we really are and what we really need in order to be happy and healthy in the new year.

Paradoxically, we need to face the reality of darkness in order to see the shining stars.



A Review of 2023

2023 has not be a good year (Ballard, 2023). The world is in a terrible mess with the cost-of-living crisis (International Monetary Fund, 2023), global food crisis (World Food Programme, 2023), worsening humanitarian crisis (Concern Worldwide, 2023), and declining freedom in the world (Freedom House, 2023).

These global crises are more than statistic; they involve real people – grieving parents that lost their children in bombing, starving people not knowing where they can find food or water, or wounded civilians groaning and writhing in pain. We can witness heart-wrenching human suffering and atrocities in the Russian-Ukraine war, and the [devastation of entire cities](#) and near-starving people in Israel-Hamas war (Jobain et al., 2023).

Just a few days ago, we witnessed the mass killing at Prague university (Janicek, 2023) and think of all the promising young lives cut short by senseless killing. In the US, there have been 627 mass shootings in 2023, more than any other year (Alfonseca, 2023).



Image of grieving from Michael (2023)

Apart from major events beyond our control, everyday stressful events, hassles, and small things can wear us down and make us feel weary and frustrated (Sreenivasan & Weinberger, 2023). With all the bad things happening, it is not difficult to understand why everyone is so angry (Wade, 2023).

The recent Netflix drama *Beef* (Jin, 2023) probably capture the pathos of the world we live in today. This is a story of a road rage incident between two strangers: Danny (a likable but hapless contractor) and Amy (an ambitious but unfulfilled entrepreneur). It is about how a petty incident spirals out of control, bringing out the dark impulses of the two protagonists, including criminal activity. According to a recent review of *Beef* (Lawler, 2023):

“Amy and Danny's beef may be petty, but all that caged rage had to go somewhere, and the two are so on edge that random rudeness is enough to open their loosely sealed cans of worms. Any one of us could snap in the same way, as beaten down as we are by the indignities of modern life.”

Against thus dark backdrop, we wonder: How shall we respond to the terrors of Being? Is Frankl's Neurotic Triad of Aggression, Addiction and Depression the only response to suffering

and human evil? What else can we do to stop human beings from destroying each other? How can we reduce violence and promote compassion and harmony in 2024?

Mahatma Gandhi said: 'You must be the change you wish to see in the world.' In a similar vein, Frankl wrote: "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." More specifically, he proposes that we can choose tragic optimism as a more adaptive response of inescapable suffering. Therefore, we all need to ask ourselves: "What can I do to make this world a better place?"



"I speak of a tragic optimism, that is, an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best always allows for: (1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action."

– Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

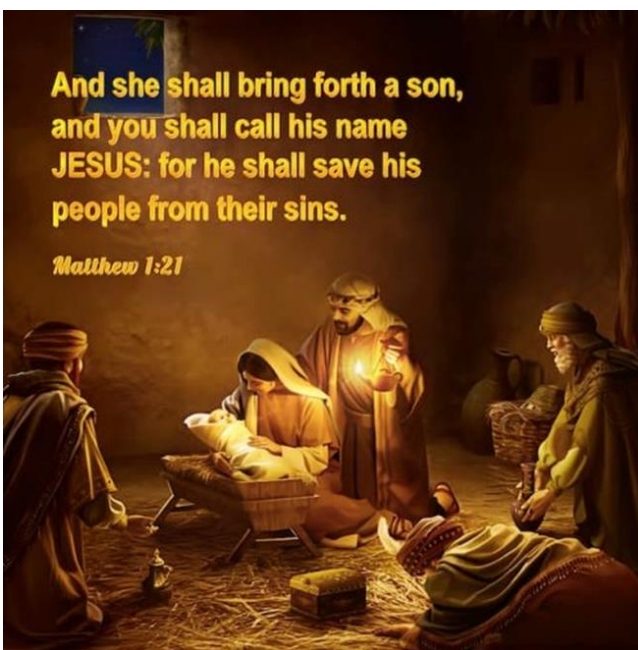
To turn suffering into achievement is easier said than done. Many people are so broken and wounded by life that they merely have the strength to cry out for divine intervention. That is why Christmas offers a glimmer of hope to all those in total despair.

The True Meaning of Christmas

Beyond the shining Christmas decorations, the exciting gift exchanges, and the joy of family gathering, the real meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of a Baby – a light was born into a dark world of political tumult, tyranny, and evil forces surrounding Bethlehem, where the infinite infant was born into a lowly manger.

I remember that several years ago, I watched Piers Morgan's interview of Pastor Rick Warren on *CNN Tonight*. I was very impressed with Pastor Warren's statement that the purpose of Christmas is the giving and receiving of the gift of grace from God through the birth of Christ.

The story of Beethoven's 9th symphony is perfect example of the triumph of joy and peace over darkness and human suffering.



Despite his deteriorating hearing, Beethoven persevered with writing this mammoth symphony, which is arguably the crowning achievement of his music career.

Since 1985, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, the last movement of this symphony, has become the melody used to symbolise the European Union (EU). According to EU's official website, "In the universal language of music, this anthem expresses the European ideals of freedom, peace and solidarity." (Roberts, 2023) Here is [the historical concert conducted by Leonard Bernstein](#) only a few weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in a city no longer divided. Leonard Bernstein observed:

"I feel this is a heaven-sent moment to sing 'Freiheit' wherever the score indicates the word 'Freude.' If ever there was a historic time to take an academic risk in the name of human joy, this is it, and I am sure we have Beethoven's blessing. 'Es lebe die Freiheit!'"

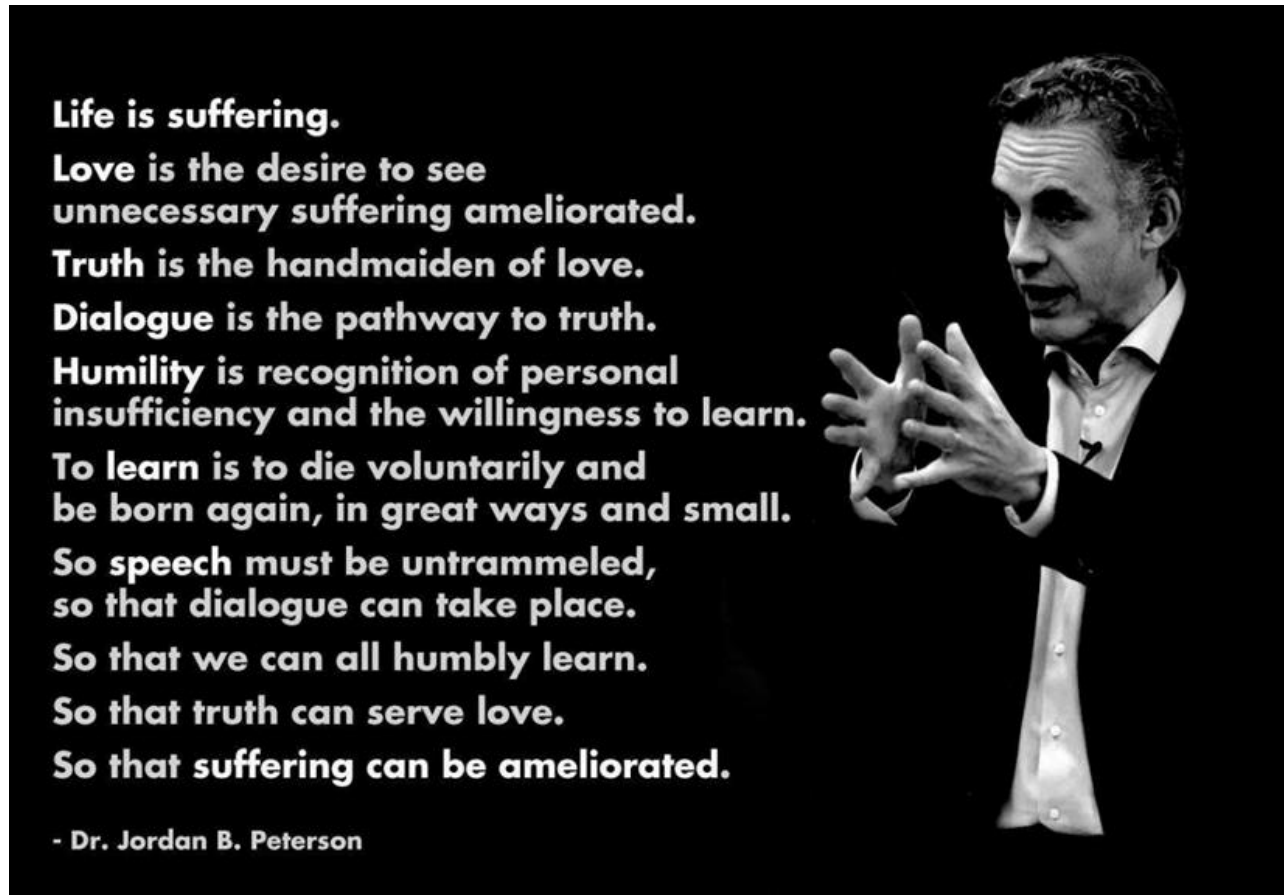
The lyrics, based on Schiller's poem, matches Beethoven's music in beauty and grandeur. The powerful singing voice soars in crescendos to the highest heavens. Here is the English translation of the last stanza, which sounds like a worship hymn of "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!" (Roberts, 2023):

*All creatures drink of joy
Be embraced, Millions!
This kiss to all the world!
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.
Are you collapsing, millions?
Do you sense the creator, world?
Seek him above the starry canopy!
Above stars must He dwell*

This is the dream of Schiller and Beethoven. The world will become a better place if we can all work towards realizing this dream of peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

I want to conclude the segment by commenting on Jordan Peterson' (2018) contribution to the positive psychology of meaning and suffering. One may not agree with many of his controversial views, but his message to suffering people is both eloquent and pragmatic.

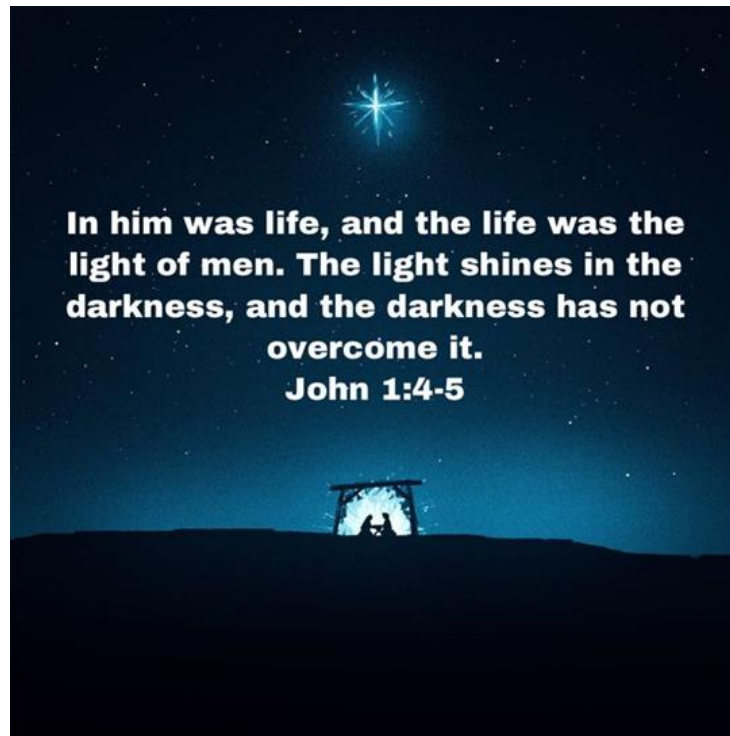
Peterson raised the fundamental question: What activity would you pursue today which will be not only good for you but also for those around you and beyond? His answer is very similar to mine: Assume your personal responsibility to aim at the greatest good according to your best understanding, then pursue it each day with all your heart, mind, and soul.



The entirety of his *12 Rules for Life* (Peterson, 2018) is an elaboration of how we can ameliorate unnecessary suffering and bring a little bit of heaven to our earth by following certain time-tested rules based on the two supreme values of love and truth. Here is my summary (Wong 2019) of his book, which is very similar to my own view on personal transformation:

“Once you are aligned with the heavens, you can concentrate on the day’ (Peterson, 2018, p. 351). This calls for the use of the double-vision strategy in meaning therapy (Wong, 2016b)—to keep one eye on what we can do at the moment, and the other eye on our spiritual vision of heaven. Peterson also challenges us to ‘repair what is in disorder, and make what is already good better’ (Peterson, 2018, p. 351); this dual-systems approach (Wong, 2012b) is the most effective way to make you stronger.”

In his latest newsletter, dated December 25, 2023, Peterson again appeals to us to wrestle with God about our fears and hopes, about the dark reality and the glory of God. More importantly, we need to balance our daily discipline to become our best and deal with our worst. Such is the tragic and heroic nature of human existence as illustrated by the Christmas message: of an infinite God in a vulnerable infant, born in the midnight of dark and evil forces, but baby Jesus will be the light of the world.



How Can We Be Decent Human Beings?

My new year resolution for 2024 is this: What can I do to help people become decent human beings? This is a burning question for me. Why is our world still full of suffering and human evil in spite of all the scientific progress and better living conditions? Why are there so many “corporate psychopaths” among business and political leaders (Pomeroy, 2023)? Why is there so much resentment, anger, and unhappiness even in individuals who have all the means to live a happy life, but do not know how to live?

Viktor Frankl proposes that the solution is awaken to people to pursue meaning or self-transcendence (see Chapters 6 & 8). He also suggests that we can experience meaning through creative value, experiential value, and attitudinal value (see Chapter 4). His focus is primarily on how an individual can become a fully functioning person through pursuing meaning or self-transcendence. A “decent human being” is not a fixed state but a process of becoming kinder and more compassionate.

How Can We Make the World a Better Place?

I have expanded his vision to broader concerns: How can we make the world a better place with God’s help? How can we all become decent human beings with empathy and compassion? How can we alleviate inescapable suffering? How can we change the cultural narrative to show that suffering can produce blessing and flourishing?

Human experience, both individual and collective, current and historical, has always confirmed the ultimate truth that life is suffering. Therefore, agreeing with Viktor Frankl and Jordan Peterson, I have argued in my existential positive psych-ology that the truth of suffering must be the foundation for global flourishing.

I have always dreamed of a better future, a better world, in which people learn how to live together in harmony, and treat each other with respect and dignity. I have also concluded that we need to go beyond specific religion, which is a source of conflicts, and focus on universal principles of meaning and spirituality.

I Had a Dream

Thirty years ago, at the start of a new year, I woke up early one morning with a dream. I dreamed of launching a meaningful living movement (MLM) (Wong, 2021) that can teach millions of people around the globe a new way of living that can transform their own lives and the world around them. As a result, I started the Meaningful Living Project by launching the Toronto Meaningful Living Meetup (Wong, n.d.), which was interrupted by COVID 19. The dream of teaching meaningful living as a grass-roots mental health movement has only been partially fulfilled (Wong, 2015). I am still looking for partners who can help spread the meaningful living movement around the globe.

This Certificate Course on Applied Existential Positive Psychology and integrative meaning therapy is my latest vision to train a thousand mental health professionals that are qualified to start Meaningful Living Meetups in every city around the world.

**The struggle of life
is one of our greatest
blessings. It makes us
patient, sensitive, and
Godlike. It teaches us that
although the world is full of
suffering, it is also full of
the overcoming of it.**

HELEN KELLER
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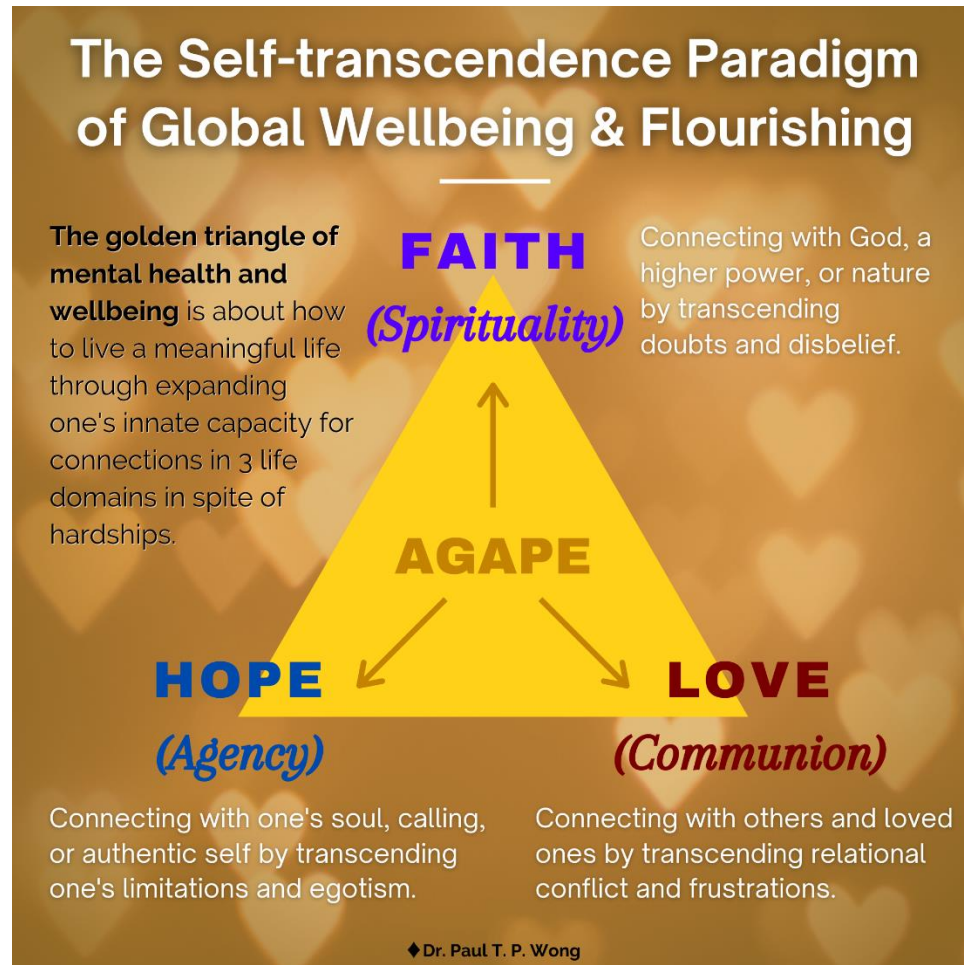
What are the Best Wishes for the New Year?

The most common new year greeting is to wish others Happiness, Health and Prosperity. I wonder how people would react to these best wishes when they are suffering from chronic pain, struggling with depression, living in dire poverty, or fearing for their lives in a place ravaged by war.

I have been wrestling with God since this Christmas about what kind of best wishes I can offer to all the suffering people, who are going through terrific struggles, and fearful of another year of living with loneliness, anxiety, and suffering.

Last night, I had a restless sleep, wrestling with God for an answer regarding what kind of new year wishes or gifts I can offer them that can make their suffering transformative. In my dream, God reminds me that in a fallen and broken world, human beings cannot save themselves. What they need most is someone that loves them, something to hope for, and some faith in an Ultimate Rescuer.

I woke up early with only 4 or 5 hours of sleep, glad to remember that I have already found the answer in my recent paper (Wong, 2023a) on spiritual-existential wellbeing, and expressed in the graph of the golden triangle of faith, hope and love to complement Frankl's meaning triangle of creative value, experiential value, and attitudinal values.

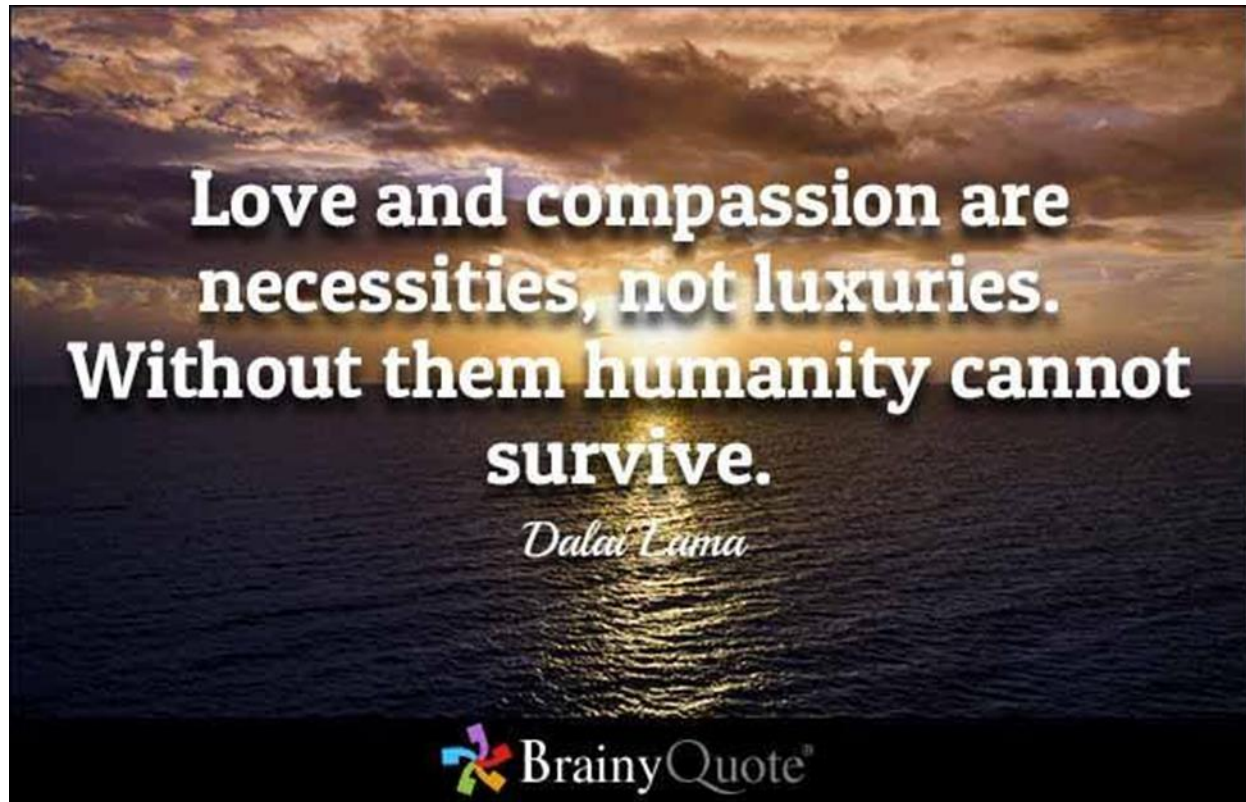


Love is All We Need

Here is a quote from Mother Teresa in *A Simple Path* (1995), describing the horrors of human existence in a society which worships the almighty dollar and treat people as instruments for personal gains:

“The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty -- it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God.”

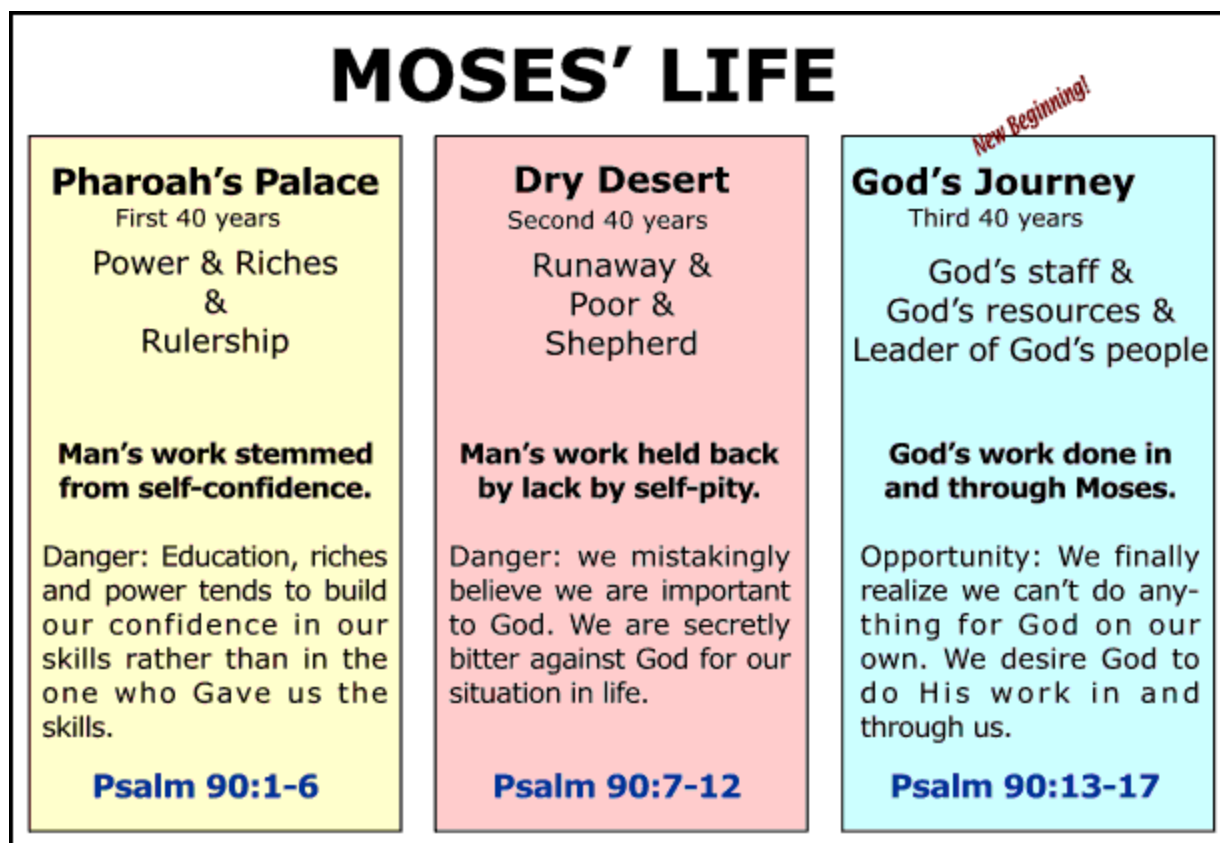
The Dalai Lama also expresses the love is essential for human survival. “We must either learn to live together as brothers, or we are going to die together as fools,” says Martin Luther King Jr.



The Bible teaches that the greatest love is demonstrated in the sacrifice of Jesus: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16). This truth is also applicable to individuals: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13). There is the broader command: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31)

Indeed, love is the strongest motivational force. One is willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of love. Soldiers are willing to lay down their lives for their beloved homeland. Mothers are willing to endure the pain to give birth to a baby. The greatest human achievements are motivated by love.

But how to love others as ourselves can be complicated (Theology of Work Project, n.d.). I want to use Moses to illustrate the long process of learning how to love in a way that is both productive and honoring God.



In his first 40 years, he was somebody, thinking that he could help the slave with his own strength and skills. In his second 40 years as a runaway poor shepherd in the wilderness, he lived in self-doubt feeling that he was a nobody. In his third 40 years, he finally learned that God can use a nobody to accomplish great work.

My own life roughly follows the same pattern of development. I first believed that I could save the world with my own knowledge. In the second stage, I felt like a nobody, because my work was not recognized by the mainstream psychology in the West. Now, in the 80s, when I am struggling with chronic pain, and have to spend so much time either in hospitals or in doctors' clinics, God may use me to do really significant work which I could not do when I was younger.

Therefore, love can bring much unnecessary suffering if it is based on impulses, selfish desires for immediate gratification, of the need for control and possession. As an ethical and instrumental agent of love, we have the personal and social responsibility to make personal sacrifices for others, and wait patiently, trusting in God's timing and guidance.

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Essential Elements of Responsibility

ALL SYSTEMS OF ETHICS AND ALL AREAS OF SELF-PSYCHOLOGY (SELF-DETERMINATION, SELF-EFFICACY, ETC.) PRESUPPOSE FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY. ELEMENTS OF RESPONSIBILITY ARE COMMON IN ALL CULTURES, BECAUSE WITHOUT THESE ESSENTIAL MORAL QUALITIES, NO INDIVIDUAL AND NO SOCIETY CAN FUNCTION WELL.

There is a great deal of empirical support for the Essential Elements listed below:

- (1) Honesty – speak the truth, do not lie, and do not let down those who trust you.
- (2) Authenticity (genuineness) – say what you mean, mean what you say, remain true to your core value and be sincere in relating to others.
- (3) Accountability – be accountable for all your words, deeds and your work performance without making excuses.
- (4) Fairness – treat others with fairness; advocate social justice; and take your fair share of the burden.
- (5) Courage – to stand up for what is right, show moral outrage towards blatant moral transgressions, and dare to pursue your preferred future.
- (6) Respect – treat others with respect, empathy, kindness and dignity as you would be treated.
- (7) Excellence – always do your best to get the job done well and on time in spite of the constraints.
- (8) Civic duties – fulfill your civic duties, contribute to the wellbeing of your community, country, and make a difference in the world.
- (9) Self-Control – regulate your own emotions and desires so that you would not harm yourself or others.
- (10) Character and personal development – strive to develop your moral character and abilities order to create a better future for you and others.

There are many lessons to be learned in order to experience what Frankl meant by “The salvation of man is through love and in love.”

Hope for Suffering

A few months ago, when I was suffering from both extreme pain and itchiness, death seemed more attractive than those lonely and agonizing days in Toronto’s Mount Sinai Hospital. During this period, my faith was again put to severe test, and I rediscovered hope in a new way:

“During my days of hospitalization, what kept me alive was hope: hope for a successful surgery, hope for a speedy recovery, hope for completing my projects, hope for a mighty

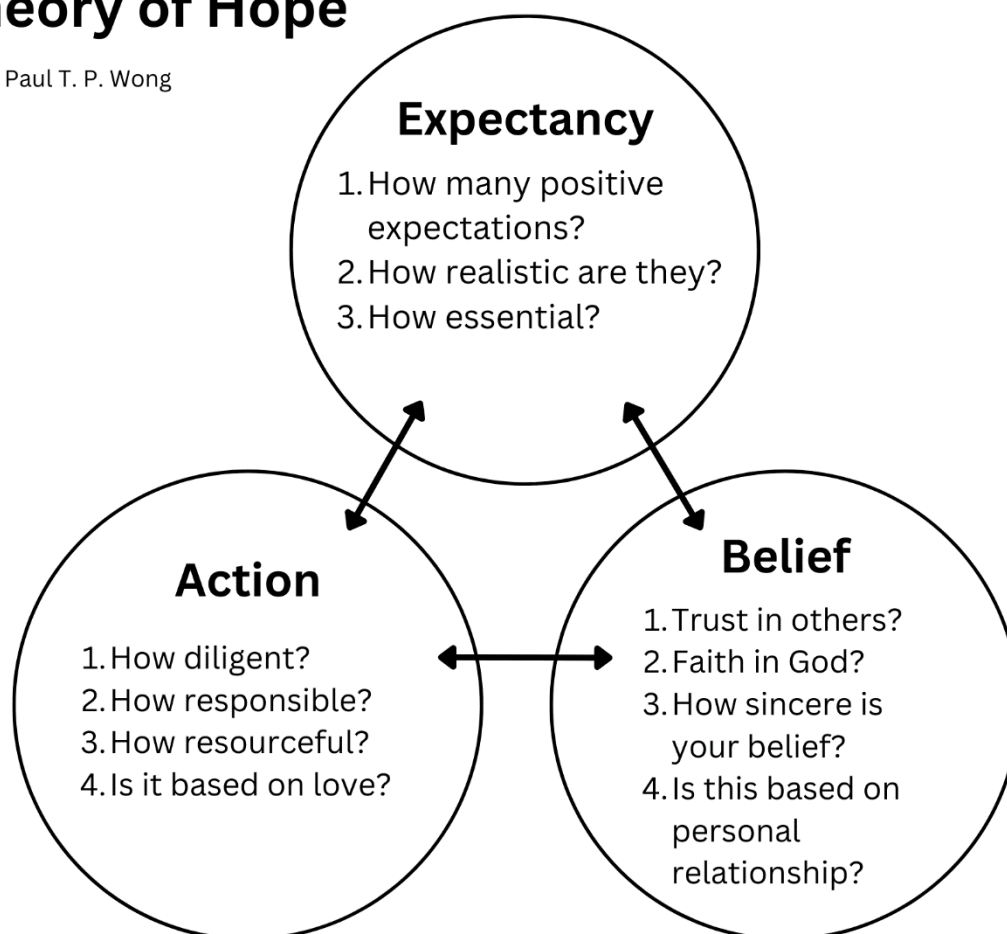
fortress against death's enemies, hope for making the necessary changes in my professional and personal life, and hope for world peace.

After a few days of wrestling with the mystery of hope, I'm finally able to put together a tentative "expectancy-action-belief" model of hope that is applicable to the entire spectrum of human challenges, based on my personal experience as a patient and as a researcher. Figure 1 captures the main components of my theory based on new paradigm of existential positive psychology (Wong et al., 2021)." (Wong, 2023b)

I also developed a new theory of hope as described in the following Figure.

Wong's Expectancy-Action-Belief Theory of Hope

◆Dr. Paul T. P. Wong

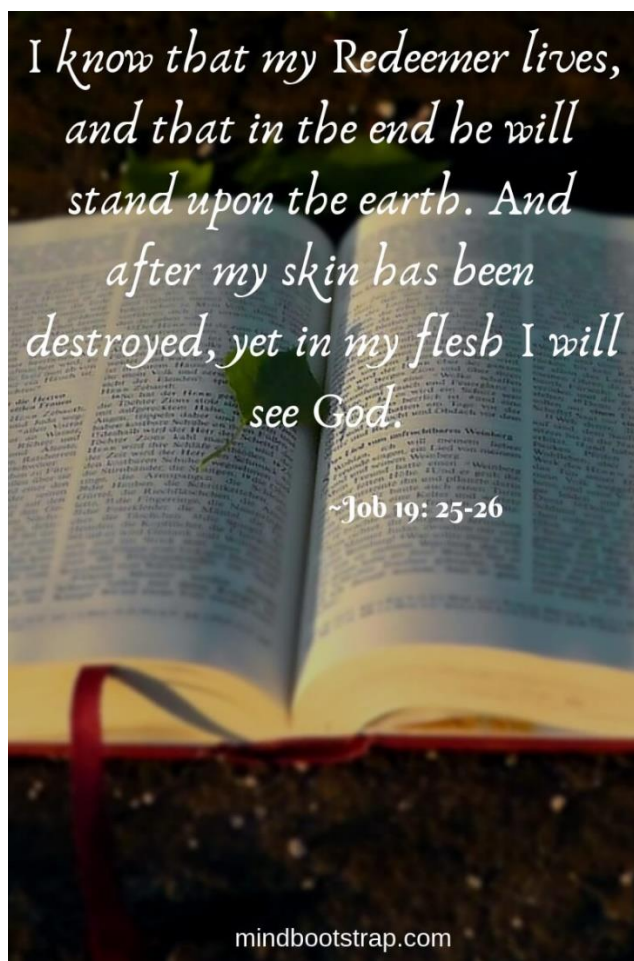


This is a complete framework that is applicable to the whole spectrum of human experience.

One can see from the above figure that in addition to self-efficacy, we also need faith in God and trust in other people. Good relationships with God and people take time to cultivate and demand sacrifice. This kind of hope is based on the power of love, flowing from God's heart to all the people, and flowing from one heart to another. Let hope keep us all moving forward towards our dreams for the new year. Here is [Holding on to Hope](#), a song which I wrote with Francine Honey (Wong & Honey, 2021).

The biblical story of Job illustrates hope that is based on faith and love. The sublime triumph of faith over the depth of suffering is shown in this verse: "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." (Job 13:15). The global message of comfort and hope of the book of Job is summarized here (ESV.org, n.d.):

"Despite its focus on challenges and sufferings, the book of Job speaks a message of great hope to the world. We live in a world longing for comfort and hope, and such hope is found in the sovereign God who sees, who is good, and who is faithful. We are not victims of random fate or uncontrolled circumstances. We are loved faithfully and passionately by a sovereign God who works all things for our good (Rom. 8:28)."



He endured unfair suffering not only for himself for all humanity. As part of the web of life, Job remains a source of hope and comfort for the suffering community in succeeding generations.

A Leap of Faith



Offering someone the key to faith may be the best thing you can do for someone. That was how my life was changed. That is why I am sharing my faith with others.

Your future is only as bright as your faith because faith makes impossible things possible. “Now faith is the assurance of things hope for the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrew 11:1) Once we lose faith, we lose everything. Many years ago, I elaborated on the power of faith this way (Wong 2017):

“It is difficult to conceive how we can maintain hope and confidence in the face of bleak prospects without faith, be it religious faith, trust in others, or self-confidence. In short, one cannot survive without faith or belief. Once you lose faith in yourself or in humanity, you will be overwhelmed by waves of hopelessness and helplessness, which will make you vulnerable to depression or suicide.

Faith opens doors, expands your horizon, and allows you to see the rainbow at the end of a storm. Faith enables you to attempt the impossible and take the first step to embark on a long and dangerous journey. A person of faith is a person of unshakable confidence and unwavering determination. Together, faith and courage are the wings that enable you to soar over the tall mountains and through the dark storms.”

We not only need faith in God, but faith in people and in ourselves. Here is a checklist that reflects different aspects of faith:

Faith Checklist by P. Wong

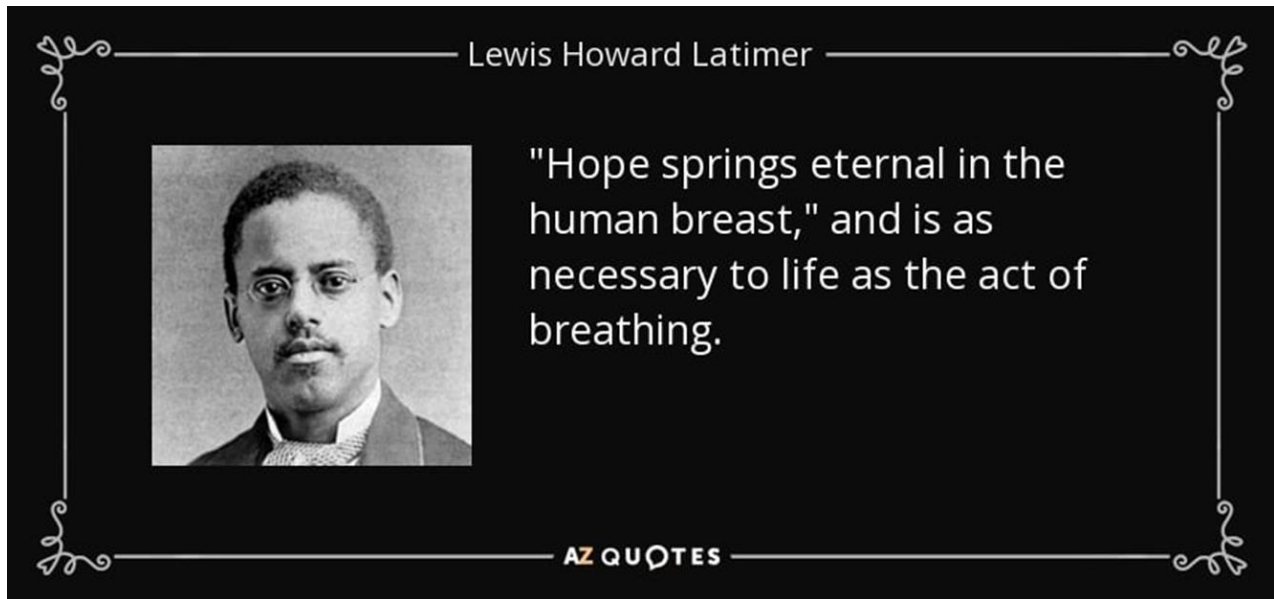
Faith means the belief in something or someone without all the information and evidence. It means the decision to believe in spite of some doubts.

Please check **Yes** or **No** for the following statements.

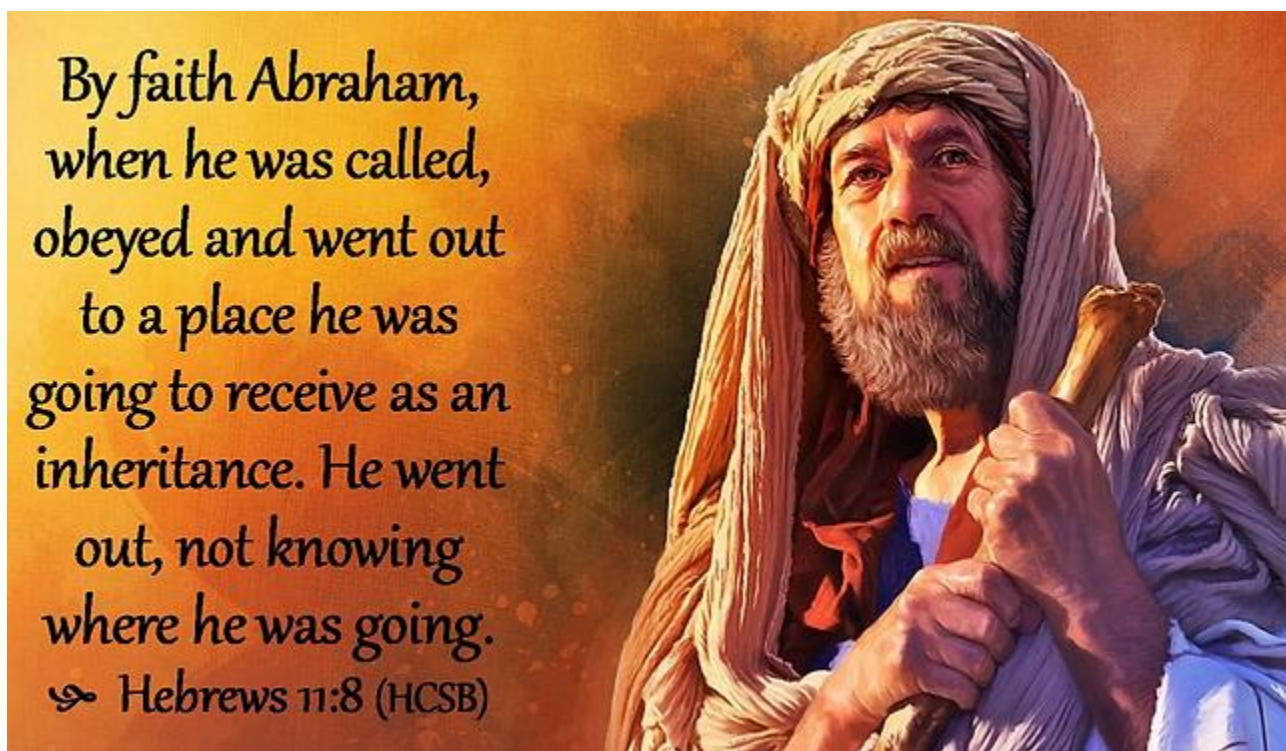
Check Yes even if your agreement is **less than 100% but more than 60%**

- 1) I have faith in my efficacy to get things done and achieve my goals. Yes/No
- 2) I believe in my potential to grow and become a better person. Yes/No
- 3) I have faith in a better future, if I do not give up. Yes/No
- 4) I have faith in the essential goodness of people. Yes/No
- 5) I believe in an orderly universe. Yes/No
- 6) I believe that life is worth living in spite of suffering. Yes/No
- 7) I believe that there is a God or higher power. Yes/No
- 8) I have faith in the intrinsic value of pursuing truth, beauty and goodness. Yes/No
- 9) I believe in second chances and the possibility of redemption. Yes/No
- 10) I have faith in the value of my mission in life. Yes/No

If you cannot affirm most of the above statements, you may have difficulties overcoming whatever problem you are facing.



Perhaps, the best possible example of living by faith is Abraham, the father of faith. He grew from weakness to strength by obeying God's call, and by his courage to take giant leaps of faith. Abraham is traditionally considered to be the first prophet of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, collectively known as Abrahamic religions.



Sometimes, taking a giant leap of faith may be the only thing you can do to change your life. May you have the courage and faith to take a leap of faith into the new year.

Conclusions



We have now reached the end of an adventure with Viktor Frankl. Throughout this journey, you can notice how I cast new light on Frankl's logotherapy with the benefit of several decades of my own research and clinical practice.

A detailed description of transition from logotherapy to my integrative meaning therapy can be found in Wong (2016).

Frankl's most important contribution is to restore the soul to psychology as the essence of personhood. The following distinction between ego and soul indicates how this completely changes the landscape of psychotherapy.

EGO VS SOUL

#LOST_NOWHERE

<p>Ego seeks to serve itself</p> <p>Ego seeks outward recognition</p> <p>Ego sees life as a competition</p> <p>Ego seeks to preserve self</p> <p>Ego looks outwards</p> <p>Ego feels lack</p> <p>Ego is mortal</p> <p>Ego is drawn to lust</p> <p>Ego seeks wisdom</p> <p>Ego enjoys the prize</p> <p>Ego is cause to pain</p> <p>Ego rejects God</p> <p>Ego seeks to be filled</p> <p>Ego is Me</p>	<p>Soul seeks to serve others</p> <p>Soul seeks inner authenticity</p> <p>Soul sees life as a gift</p> <p>Soul seeks to preserve others</p> <p>Soul looks inward</p> <p>Soul feels abundance</p> <p>Soul is eternal</p> <p>Soul is drawn to love</p> <p>Soul is wisdom</p> <p>Soul enjoys the journey</p> <p>Soul is cause of healing</p> <p>Soul embraces God</p> <p>Soul is eternal wholeness</p> <p>Soul is We</p>
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Both logotherapy and meaning therapy represent a shift from the old paradigm to a new one. This involves a fundamental change of perspective from treating suffering as something to be avoided to embracing suffering as life-transforming.

New Paradigm vs. Old Paradigm

New Paradigm

1. A wounded healer
2. Clients are worthy human beings
3. A holistic approach
4. Focuses on both healing & flourishing
5. Embraces negativity
6. Nature's way to mental health

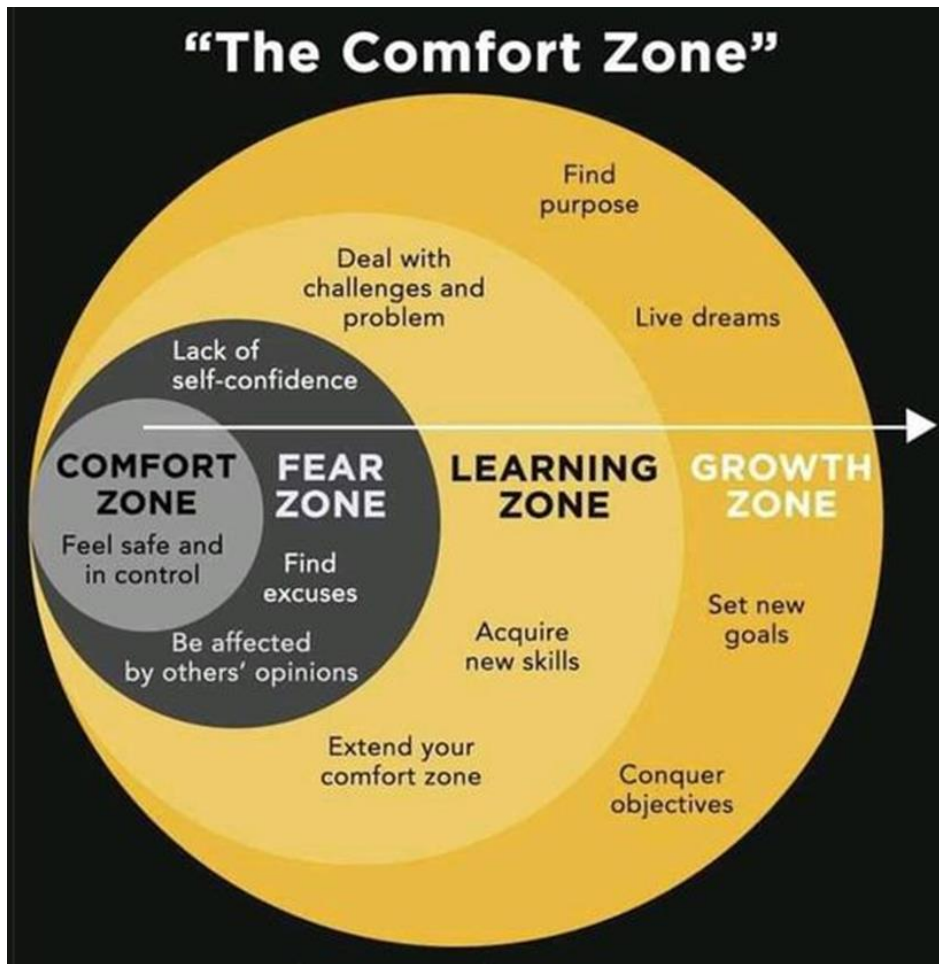
Old Paradigm

1. An expert authority
2. Clients are patients with psychological disorders
3. A component approach
4. Focuses on symptom reduction
5. Remove negativity
6. Medical way to mental health

From the perspective existential positive psychology, deep down, we are all inherently vulnerable to being injured physically and psychologically. Our core psychological vulnerability is our fear of making the wrong decision, trusting the wrong person, choosing the wrong career, or being inadequate for the task, resulting in shame and guilt.

Thus, far from being a philosophical abstraction, such existential anxiety is a normal human reaction to a scary world with so many unknowns, risks, and dangers.

Paradoxically, it is this deep-seated sense of insecurity and anxiety that drives us to reach out to others, to God, and to the path of personal growth.



It is tragic that so many people exist in their comfort zone, within their self-made prison of fear, unaware of all the opportunities beyond the protective wall. But life is more than mere existence. By its very nature, life is meant to be purposeful, growing and fruitful.

It often takes something painful to awaken us to the need to discover that all the real treasures, all the things that really matter in life, are beyond the fear zone. It involves learning new skills and taking leaps of faith in order to grow and flourish. From the perspective of existential positive psychology, to live fully and deeply, we need to practice following exercise:

- 1) Look deeper into your true self.
- 2) Reflect on your life to discover your passion.
- 3) Develop your potential each day.
- 4) Aspire to reach your highest ideal with God's help.
- 5) Savor every moment.
- 6) Appreciate the people around you and what you do have.
- 7) Give your best to others.
- 8) See every crisis as an opportunity.
- 9) Be grateful towards God and people.
- 10) Create a coherent story about your struggles and triumphs.

To recapitulate the major landmarks in our journey, I want to identify the following points in my extensions of logotherapy:

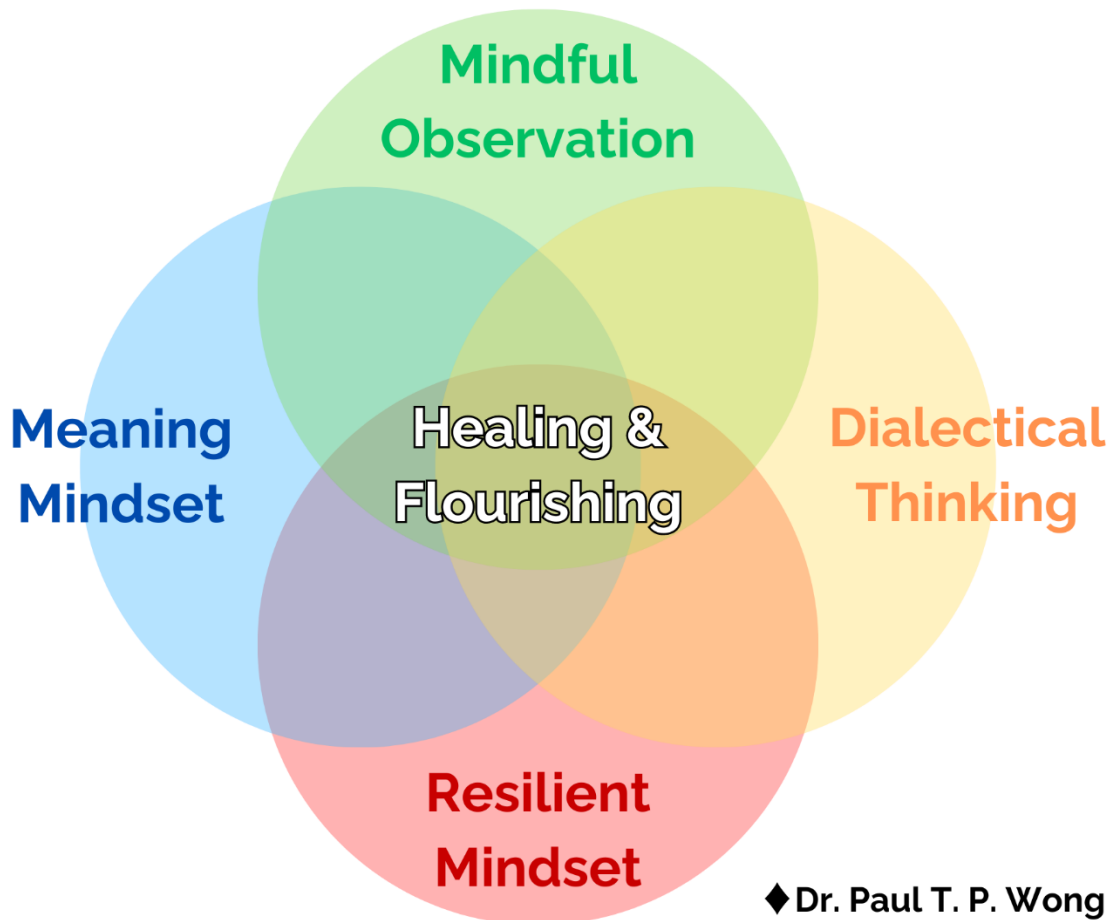
- 1) Since meaning is multidimension, integrative meaning therapy is necessarily pluralistic with meaning as its central organizing construct. It makes use of different therapeutical modalities according to clients' needs and conditions. Here is an illustration of integrative therapy.



- 2) A mentally tough person needs to develop the following mindset in order to be more resistant to traumas and maintain mental health. It requires a shift from binary either-or thinking to dialectical thinking of consistent opposites.

The dialectical mindset is the best tool in positive psychology – one can be both pessimistic about the situation and optimistic about the future, as in Frankl's concept of tragic optimism.

FOUR MENTAL DISCIPLINES FOR HEALING AND FLOURISHING



- 3) It is based on paradoxical principles, which cannot be easily grasped by logical thinking. Only a dialectical mindset enables us to tap into the power of paradox in life, such as winning through losing, leading through serving, strength through vulnerability, happiness through sorrow, and optimism through pessimism.

Here are some **paradoxical truths** from existential positive psychology:

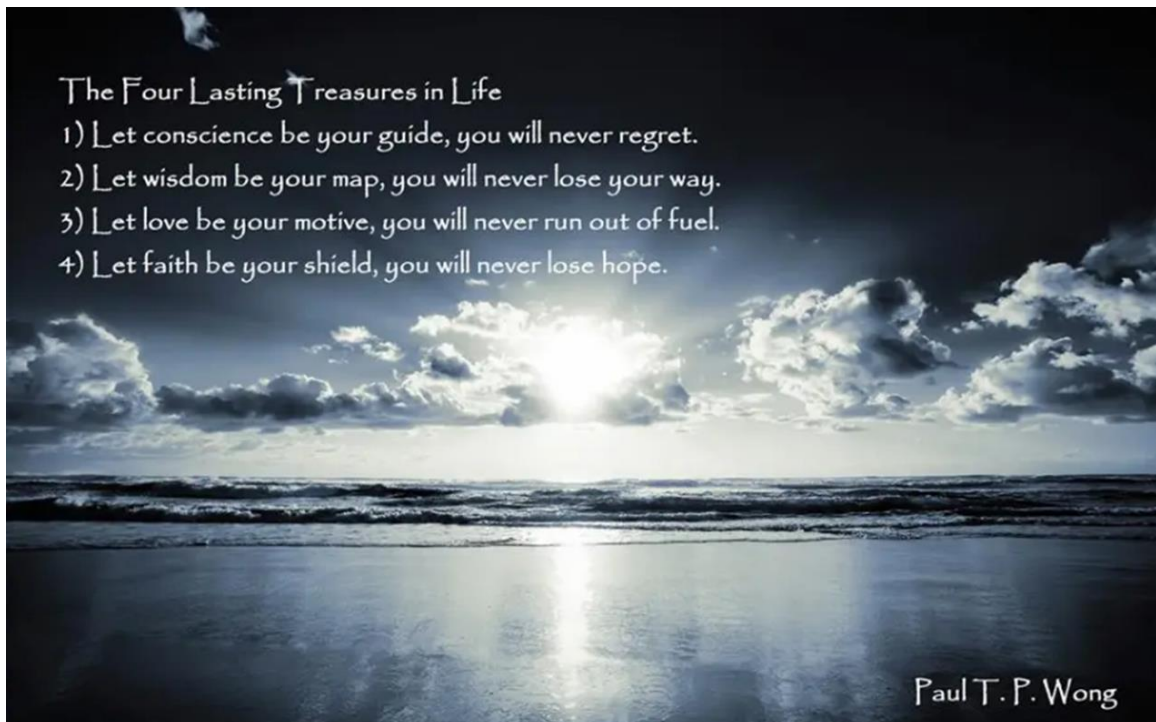
- 1 Find **happiness** by embracing suffering.
- 2 Find your **life** by pursuing something greater that's worth dying for
- 3 Experience the joys of **gratitude** by not using it as a tool for happiness.



**THE WORDS OF TRUTH ARE ALWAYS PARADOXICAL
– LAO TZU**

Dr. Paul T. P. Wong ♦ 2020

- 4) If we want to enjoy sustainable peace and joy even in the midst of a storm, we need to remember to embrace the four treasures in life as more valuable than anything the world may offer us.



Glad to have you in AEPP01. If you want to learn more about the how to transform suffering to mental health and human flourishing, wait for the next module (Module 2) of this course.

Looking forward to having Q & A sessions with you early next year.

Wishing you a happy and meaningful new year.

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