

LIVING LOGOTHERAPY

Elisabeth Lukas

LOGOTHERAPY Principles and Methods

A publication series of the Elisabeth-Lukas-Archive

Living Logotherapy

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Principles and Methods

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Foreword for the Series “Living Logotherapy”

“In our time, people usually have enough to live on. What they often lack, however, is something to live for.” This is how Viktor E. Frankl, the Viennese psychiatrist and founder of logotherapy, summarised a problem that is just as relevant today as ever. Elisabeth Lukas, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, has an international reputation as Frankl’s most important student. In her many books, she illustrates how logotherapy provides help in cases of mental illness, enriches the everyday life of healthy people and inspires us all to lead a meaningful, fulfilling life. Her books illustrate how humane, authentic and up-to-date a “living logotherapy” can be. The main objective of this new series is to make her books, which have enjoyed lasting success in the German-speaking world, more accessible to speakers of English.

Many people have worked hard to make it possible for the Elisabeth Lukas Archive to publish this new series. Particular thanks are due to our translator Dr. David Nolland, who has produced a fluid text that remains very close to the original. He has excellent knowledge in the field of logotherapy and supervises this series in all matters relating to the English-speaking market. Thanks are also due to Prof. Dr. Alexander Batthyány, who supported us from the beginning and will accompany this series as a guide. The formatting and layout is due to Bernhard Keller, and the beautiful presentation of the books is wholly attributable to his expertise.

The first book in this series was a collaborative project combining discussions of the theory of logotherapy by Lukas with numerous case studies by Schönfeld. The present book, the second in the series, is a textbook by Elisabeth Lukas on the fundamental concepts of logotherapy and their applications. This book has been reprinted in German many times,

but there has not, until now, been a satisfactory translation available in English.

Thanks to Dr. Kagelmann of Profil Verlag, the holder of the rights for the German version of the books, for generously giving his permission for an English language version.

The third book, which will appear shortly, is a further collaboration between Lukas and Schönfeld, combining case studies with discussions of how these cases illustrate the practical application of logotherapeutic methods.

All that remains is to wish all of these books on the practical application of logotherapy success in the English-speaking world. May it give readers a glimpse into the vitality and relevance of these lifechanging therapeutic methods!

Dr. Heidi Schönfeld

Director of the Elisabeth-Lukas-Archive

Translator's Note

Logotherapy is notoriously tricky to translate, as indicated by Frankl's dissatisfaction with the translations of his own works. In developing his ideas, Frankl made use of nuances of language: metaphor, wordplay, and poetry, and it is not always possible to render these into another language. What is important is to make sure that Frankl's intentions are respected, that his underlying respect for the human spirit in all its responsibility and freedom is kept in focus.

Elisabeth Lukas is a student of Frankl who followed very closely in his footsteps, and this classic work illustrates her achievements in developing the practical applications of Frankl's logotherapeutic methods. To do justice to these methods, and provide a satisfactory reference work for an English-speaking world, we have to be careful that the nuances do not become misleading. To stay on track, we simply need to recall that meaning is always there to be found, and that we have, inalienably, within ourselves, everything we need to find it.

A note on the many Frankl quotations in this book. Most of these have been cited from German originals, and in these cases the translations are all mine. In many cases there is no English translation available, and even where there is, we often felt that a new translation was better suited to the needs of Lukas' text.

Dr. David Nolland

LOGOTHERAPY'S
CONCEPT OF MAN

Classification of Logotherapy

Logotherapy was founded by the Viennese psychiatrist and neurologist Viktor E. Frankl (1905-1997). It can be categorized amongst the many therapeutic approaches existing today by noting to two main points of view:

1. According to W. Soucek, logotherapy is the “Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy”, where Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis is the “First Viennese School of Psychotherapy” and Alfred Adler’s Individual Psychology is the ”Second Viennese School of Psychotherapy”. There is a simple rule of thumb to help us remember the emphases of these three approaches: Sigmund Freud focused on the “will to pleasure”, Alfred Adler on the “will to power”, and Viktor E. Frankl on the “will to meaning”. Naturally these are only simplified descriptions, which cannot claim to do full justice to the corresponding schools of psychotherapy. They merely characterise typical areas of research. Freud’s comprehensive theories focus on human drives – in particular the gratification of the sexual drive – which, if suppressed, become a source of psychic disorder. Adler examined the relationship of the individual to the social environment and derived the theory that deepseated feelings of inferiority lead to compensatory striving for power. Frankl ultimately saw human beings as entities who want to shape life in a meaningful way, and who can become psychologically ill when their *will to meaning* is frustrated.
2. In American textbooks logotherapy is considered a “third force” in psychotherapy, a third approach, though in a somewhat different sense than for Soucek. In the USA, psychoanalysis is regarded (purely historically) as the ‘first force’, behavioural therapy is regarded as the “second force” and so-called existential psychiatry, which became well-

known in Europe through Charlotte Bühler's concept of "humanistic psychology", is regarded as the 'third force'. Logotherapy is seen as part of this third force, although Frankl's concepts differ in one important respect from the ideas of humanistic psychology. In logotherapy, self-actualization is not recognized as the highest goal of human existence, as is the case for all of the many versions of humanistic psychology. In logotherapy, self-actualisation is not recognized as the highest goal of human existence, as is the case for all of the many versions of humanistic psychology. In logotherapy, the self-transcendence of human beings rates higher than self-actualisation. What this means will be explained below. Here it must only be established that in the American context logotherapy is assigned to the third force of psychotherapy, even though its content goes beyond it.

"People who set themselves an objective such as selfactualisation overlook and forget that ultimately human beings can actualise themselves only to the extent to which they fulfil a meaning in the external world, not within themselves. In other words, self-actualization evades being defined as an objective insofar as it occurs as a side-effect of other objectives. This is what I call the 'self-transcendence' of human existence."¹

Again, there is a simple rule of thumb for distinguishing the emphases of these three major groups of psychotherapy according to the American classification. This is what it says: Psychoanalysis sees humans as "abreacting beings"; behavioural therapy sees humans as "reacting beings"; logotherapy sees humans as "acting beings". These are also simplified descriptions, whose memonics are a play on words: each time a prefix is deleted. Ab-re-acting represents the drive dynamic which is the brainchild of psychoanalysis. Re-acting represents the conditioning and learning processes which are the focus of behavioural therapy. And the capacity for acting in freedom emphasises human *freedom of will*, which is highly regarded in logotherapy.

Giambattista Torello once asserted that logotherapy is the last complete system in the history of psychotherapy. What he meant by “complete” is that logotherapy as a therapeutic approach is based on a finely honed concept of human beings and of the world. He was not mistaken, for the edifice of logotherapeutic thought is supported by three “pillars”, which Viktor E. Frankl designated as

freedom of will – will to meaning – meaning of life

The two outside pillars are axioms which elude scientific proof, as many thinkers and philosophers before Frankl had already established. The middle pillar, the *will to meaning*, can and has been proven by experimental psychological studies to be a primary motivating force for human beings. Let us look at the three pillars in detail:

Pillar 1

The question of how “free” or “unfree” humans really are has been asked throughout history. According to logotherapy, every human being has *freedom of will*, at least potentially. This potential *freedom of will* can be constrained at times by illness, immaturity, or senility, or can even be overridden, but this does not affect its fundamental existence. Logotherapy is a “non-deterministic” psychology.

“Logotherapy’s concept of man is based on three pillars, the freedom of will, the will to meaning, and the meaning of life. The first of them, the freedom of will, is opposed to a principle that characterises most current approaches to man, namely, determinism. Really, however, it is only opposed to what I am used to calling pan-determinism, because speaking of the freedom of will does not in any way imply any a priori indeterminism. After all, the freedom of will means the freedom of human will, and human will is the will of a finite being. Man’s freedom is no freedom from conditions but rather freedom to take a stand on whatever conditions might confront him.”²

Pillar 2

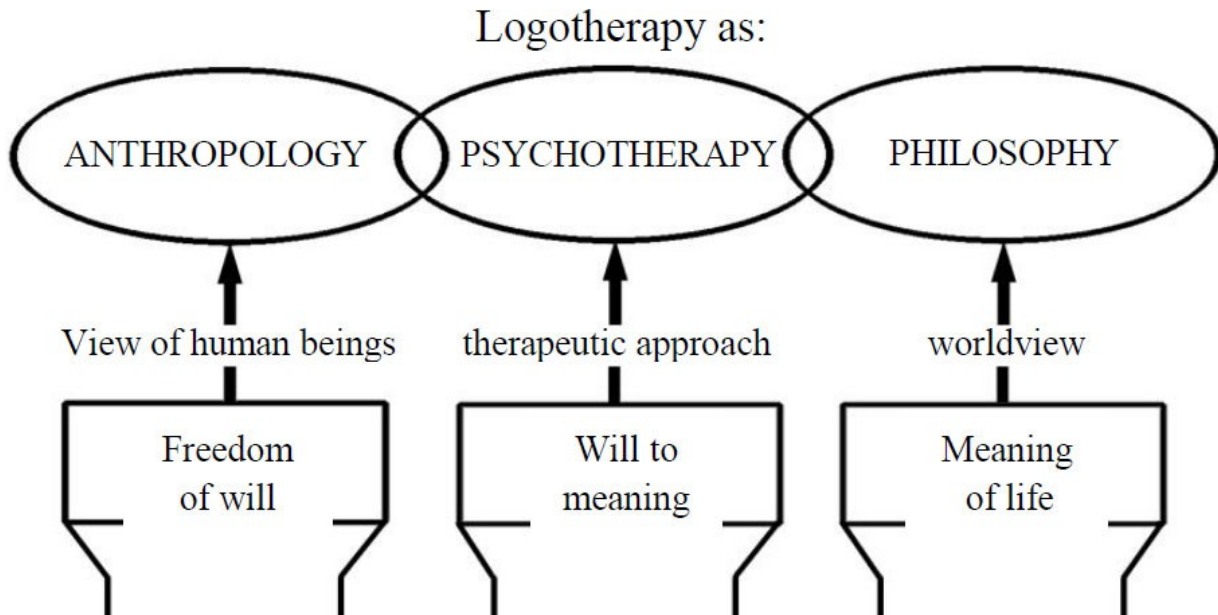
The motivational concept of *will to meaning* means that every human is animated by a striving and yearning for meaning. The fulfilment of meaning is the meeting of two complimentary parts: an “internal” part – this striving and yearning for meaning – and an “external” part, the meaning offered by a situation. If the *will to meaning* in human beings is constrained by illness, immaturity or senility, which does sometimes happen, then this is an impairment in the perception of the external part and not an attrition of the internal part, which remains a proof of humanness even in the case of serious disorders. Logotherapy is meaning-centred psychotherapy.

“Meaning is something objective, and that is not just an expression of my own private and personal worldview, but something which has been verified by psychological research. Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of gestalt psychology, explicitly pointed out that every situation possesses the character of a demand, namely ‘the meaning’ that the person who is facing the situation has to fulfil. ‘The demands of the situation’ are to be responded to as ‘objective qualities’. What I call the *will to meaning* seems to lead to something like a gestalt concept. James Crumbaugh and Leonard T. Maholick describe the will to meaning as the specifically human ability to discover objective meaning not only in the actual, but also in the possible.”³

Pillar 3

The postulate of meaningfulness of life expresses the logotherapeutic conviction that life has an unconditional meaning which it cannot lose under any circumstances. This meaning can, however, evade human comprehension. Insofar as this meaning is too big to be grasped by humans, it must always be perceived and sensed anew. It follows that logotherapy is a positive worldview.

“There is no situation in life that is really meaningless. This is because the seemingly negative aspects of human existence, especially the tragic triad which consists of suffering, guilt and death, can also be fashioned into something positive, into an achievement, if only they are faced with the right composure and attitude.”⁴



The figure shows that each pillar corresponds to a disciplinary form of logotherapy. *Freedom of will* is the basis for its concept of the human being and shapes its anthropological foundations. The *will to meaning* is the starting point and pivotal point of its therapeutic approach and therefore pervades all of its psychotherapeutic methods. The *meaning of life*, that is, belief in the unconditional meaningfulness of human life under any and all circumstances, belongs to its worldview, to its philosophy.

In this textbook of logotherapy we will principally be thinking about logotherapy as a therapeutic approach. To apply its methods successfully, it is essential to get to know at least the main features of its concept of the human being. It is just as essential to apply the worldview of logotherapy to preventative and follow-up care. For this reason, and to provide a broader view of the philosophy of its teachings, a brief description of the

anthropological foundations of logotherapy is given first, followed by an explanation of how logotherapy deals with psychic disturbances.

Before we begin, it is appropriate to answer a frequently asked question: how scientific can a structure of thought be, when it is built on two pillars which cannot be empirically verified, as is the case with the first and third pillars? Well, every form of psychotherapy has its own specific axiomatic basis. The entire field of medicine requires at least one such pillar to justify its existence, namely the belief that human life is of value and is to be preserved. Without this axiom there would be no reason to treat sick people, or to operate on them; one could simply allow them to die. It cannot be scientifically proven that there is any advantage in prolonging life, especially in the context of global overpopulation. We should not, however, allow our belief in the fundamental importance and value of human life to be shaken; it resonates deeply within us, and it is strengthened in logotherapy by the elements of meaningfulness.

The problem of *freedom of will* is even more controversial. But here as well, all forms of psychotherapy must at least agree on the basic assumption that a patient is capable of changing. Without this assumption, therapeutic efforts would be pointless from the outset, and yet such a capacity for change cannot be proved, or if so, only in retrospect.

“Logotherapy and existential analysis are admittedly based on clinical practice, but one cannot evade the fact that they flow into a meta-clinical theory, as all psychotherapies have as an implicit basis; and this theory implies a vision, that is, the vision of a concept of the human being. In this way we come full circle: clinical practice is always determined and influenced to a large extent by the concept of the human being that the doctor brings to the patient, even if it is unconscious and uncontrolled. In fact, every psychotherapy plays itself out against an a priori horizon. There is always an anthropological concept at its base, whether the psychotherapy is conscious of it or not.”⁵

The Concept of Dimensional Ontology

Viktor E. Frankl presented his concept of the human being by means of his concept of “dimensional ontology”. He unfolded being human into three dimensions: somatic, psychological, and spiritual. The analogy with the three-dimensionality of space makes it clear that this is not a theory of three “layers”. The human dimensions of being interpenetrate one another as completely as the three dimensions of space: length, height and breadth. For example, it would be ridiculous to say that the spatial dimension “width” begins where the spatial dimension “length” ends. It is the same for human beings: for a human all three dimensions of being meet at every “point”. Frankl spoke of a “unity in spite of diversity”.

The somatic level of a human is easy to define: it corresponds to all physical phenomena. It includes organic cell activity and biological-physiological bodily functions, including all associated chemical and physical processes.

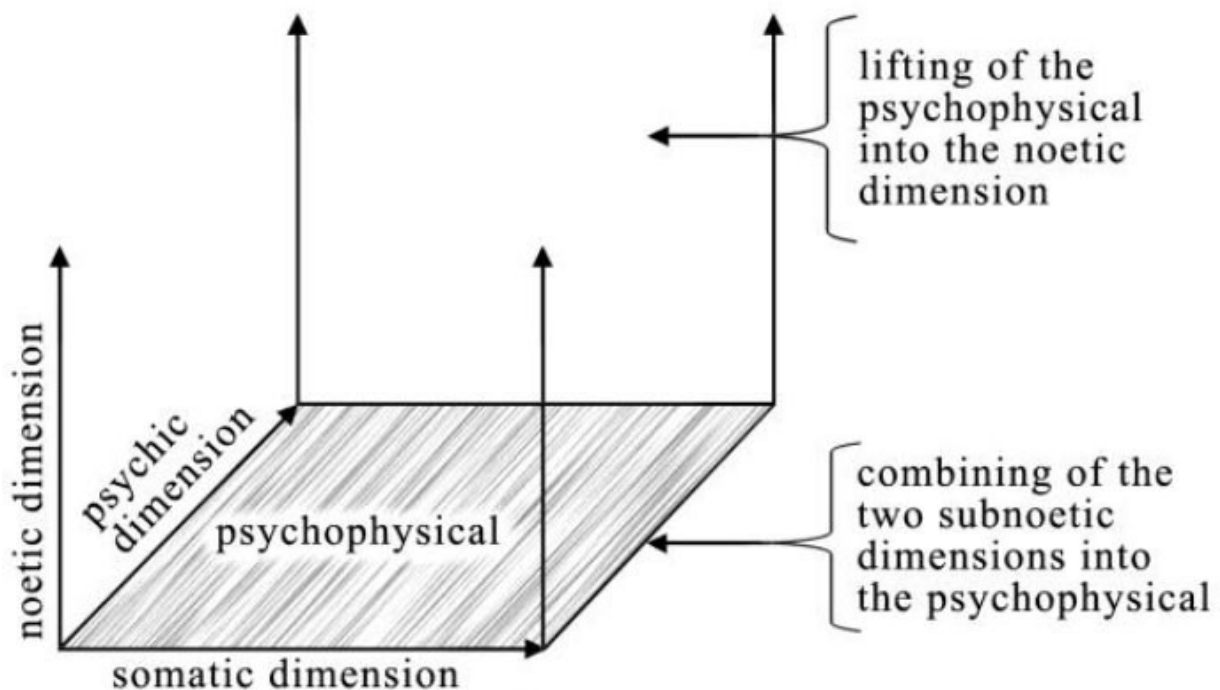
The psychic plane of the human being is to be understood as the sphere of condition: mood, instincts, desires, affects. To these psychic phenomena we add intellectual talent, acquired patterns of behaviour, and social formation. In short, cognition and emotion are “at home” in the psychic dimension.

What is left over for the spiritual plane? An endless amount! The “primal human” aspect, namely the freedom to determine one’s attitudes to body and condition. Independent decision-making (“intentionality”), technical and artistic interests, creative activity, religiosity and ethical sensibility (“conscience”), an understanding of values and love are all located in the spiritual dimension of the human being.

If we were to divide the living beings on earth according to their participation in the different dimensions of being, we would arrive at the following, with a minimal number of transitional forms:

plants, animals, people → body
animals, people → body, psyche
people → body, psyche, spirit

We see that the spiritual plane (which has nothing to do with intelligence or understanding) is the real human one, the “uniquely human” dimension; in logotherapy it is also called the “noetic dimension”, from the Greek word nous (spirit or mind). The other two levels, which humans share with animals, i.e. the somatic and the psychosocial dimensions (animals also have emotions and cognition to a certain extent!), are characterised in logotherapy as the “psychophysical” or the “subnoetic dimensions”.



Because logotherapy focuses primarily on the noetic dimension, Frankl used the formulation: “Logotherapy is a psychotherapy from the spiritual and towards the spiritual.” In this respect, it stands out from the other schools of psychotherapy, which focus more on the psychic dimension, dedicating themselves to the elucidation of buried drives or of human

learning and developmental history. The results, particularly those which have been verified experimentally, are by no means questioned by logotherapy, but they are identified as localised on a two-dimensional plane. Frankl's contribution was to integrate the uniquely human aspects of being human into conventional psychotherapy, which until then had literally been "spiritless" psychotherapy.

"In this three-dimensional schema, it is now apparent from the three-dimensionality of the human being that the uniquely human can only appear when we venture into the spiritual dimension. A human is only visible as a human once we take this "third" dimension into consideration: only then do we see the human as such. While the vegetative life of man can be explained within the bodily dimension, and his animalistic life, if necessary, within the psychic dimension, human existence as such, personal spiritual existence does not fit into this two-dimensional "plane" of mere psychosomatics. Homo humanus can at most be projected onto this two-dimensional plane. In fact, the essence of what we call projection is that one dimension is sacrificed – that is, projected onto the next lower dimension.

Such a projection has two consequences: It leads to 1. ambiguity and 2. contradictions. In the first case the reason for this consequence is the following: different things are mapped onto the same thing by projection. In the second case, the reason is found in the following fact: one and the same thing maps onto different things in different projections."⁶

Psychotherapy with its many different approaches is not exactly lacking in ambiguities and contradictions ... with reference to Frankl's words, it can be assumed that it still suffers from the consequences of improper projections. The most human things in man, like value structures or the inborn desire for meaning, must not be lost in the jungle of psychological interpretations. Logotherapy endeavours to avoid this error by perceiving

the spiritual as its own human dimension – the real one, if not the only one – and by investigating whether the influence of the spiritual on the other two dimensions can be used for therapeutic purposes. For this reason, it does not neglect the psychic-social and physical dimensions, but it sets itself the specific research goal of exploring the extent to which the spiritual forces in humans can be mobilised and it can look back on more than 70 years of research, from which some very important results have emerged. Where traditional psychology essentially uncovers ‘psychic dependencies’, logotherapy promotes ‘spiritual independence’, and where traditional psychotherapy analyses ‘neurotic arrangements’, logotherapy registers ‘existential commitment’. This is an extraordinary extension, an additional entry point, otherwise achieved only by pastoral care, which is, however, normally only available to a subset of people: believers with denominational affiliations.

- a) to remove spiritual frustrations,
- b) to correct mental disorders
- c) to alleviate (psycho)somatic suffering,

It goes without saying that each patient must be helped at the level of existence in which his or her disorder is present. For this reason, at the somatic level, medication (including psychotropic drugs) or, if necessary, electric shock therapy is needed, and at the psychic level cathartic relief, behavioural therapy exercises, cognitive problemsolving strategies, and so on, and in the area of overlap between the physical and the psychic, relaxation techniques (autogenic training, yoga) and suggestive methods. However, to be properly equipped for holistic treatment also requires therapeutic methods that penetrate into the noetic dimension, and logotherapy, ideally combined with therapy operating at a sub-noetic level, fills this gap. This is quite apart from its excellent potential for being combined at its own level with pastoral care or with all forms of art (therapy) or with (promotion of) education.

From the explanations so far, it is clear that it is important to distinguish the psychic and spiritual dimensions from one another and not to mix them together. (There is less confusion in this regard at the somatic dimension.) To acquire a deep knowledge of logotherapy, one has to incorporate into one's thoughts the "noo-psychic antagonism", which according to the theses of logotherapy characterises human existence. This is nothing less than the possibility of fruitful interaction between "psyche" and "spirit" within a person.

"Man is a point of intersection, a crossroads of three levels of being: the physical, psychic, and spiritual. These level of being cannot be separated cleanly enough from one another. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to say that a human is a 'sum' of the physical, the psychic, and the spiritual: man is a unity and totality, but within this unity and totality, the spiritual 'interacts' with the physical and the psychic. This creates what I once called the noopsychic antagonism. While psychophysical parallelism is obligatory, noo-psychic antagonism is optional: it is always only a possibility, a mere power, but a power which can always be appealed to, and which has to be appealed to on the medical side: again and again it has to call upon the 'defiant power of the spirit', as I have called it, against the seemingly so powerful psychophysical reality.

The noo-psychic antagonism thus states that the psychic dimension and the spiritual dimension of man are not just somehow juxtaposed, but have a relation with one another, and are sometimes even in opposition to one another. Therefore, in the following chapters the differentiation criteria for both levels should be examined carefully in order to make the enormous potential of their "antagonistic power" transparent for psychotherapy. These are the four distinguishing criteria: fate and freedom, vulnerability and integrity, pleasure orientation and meaning orientation, character and personality. Where they are not heeded, and instead all spiritual phenomena

are traced back to psychic ones, which is equivalent to projecting the third dimension into the second dimension, it produces a distorted concept of the human being against which Frankl rightly warned. Specifically, there are four distorted concepts:

Pan-determinism → Whoever denies human spiritual freedom must logically define humans as being subject to fate.

Psychologism → Whoever loses sight of the integrity of spiritual existence, soon sees a human only as a vulnerable psychic apparatus.

Reductionism → Whoever ignores the meaning orientation of the human being is tempted to interpret every motive as an expression of a (secret) instinctual need.

Collectivism → Whoever ignores the personality of the individual is quickly ready to judge him or her solely by character type.

These mistakes are to be excluded in logotherapeutic anthropology, because they are sins against the “spirit”, from which nothing good proceeds.

	2nd human dimension: “ <i>psyche</i> ”	3rd human dimension: “ <i>spirit</i> ”	False reduction of the 3rd dimension to the 2nd one leads to:
A	fate	freedom	pan-determinism
B	vulnerability	intactness	psychologism
C	pleasure orientation	meaning orientation	reductionism
D	character	personality	collectivism

The Dialectic of Fate and Freedom

The scientific discipline of psychotherapy began at the beginning of the 20th century with the idea that childhood fatefully predetermines a person's whole life. The reason for this deterministic conception is to be sought in the naturalism of the late nineteenth century, a period in which people (especially in the European cultural environment) had a feeling of being at the mercy of fate. Many discoveries were being made, which increased this sense of dependency and "smallness". Advances in astronomy had revealed the vastness of the cosmos, which made the earth seem like an irrelevant grain of sand. Insights into the relations between societal structures and socioeconomic conditions had made the individual seem like a tiny cog in an unstoppable machine. The rapid development of technology further exacerbated this feeling of fatality; there emerged robotic models of thought, with which people identified themselves. They saw themselves as "programmed", controlled by automatically stored influences.

Existential philosophy developed as a counter-movement, but it split into two camps: one more life-affirming and one more sceptical. It saw humans as beings "thrown into life", who must find their own essence for themselves, but who can, so to speak, recapture the principle of action. Logotherapy has its theoretical roots here, especially in the life-affirming form of existential philosophy.

Amongst the pioneers of psychotherapy, Frankl was the first to reaffirm the element of human spiritual freedom, which, of course, is not freedom "from" something, from outside influences, but a freedom "for" something, namely a freedom to put outside influences in their place: to affirm them, to deny them, to follow them, or to resist them.

"We in no way deny the life and world of human drives. We deny neither the external world, nor the inner world; ... What we emphasise, however, is the fact that a human as a spiritual being is not only confronted with the world – the external world as well as the inner world – but also takes a position with respect to it, can always respond to the world with some "attitude" or "behaviour", and this position is a free one. A human being takes a position at

every moment of existence, both to the natural and social environment, to the external milieu, as well as to the vital psychophysical inner world, to the inner milieu.”⁸

Let us consider the logotherapeutic concept of freedom by looking at three examples.

1. Example: anxiety

Anxiety – with the exception of loving care for someone or something valuable in the world – is an unpleasant mental feeling of being threatened. It “sits” in the second dimension and is closely linked to physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, pallor, or tremors in the first, somatic, dimension. Because it sits or appears there, there is no choice about it at the time of its appearance, and this means that it is “fate”. The causes of anxiety may or may not have been possible to avoid, but the feeling of anxiety cannot easily be ignored when it has crept up in a human being.

On the other hand, the decision about how to react to this anxiety lies in the third, spiritual, dimension: whether one takes it seriously or whether one ignores it, whether one runs away because of it or persists in a situation in spite of it. Here there is something about which a choice can be made, here there is some freedom. So we see that we are not free *from* fear, but free *despite* fear ...

2. Example: a bad childhood

People who have suffered an unhappy childhood are not free from its effects, but they are free to adopt different positions towards it. Some parents say: “I was beaten when I was growing up, so beating is in me. If I get angry, I’ll beat my children too!” Other parents say, “Because I was beaten as a child, I want to make things better for my children. That’s why I do not beat them!”

Upbringing undoubtedly has a powerful influence, but not an allpowerful one. With a certain degree of maturity, every human being is free to educate him or herself. The act of self-education is then less and less

dependent on “the will of the parents”, rather than on an “ought that should be experienced by the individual as his or her own” (Frankl).

3. Example: instinctive actions

An animal cannot act against its instincts. If it is hungry and sees food, it “must” pounce on it and devour it. A person, on the other hand, can be hungry (– *fate*), and still give the last piece of bread which he or she still possesses to a comrade who might need it more urgently (– *freedom*). In the first, somatic, dimension, the stomach will growl and the sinking blood glucose level will cause discomfort. In the second, psychic, dimension, the desire for bread and fantasies about food will cause torments. This is the “psychophysical parallelism” mentioned by Frankl, in which the first two levels are interwoven. But in the third, noetic dimension, a person separates him or herself from the fact of hunger, and decides – if this is what he or she wants for any meaningful reason – to overrule the inner psychophysical pressure.

Humans thereby prove themselves able to respond to the conditions of fate in freedom, and, in doing so, they are responsible for their response. The non-deterministic outlook of logotherapy implies the re-admission of responsibility and possible guilt in the psychotherapeutic concept of the human being.

Where there are no choices at a given time, there can be no guilt. Since we have no ability, for example, to change our past, we cannot be guilty towards it. (This says nothing about whether we were guilty in the past, at the time when we could still make choices about it.) On the other hand, when we have choices, we are responsible for the choice made. And it may happen that a bad, a wrong choice is made. The terms “good or bad” or “right or wrong” are difficult to define, which is why they are replaced in logotherapy by the words “more or less meaningful”. In other words they are measured according to the concrete meaning of the corresponding life situation. Guilt is then: choosing against meaning.

Fate

(The past, biological, psychological and sociological conditions; in the second dimension: instincts, drives, moods)

No choices at a particular point in time



No responsibility



No “wrong” choice can be made



No guilt

Freedom

(In the third dimension: acts of will and inner attitudes, response to the past, to biological, psychological and sociological conditions)

Choices available at a particular point in time



Responsibility



A wrong choice can be made



Possible guilt

“Humanity has developed a maximum of consciousness – of knowledge, of science – and a maximum of responsibility; but at the same time it has developed a minimal sense of responsibility. The man of today knows much more than ever, and is also responsible for many things - for more than ever; but what he knows less about than ever, is his responsibility.”⁹

According to a logotherapeutic outlook, fate never fully explains a person’s behaviour, for a human is not a victim, but a co-creator of his or her destiny. Logotherapy abhors the widespread “victim ideology” in psychology, and the tendency to provide psychological excuses by asserting human dependencies. To assert, for example, that a murderer had to murder because of terrible childhood circumstances or long-suppressed feelings of hatred, is too facile. This criticism on the part of logotherapy does not, of course, apply to cases in which there is limited responsibility as a result of psychosis. It applies to authentic cases such as the following: A 41-year-old Swede was released because of a supposedly severe mother complex after he strangled his wife and stabbed his two children. The court sent him to a

psychiatric institution, where he was discharged as cured after a few months. He took the money from his wife's life insurance and started a nice new life with his girlfriend, in which his wife and children would have been in the way.

Logotherapy asserts that a person can always take a position with respect to his or her childhood circumstances, feelings of hatred, mother complexes, etc., and decide what he or she makes of them; and that it is actually the worst "condemnation" to be denied this last room of manoeuvre and seen as a spiritually incapable marionette, a "homo-automaton", a product of heredity and environment who is unalterably subservient to external conditions. It is precisely this statement that characterises pan-determinism, which commits the error of sparing nothing from deterministic interpretation. However, in fact, there are always still personal choices that are not defined, there always remains a small amount of unpredictability in human life.

Logotherapy has reversed the old deterministic question, which asks what determines a person's feelings and actions, and asks where this ineliminable residue of indeterminateness, which is still present in distress and illness, comes from. Its answer: it comes from the noetic dimension. Thanks to it, human beings can defy their fate, dissociate themselves from their inner states, resist their external circumstances or accept their limitations heroically. On the psychological level, such freedom does not really exist: nobody can choose his or her condition. Anxiety, feelings of anger and instinctual drives are not selectable, conditioning cannot be annulled, social formation cannot be shaken off, limitations of ability cannot be lifted. Reducing the spiritual to the psychic, as pan-determinism does, deprives human beings (at least theoretically) of individual responsibility and delivers them to fate.

What does all this mean for practical psychotherapy? Simply: if we admit that even a psychically disturbed human being has spiritual freedom, we must also respect that human being. A patient shares responsibility for his or her own healing – to the extent that the spiritual dimension is still "open" – and also has the freedom to destroy his or her life. Ultimately,

healing is not “do-able”; it can only be promoted, and relies on the self-healing powers of the body and the psyche, and the willingness of the spirit to be healed. Therefore, one of the basic rules of logotherapy is:

**One should offer help,
but not take away responsibility!**

Unfortunately, psychotherapy often works the other way around, because a therapist strictly avoids giving instructions or disappears behind an impenetrable wall of non-comment. On the other hand, too much responsibility is taken away from the patient, in that all internal and external difficulties are traced back to conflicts initiated by others, and this makes the patient a helpless victim. In logotherapy, concrete help is offered, but responsibility remains with the patient.

Conscience, the “Organ of Meaning”

We have illustrated the noo-psyche antagonism by means of the dialectic between fate and freedom. Here the psychic “determinateness” of the human, everything which is fated, stands against the spiritual “indeterminateness”, everything which is free. We contrasted what is psychically imposed with what can be chosen by the spirit. From the resulting freedom (not from, but for something), we deduced the basic responsibility of the human and the possibility of guilt. But this does not end the chain of logical consequences. For, as freedom presupposes choice, a more or less meaningful choice presupposes the recognition of meaningful and not meaningful, and to ensure this recognition a special “organ” is needed in the human organism: the conscience.

“Meaning not only must but can be found, and human conscience is the guide in the search for it. In a word, the conscience is a