

Frankl argues that humankind must change its approach to achieving meaning in life: meaning springs from what life expects of human beings, not what human beings expect from life.

“Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.” Sister MC quotes that Happiness = fulfilling your purpose.

“Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.”

“A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how"." What are the limits/drawbacks of living for other people or projects vs living for God?

Talk about the passage on pp. 86–87 that questions the over-simplification of decent vs. indecent or good vs. evil among human beings in the Holocaust.

Regarding the movie analogy on p. 143: Do you think that the movie analogy is a good example for Frankl's view of existentialism?

“The Importance of Tension” (p. 104), Frankl argues that the presence of tension is a prerequisite for mental health.

“The Meaning of Love” (pp. 108–11).

“Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment” (p. 120) how does this differ from the idea today that our existence is determined by our mother's desire that we exist (prochoice mentality)

p. 37–41 passage about Frankl's wife: How do these passages explain or exemplify the separation of the mind from the body?

12. p. 29 passage: Compare and contrast to this famous passage from Elie Wiesel's Night: "Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."

Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

<https://ed.ted.com/on/brDgpNBa>

“A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how".”

“But today’s society is characterized by achievement orientation, and consequently it adores people who are successful and happy and, in particular, it adores the young. It virtually ignores the value of all those who are otherwise, and in so doing blurs the decisive difference between being valuable in the sense of dignity and being valuable in the sense of usefulness. If one is not cognizant of this difference and holds that an individual’s value stems only from his present usefulness, then, believe me, one owes it only to personal inconsistency not to plead for euthanasia along the lines of Hitler’s program, that is to say, ‘mercy’ killing of all those who have lost their social usefulness, be it because of old age, incurable illness, mental deterioration, or whatever handicap they may suffer. Confounding the dignity of man with mere usefulness arises from conceptual confusion that in turn may be traced back to the contemporary nihilism transmitted on many an academic campus and many an analytical couch.”

“It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.”

“The pessimist resembles a man who observes with fear and sadness that his wall calendar, from which he daily tears a sheet, grows thinner with each passing day. On the other hand, the person who attacks the problems of life actively is like a man who removes each successive leaf from his calendar and files it neatly and carefully away with its predecessors, after first having jotted down a few diary notes on the back. He can reflect with pride and joy on all the richness set down in these notes, on all the life he has already lived to the fullest. What will it matter to him if he notices that he is growing old? Has he any reason to envy the young people whom he sees, or wax nostalgic over his own lost youth? What reasons has he to envy a young person? For the possibilities that a young person has, the future which is in store for him? No, thank you,’ he will think. ‘Instead of possibilities, I have realities in my past, not only the reality of work done and of love loved, but of sufferings bravely suffered. These sufferings are even the things of which I am most proud, although these are things which cannot inspire envy.’”

“To draw an analogy: a man's suffering is similar to the behavior of a gas. If a certain quantity of gas is pumped into an empty chamber, it will fill the chamber completely and evenly, no matter how big the chamber. Thus suffering completely fills the human soul and conscious mind, no matter whether the suffering is great or little. Therefore the "size" of human suffering is absolutely relative.”

St Therese believes grace also fills our vessel completely:

*You knew all my intimate thoughts and cleared up all my doubts. I once told you how astonished I was that God does not give equal glory in heaven to all His chosen. I was afraid they were not*

*at all equally happy. You made me bring Daddy's tumbler and put it by the side of my thimble. You filled them both with water and asked me which was fuller. I told you they were both full to the brim and that it was impossible to put more water in them than they could hold. And so, Mother darling, you made me understand that in heaven God will give His chosen their fitting glory and that the last will have no reason to envy the first. By such means, you made me understand the most sublime mysteries and gave my soul its essential food. –St. Thérèse of Lisieux, The Story of a Soul. (New York: Double Day, 2001) 20.*

“Dostoevski said once, "There is only one thing I dread: not to be worthy of my sufferings." These words frequently came to my mind after I became acquainted with those martyrs whose behavior in camp, whose suffering and death, bore witness to the fact that the last inner freedom cannot be lost. It can be said that they were worthy of their sufferings; the way they bore their suffering was a genuine inner achievement. It is this spiritual freedom—which cannot be taken away—that makes life meaningful and purposeful.”

“On the average, only those prisoners could keep alive who, after years of trekking from camp to camp, had lost all scruples in their fight for existence; they were prepared to use every means, honest and otherwise, even brutal force, theft, and betrayal of their friends, in order to save themselves. We who have come back, by the aid of many lucky chances or miracles - whatever one may choose to call them - we know: the best of us did not return.”

“Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.”

“To the European, it is a characteristic of the American culture that, again and again, one is commanded and ordered to 'be happy.' But happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue. One must have a reason to 'be happy.' Once the reason is found, however, one becomes happy automatically. As we see, a human being is not one in pursuit of happiness but rather in search of a reason to become happy,

“Thus it can be seen that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become. Such a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being.

Being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself—be it meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is

“The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.”

“Freedom, however, is not the last word. Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibility. In fact, freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibility. That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast.”

**“The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity — even under the most difficult circumstances — to add a deeper meaning to his life. It may remain brave, dignified and unselfish. Or in the bitter fight for self preservation he may forget his human dignity and become no more than an animal.”**

“One evening, when we were already resting on the floor of our hut, dead tired, soup bowls in hand, a fellow prisoner rushed in and asked us to run out to the assembly grounds and see the wonderful sunset. Standing outside we saw sinister clouds glowing in the west and the whole sky alive with clouds of ever-changing shapes and colors, from steel blue to blood red. The desolate grey mud huts provided a sharp contrast, while the puddles on the muddy ground reflected the glowing sky. Then, after minutes of moving silence, one prisoner said to another, "How beautiful the world could be...”

[https://whitelilyoftrinity.com/saints\\_quotes\\_suffering.html#bible](https://whitelilyoftrinity.com/saints_quotes_suffering.html#bible)

'When it is all over you will not regret having suffered; rather you will regret having suffered so little, and suffered that little so badly.'

--St. Sebastian Valfre

All the science of the Saints is included in these two things: To do, and to suffer. And whoever had done these two things best, has made himself most saintly.

--Saint Francis de Sales

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

2COR4:8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

“Courage, my sons. Don't you see that we are leaving on a mission? They pay our fare in the bargain. What a piece of good luck! The thing to do now is to pray well in order to win as many souls as possible. Let us, then, tell the Blessed Virgin that we are content, and that she can do with us anything she wishes” (Maximilian Mary Kolbe, [source](#)).

Links to related books and websites:

<https://www.prisonexp.org>

<http://www.ciszek.org/HeLeadethMe.html>

<http://www.ciszek.org/WithGodInRussia.html>

<https://achievement.org/achiever/admiral-james-b-stockdale/>  
<https://www.amazon.com/Courage-Under-Fire-Epictetuss-Laboratory/dp/0817936920>

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<http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/epicench.html>

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Questions for keeping a notebook on books read:

I liked this book because.....

Some lines that stood out to me were.....

Catholic thought or behavior was woven into..... (whether or not the character or author is Catholic)

I can see myself applying this to my life in this way.....

I was disappointed and/or it fell short for me when.....

It reminded me of this other book/essay/film.....

I have/have not seen a film adaptation and it was/wasnt a faithful interpretation.....