

Foreword

Stanley Krippner, PhD

It has been my good fortune to have known Paul Wong for over two decades. We are both members of the Society for Humanistic Psychology and met at its meetings during the annual conventions of the American Psychological Association. In addition, Paul and his wife Lilian invited me to several INPM Biennial Meaning Conferences where I spoke and interacted with other like-minded psychologists and other professionals.

Over the years, I have come to admire Paul as a jovial warm-hearted colleague in addition to appreciating his talent as a scholar, researcher, and psychologist. Paul has always been and still is one of the most cited existential scholars and psychologist. Paul is a bridge builder who has attempted to facilitate connections between East and West, and between existential and positive psychology, resulting in the integrated Existential Positive Psychology (EPP).

I consider Paul's major contribution to be his development of EPP as a new paradigm. This paradigm confronts the perennial questions – how can one attain happiness in the throes of struggling with dismal experiences, how to attain happiness and flourishing through transcending suffering and inherent human limitations. He has made the transformation of suffering the cornerstone of wellbeing.

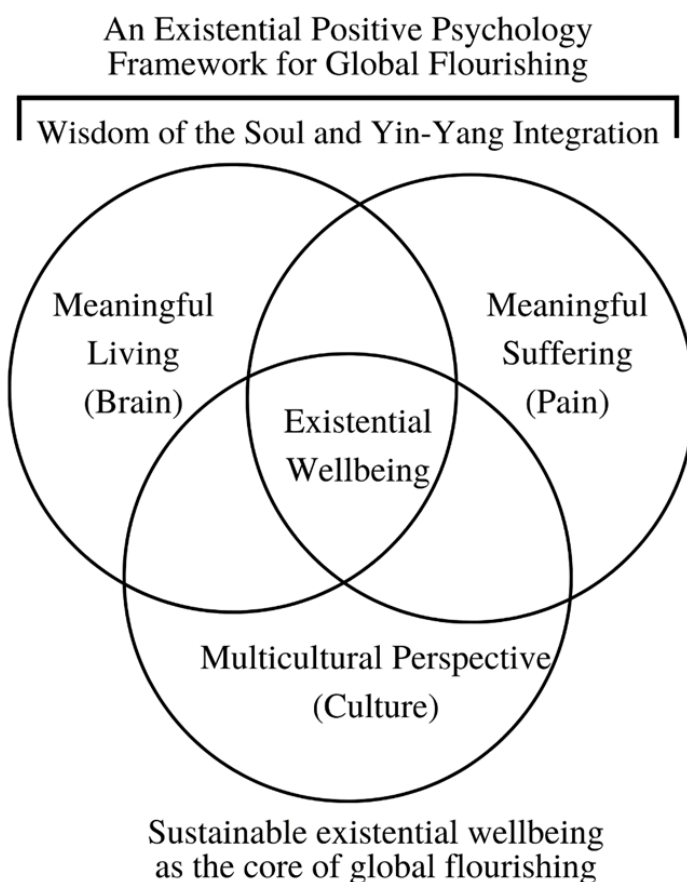
According to his general theory of global flourishing, the above questions can be answered affirmatively through navigating the dialectical process of integrating such opposites as meaning and nihilism, suffering and happiness, personal myths and meta-narratives. In short, EPP can offer people new grounds for meaning and hope even in their darkest hours (Wong, 2016; Wong et al., 2021).

This general theory of global wellbeing and flourishing is depicted in Figure 1. In contrast to positive psychology, his alternative existential vision of the good life (Wong, 2023) recognizes that unity of human being and the need of wholeness by integrating:

1. The human capacity for meaningful living,
2. The need to transform suffering to human achievement, and
3. The importance of adopting the multicultural perspective of intertwining existential universals with indigenous psychology.

Figure 1

An Existential Positive Psychology Framework for Global Flourishing



I still remember that in the 2011 American Psychological Association Convention, he organized a cooperative inter-divisional symposium between Humanistic Psychology and

Positive Psychology. It attracted so many people that even in the largest room for symposia, there was standing room only. In that symposium, he advocated cross-fertilization and cooperation. He proposed that EPP does not ignore the dark sides of the human condition, such as poverty, violence, and injustice while focusing on the potential of positive transformation for individuals and societies (Frankl, 1946/1985; Wong, 2009). It accepts the inherent paradoxes and dilemmas of life but affirms the human capacity to integrate contradictions and complexities into wholeness (Rogers, 1961/1995; Schneider, 1999; Wong in press).”

As illustrated by Figure One, the tripartite model of global flourishing is based on three existential universals — Meaningful living, Meaningful suffering, and the Multicultural perspective. Together, these three pillars of EPP enable people to survive and thrive in whatever circumstances and in any culture. In sum, Paul has added both the depths of exploring the heart of darkness and the heights of aspiring to the further reaches of human consciousness and transcendental realm. That is why I highly recommend this book edited by Dr. Lilian C. J. Wong. The contributors of this book encompass leading researchers from both Humanistic Psychology and Positive Psychology, indicating that his new paradigm has finally attracted wider acceptance.

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