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LOGO THERAPY



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***“Best way to find a meaning - especially in a situation we cannot change - is to change our attitude!
A new meaning will be often dawn by doing so”***

Number of questions arises in a human mind about his life. Man can never be free from condition, such as, biological, sociological, or psychological determinants. Man is “capable of resisting and braving even the worst conditions”. In doing so, man can detach from situations, himself, choose an attitude about himself, determine his own determinants, thus shaping his own character and becoming responsible for himself.

Logo therapy was developed by neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl. It is considered the “Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy. Logo therapy is founded upon the belief that it is the striving to find a meaning in one’s life that is the primary, most powerful motivating and driving force in humans

Definition

Logo therapy is finding meaning

Basic assumptions of logotherapy:

1. Life has meaning under all circumstances:

A meaning to fulfill or a person to encounter, the more one gives to serve, or to another person to love, the more the meaning of life will be defined.

It can be discovered in 3 different ways

- ☞ Creating a work or doing a deed
- ☞ By experiencing something
- ☞ The attitude one take toward unavoidable suffering

2. People have a will to meaning: There is a universal, primary motivation to find meaning

Latent Motivation: It is suppressed by the survival, pleasure, power instinct .When latent motivation becomes manifest the will to meaning surfaces.

3. People have freedom under all circumstances to activate the will to meaning and to find meaning: Individuals have the freedom to choose a positive attitude, even under the most appalling conditions.

Dimensional ontology image of man:

The human being is an entity consisting of:

1. Body (soma)
2. Mind (psyche)
3. Spirit (noetic core)

Attributes of the noetic dimension:

1. Responsibility (not from, but responsibility to)
2. Authenticity and creativity
3. Choices
4. Values
5. Self-transcendence
6. Will to meaning
7. Love
8. Conscience
9. Ideals and ideas

Finding meaning in life

Frankl points to three ways the “meaning triangle:”

1. **Creativity** (giving something to the world through self-expression): Using ones talents in various ways; i.e., the work we do, the gifts we give to life.
2. **Experiencing** (receiving from the world): Through nature, culture, relationships, interactions with others and with ones environment.
3. **Change of attitude** (even if one can’t change a situation or circumstance): One can still choose the attitude towards a condition. This is often a self-transcending way of finding meaning, especially in unavoidable suffering.

The two levels of meaning in life

Viktor Frankl specified two different meanings in life.

1. Ultimate meaning: A meaning one can never reach but just glimpse at the horizon. It can be God, but also science as the search for truth, nature, and evolution for those who do not believe in God.

2. Meaning of the moment: one has all the time to answer the questions life asks and, therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of each moment by fulfilling the demands life places on oneself.

Demand quality of life

Logo therapy teaches that it is not one who can ask life, “WHY, WHY, WHY...?” Rather, it is Life, who is the questioner. One have to respond to Life’s

questions and answer to Life by listening for discernment of the meaning of the moment; then, by making responsible decisions within available area of freedom. The choices will be based on ones values and guidance received from the voice of ones conscience.

Existential vacuum

When life has no meaning, it becomes empty. “It is a state of inertia, boredom, and apathy experienced by many. If this state persists, it progresses into existential frustration, and eventually becomes a “noogenic neurosis.” One tries to fill the existential vacuum with drugs, violence, also with food, over-work, sports, etc., yet remain unfulfilled.

Noogenic neurosis

This state is refered to as “somatization disorder”. In about 20% of these cases, the maintaining cause of somatization disorder lies in the noetic level, not in the psycho-physical. Noogenic neurosis can be the result of protracted existential vacuum or a conflict of values that result in conflicts in conscience.

The tragic triad: Since life is dynamic; all are faced all the time with elements of the tragic triad:

1. Unavoidable suffering
2. Guilt
3. Death

Logo therapy: Indicated when people are experiencing:

- ❖ Loss of direction
- ❖ Values confused
- ❖ A shaken identity
- ❖ Personal alimentation
- ❖ Boredom, meaninglessness, ambivalent
- ❖ Priority shifts, direction change
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Neurosis
- ❖ Obsessive compulsive disorder
- ❖ Schizophrenia

❖ Terminal illness

Approaches in Logotherapy

Welter’s Four Step Approach:

1. The Approach: Self Distancing

The basis for a healthy resistance is a crisis. Loosen the grip of the symptoms. Ask thought provoking questions “you do not need to know the origin of a fire in order to put it out” “as if” the symptoms were not present .

2. Attitudinal Change

Situations that have no meaning and cannot be changed; ex. ‘blows of fate, incurable diseases, irrevocable ending of a career, relationship’. Relationships do not need to control one’s life. It is possible to find a meaningful attitude toward a situation that which in itself is meaningless. Meaning does not have to be found in the event itself, but may be discovered through the transformed attitude.

3. Actual Reduction of Symptoms

After one achieves a transformation of attitudes, the symptoms often diminish or disappear; sometimes unexplainable.

4. Orientation to Meaning Before

Therapy is jeopardized if the person gets discharged to a life lacking meaningful content; person should be filled with a mission and a meaningful life.

Logo therapeutic techniques

Dereflection

Dereflection is indicated in cases of hyper intention (trying too hard to succeed) or hyper reflection (overly focused self-observation). When a person is overly self-absorbed, attention is taken away from a self-focus and redirected towards a focus on another person to love or a value to respond to.

- The person’s distress is seen in the context of the spiritual essence of the person “behind” the problem.
- Self-transcendence is the essence of human existence. One transcends self to focus on meanings

and values.

The will to meaning empowers our capacity for self-transcendence. The will to meaning is the primary motivation to find meaning and purpose of life. This inner urging causes us to seek and reach out towards people to love and values to fulfill.

Thus as meaning seekers one naturally activate the capacity for self-transcendence unless something prevents the occurrence of this natural phenomenon. The technique of dereflection works by helping to access the capacity for self-transcendence and mobilizing the will to find meaning that is always seeking a transcendent value.

Paradoxical Intention

Paradoxical intention is indicated in cases of phobias and obsessions. Paradoxically wishing for the thing one fears and laughing about it breaks the vicious cycle in which the anxiety keeps the feeling like a helpless victim. Instead of fleeing from the fear one has to ridicule it.

In the application of paradoxical intention one uses the capacity for self-distancing or selfdetachment through humor, heroism and the defiant power. One can poke fun at a tragic situation. Animals do not know how to laugh. Only humans can laugh. Only humans have a hierarchy of values that gives them something to live for.

Here too the capacity for self-distancing is made possible only because of a different human capacity: freedom of will. This is the core of self-detachment. While one is not free from conditions that are free in the attitude we take towards those conditions. Once one loosen the grip of fear, we are free us to see what confronts us as something we are called upon to do something about! We’re not determined; we can take a stand. We are meant to be victors, not victims! No longer immobilized we are empowered to change

things.

Thus with our freedom of will naturally one chooses to see self from different perspectives and paradoxical intention reactivates the ability to do this.

Socratic dialogue: Socratic dialogue is a means of listening and asking provocative questions or highlighting hints to meaning that come through the person’s words. The faculty of mind that guides this process of discernment is called as “conscience.”

In Socratic dialogue one draws on the human capacity for consciousness of ones responsibility. We are not driven; we can evaluate and judge and seek out the meaning of an event. Frankl defines responsibility as response-ability, or the ability to respond to the call of the meaning of the moment. The therapist’s questions in effect illuminate the questions life itself is asking the client. We are questioned by life and we must answer with our life. The most basic capacity that is required to evaluate and think about our lives is self-awareness. When one have lost the self-awareness Socratic dialogue helps reinstate it. The questions that are asked in Socratic dialogue forces one to rethink what we’re all about.

Helping people to find meaning:

- ❖ I am the spirit.
- ❖ I am unique: There are always situations where we experience our uniqueness, in relationships, in creativity.
- ❖ It is through transcending our previous limitations, striving toward a worthwhile goal, encountering other human beings that to find meaning and fulfillment in their lives.
- ❖ I can change my attitude.

The tools of logotherapy

The main tool is the Socratic dialogue where the therapist and the client together try to find a meaning in life. Meaning cannot be given, it must be

discovered.

1. The first thing is to make the client realize that he is NOT A VICTIM of circumstances! He might have symptoms, but he IS NOT his symptoms.
2. Try to help client find a meaning within his “meaning triangle.”
3. Make client independent of the therapist by helping him find his guidance within.

Conclusion

Accepting that our life (where we stand today) is a consequence of the choices made in the past, the future will consequently be shaped by the choices one make today! Every day one have many possibilities from which to choose within the area of freedom. One must choose the most responsible option; make the best choice, not only for themselves, but also for the people around them.

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