

Discover the Meaning in
this
very
MOMENT

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MICHAEL F. STEGER, PH.D.
MEANING AND PURPOSE RESOURCES

Meaning in the Moment?



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Meaning in the Moment?

- Mike and the Quest for Meaning
- Meaning and Purpose Strengthen the Ways We Help
- Grouchy Philosopher Syndrome
- The Need to Start Small, Start Now
- Scalable
- Deeper Than It Appears, But You Choose When to Dive

Mike and the Quest for Meaning

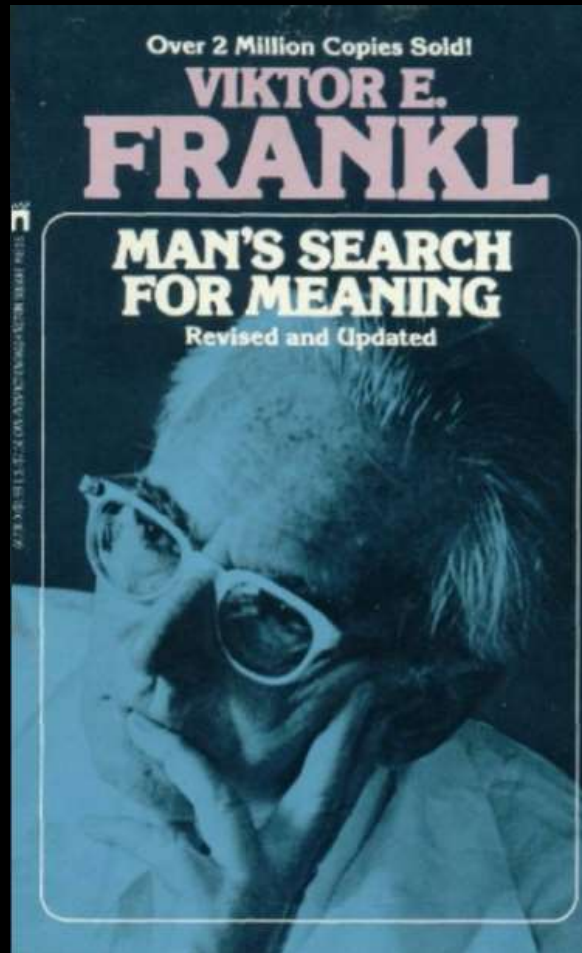


Mike and the Quest for Meaning

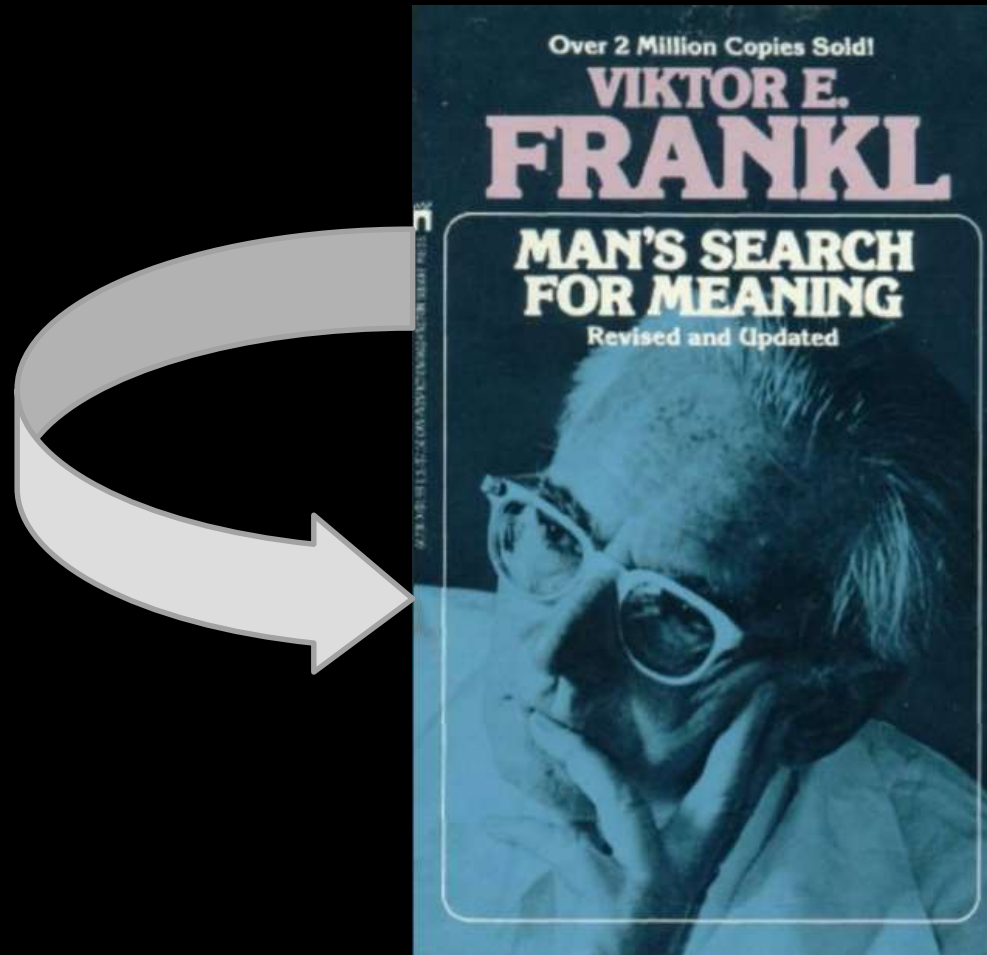
There's got to
be more to life
than this



Mike and the Quest for Meaning



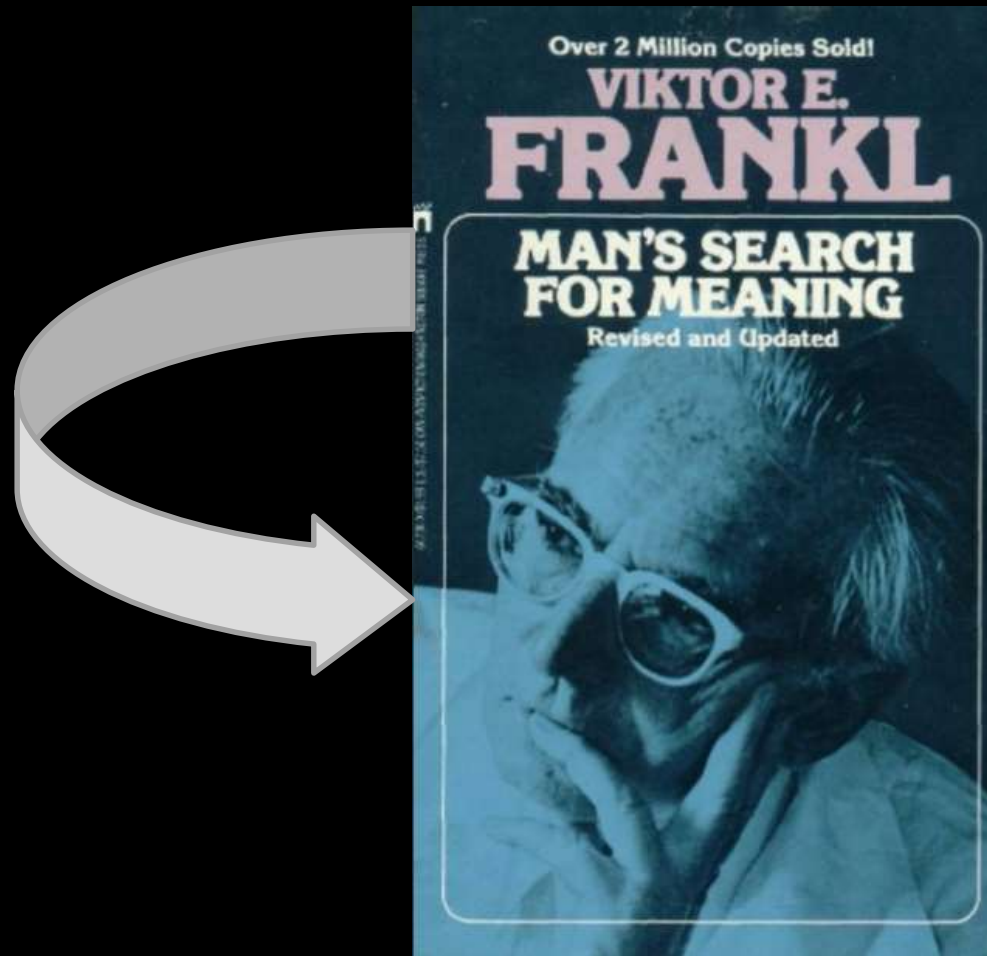
Mike and the Quest for Meaning



I TRIED MY BEST

- 1992-1995: Worked with adults with disabilities and autism
- 1995-1997: Training for Master's in Counseling
- 1997-2000: Addictions and Family Therapy for Teens
BURNING OUT!!!

Mike and the Quest for Meaning



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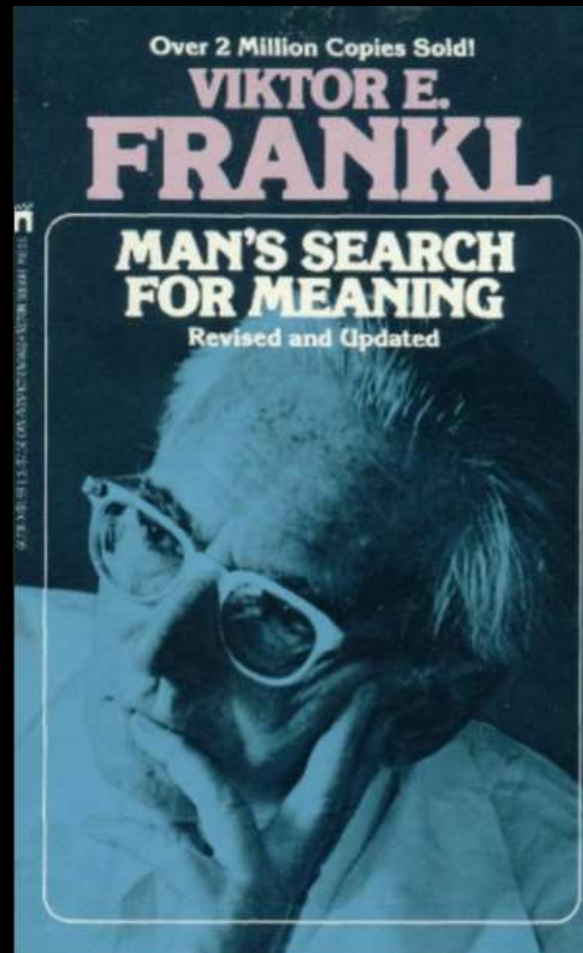
Not Just Happy...Better Than Happy

- Meaning in life is one of the most-researched, and most powerful parts of having a good life

The Big Picture

- From 1000s of studies, we are confident that the meaningful life is...
 - Happier
 - More fulfilling
 - More fun
 - Better for other people
 - Healthier
 - Longer

Mike and the Quest for Meaning



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- ## BURNING OUT!!!
- 2000-2005: PhD in Counseling Psychology, and in Personality Psychology
- ## RESEARCH IS COOL!!!
- 2005-2012: Research, Teaching, Keynotes
 - 2012-Now:

AM I MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Meaning and Purpose Strengthen the Ways We Help

- Coaching
- Counseling
- Psychotherapy
- Career Guidance
- Mindfulness Practice

...each have a focus on insight, behavior change, the positive experience of being alive, or taking a more active role in authoring our own wellbeing

Meaning and Purpose Strengthen the Ways We Help

Three Dimensions of Meaning in Life

- Coherence
- Purpose
- Significance

...each have a focus on **insight**, behavior change, the **positive experience of being alive**, or taking a more active role in authoring our own wellbeing

Meaning and Purpose Strengthen the Ways We Help

- Meta-analysis of meaning-based practices
- Meaning as common therapeutic factor, not just meaning centered therapy
- 392 trials, n = 28,808 patients
- Overall Effect Size Beta = .37
 - ~13.7% of positive outcomes linked to meaning-based practices

Meaning and Purpose Strengthen the Ways We Help

- Identified 30 separate meaning-focused practices
- Pre- / Post- changes, compared to control groups:
 - Large effect for QUALITY OF LIFE*
 - Large effect for MEANING IN LIFE
 - Large effect for SELF-EFFICACY
 - Large effect for SOCIAL WELL-BEING
 - Large effect for HOPE & OPTIMISM
 - Large effect for LOWER PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

But Why Focus on The Moment?

- Good evidence that meaning predicts positive outcomes and strengthens other intervention programs
- Need to address a few wrinkles:
 - Grouchy Philosopher Syndrome
 - The Need to Start Small, Start Now
 - Scalability
 - Hidden Depths

Grouchy Philosopher Syndrome



Join us for our next Zoom chat on how to have life your best life now...just like us!

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- The most effective ways to create a more meaningful life are...

Group or Individual Therapy!

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- People are busy
- People are distracted
- People are overwhelmed
- People are already doing things to try to be happier
- You may already have your own approach or program

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?

By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system

VIKTOR FRANKL

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?

Don't aim at success. The more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue

VIKTOR FRANKL

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?

Don't aim at success. The more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself.

VIKTOR FRANKL

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?
- Principles of Impactful Meaning Interventions
- Are self-relevant
- Increase insight
- Increase Hope
- Increase agency and responsibility for wellbeing
- Increase appreciation and positivity toward fact of existence
- Encourage integration of past-present-future
- Provide incentives and means for planning for the future and forming goals
- Enable contact with uncomfortable questions about existence
- Steer emphasis toward living, and not just thinking or pondering

The Need to Start Small, Start Now

- What if we want something we can plug into the life, the program, and the methods we already have?
- Principles of Impactful Meaning Interventions



**The Most
Important
One?**

- Steer emphasis toward living, and not just thinking or pondering

Scalable

- Scalable exercises and interventions enable administration to many, because they:
 - Are portable
 - Provide sufficient structure
 - Seem appealing and enjoyable
 - Do not impose high barrier to entry
 - Do not require extensive interpersonal processing or explanation

Hidden Depths

- Moment-Centered Exercises
 - Deeper than they appear
 - But You choose when to dive
- May focus on Dimensions of Meaning and/or of Behavior Change
 - May focus on the *Experience of Being Alive*
 - Also may focus on *Skill Development and Building Practices*
 - Also may focus on *Insight and Coherence*
 - As a bonus, also may focus on *Transcending the Physical Moment*

An Example

- Meaning versions of present-centered classics

SAVORING

Meaning Versions of Present-Centered Classics

A definition of SAVORING

being aware that we are enjoying an experience,
magnifying and growing our enjoyment

Meaning Versions of Present-Centered Classics

My definition of SAVORING

Diving into the potential for delight in an experience, being aware that we are enjoying this experience, magnifying and growing our enjoyment, and giving our attention to both our delight and our appreciation of the qualities of the thing that is pleasing us so

Let's Try One More Example

- Try to enjoy what comes next
- As you notice elements of the video, give some attention to what you find pleasing
- There is no need to report back, so use your enjoyment and your noticing in any way you like



Let's Try One More Example

- Try to enjoy what comes next
- As you notice elements of the video, shift your attention to what you find pleasing
- There is no need to report back, share your enjoyment and your noticing in a

Grouchy Philosopher Syndrome

Start Small, Start Now
+steer toward living, not just thinking

Scalable

- structured...enough
- seems enjoyable or easy
- low barrier to entry
- no need for Interpersonal processing

Hidden Depths

1. Nature exposure increases meaning in life and wellbeing
2. Easy enough to ask someone to breathe
3. Easy enough to ask someone what is relaxing for her/him/them
4. Easy enough to ask someone to tell a story about time spent in nature, or with someone by a stream, or about a favorite activity like hiking or walking
5. Easy enough to ask someone to plan for a future session of relaxing, or seeing nature, or telling a story...
6. Easy enough to ask someone to plan to bring along a friend, or to videochat with someone, during a future session of relaxing, or seeing nature, or telling a story...
7. Easy enough to ask someone what life would be like without the little parts of the world that help them relax, or feel at peace, or that they look forward to sharing with others...

Deeper Than It Seems

1. Nature exposure increases meaning in life and wellbeing
2. Easy enough to ask someone to breathe
3. Easy enough to ask someone what is relaxing for her/him/them
4. Easy enough to ask someone to tell a story about time spent in nature, or with someone by a stream, or about a favorite activity like hiking or walking
5. Easy enough to ask someone to share a session of relaxing, or seeing nature, or telling a story
6. Easy enough to ask someone to videochat with someone about a session of relaxing, or seeing nature, or telling a story
7. Easy enough to ask someone to share a session of relaxing, or seeing nature, or telling a story of the world that help to share with others...



Meaning in the Moment Curriculum

Four Sessions

1. Life is What You Pay Attention To
2. The Miracle Machine
3. Savor
4. A Stitch in Time

Eight Exercises*

Attention → Our Bodies → Meaningful Savor → Folding Time

*there are a couple of bonus visualization exercises



Meaning in the MOMENT

Opens soon!

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