

How to lead a happy and fulfilled life? –

An existential analytical approach to myself and meaning

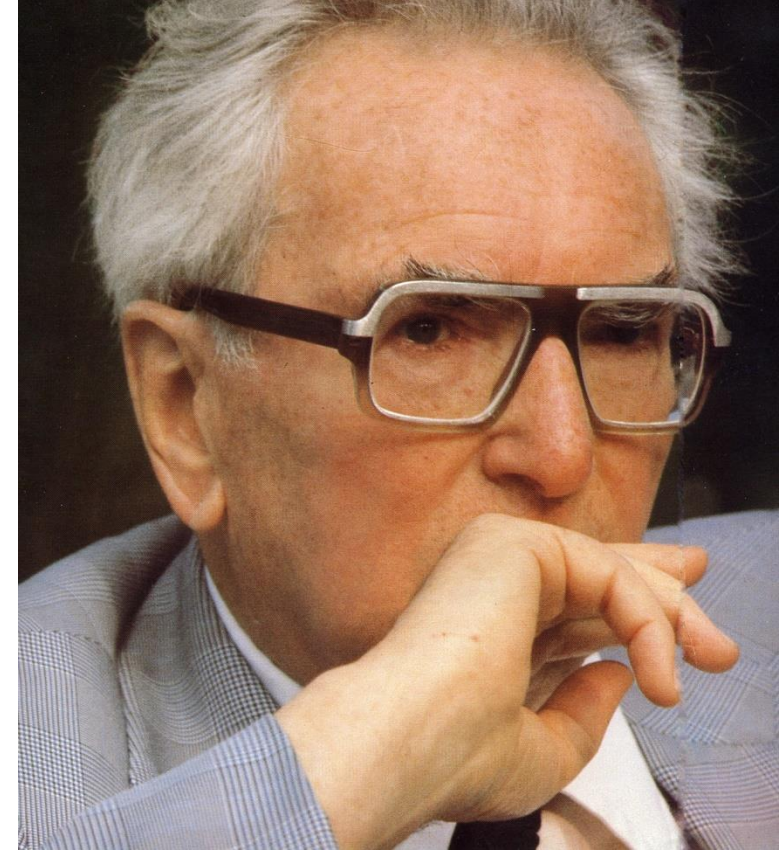
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Viktor Frankl M.D., Ph.D.
(1905 – 1997)

- „Man's Search for Meaning“
- Philosophical concept of man
- Logotherapy as practical application of meaning concept





2. AIM OF EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS:

**TO HELP THE PERSON
TO LIVE WITH
INNER CONSENT
TO WHAT ONE IS
DOING**



What else is happiness?

- than to really be myself
- feel free
- accompanied by myself
- in a valuing presence in my world
- and in a good exchange/dialogue



[Existential Analysis =]

**... am I content *with me* in my
life?**

[= PERSON in the center]

To BE MYSELF:

PROCESS MODEL

STRUCTURAL MODEL

Power of
the person

Basis of
existence

PERSONAL EXISTENTIAL
ANALYSIS

FUNDAMENTAL EXISTENTIAL
MOTIVATIONS

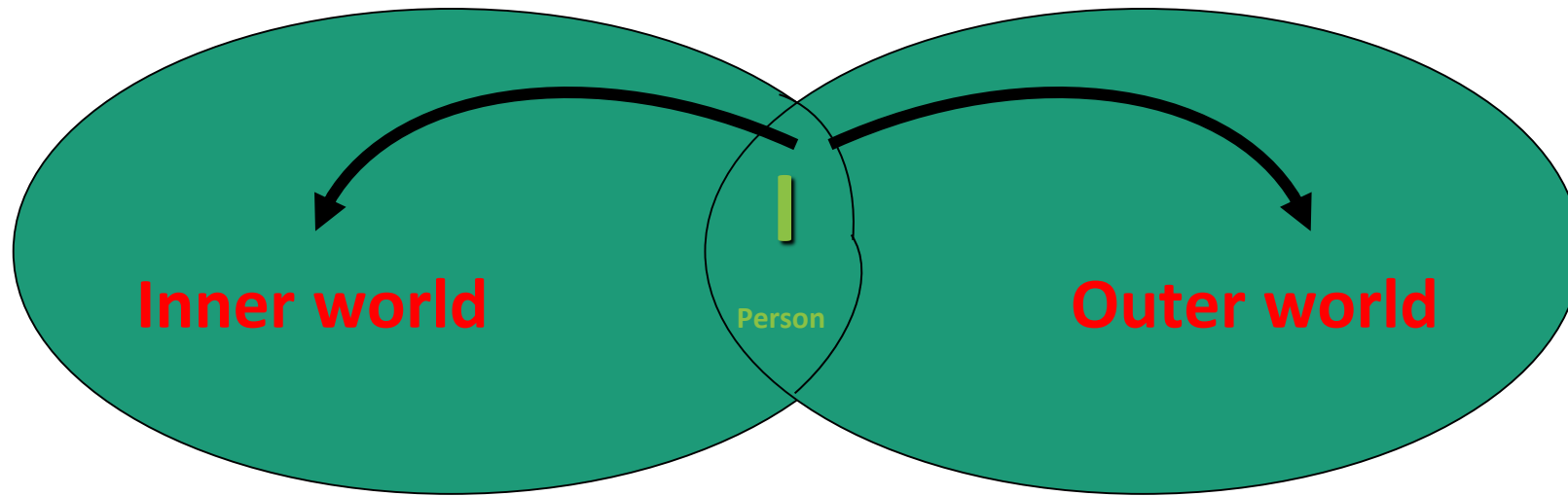
PEA

FM

4) Being a person means:

dialogical exchange with *oneself* and
others

[\Rightarrow basic principle of EA]



Person stands in continuous inner and outer dialogue

Some descriptions of “person”:

- What is saying “I” within oneself
- What is free in the subject
 - ⇒ what corresponds and is congruent, “the right”
 - Gives direction for choosing, deciding; says where I am responsible

Some descriptions of the “person”:

- **Autonomous**, authentic, pure subjectivity, unique individual
- This with what I **identify** with me
- Creative “*self-efficacy*”

Specific power/potential of the “person”

Specific potentials of the “person”:



1. to be receptive



The inner world is attainable
and can be impressed, touched,
moved, reached

Specific potentials
of the “person”:



2. to be understanding



Connects new / outer information with
own / known and evaluates it
personally

Specific potentials
of the “person”:

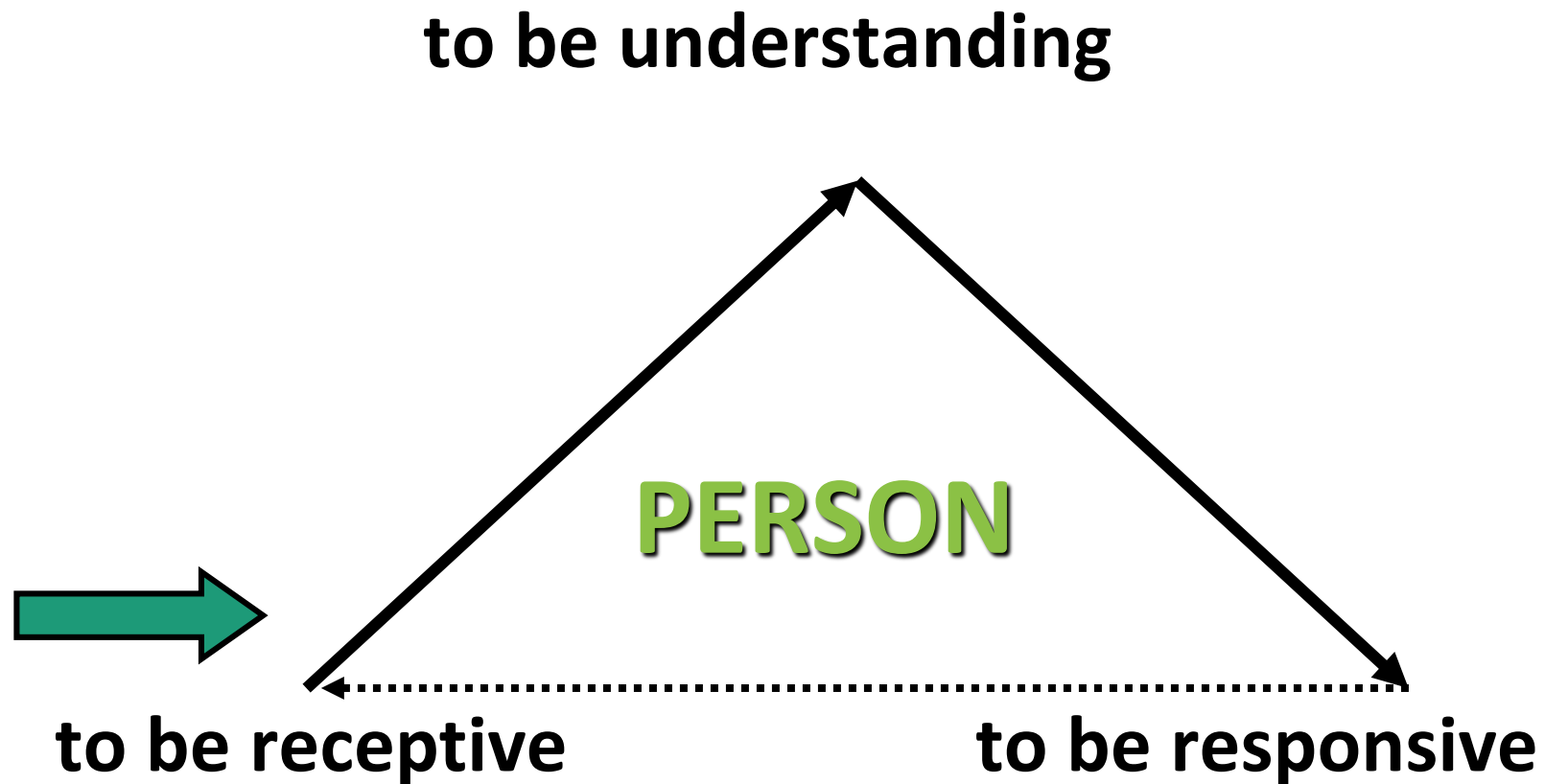


3. to be responsive



Something new, genuine, original
comes to the world –
the own answer corresponding to
demands/question of the situation

[The specific potentials of the person seen as a process]



5) THE CORNERSTONES OF EXISTENCE

Correspond to the **FOUR DIMENSIONS OF EXISTENCE:**

- the **world**
- the **life**
- the **being oneself (person)**
- the **wider context**

THE **FOUR FUNDAMENTAL ACTUALITIES:**

- the **world**: perceiving of facts & possibilities

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THE **FOUR FUNDAMENTAL ACTUALITIES:**

- the **world**: perceiving of facts & possibilities
- the **life**: feelings & values
- the **being oneself**: sensing & being a person
- the **wider context**: developing & becoming (future)

RESULT:

the **cornerstones** of
existence

⇒ 4 fundamental
existential **motivations**

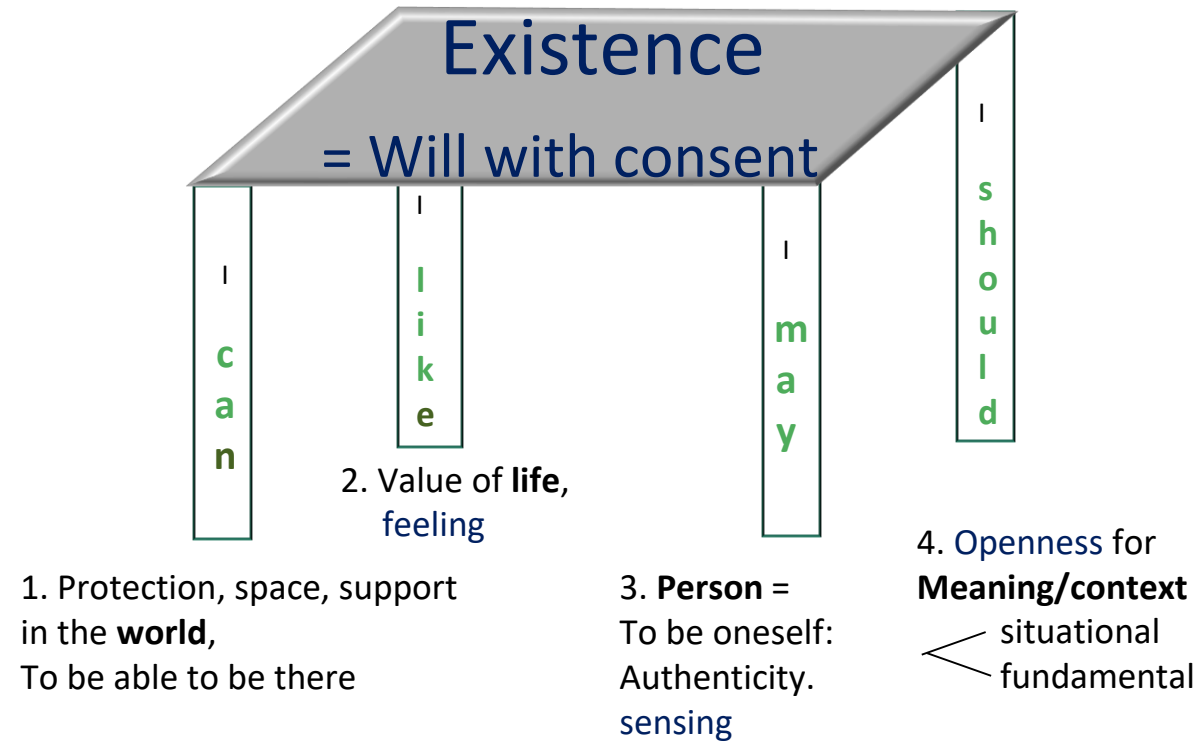


6) THE FOUR BASIC ACTIVITIES:

1. To **be able** to be there
2. To **like** to live
3. To **may** be one-self
4. To do what we **should** (are called to)

⇒ Holistic **will**

OVERVIEW



7) THE EXISTENTIAL MOTIVATION:

7.1 THE FIRST EXISTENTIAL MOTIVATION:

(the fundamental condition of existence)

= the ability of being in this world

a) Basic question:

I am –
can I be?



b) NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES:

**“I cannot be here” ⇒
anxiety**

c) COPING REACTIONS: (defense mechanisms)

1. Basic reaction: **avoidance,**
flight
2. Paradoxical reaction =
activism: **attacking**

3. AGGRESSION: hate (= destructive)

4. FREEZING REFLEX: benumbing, shock

d) PERSONAL ACTIVITY:

**Accept,
Endure**

e) PREREQUISITES:

- **Protection**
- **Space**
- **Support**

7.2 THE SECOND EXISTENTIAL MOTIVATION:

(the fundamental
condition of *life*)

= the ability of
relating to life



a) BASIC QUESTION:

I live – do I really *like* to live?

**b) Negative
consequences:**

→ depression

c) COPING REACTIONS:

1. Basic reaction: **regression**

2. Paradoxical reaction = activism:
achievement

3. Aggression: **fury** (= relational)

4. Freezing reflex: **resignation**

d) PERSONAL ACTIVITY:

turning towards;
grieving (mourning)

e) PREREQUISITES:

relationship
time
closeness

7.3 THE THIRD EXISTENTIAL MOTIVATION:

(the fundamental
condition of
being a person)

= the ability of
being oneself



a) BASIC QUESTION:

I am myself –
may I be as I am?

b) NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES:

**hysteria, most
personality disorders**

c) COPING REACTIONS:

1. Basic reaction: **distance**
2. Paradoxical reaction = activism:
functioning; punish

3. Aggression: **anger** (setting boundaries)

4. Freezing reflex:

dissociation, splitting

d) PERSONAL ACTIVITY:

Looking at, drawing boundaries,
encounter
forgive
regret

e) PREREQUISITES:

attention

justice

appreciation

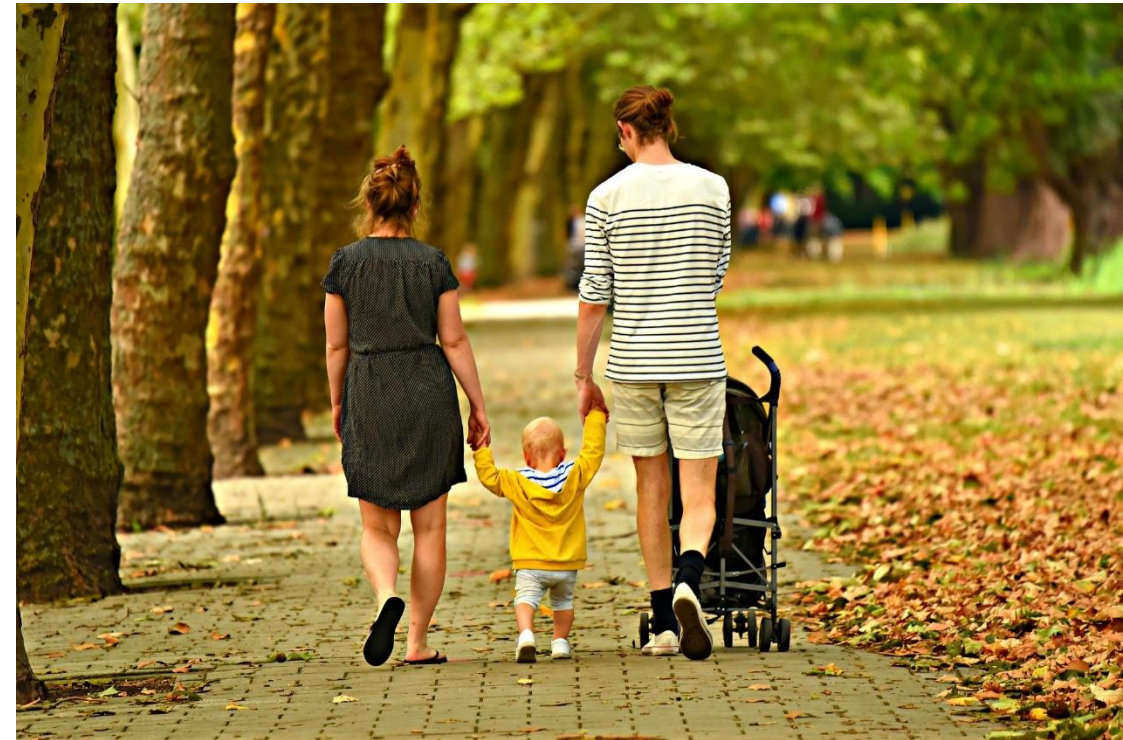
RESULTS:

self-image
ego-structure
ego-strength
authenticity

7.4 THE FOURTH EXISTENTIAL MOTIVATION:

(the fundamental condition
for a *meaningful life*)

= the ability of
finding meaning



a) BASIC QUESTION:

I am there
– for what good?

EXISTENTIAL TURN:

„I am asked by the situation“ (Frankl)

b) NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES:

Suicidality

c) COPING REACTIONS:

1. Basic reaction: **provisional life**
planless, day-to-day attitude; collective
thinking

2. Paradoxical reaction = activism: **ersatz-life;**
fanaticism

3. Aggression:

cynicism;

playfull, pleasurable aggression

4. Death imitating reflex:

fatalism;

apathy, loss of interest; nihilism

d) PERSONAL ACTIVITY:

tuning the situation with oneself
checking the outcome for
others/future

e) PREREQUISITES:

structural context
field of activity
value in the future

EXISTENTIAL MEANING:

the most valuable possibility of the
given situation

ONTOLOGICAL MEANING:

the meaning of being

⇒ philosophy

art

religion

f) PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES:

act

devote

commit



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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