

The Meaning of Life According to Viktor Frankl

Exploring Your Mind
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The meaning of life according to Viktor Frankl lies in finding a purpose and taking responsibility for ourselves and other human beings. By having a clear “why” we can face all the “how” questions of life. Only by feeling free and sure of the objective that motivates us will we be able to make the world a better place.

That said, we know **there is no question as complicated as what the “meaning of life” is**. Such questions sometimes have philosophical, transcendental and moral nuances, so often we stick to classic sayings, like *“be happy and make others happy”, “be content”, “do good”*.

“Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress”.

-Viktor Frankl-

However, **many ask the question and feel a deep existential void**. What is the meaning of life for me if all I do is work, if all my days are the same and if I do not find meaning in anything around me? Faced with this very common situation, the famous neurologist, psychiatrist and founder of logotherapy, Viktor Frankl, gave an answer that invites constructive reflection.



Humans don't have an obligation to define the meaning of life in universal terms. Each of us will do it our way, starting with ourselves, with our potential and experiences, discovering ourselves every day.

Moreover, the meaning of life may not only differ from one person to another, but **we ourselves may have a different life purpose at each stage of life**. The important thing is for each goal to give us satisfaction and encouragement to get up in the morning and fight for what we want.

Viktor Frankl published “Man's Search for Meaning” in 1945. It inspired millions of people to identify their attitude towards life. Frankl lived through the horrors of the Holocaust, a prisoner in Auschwitz and Dachau. He overcame it stoically and it laid the foundation of a very personal type of therapy, logotherapy.

Also, the loss of his family clarified for him that **his purpose in this world was simply to help others find their own purpose in life**. There were three very specific points to it, however:

- work day by day with motivation
- live from a perspective of love
- have courage at all times in adversity

Let's see below how this can help us find our purpose in life.

Live with decision

We've all seen before: **people who handle very tough circumstances with positivity and motivation**. How do they do that? We all share the same biological structures, but what sets us apart from these people is their determination. Being determined to achieve something, overcome all obstacles and fight for what we want, however small, will help us clarify our purpose in each stage of our life.

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

-Viktor Frankl-

Even if you suffer, have your purpose clear and you will find strength

Viktor Frankl explained in his book “Man's Search for Meaning” that there is nothing worse than perceiving that our suffering is useless. However, if you can find a purpose, you won't just endure your suffering; you'll see it as a challenge.

Change your attitude to find a higher meaning in life

Sometimes life is not fair. Sometimes we work to exhaustion and invest all our time, energy, emotions and heart... yet fate only hands us setbacks. Every dream we have falls apart. Backing down is more than logical and understandable, but when this happens, we have two options.

- First, to assume that we cannot change what happens to us and be prisoners of circumstance.
- Second, to accept that we cannot change what has happened to us but that **we can change our attitude towards it**.

Therefore, we must adopt a stronger, more resilient and more positive attitude if we want to find a more hopeful, higher meaning of life.



The meaning of life is not asked, it is felt

All the answers to our questions in life are not on the outside. Books will not explain what our own meaning of life is, nor will our family or friends. In reality, **all our needs, passions and**



existential goals are within us. And they will change over time as we mature and grow.

To conclude, nothing is as important as understanding the freedom and responsibility we have to define our own goals. The meaning of life according to Viktor Frankl centers around the fact that **every second of every day is a chance to make a decision**, a decision that will determine whether we'll be subject to circumstance like a puppet in the

hands of fate, or if we'll act with true dignity, listening to our true self.