

**It's Not the Load, It's How You Carry It**  
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What is now the third major school of psychotherapy — called logotherapy — in the world nearly perished amid the horrors of World War II. Its founder, Viktor Frankl (pronounced FRAHNkl), who died last year at 92, had only recently completed the manuscript for a book, *The Doctor and the Soul*, that outlined the school's thinking. Unlike Freud, who said that humans are essentially pleasure-seeking animals of two dimensions, body and mind, Frankl perceived a third dimension, spirit, that which a person *is* rather than possesses.

Ironically, his own spirit would soon be cruelly tested.

Despite the peril of being Jewish at the outset of World War II, Frankl's position as a doctor was deemed an asset by the Nazis. This meant, he thought, that he and his family would be left alone. He refused a visa from the American embassy.

By 1941, however, the situation had deteriorated. He, his parents, brother and pregnant wife were arrested and sent to a Nazi concentration camp, where all but he would perish. He would also lose his unpublished manuscript, which his wife had sown into his coat lining.

Camp life bore out his belief that someone with purpose can better withstand suffering; higher-spirited people would remind despondent ones of loved ones or plans awaiting them "after." At one point, disgusted with mundane thoughts such as the next scrap of food, Frankl envisioned teaching a course in surviving the concentration camp. Doing so cast his experience in a new light.

Sick with dysentery, Frankl knew that he risked collapsing his lung if he slept, so he would crawl around looking for scraps of paper on which he slowly reconstructed his manuscript. Freed in 1945, Frankl finally published his book in 1946. He went on to write 31 more — two published in 1997, the year he died in Vienna.

According to logotherapy, meaning can be discovered by three ways: "1) by creating a work or doing a deed; 2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and 3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering," Frankl wrote.

Today, logotherapy is officially recognized by, among other groups, the American Psychiatric Association. Robert Barnes, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, serves as director of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in Vienna. With affiliates in 22 countries, the institute offers certification in logotherapy and also works to raise awareness of Frankl's insights.

Barnes believes that Frankl's theories will become dominant in the next century because people around the world are looking for meaning and also because logotherapy rehumanizes psychotherapy.

Frankl's signature work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, became phenomenally popular. A 1991 Library of Congress survey found it to be one of "the 10 most influential books in America."

In it, Barnes says, Frankl taught that as "human beings we need to recognize everything can be taken away from us: Our material possessions, our health, our loved ones — everything except one thing, our freedom to decide how we will respond to the circumstances of our life. Frankl teaches us that it's not so important what happens to us. What is important is how we respond. It's not the load we carry, it's how we carry it."

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