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Article

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VIKTOR FRANKL'S MEANING OF LIFE: LOGOTHERAPY AND THE HUMAN SEARCH FOR MEANING

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Abstract

This article examines Viktor Frankl's concept of the meaning of life as articulated in his existential philosophy and psychotherapeutic approach known as logotherapy. Against the backdrop of twentieth-century existential crises marked by suffering, alienation, and moral disorientation, Frankl proposes meaning not pleasure or power as the primary motivational force in human existence. Drawing from his personal experiences in Nazi concentration camps and his engagement with existential philosophy and depth psychology, Frankl argues that human beings retain the freedom to find meaning even under the most dehumanizing conditions. The study adopts a philosophical-analytical method to explore Frankl's central ideas, including the will to meaning, self-transcendence, freedom and responsibility, and the triadic pathways to meaning: creative, experiential, and attitudinal values. Special attention is given to Frankl's understanding of suffering and his notion of "tragic optimism," which affirms the possibility of meaning in the face of pain, guilt, and death. The article further situates the three ways to find meaning in Life. The paper concludes that Frankl's philosophy offers a compelling and enduring framework for understanding human dignity, resilience, and responsibility, making it a valuable resource for both philosophical reflection and practical engagement with the challenges of contemporary life.

Keywords: Viktor Frankl, Meaning of Life, Logotherapy, Existential Philosophy, Suffering, Self-Transcendence.

Introduction

The question of the meaning of life has remained one of the most enduring and urgent concerns in philosophy, psychology, and the humanities. In an age marked by rapid technological advancement, social fragmentation, and moral uncertainty, many individuals experience a profound sense of emptiness, disorientation, and loss of purpose. This

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condition, often described as an existential vacuum, reflects a deep crisis of values and orientation in modern society (Frankl, 2006). Beyond being a philosophical problem, the loss of meaning has significant psychological and ethical consequences, manifesting in anxiety, despair, and alienation. It is within this context that Viktor Frankl's reflections on the meaning of life acquire renewed relevance and significance. Viktor Emil Frankl an Austrian psychiatrist, neurologist, and Holocaust survivor, developed logotherapy as a distinctive response to the existential crisis of the twentieth century. As the founder of the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, Frankl critically departed from Freudian psychoanalysis, which emphasizes the will to pleasure, and Adlerian individual psychology, which prioritizes the will to power. In contrast, Frankl proposed the will to meaning as the primary motivational force in human existence (Frankl, 1988; Frankl, 2006). According to him, the human person is not merely determined by biological drives or social conditioning but is fundamentally oriented toward discovering meaning in concrete life situations. Central to Frankl's philosophy is the conviction that life retains meaning under all circumstances, including suffering, loss, and death. Drawing from his experiences in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl argues that even when external freedom is radically constrained, human beings retain an inner freedom, the capacity to choose their attitude and respond responsibly to life's demands (Frankl, 2006). Meaning, therefore, is not arbitrarily invented by the individual but discovered through self-transcendence, that is, through commitment to values, relationships, and tasks beyond the self (Frankl, 1988).

Frankl made the problem of man and meaning the focal point of his research and teachings. This is evident in the preface to the 1992 edition of his book; while commenting on the bestseller status of his famous book *Man's Search for Meaning*: I do not at all see in the bestseller status of my book an achievement on my part but rather an expression of the misery of our time: If hundreds of thousands of people reach out for a book whose very title promises to deal with the question of a meaning to life, it must be a question that burns under their fingernails (Frankl, 1992). Frankl stands out among numerous authors in their approach to the problem of meaning, by his focus on the nature of man. His, is essentially a theory of man. (Frankl, 2006). This article undertakes a philosophical analysis of Viktor Frankl understanding of the meaning of life, examining its key concepts, ethical implications, and contemporary relevance. By situating Frankl's thought within broader existential discourse, the study seeks to demonstrate how logotherapy provides a compelling framework for addressing the modern crisis of meaning and reaffirming human dignity, freedom, and responsibility (Batthyány & Guttman, 2006).

Viktor Frankl: Intellectual and Historical Background

Viktor Emil Frankl emerged as one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century existential psychology and philosophy, largely due to the profound interplay between his personal experiences and intellectual formation. Born in Vienna, Frankl was trained in medicine, psychiatry, and neurology at a time when psychological thought was dominated by psychoanalysis and individual psychology. His intellectual development, however, cannot be separated from the historical upheavals of the twentieth century, particularly the trauma of the Holocaust, which decisively shaped his understanding of human existence, suffering, and meaning. Frankl's most formative life experience was his imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, Dachau, and Türkheim, during the Second World War. In these extreme conditions of deprivation, brutality, and dehumanization, Frankl observed that survival was not determined solely by physical strength or psychological toughness, but by one's capacity to find meaning in suffering (Frankl, 2006). He noted that

prisoners who perceived a purpose such as the hope of seeing loved ones again or completing unfinished work were more likely to endure the horrors of camp life. These observations provided the existential foundation for his conviction that life retains meaning under all circumstances, even the most tragic ones, and that human freedom persists in the form of an inner capacity to choose one's attitude (Frankl, 2006).

Frankl's thought developed in critical dialogue with Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, the dominant figures of Viennese psychology. While Freud emphasized the will to pleasure and Adler the will to power, Frankl found both approaches reductionist in their understanding of human motivation (Frankl, 1988). He argued that such theories overlooked the spiritual or noetic dimension of the human person, wherein the quest for meaning resides. Beyond psychology, Frankl was deeply influenced by existential philosophy, particularly thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Max Scheler, whose reflections on freedom, responsibility, and value resonated with his own insights (Batthyány & Guttman, 2006). Out of this intellectual and experiential synthesis emerged logotherapy, which Frankl described as the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy," following Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology (Frankl, 1988). Derived from the Greek *logos* (meaning), logotherapy centers on the human will to meaning as the primary motivational force. It emphasizes personal responsibility, self-transcendence, and the discovery of meaning through creative, experiential, and attitudinal values. As both a therapeutic method and a philosophical anthropology, logotherapy represents Frankl's enduring contribution to understanding the human person as a meaning-oriented being capable of dignity and freedom even in the face of extreme suffering.

The Concept of Meaning in Frankl's Philosophy

At the heart of Viktor Frankl's philosophical anthropology and logotherapeutic theory lies the concept of meaning. For Frankl, meaning is not a secondary or derivative aspect of human life but its central and defining orientation. Human existence, he argues, is fundamentally structured around the search for meaning, and psychological well-being is closely tied to the successful discovery and realization of meaningful values (Frankl, 1988; Frankl, 2006). Frankl's most distinctive contribution to psychology is his assertion that the will to meaning constitutes the primary motivational force in human life. This claim stands in deliberate contrast to the dominant motivational theories of his time. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis locates human motivation in the will to pleasure, understood largely in terms of the gratification of instinctual drives, while Alfred Adler's individual psychology emphasizes the will to power, expressed as a striving for superiority and control (Frankl, 1988). Although Frankl acknowledged the explanatory value of these approaches, he criticized them for reducing the complexity of human existence to biological impulses or social drives. According to Frankl, such reductionist psychologies fail to account for the specifically human capacity to transcend instincts and circumstances in pursuit of meaning. By interpreting neurosis primarily as the result of frustrated drives or power struggles, Freud and Adler overlook what Frankl termed noogenic neuroses forms of psychological distress arising from a perceived lack of meaning rather than from instinctual conflict (Frankl, 2006). For Frankl, most modern pathologies stem from existential frustration, not repression, indicating that the loss of meaning, rather than the denial of pleasure or power, lies at the root of much contemporary suffering.

A further defining feature of Frankl's philosophy is his insistence on both the objectivity and uniqueness of meaning. Meaning, he argues, is not subjectively fabricated according to personal preference or emotional states but is discovered in concrete life

situations (Frankl, 1988). Each situation poses a specific demand or “question” to which the individual must respond responsibly. In this sense, meaning exists independently of the individual’s subjective inclinations, calling for recognition rather than invention. At the same time, meaning is always personal and situational. There is no single, abstract meaning of life applicable to all persons and contexts; instead, meaning changes from moment to moment and from person to person, depending on life circumstances and moral responsibility (Frankl, 2006). This dynamic understanding avoids both relativism and determinism: while meaning is objective, it is uniquely addressed to each individual. Through this framework, Frankl preserves human freedom and responsibility, affirming that every person, regardless of circumstance, remains capable of responding meaningfully to life’s challenges.

Human Freedom and Responsibility

Viktor E. Frankl understands human freedom and responsibility as a central pillar of his existential analysis and the foundation of logotherapy. Unlike radical notions of freedom that emphasize absolute autonomy, Frankl presents freedom as situated, limited, and inseparably bound to responsibility. Frankl argues that human freedom is not freedom from all conditions, but freedom to take a stand toward conditions. Even in situations of extreme constraint such as suffering, imprisonment, or social limitation human beings retain what he famously calls “the last of the human freedoms”: the ability to choose one’s attitude and response (Frankl, 2006). This inner freedom distinguishes humans from mere biological or psychological determinism. While instincts, drives, and social pressures influence behavior, they do not fully determine it. For Frankl, the human person is never completely reducible to these factors.

Without freedom which is an essential component of man’s noetic dimension (spirituality), self transcendence and self-detachment will not be possible. Corresponding to freedom is in Frankl’s own terminology, responsibility. As a philosophical foundation stone of his school, Frankl has devoted the greater part of his writings and teachings on defending the reality of human freedom which like spirituality and responsibility, is an irreducible original phenomenon. The issue of freedom has agitated the mind of man throughout the history of philosophy beginning from the ancient period till the present day, and as such deserves a special treatment here in the light of Frankl’s existential analysis. In his *Philosophical Anthropology*, Battista Mondin wrote: Man, beyond being intelligent, is also highly free, freedom is, therefore, another title of his excellence and nobility, and represents another great window for looking into the mystery of man, with a goal of acquiring a more concrete, more complete, more adequate comprehension of him. As a logical conclusion to this, Frankl insists that “man’s being consists of being conscious and being responsible (Mondin, 2002). Modern history of philosophy was enriched with Descartes’ ‘*Cogito Ergo sum*’ (I think, therefore I am), with heavy emphasis on man as self-consciousness, man unlike other creatures has ‘reflective self-consciousness’ showing his high level of intelligence and volition. With the testimonial of consciousness which makes us aware of possessing free will, we are faced with responsibility. Hence Frankl, capping his theoretical knowledge, clinical experiences with those of the ‘living laboratory’- the concentration camps, maintained that the human person is free. Consequently, freedom of will became one of the basic tenets or credo of logotherapy. Notwithstanding the common conception of freedom of will as belonging to and worthy of the human person, it has been contended with the reality of things and theoretical arguments; beginning with socio-economic, political, and cultural constraints especially the socialists and capitalists’ socio-economic systems that have

crippled, traumatized, and dehumanized people in the recent past (both in the east and west), and other restrictions on man that originate from his bio-genetic constitution

However, freedom in Frankl's thought is never arbitrary or self-centered. It is always oriented toward meaning and therefore demands responsibility. He insists that freedom without responsibility degenerates into license and existential emptiness. Thus, Frankl proposes that freedom must be complemented by responsibility, noting symbolically that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast of the United States should be balanced by a "Statue of Responsibility" on the West Coast (Frankl, 2006). Responsibility, for Frankl, means responding to the concrete demands that life places before each individual. Meaning is not invented subjectively but discovered through responsible engagement with life's tasks, whether through creative work, love, or the courageous acceptance of unavoidable suffering (Frankl, 1988). In this sense, freedom is teleological; it points beyond the self toward values, others, and transcendence. Furthermore, Frankl emphasizes that responsibility is personal and situational. Each moment poses a unique question to the individual, and one's response determines the meaningfulness of existence (Frankl, 1984). This view rejects moral relativism while also avoiding rigid moralism, since responsibility is exercised within concrete historical and existential contexts. Frankl's idea of human freedom affirms the dignity of the person as a meaning-oriented being capable of self-transcendence, even under severe limitations. Freedom, for Frankl, is not an end in itself but a condition for responsibility. To be human is to be free for meaning and responsible to life (Frankl, 1984; Frankl, 2006).

On the Meaning of Life and Triad of Values

We have seen that unlike psychoanalysis whose primary aim is to bring instinctual facts to consciousness, logotherapy strives to bring awareness to spiritual realities. It is particularly concerned with making men conscious of their responsibility since being responsible is one of the essential grounds of human existence. If to be human is to be conscious and responsible, then existential analysis is psychotherapy whose starting point is consciousness of responsibility. According to Frankl, responsibility implies a sense of obligation and a man's obligation can only be understood in terms of a "meaning", the specific meaning of a human life. Each time the question of meaning comes up, it reflects the truest expression of the state of being human. The question of life's meaning brings up the question of one's life's responsibility because to be truly human is to be responsible. As we must agree with Frankl that, a life must either be responsible to itself, to another or to a God. Human maturity shows itself immediately a life begins to question its meaning (trying to be responsible). It is intrinsically a human question, so challenging the meaning of one's life is never a manifestation of morbidity or abnormality; instead, it is the truest expression of our humanity and the mark of the most human nature in man. Unlike insects and animals that, even though may be superior to man in most aspects of their social organization, it is only man who can raise the question of the meaning of its own existence, thereby able to challenge it. This factor of being able to doubt and question life's meaning, among other factors like power of speech (language), conceptual thinking, walking erect, etc., sets the human person apart from animals. The crises of meaning (question of life's meaning) is always part of human life but shows its overwhelming urgency particularly at puberty, when the essential uncertainty of human life is suddenly revealed to young people maturing and struggling spiritually.

The Three Pathways to Meaning

Viktor Frankl identifies three fundamental pathways through which human beings discover meaning in life: creative values, experiential values, and attitudinal values. These pathways reflect the diverse ways in which individuals respond to life's demands and actualize meaning in concrete situations. Rather than offering a rigid hierarchy, Frankl presents these values as complementary dimensions of a meaningful existence, each becoming primary depending on one's circumstances (Frankl, 1988; Frankl, 2006).

On the Meaning of Work (Creative Value): Creative values refer to the meaning realized through what a person gives to the world. This includes work, creativity, productivity, and achievement in its broadest sense. For Frankl, work is not merely a means of economic survival or social status but an opportunity for self-transcendence, through which individuals contribute something unique to the world (Frankl, 1988). Meaning arises when one responsibly fulfills a task, vocation, or mission that no one else can accomplish in the same way. Frankl has said that life is a question-and-answer period, that the question of the meaning of life is not just to be asked but to be responded to. So, it becomes a question demanding activism or action! That the question should not be asked in the vague but should be founded in the concrete realities of existence. Life is a vocation to responsibility. Such concrete response through action depends upon the situation and the person in all his concreteness. Our author has highlighted an individual's indispensability and irreplaceability in one's area of existence following the ontological qualities of uniqueness and singularity of being. He also brought our awareness on the aim of existential analysis as that of bringing one's consciousness to bear on life's responsibilities, on one's life mission. To exist is to be tasked. The difficulties and uncertainties of man's terrestrial existence is minimized by a high sense of mission that life has a goal. In other words, the project of life is invigorated with the energy of a sense of purpose before the fatigue of difficulties. Work is an avenue of realizing creative values.

Work, said Frankl, usually represents the area in which the individual's uniqueness stands in relation to society and thus acquires meaning and value. This meaning and value, however, is attached to the person's work as a contribution to society, not to the actual, occupation as such. Therefore, no particular type of work is necessary for meaning. No work is superior to the other or should be neglected; be it menial labor, domestic chores, clerical jobs, or mechanized works, etc. The meaning deriving from work depends on the individual in relation to his contribution to the society or life of others. As he said, no particular occupation offers a person the opportunity for fulfillment and no one occupation is the sole road to salvation. He concludes that it is self-deception for one to hold onto the excuse that a particular occupation could have granted one a sense of fulfillment. As such if there are cases where the actual occupation does not allow a sense of fulfillment to arise, the fault is from the person, not in the work. This is because work gives one, the chance to demonstrate one's indispensability and irreplaceability and not vice versa. Work becomes meaningful with the manner it is done, in that one's personality shines out, in that it makes life meaningful. An example is a doctor, being a doctor does not confer meaning automatically to one's life or the arts of medicine (which of course is different from the art of medicine). The medical profession only offers a person a framework whereby a doctor is offered opportunities to fulfill oneself through the 'personal exercise' of professional skill.

On the Meaning of Love (Experiential Value): Experiential values concern the meaning discovered through what a person receives from the world, particularly through

relationships and encounters with beauty, truth, and love. Among these, Frankl assigns a privileged place to love, which he understands as a profound encounter with the uniqueness of another person (Frankl, 2006). Through love, individuals grasp the essential value of the other and are drawn beyond self-centered concerns toward genuine communion. To grasp and appreciate the existential meaning of love, Frankl asserts that we must put aside all our vague ideas about love in order to exhaust its riches. In the recent times, love has become one word that has been so abused and confused to mean different things to different individuals. We have seen that creative values are achieved in the form of accomplishments that have their bearing on community. Community said Frankl “in its turn confers existential meaning upon personal uniqueness and singularity (Frankl, 1998). This same community can also be a rich field of human experience. The community of persons “twoness”, the intimacy between oneself with another. This is the reason Frankl defined love as living the experience of another person in all his uniqueness and singularity. Love, said Frankl, is by grace. The beloved does not need to merit it. In love the beloved person is comprehended in his very essence, as the unique and singular being that he is, he is comprehended as a thou and as such is taken into the self. As a human person he becomes for the one who loves him indispensable and irreplaceable without having done anything to bring this about. The person who is loved can’t help having the uniqueness and singularity of his self- that is the value of his personality- realized.

Here, one could see Frankl indebted to the ideas of the personalist philosopher Martin Buber who maintains that authentic relationship must be marked with I and Thou. (Though this exercise is limited in scope, suffice it to mention that the stretch of Buber’s dialogue extends farther than this. E. J. Bauer had in his article *Ich- Person- Gewissen. Darstellt am Phänomen der inneren Zwiesprache, in Existenzanalyse*, (I-person-conscience: presented through the Phenomenon of inner Dialogue in Existential Analysis) agreed on the veritable role of Buber’s dialogical philosophy in infusing rich meaning in the life of an individual through relationships. While Buber distinguished two-word pairs of I-It world of experience and sensation, and that of I-Thou that describes the world of relations involving persons who are drawn into a mental or spiritual relationship with positive thoughts, leading to communion. Bauer would go further to disclose two modes of dialogue, that of interpersonal and intrapersonal. This was as a reaction to A. Längle’s entanglement within Frankl’s dimensional ontology that seems to restrict or limit his definition of person as ‘pure ability’, a sort of division and limitedness as against a being in its wholeness (Nweke, 2022).

On the Meaning of Suffering (Attitudinal Value): Attitudinal values represent the highest and most radical pathway to meaning in Frankl’s thought. They become decisive when individuals are confronted with unavoidable suffering, that is, suffering that cannot be removed or changed. In such situations, meaning is found not in action or experience but in the attitude one adopts toward suffering (Frankl, 2006). Frankl insists that while suffering in itself is not meaningful, it acquires meaning through the courageous and responsible stance taken toward it. Frankl has made us understand that man’s being consists of being conscious and being responsible. He emphasized also the two intrinsic ontological qualities of the human personality, that of singularity and uniqueness. For him, man’s responsibility consists in the actualization of values. As we saw in his admiration of Marx Scheler’s theory of values, this responsibility for the actualization of values is not only of ‘eternal’ values, but also ‘situational value’ (Scheler). Accordingly: Opportunities for the actualization of value change from hour to hour. The requirement that radiates from the world of values into lives of men,

this became a concrete demand for every single person. The possibilities that every person has exclusively for himself are just as specific as the possibilities presented by every historical situation in its peculiar singularity. Among the three sets of categories of values, the realization of attitudinal values consists in the manner in which a person takes upon himself 'his inescapable, unavoidable situation' and 'assimilates these difficulties into his own psyche; then 'there flows an incalculable multitude of value potentialities. Consequently, human life can be fulfilled not only in creating and enjoying, but also in suffering.

Frankl's Hierarchy of Values at the end of part one of his books, *The Will to Meaning*, presented the question: What is meant by meaning? While he did not throw a straightforward definition of meaning, he rather made an existential and phenomenological elaboration of meaning. Referring to Albert Einstein, he declares that the man who regards his life as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life. The question of meaning centers on human existence. A question, according to Frankl which, from the man in the street we may learn that being human means being confronted continuously with situations which are each at once chance and challenge, giving us a chance to fulfill ourselves by meeting the challenge to fulfill its meaning. Each situation is a call, first to listen and then to respond. According to him, as with most existentialists, "existence is not only intentional but also transcendent. Self-transcendence is the essence of existence. Being human is directed to something other than itself. This otherness highlights the natural tension in life between the I am and the I ought, what is and what to ought to be. Being human, said Frankl, "means being in the face of meaning to fulfill and values to realize. It means living in the polar field of tension established between reality and ideals to materialize. Man lives by ideals and values. Human existence is not authentic unless it is lived in terms of self-transcendence. Frankl instead of speaking of the relativism and subjectivism of meaning, preferred to speak in terms of uniqueness of meanings. Since uniqueness does not only involve situations but life itself a string of unique situations. The human person is not only unique in essence but existence- one's life is unrepeatable with the unique opportunities to fulfill the meaning in it. Going by his thesis of uniqueness of meaning one must agree that there is no universal meaning of life but only the unique meanings of the individual situations, while not forgetting that there are situations which have something common in life and therefore, one must accept that there are also meanings commonly shared by people across society, through human history. These meanings only refer to the human condition instead of unique situations. These meanings, he called values. Values are those meaning universals which crystallize in the typical situations a society or even humanity must face. Among the three meaning-oriented avenues in life, that of work (creativity), love (experienced) and suffering (attitudinal), Frankl ranks the last- suffering (attitudinal value) highest. This is because; it is not all that is confronted with a hopeless and helpless situation that can turn the predicament into an achievement and accomplishment. At this point, one bears witness to the human potential at its best to be able to turn tragedy into triumph. For according to Plutarch, "the measure of a man is the way he bears up under misfortune". While distancing masochism from his philosophy, he explicitly refers to "a fate that cannot be changed". Furthermore, he contends that 'the wisdom of the heart of the man in the street' does not only disclose his cognizance of creative, experiential, and attitudinal values, but of their hierarchy that "he knows that attitudinal values rank higher than creative and experiential values.

Conclusion

Viktor Frankl's philosophy and psychotherapeutic approach offer a profound and enduring framework for understanding the human search for meaning in life. At the heart of his thought is the conviction that meaning exists under all circumstances, including suffering, loss, and moral adversity (Frankl, 2006). By emphasizing the will to meaning as the primary motivational force, Frankl departs from reductionist psychological models, such as Freud's pleasure principle and Adler's will to power, affirming instead the unique capacity of humans to choose their attitudes and responses even in the most extreme conditions (Frankl, 1988). The triadic pathways of meaning creative, experiential, and attitudinal values demonstrate that purpose can be realized through work, artistic or professional achievement, love, interpersonal relationships, engagement with beauty and truth, and courageous acceptance of unavoidable suffering (Frankl, 1988; Frankl, 2006). These pathways underscore both the personal and situational dimensions of meaning, illustrating that while meaning is objectively present in life, it is uniquely discovered by each individual in relation to their circumstances. The notion of attitudinal values, in particular, highlights Frankl's ethical and existential insight that suffering itself can be transformed into a source of meaning when approached responsibly and with moral courage (Batthyány & Guttman, 2006).

Logotherapy, as both a therapeutic and philosophical framework, operationalizes these insights by providing practical techniques such as paradoxical intention and dereflection, enabling individuals to confront anxiety, transcend self-centered concerns, and actively participate in meaningful life endeavors (Frankl, 1988). Its integration of existential philosophy, phenomenology, and a noetic understanding of the human person distinguishes it from other forms of psychotherapy, bridging theoretical reflection with practical application (Batthyány, 2000). In contemporary society, characterized by existential disorientation, social fragmentation, and moral ambiguity, Frankl's insights remain especially relevant. His work offers guidance for mental health practice, ethical leadership, education, and personal development, emphasizing resilience, responsibility, and human dignity. Ultimately, Frankl affirms that regardless of external constraints, individuals retain the freedom to respond meaningfully to life's challenges, thereby actualizing their potential and sustaining hope (Frankl, 2006). This enduring vision of human existence continues to inspire philosophical reflection, therapeutic practice, and a purposeful engagement with life, making his contributions indispensable for both scholarly inquiry and practical life application.

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