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## **EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS –**

### **The search for an approval of life**

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*“Whoever has a ‘why’ to live for can cope with almost any how”*

*Abstract:*

*This paper presents some modern developments of Existential Analysis - a main school within the range of existential-phenomenological psychotherapies founded by Viktor Frankl. Its history starts with existential philosophy and the battle against anthropological and technical reductionism. It follows an outline of the existential-analytical anthropology with a picture of the forces operating in the individual. This concept describes the human being as being basically directed toward dialogical exchange with his or her outer and inner world.*

*Existential Analysis has been further developed in the last 15 years mainly by an enlargement of its theory of motivation. Frankl has seen the “will to meaning” as the central motivational power in the person. Three more motivational forces have been found phenomenologically to be in vigour preceding the search for meaning: 1. to overcome in the world with its facts; 2. to relate with one’s own life by experiencing its quality and feelings; 3. to find one’s own self with identity and authenticity. Together with the search for meaning they form the four fundamental existential motivations and give a new understanding of both the existence and the background for psychopathology. The connection between a dynamic anthropological concept and a theory of psychopathology has been found to be of great importance for the psychotherapeutic practice. Psychodynamic reactions as well as cognitive and social behaviour can be treated by this new approach. Its practical application and evaluation is discussed as well as its training procedure.*

*Key words:* Existential Analysis, Frankl, fundamental existential motivations, existence, meaning

## **Overview**

Existential Analysis (and its subsidiary branch, Logotherapy), is a psychotherapeutic method, which works primarily through verbally induced processes. In view of its method and its anthropology it can be defined as a phenomenological and person-oriented psychotherapy, its aim being to bring the person to make (mentally and emotionally) free experiences, to induce authentic decisions and to bring about a truly responsible way of dealing with life and the world. Thus, Existential Analysis can be applied in cases of psychosocial, psychosomatic and psychologically caused disturbances in experience and behaviour.

At the *centre* of Existential Analysis we find the concept of “existence”. This means a life that is full of meaning, being given its shape in freedom and with responsibility, all within the framework of the individual’s particular world with which this person maintains a relationship of mutual dialogue and influence.

The *aim* of existential analytical psychotherapy is to free the person from fixations, distortions, one-sidedness and traumatizations which influence his or her experiences and behaviour. The psychotherapeutic process takes place via phenomenological analyses of the emotions as the centre of experiences. Biographical work and empathic listening by the therapist contribute to an improvement in emotional understanding and accessibility. The following work shows the procedure through which patients are going to be freed for those purposes, aims, tasks and values which they conceive of as the authentic content of their lives and for which they want to live.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Existential Analysis – and its subsidiary branch, Logotherapy - were founded in the 1920s and 1930s by the neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl (1905-1997) of Vienna (1, 10). It is also known as the third Viennese school of psychotherapy (25, 15). The interest that Viktor Frankl had from early on in psychoanalysis led to personal contact with Sigmund Freud. Nevertheless, Frankl received his psychotherapeutic training in Alfred Adler’s school of Individual Psychology. There he found his most important teachers, Oswald Schwarz and Rudolf Allers. It was under their influence that Frankl found his true calling, which was to guide him in his lifelong engagement in psychotherapy: to combat psychologism in psychotherapy.

Frankl’s interest was centred around what he called the “specifically human“, ie. the intellectual and spiritual side of man which manifests itself in his search for meaning.

This capacity was not to be sacrificed to a psychomechanical reductionism. This concept conflicted with Adler’s views and so he excluded Frankl in 1927 from the society after the departure of Schwarz and Allers (21, 27). After that, Frankl turned increasingly to the existential philosophy and phenomenology of Max Scheler. Shortly before his deportation to a

concentration camp in 1941/42, he wrote his fundamental book about Existential Analysis and Logotherapy, but he lost the book in the camp.

Frankl spent two and a half years in the camps and lost practically his whole family there. What made himself survive the horrors were three important factors in his life: the *relationship* to his family which he kept alive in his heart and mind and along with it the hope for a reunion; the determined will to *rewrite* the lost book about Logotherapy and to leave it to posterity; and thirdly and finally his strong *faith*. After the war Frankl described in an authentic report the mental and psychic process experienced by people in concentration camps. He demonstrates how meaning can constitute a mental orientation and can thus enable man to survive even the most difficult circumstances. (4)

Originally, Frankl had intended Logotherapy as a supplement to the psychotherapy of the 1930s and not as a new method. It was supposed to serve as a “corrective of psychologism” in every psychotherapy. Therefore; he concentrated on the development of a “*psychotherapeutic anthropology*” and concerned himself with the suffering that arises from a loss of meaning. Already in the 1920s he had developed the technique of “*paradoxical intention*” for the treatment of anxiety. This technique has since been recognized worldwide. Otherwise, Logotherapy, which was initially almost exclusively practiced by psychiatrists, was applied on the basis of the rich psychiatric knowledge existing. In the course of events this was systematised with the help of existential-analytical anthropology and obtained its specific form (10, 13, 14). In addition, Frankl gave numerous lectures. He was invited by more than 200 universities all over the world and received 28 honorary doctorates.

In the last 15 years, progress was made in Existential Analysis by the work of the Society for Logotherapy and Existential Analysis particularly in the field of methodology. It can therefore be considered today as an independent and major current in psychotherapy. This evolution from “Logotherapy as a supplement of traditional psychotherapy” into a full-fledged psychotherapeutic method is reflected in its name: this method is now called “Existential Analysis.” (22/26)

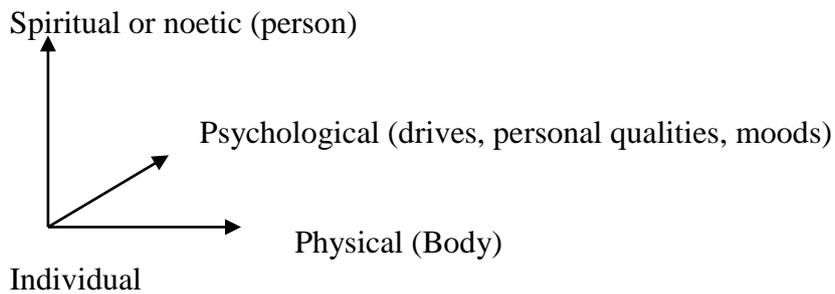
## **THE AIM OF EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS**

“Existence” as a technical term means a fully lived, “whole” life. According to Existential Analysis man is not “whole” in himself. “Man is strictly speaking whole only where he is completely engrossed in a cause or in a relationship to another person.” (7; p. 160) This is one of the differences between Existential Analysis and those psychotherapeutic anthropologies that neglect this existential dimension of man.

This specific understanding of the existential reality of man defines the practical task of Existential Analysis: it is an “analysis” – or put differently an “illumination, clarification” – of the conditions of life in view of the possibilities worth realising. Their realisation is called “existence”. The aim of Existential Analysis is to help man to live with his own inner consent (“affirmation of life”). Frankl’s theoretical explanations were put to a tragic test by his own years in concentration camps where he repeatedly escaped death only narrowly.

## THE ANTHROPOLOGY

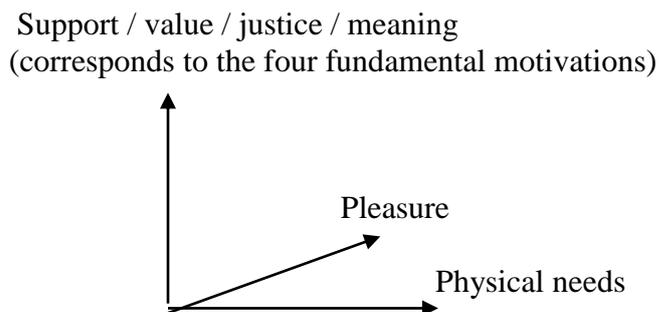
The wholeness of man is characterised by the concurrence of three different ways of being: Man is at once body, soul and mind.



*Picture 1: Man lives in three modes that form an indivisible unity within him, but at the same time constitute three distinct ways of being body, mind and spirit(1).*

The three dimensions of man are related to each other in a certain way. For one, a human being is not composed by these three dimensions. Rather, the unity of the human stems from the fact that the mind concerns itself with the psychophysical. (9, p.176) Secondly, the three dimensions of human existence develop their own dynamics, which manifest themselves as motivating forces.

## THE FORCES OPERATING IN MAN



*Picture 2: the dynamics of man on the different anthropological levels – a model depicting the possible divergence of the motivations, which may lead to tensions and motivational conflicts.*

As a *physical* being, one strives to maintain one's body in good health, and this is regulated by one's needs (for sleep, food, drink, sexuality and exercise etc.).

On a psychological level one is concerned with one's psychic forces (such as drives, needs and moods) and one's feeling of well-being within one's body. Everyone strives for pleasant feelings and freedom from tensions according to one's personality. If one succeeds, one feels pleasure; if one fails, one feels annoyance, tension and frustration.

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1 The translation of the german term "geistig" or "personal" into English is not satisfactory. We chose "spiritual" because it comes closest to the essence which lies in the human potential of decisiveness, responsibility, personal encounter, love or the conceptualization of meaning. In the same category we find the potential for religion. This, however, is not the theme of Existential Analysis, although it is treated and accepted as a human phenomenon. – The alternative term "mental" has been rejected for these reasons, although it is a good option.

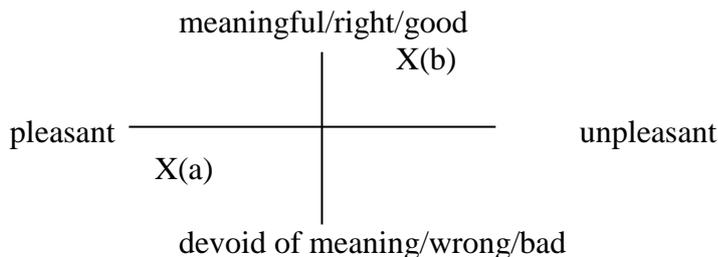
As a *spiritual* being (person) one looks for meaning and value in one's life, for support, faith, true love; values, justice, freedom, responsibility etc.

In this anthropology it is important that one feels like “a pilot on the boat of the psychophysical” with which one is inseparably connected. In other words: the “personal-existential dimension” of the human being has the ability to become concerned with the psychophysical part. This means that one can achieve some distance from oneself (“self-detachment” – Frankl 1990, p. 234 ff.). Thus, one can choose one's way of dealing with oneself and of behaving *towards* oneself.

This “inner perceptiveness” of a human towards himself is the one side of this third dimension that is specific to humans. The other side is perceptivity towards the *world* (Scheler). Man recognizes and feels the values in his world, the meaning contained in any given situation and ready for him to realise. Thus, one transcends oneself, i.e. one's captivity in the inner world of one's own needs, drives and tensions. (Frankl [7, p. 160 f.] therefore speaks of ‘self-transcendence’). One becomes open for a *dialogue* with the world. (18, p. 10 ff.)

## THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL BASIS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

The relations of the anthropological dimensions to each other have one practical consequence. Since they show such great differences, no conclusion can be drawn from one in respect to another. As to their contents, they unfold their dynamics independently from each other. Something may be pleasant and agreeable on the physical level, but not necessarily “meaningful, right or good” on the spiritual level:



Picture 3: the psychological and personal (noetic) experiences take place in different dimensions. Their contents are therefore not to be mixed up – something pleasant need not be right (a) (after V. Frankl in 8)

Someone psychologically ill will look for pleasant experiences (e.g. something to alleviate his anxiety or to ease his tensions) however meaningful or not (13, 14). The psychologically healthy person will put the emphasis on the meaningful. Something may be right and meaningful in spite of being unpleasant (eg. to discuss a conflict). This schema might be called “the existential-analytical principle of pleasure and reality.”

## EXISTENTIAL THEORY OF MOTIVATION

Apart from all physical and psychical motivations every human being is motivated as a person by four existential motivations. These motivations include even the physical and the psychical ones (drives, coping reactions). They are therefore called “fundamental existential motivations”. Whereas Frankl considered the search for meaning as one's deepest motivation

(11,12) recent Existential Analysis has made out another three existential (or personal) motivations which precede the motivation for meaning and which move man profoundly and constantly.

1. Man is moved by the **fundamental question of existence**: I am – but *can* I be (a whole person)? Do I have the necessary space, protection and support? A person experiences these mainly when feeling accepted, which, in turn, enables him to embrace an accepting attitude himself. The latter requires a sense of security for one's own existence, otherwise this must be fought for first. Disturbances on this existential basis lead to anxiety problems and form the psychic component of schizophrenia.
2. Man is moved by the **fundamental question of life**: I am alive – do I *like* this? Do I experience abundance, affection and appreciation of values? Man experiences the value of his life mostly in affection, closeness, love. This, in turn, enables him to devote himself to causes or people. Devotion requires a feeling for the value of one's own life. This fundamental value consists of a deep feeling that it is good to be in existence (“that I am here”). This feeling of fundamental value is at the same time a prerequisite for the appreciation of values. – Lack of it leads psychopathologically speaking, to depression.
3. Man is moved by the **fundamental question of the person**: I am myself – but do I feel *free* to be myself? Do I experience appreciation, esteem, respect, my own worth? This feeling arises as the result of recognition, of being taken seriously and, actively, of holding one's own. This, in turn, makes it possible to give recognition to other people. Giving recognition requires a sure delimitation of one's own identity against everything else. – Deficits on this level lead to the histrionic complex of symptoms as well as to the main personality disorders.
4. Man is moved by the **question of existential meaning** (6, 8, 11, 12): I am here – *for what* good? What is there to do today to make my life part of a meaningful whole? In what greater affiliations, which are not only concerned with me, do I see myself? – What do I live for? – Man experiences meaning in tasks and worthwhile possibilities, in the adherence to superior structures, in maturing and in religion (5). This enables him to synchronise himself with his world and to find and to realise his personal meaning in each and every situation. – Deficits lead, speaking to addiction and dependency.  
For this process of finding existential meaning, the three preceding fundamental motivations are prerequisite, but a feeling for the demands of the specific situation is required as well.

## EXISTENTIAL-ANALYTICAL PRACTICE

Since life always and only happens in the present, Existential Analysis starts with what is currently an issue. However, the future and its requirements for dealing with life are at the centre of attention. “No future” – this means: to see no chance to achieve a real life. Existence is barred – how does that come about?

a) It may be that the burdens of the past overshadow the present. In such cases, Existential Analysis uses the *biographical method* – the phenomenological analysis and work on overcoming undigested past events (16). In contrast to psychoanalysis Existential Analysis is no “archaeology” (Freud), nor historicism, but “project analysis,” i.e. elucidation of those areas that prove to be a hindrance in one’s present life (instead of systematic and time-consuming screening of the past). Past suffering is only as much the object of existential analytical work as it obstructs life at present. Actually, there are not only traumata to elucidate, but also one will frequently find long-held and life-hampering attitudes which lead to painful omissions.

b) However, traumata and distorted attitudes do not constitute the only reason for an unfulfilled life. It is almost always true that someone who seeks aid and needs external assistance does not really know his own *abilities and resources*. In such cases, Existential Analysis aims to encourage this person’s abilities, his emotions (“Can I trust them?”), his self-acceptance and his approach to himself.

c) Some people suffer from a very different deficiency: They do not suffer because of their biography or their ignorance of their own abilities. They do not have a “*Why*” in their lives. It is a lack of *orientation* that makes them ill. Everything has become empty and devoid of meaning for them. (Cf. 12, p. 34) But also grave losses and crises may lead to this bottleneck in life.

Where someone’s existence has become hampered we look for the track of life in the existential-analytical discourse, we try to overcome impeding traumata and to uncover the authentic sensibility. As soon as we have a search for new possibilities of leading a meaningful life, Existential Analysis turns into “**Logotherapy**” - into a treatment of the disturbance by assisting in the search and realisation of meaning. “Logos” simply means “meaning” in the context of Logotherapy - therefore Logotherapy is nothing different but “psychotherapy centred on meaning” (Frankl). As such, we see Logotherapy today as a special segment of Existential Analysis. It was particularly dear to Viktor Frankl (after World War II he spoke of a “*ärztliche Seelsorge*, meaning pastoral care conducted by doctors”) and he elaborated it particularly. The specific strength of Logotherapy lies in aiding to overcome difficult and inevitable life situations (incurable diseases, losses) (7, 8). Besides, Logotherapy holds a special role in prophylaxis, education and social work: To put it briefly, Existential Analysis is concerned with “coming to a true life” and Logotherapy with “leading a meaningful life“.

## PSYCHOGENESIS

Existential Analysis sees man as firmly imbedded into the circumstances of his life. And he is - in an utterly human sense - only treatable through the relations he has to other people and to his environment. In existential-analytical understanding mental disease originates in a partial isolation (disturbed dialogue and exchange). If a psychotherapy detaches a person artificially from the connections of his life (eg. by partial concentration on drives, emotions, conceptions, desires and ideas) this will lead, in existential-analytical view, to a falsification of human nature. It was against this reductionism in psychotherapy that Logotherapy set out historically. Frankl wanted a “rehumanisation of psychotherapy” (cf: 7, p. 242), ie. to reintroduce the

“existential dimension“, implying that he saw a person not only as a physical being with psychological drives, but rather as a person with the power of decision-making, loving and assuming responsibility, and as a person who should stand by his life as by a partner. Because of this existential dimension, one is able to concern oneself with one’s physical and spiritual components (“self-detachment” frequently induced by a paradoxical approach). This is a prerequisite for opening up to one’s world and to putting one’s stamp on it. One comes into “existence.” Personhood and existence are the central themes of Existential Analysis. (9, 10, 22, 24, 26)

As far as motivational theory is concerned, man does not only strive for sexuality, power, equilibrium and freedom from tension. They are only penultimate goals, what follows are his deepest needs: existence, support, relation, authenticity and meaning (24) (cf. existential theory of motivation). If one feels frustrated there, life becomes boring, disappointing and empty. This motivational theory characterises Existential Analysis (Logotherapy) as an extension and existential heightening of other schools of psychotherapy. Theoretically, it is based on existential philosophy (3, 9, 15, 25, 28), above all on that of Max Scheler, and there is considerable affinity to Karl Jaspers’ and Martin Buber’s dialogic anthropology.

### **EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE: AN EXAMPLE**

A woman forty years old and single has been suffering from depression for years. “One day I am certainly going to kill myself. That day is not far off. Nothing doing anyway.”

We talk about her despair for a long time. The “nothing doing” stands out: She believes that only something useful can possess meaning. - Useful for whom? She considers as useful what corresponds to her own ideas. Does this mean that life is an institution for service and maintenance? –

This track proves right and leads to her “*pre-existential*” attitude towards life: Otherwise I won’t go along.” In her anger and defiance she develops suicidal ideas.

Does this attitude not show a depressive outrage upon life, an incapacity to come to a true life? Who will love what he ravishes? We speak about the fact that life does not conform to the conditions we would like to impose on it. It is not at my service since, in the end, I am here to tackle my life instead of waiting for it (“existential twist”): “There is terrible anger in me that life is like that. It was not me, after all, who has brought me into the world. That is outrageous: I am there without being asked and cannot even expect anything.” - We wrestle for a new attitude towards life.

For twenty years she has had the same assumptions about the prerequisites for an acceptable life: She wants to have a partner - she is still waiting - and, of course, children. In the meantime she has become petrified in her anger. After the long years of disappointment she seeks relief in alcohol and tranquillisers, and since they do not give her peace of mind, she longs for death.

In cases of such massive stubbornness, Existential Analysis first seeks to understand the biography and the experiences, which have led to this attitude.

It is of therapeutic value if the woman can understand why she has become like that. How could she otherwise give up this attitude with which the greatest part of her life and her failure has been intimately tied up? It is essential in this biographical work to uncover her true struggle for a meaningful life. The reason for her failure is not a simple and one-sided failing on her part, but becomes understandable from the many setbacks and reverses she has suffered. At the same time she can see for the first time how her life can succeed.

In order to induce in her the vitally necessary distance to her own demands we also work paradoxically. “What would you do, if you knew from now on that your demands will never be fulfilled?” - “Strangely enough, I think about this frequently. If I knew that I was going to be alone for the rest of my life, I could live more easily. Sometimes I feel annoyed that my desire is so strong.” Haltingly and tentatively, the patient lets herself be guided to a new attitude, i.e. to accept life as it comes. Only then can she deal with it in a meaningful way. We tried the existential meaning of life: to make the best out of the given facts. “Do you want to try just for today to say yes to your life - and with this yes to turn your life, as it is now, into the partner you have longed for such a long time? Her initially hesitating resolve to renounce any man for a single day and to consciously live alone gave her some breathing space. Soon one day became several days. She started sensing the calm she had been longing for. It was not the calm of annihilation, but a calm arising from the protection against her own unconditional desires. With her attitude she had driven away life. Her newly achieved equanimity finally permitted her to become truly alive.

Such a process can take months, sometimes - in particularly hardened attitudes - even years.

## THE METHOD AND ITS APPLICATION

The approach of Existential Analysis is through phenomenology (i.e. letting oneself be guided by what the patient is saying without interpreting it, but simply trying to understand it) and through dialogue (inducing an exchange between the patient and the world.) Apart from Existential Analysis as its psychotherapeutic application, Logotherapy is mainly used in counselling and prophylaxis. Both forms are applied in individual sessions with therapist and patient sitting on chairs or (less frequently) in group sessions. Usually a frequency of once a week is agreed upon. The therapists - only occasionally - restrain from personal interventions and sometimes give their opinions and feelings when it suits and seems helpful. Patient and therapist are partners in a dialogue and they communicate their understanding, their ideas (based on existential-analytical anthropology) and their impressions in a differentiated way. There are about a dozen specific techniques and methods, but there is also a general readiness to include techniques of different approaches of psychotherapy.

## MEANING AND VALUES

How can one find meaning? - According to present existential-analytical understanding one is only and truly free to find the meaning of a given situation, if the **four fundamental conditions of existence** are fulfilled:

- If one can *accept* the situation
- If one is *touched* by some value: if one “likes” something
- If one understands one’s behaviour as truly *one’s own* (conscience)
- If one is able to recognize the *demands* of a situation (“the time has come”)

If these existential and fundamental conditions are not fulfilled, the meaning of the situation may lie in the necessity to work on the conditions for a fulfilled existence (self-acceptance, sensitivity to values, authenticity). It may be sensible then to deal with the incapacity to accept certain things and with the feeling of being threatened - or with the seeming worthlessness which tends to overshadow life. Otherwise, one must look into the question why there are recurrent feelings of loneliness and estrangement. If any one of the fundamental

motivations is not fully there one cannot comprehend one's actions or experiences as truly meaningful (which does not preclude that they may be meaningful for others or for oneself in the future.) We may therefore conclude: one has the feeling of meaninglessness, if one experiences or does something one (1.) cannot accept (eg. disciplinary measures) or (2.) to which one cannot relate (eg. a task) or (3.) if one does something of which one senses that it is not truly one's own or for which one cannot answer or (4.) if one does not see the demand or the context of the situation. Certain types of behaviour or experiences may provide a lot of pleasure, but lack in meaning for this specific person.

Frankl (9, p. 322) particularly underlined the importance of values - corresponding to the 2nd fundamental motivation - for the quest for meaning: "We fulfil the meaning of our lives - we fill our lives with meaning - always by realising values." Whatever has no value is subjectively experienced as meaningless. We can say for the practice of counselling that the focus of the quest for meaning lies on finding values. The actual theory of motivation is in line with Frankl's conception. We may therefore summarise pragmatically:

**Leading a meaningful life means doing what one has sensed and recognized as being valuable (7, p. 58ff.; 20).**

*What is a value?* The existential-analytical theory of values (19, pa.22 ff.) defines value in the philosophical tradition as the reason to prefer one action (thing, behaviour) to another. On the level of experience one relates to a value by "having one's heart in it." Values have an appealing character, one wants to connect to them, to maintain and protect one's relation to them.

The meaning of a situation consists in dealing specifically with the value concerned, which is to engender something new and valuable or at least to preserve the value in question. Frankl put it this way: "Meaning is - to make the best of it." *Existential* meaning may be defined as "the most valuable possibility in the specific situation." Whether a person's life has meaning depends on the person himself. Apart from this existential meaning an "*ontological* meaning" can be described as the meaning that is intrinsic (philosophical-ontological) or that has been attributed to it by its creator (religious). Ontological meaning is not created by humans (by their behaviour or attitudes apt to create meaning, as it is the case with existential meaning), but originates in the things or situations themselves.

Logotherapy distinguishes different kinds of values (eg. common values, individual values and personal values) and attributes all values to three categories (7, p. 39ff.). Each situation offers the possibility to realise one of these categories and thus to find meaning.

- 1. Experiential Values:** In experiencing something good, pleasant or true one absorbs something valuable and in doing so realises meaning (eg. when enjoying music or a landscape, when truly encountering another person and, most strongly, in a love relationship).
- 2. Creative Values:** When making something valuable one brings forth values into the world and experiences oneself as meaningful (eg. by working, by creating a home or by defending a conviction.)
- 3. Attitudinal Values:** If, for example, disease or suffering makes it impossible to do or experience anything meaningful, one can always resort to one final value and that is to maintain one's basic outlook on life. This becomes evident in the way one endures and copes with suffering or blows of fate (eg. inoperable cancer or loss of one's spouse). The attitude maintained in the face of such blows shows most profoundly the outlook a person

has on his life and world. Here his (unconscious) conviction manifests itself whether the whole of it makes sense and, if so, what sense. This is where religious meaning sets in.

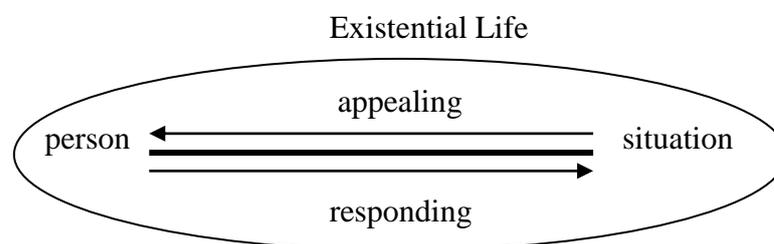
Psychologically speaking, each value finally refers to the fundamental value (19, p. 33f.). The latter consists in the frequently unconscious but profound feeling a person has about his or her existence. Is it good that I am here? Do I want to live? Anyone who does not find a positive answer to these questions in himself will be impeded in his experience of values and thus in his quest for meaning and will lead a provisional life.

## THE EXISTENTIAL TWIST

In order to find existential meaning, a special attitude towards oneself and the world is needed. This demands a certain distance to oneself (self-detachment), so that the world with its intrinsic value can be seen (perceptiveness). According to Frankl, meaning can be found outside, i.e. in the world, and it cannot be found by imagination or whim and without reference to the world (7, p. 45f.). On the contrary, the quest for meaning demands a deferral of one's own wishes and ideas in order to attune oneself to the situation. Existential meaning implies a life in perceptiveness instead of (ruthless) self-realisation. Frankl (7, p. 62) puts it like this: "...we must perform a kind of Copernican Revolution, and give the question of the meaning of life an entirely new twist. To wit:

It is life itself that asks questions of man. As we pointed out earlier, it is not up to man to question; rather, he should recognize that he is questioned, questioned by life; he has to respond by being responsible; and he can answer *to* life only by answering *for* his life." But the answers that one gives can only be concrete answers to concrete questions of life. One answers them by assuming the responsibility for one's life, in one's existence one puts one's answers into practice.

By this turn towards the world, which is met with perceptiveness in regard to its possibilities, human existence acquires its *basically dialogic character*.



Picture 4: Man enters into an existentially meaningful exchange with the world if he communicates with it in a dialogue

This existential and fundamental position leads furthermore to a distinction between *will and wish* or action and reaction.

## INDICATIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

The range of application as shown above comprises neuroses, feelings of being blocked in one's vitality, psychoses, psychosomatic disorders, sexual disorders, addiction and dependency, personality disorders, feelings of meaninglessness, and crises (13, 14, 22). Logotherapy also plays an important role in prophylaxis and pedagogy.

The contraindications refer to the methods used in Existential Analysis. There is, for one, the danger of its diagnostically unspecific application. Paradoxical intention, eg, is contraindicated in suicidal or psychotic cases, and biographical work is not indicated in situations of great stress, since it would overburden the patient and might even create a suicidal risk.

## **THERAPY EVALUATION**

There are about ten specific testing procedures available to evaluate Logotherapy and Existential Analysis. Some of these tools are guided by theory, others are constructed on an empirical basis (eg. in 11, 23).

The classic domain of the study of effectiveness for phenomenological procedures is the individual case study. Up to 1993, 126 such case studies were compiled (22, 29). At that date, another 9 qualitative group studies were to be found in literature, 16 one-group studies and 7 multi-group studies and another large-scale study is under way. On the average, in three quarters of the cases an improvement of the symptoms, which was satisfying to patients and therapists, could be observed over varying periods of time (simple and comparatively recent disorders in about 10 sessions, neuroses that have become chronic in 30 sessions; graver disorders such as personality disorders and schizophrenia need years of therapy).

In addition, there are about a 100 publications on the mode of action of paradoxical intention alone which comprises the whole range of conventional therapy research from individual case studies to multi-group studies. Its effectiveness was proved in particular in comparison to behavioural-therapeutic techniques, and it was treated in detail in respect to specific diagnoses: in roughly half of the cases a combination of the techniques of behavioural therapy with paradoxical intention proved to be superior to the application of only one technique.

## **CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Frankl himself wrote about 400 articles and 31 books which were translated into 24 languages.

Until 1995 a further 131 books by different authors on Logotherapy and Existential Analysis were counted by the Viktor-Frankl-Institute, 151 dissertations and theses and more than 1300 articles were registered. (21)

In the past 15 years, the originally largely philosophical approach of Viktor Frankl was further elaborated, chiefly by the Viennese society (GLE-Wien). In the first place the development of Personal Existential Analysis must be named, since it has considerably enlarged the inventory of methods used in Existential Analysis. The uncovering and in-depth work of Existential Analysis is done today with reference to the four steps of existential motivation, and this has been found to be a very efficient way of proceeding. Currently, research is being done on the therapy of personality disorders, moreover, empirical studies are being undertaken on the

safeguarding of quality, on effectiveness in psychotherapeutic practice and training, on effectiveness in the hospital sector, and a screening of the level of frustration as far as meaning is concerned is under way.

The dissemination of Existential Analysis and Logotherapy has reached all continents. It is taught and practised at universities and in private institutions, particularly in Austria. But it has also been officially recognized by the health authorities in Switzerland (Canton of Berne), in the Czech Republic and in Romania as a valid school of psychotherapy. In 1998 an International Society of Existential-Analytical Psychotherapy (ISEAP) was founded.

## **TRAINING PROCEDURES AND CENTRES**

A full training in psychotherapy takes about five to six years and comprises theory, practice, self-experience and supervision. A detailed curriculum enumerating all the topics dealt with can be obtained from the secretariat in Vienna or from various institutes. Training centres exist in Berlin, Hannover, Munich; Berne, Zurich; Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck; Prague; Temesvar, Arad, Klausenburg, Bucharest; Moscow; Argentina and Mexico. There are additional centres offering abbreviated forms of training (ca. 2-3 years, "counselling training") in the German-speaking regions. A training in Poland is planned for 2004 (for further details please contact GLE-International, see below).

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