

"To be a good logotherapist"

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The subject assigned to me by Svetlana was "to be a logo-therapist", but I would like to speak about my concept of what it means to be a good logo-therapist, with emphasis on the term good. This subject is relevant and sorely needed today when logo-therapy is making great strides in many countries in the world, *especially in Russia and in Kazakhstan thanks to the dedicated work of Svetlana, Katya and Julianna.*



Professor David Guttman

Last week I spoke with **Elly Frankl**. She complained about the commercialization of Viktor Frankl's spiritual heritage. And the same subject is discussed in each conversation we have once or twice



ELEONORE FRANKL

a month since the death of Viktor Frankl twenty years ago. She keeps lamenting on how the times have changed; how the logo-therapists of today are different from the previous generations, from the old-timers who knew Viktor Frankl personally, understood his philosophy, theory and values, and were affected by his spirit and wisdom; how everything turns around and centers on money, rather than on values, and how much this saddens her.

Her words reminded me of an old anecdote about a rabbi who wishes to convince the richest man in the congregation that money makes one egoistic, stingy, and miser. He holds a sheet of glass in front of the rich man's nose and says: "What do you see?" And the rich man replies: You, rabbi, and your wife and your students. The rabbi then says: "Now let's smear one side of the glass with some silver color. What do you see now?" "Myself", replies the rich man. "You see, says the rabbi, this is what a little silver does, what money does...

The greediness of so many people in today's world is not new and not limited to psychotherapists. The great Sigmund Freud characterized many psychoanalysts in his days as "incorrigible mechanics and materialists".

The question of what does it takes to be a good logo-therapist is an urgent one. The danger of people entering the field of psychotherapy and particularly logo-therapy with questionable backgrounds and qualifications is real. From

my long years of experience in working, teaching, writing and doing research in logotherapy, I know that not everybody can, or should be a logotherapist.

In the "old days of logotherapy", Frankl maintained that only people with a doctoral education in one of the helping professions should be logotherapists, for they would have the necessary knowledge, training and personality to work with people in need of help. This requirement is too strict for implementation in today's world. An appropriate academic degree such as a Masters' is indeed helpful, but not enough. One can assume the role of a good logotherapist if, besides a higher academic degree, that person has lots of knowledge, maturity, life experience, empathy, and an appropriate personality. A good logotherapist needs to be a role model and a living example for the people in his or her care - like Frankl was to his patients. Such a person must remember that a logotherapist is a human being with strengths and weaknesses similar to the rest of mankind. Therefore an attitude of equality with other people is one of the basic requirements of a good logotherapist.

My philosophy of logotherapy is based on the principles I listed in my book "Finding Meaning in Life at Midlife and Beyond, Wisdom and Spirit from Logotherapy". And particularly on how a person looks upon the world, whether as a meaningless, or as a meaningful place. There is a lovely Hasidic story in this regard, told by Jacobson (1995, p.62): "A young child once asked a rabbi why man was created with two eyes instead of one, like the nose and the mouth. The rabbi replied: With the left eye you should look at yourself, to see how you can improve yourself. And with the right eye you should look at others lovingly, always seeking out their best qualities". Looking upon the world with an eye that sees the good in it is already an indication of this person's ability to be a good logotherapist in the future. Now a few words on the **Motivating forces in human behavior**: A good logotherapist should understand the motivating forces in human behavior. Understanding usually comes after years of hard work. You can't acquire it by completing some courses. You have to live logotherapy's values, principles and tenets. There is no instant knowledge in logotherapy – unless you are a genius. What matters most is the inner resolve and motivation of someone who wishes to be a logotherapist. This motivation is expressed by a person's eagerness to learn from many sources of knowledge, from a joy of life; from understanding one's place in this world, from an ability to concentrate on the task at hand; and on accepting the fact that a logotherapist is a servant of the people whose task is to help others in their quest for a meaningful life. It is a wonderful sensation too.

I had this sensation when I met Viktor Frankl in 1984. I knew instantly that this man had what I was searching for, something that fitted well with my being a social worker, one whose real reason for his existence was similar to mine. That is, helping people less fortunate than us as much as we are able to do.

And after our meeting I had a sense of rejuvenation, and consequently changed my whole outlook on life – including my career as a gerontologist. My desire was to become a good logo-therapist. Due to Frankl's influence I understood that there is a whole new way of looking upon the world; that there is another reality beyond the earthly one in the realm of secular spirituality and I wanted to be actively involved in it.

In 1990 Dr. Hiroshi Takashima's wise book titled "Humanistic Psychosomatic Medicine" was published in Israel. The Hebrew translation was done jointly by the late Dr. Mignon Eisenberg, a fine logo-therapist, and by me. According to Dr. Takashima man has four conscious wills (or principles) that motivate his behavior: 1 - His will to survive, according to Pavlov. 2 - His will to pleasure – as developed by Freud; 3 - His will to power – as per Adler, and 4 - His will to meaning, according to Frankl. Of these, only the will to meaning is unique to human beings. The four wills correspond to the life-cycle of a man: The will to survive is the unconscious concern of the soul to exist, and can be observed even at infancy. The will to pleasure is the main objective of adolescence and young adulthood, whereas the will to power characterizes people in their middle years of life and beyond. The will to meaning is the most important of the four wills. It is evident in people who reached spiritual maturity. While the first three wills, namely survival, pleasure and power are expressions of the soul, the will to meaning, as observed in the activities of man, is the most important resource in psychotherapy. It is the expression of the spirit. Therefore the will to finding meaning in life is a central matter in human existence.

In logo-therapy we speak about three dimensions of a human being; the biological, the psychological and the spiritual dimensions. Dr. Takashima developed a fourth dimension and he called it the functional dimension. He based his theory on the amalgamation of logo-therapy with the Japanese concepts of Tai, Chi and Shi.

The working of the four dimensions was illustrated by Takashima with music produced by an orchestra, in which the musical instruments resemble the somatic dimension. The technical knowledge of the musicians is the functional dimension. And the consciousness of the musicians who follow the instructions of the conductor is the psychological dimension. But only the consciousness of the conductor creates the spirit of the orchestra, for he decides how to play the music.

Takashima said that science is needed to analyze the reasons for a sickness. Philosophy is needed to understand the sick person, but we need humanism to treat man and woman. His contribution to lo-gotherapy is vested in his

humanistic approach to medicine and to the spiritual dimension. Now let's speak about;

Wisdom, knowledge and intuition

A good logo-therapist needs an ability to understand the difference between wisdom and knowledge. When we treat somebody we must consider in diagnosis and in treatment the relationships among the four dimensions. For a sickness may begin within any of these dimensions and influence all the others. This understanding is a matter of wisdom, not knowledge, and it points to the difference between wisdom and knowledge.

The purpose and motivation of the medical profession is to ease the suffering of the patient. This purpose applies to logo-therapy as well. Frankl was first and foremost an MD, a doctor of both body and spirit. Thus one who wishes to be a good logo-therapist should learn as much as possible on the alleviation of mental ailments in addition to the physical ones. Takashima maintained that the functional dimension is beyond the psychosomatic approach in modern medicine. And this is evident from the presently existing fragmentation in medicine, in which each component of the human body is treated with sophisticated machinery – while the whole man - body, soul and spirit - is ignored. And now let's speak about:

Seeing beneath the surface

One of the characteristics of the human being is an ability to rise beyond his or herself in various situations. This ability is the expression of wisdom and intuition, not knowledge, nor instinct. We often see just the surface of a situation and judge by appearance. But if we are able to see beneath the surface, we discover a whole new perspective. For example: Frankl's encounter with Dr. Mengele at the Auschwitz railroad station as told in his Recollections. If he would not understand in an instance what was going on at the selection of the prisoners, if he would not switch sides and steal himself to the right line behind Dr. Mengele's back, we wouldn't have Dr. Frankl and logo-therapy. He wrote that "only God knows where I got that idea or found the courage...

We should remember what Antoine de Saint Exupery, the author of "The Little Prince" wrote: "Here is my secret. It is very simple. It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye". This applies to logo-therapists too. We need to know where to search for what is essential for the client. We should remember that people come to the therapist in order to be helped.

Surface impressions may be wrong and even misleading. For example: Recently I saw an interview with an orthodox Jewish Hasid. This man was clothed in the traditional garbs of such a religious person; he had a long beard, a large family with eight children and he gave the impression of a weakling, someone dependent on the community's help for survival. But what turned out in the interview was the complete opposite to what one could observe at the first sight of that person: He was full of energy. He served as a commando in an elite unit in the army. He studied law; travelled in many countries in search of his true identity, his mission and meaning of his existence in the world. He was also holding three jobs, two of them as a volunteer. And after a long search he found his meaning in life by becoming a Hasid.

Intuition is the key to seeing beneath the surface in life, whether it is about relationships, career, or personal growth. It is also a gift. Frankl, for example, used his intuition when someone would surprise him with an unexpected question.

Seeing beneath the surface gives one a different perspective on one's situation, as if all of a sudden something hidden is illuminated by lightning. Intuition enables one to understand hidden motives in the behavior of a client, his fears, his anxiety and the reasons for his behavior.

Intuition is a gift similar to humor. It cannot be learned from books. You either have it, or not. No academic degree can give one intuition. And the same holds true for insight. The importance of listening to your intuition means that you realize that the world is more mysterious than science and scientists can explain.

Now let us see what one needs to become a good logo-therapist? More than thirty years ago Dr. Lukas included in the last chapter of her book "Meaningful Living" the characteristics of an ideal logo-therapist. I translated her book into Hebrew with Dr. Mignon Eisenberg. The book was published in 1988. Dr. Lukas has prepared a list of four traits necessary for the role of an ideal logo-therapist. I will refer to these briefly.

The four traits listed by Dr. Lukas were basically practice oriented and included the following: One, being optimistic and doubtful or pessimistic at the same time. For me, this means that it is permissible to be skeptic in relation to ourselves and the client. We don't have to take problems and people too seriously. We have to accept the fact that not every problem in life is soluble. We have to learn that ailments, such as chronic or incurable illnesses, have to be tolerated. Fight against them is futile. Much wiser is to prepare ourselves in

earlier years for facing them. And we must learn how to relate to the challenge without judgment.

Two, the logo-therapist must search for the reasons behind a problem and, at the same time, to ignore them, especially those that cannot be changed, or those in which the intervention of the therapist may be more hurtful than helpful. Three, the logo-therapist must learn how to deal with cases in which the client comes from a very poor and failed personal background and at the same time with those who come to the therapist because they feel that their lives are empty of meaning, that they live in an existential vacuum – despite their favorable economic condition and social standing. And four, the logo-therapist must have a set of individual values, while he or she must also accept the values of the clients. That is, the logo-therapist must use his or her set of values when the client requests answers to his doubts. These four traits are difficult to follow. They require the logo-therapist to act almost as an acrobat in the circus.

And they remind me of a story from my life:

Once I gave a lecture to graphologists on the theory and method of fate analysis, as developed by the Hungarian psychiatrist Lipot Szondi. He was the creator of a famous test, a projective technique used mainly by psychiatrists and criminologists. I spoke without knowing that my former professor of psychology was in the audience. At the end of my lecture he rose to his feet and said: "I am delighted to hear my former student doing such good work, but his lecture reminds me of a good Swiss cheese. It is full of holes", and now I will fill a few of them. He then proceeded to say that in 1944 he was incarcerated with Szondi in Bergen Belsen, the infamous German concentration camp. They bunks were just a few centimeters from each other and they had plenty of time to speak about Szondi's theory. And thus he learned many things about fate analysis that I couldn't know for I had no access to them. This is why he compared my lecture to a Swiss cheese. Now I wish to do likewise with the traits discussed by Lukas.

There are many traits a good logotherapist needs. I will concentrate on those that are critical in my eyes. But first, I want to emphasize that the caring and curing function of logo-therapy is vested in a close emotional bond between the logo-therapist and the client. This emotional bond is called trust. Trust is a central condition of therapy. It plays a crucial role in individual and social well-being.

A good logo-therapist should remember that an encounter with another human being has a double meaning, that is, with the client and with yourself –

with your soul. The question can be raised when does a person become a client? The answer is: When trust is established; when there is a mutually established contract, when the client feels that you support him and her all the way to recovery from an ailment.

There are two kinds of trust. And the logo-therapist should be aware of the difference between them. The first is trust that exists for example in a skilled worker. Here the customer believes that this man has the necessary skills to perform a job and he is entrusted in his occupation by society. But what is delivered in the hands of a logo-therapist is a different kind of trust: It is the recognition and the responsibility for the potential of changing a person's entire life for good or bad. Each kind of trust is based on the principle of reciprocity. There is an explicit agreement about the expectations of what each party has to do. And if this trust is damaged and lost, then the whole practice is gone. The failure exposes the parties to various degrees of sanctions. Both parties should be equally interested in the therapeutic work. The logo-therapist must be fully aware of the limits of this trust, of this emotional bond, and should never exploit the feelings of the client.

Good logotherapists are people of virtues! Logo-therapy is based on moral requirements. First and foremost among them are integrity and decency of the practitioner. The concept of integrity implies wholeness, emphasizing honesty and authenticity, which means acting all the times in accordance with the individual's chosen worldview.

For me the two most important traits for a good logotherapist are: To be an ethical and a courageous person. These two traits are not easy ones to fulfill. For not everybody is capable of living their lives in such a way that their values and creativity are combined with courage, enthusiasm, dedication and joy that help one to overcome failure, suffering and despair.

Healing in logo-therapy is not dependent on a person's religion, or on his or her cultural background. What matters is the way in which the healing is being performed. It means giving yourself and being truly present. It becomes a virtue when it is practiced to a certain end, when a genuine sharing of the burden occurs, when helping and comforting occurs. To illustrate: A few months ago I went to see a specialist in ophthalmology, an eye doctor due to my difficulty seeing well in my left eye. I was full of anxiety about his verdict and tried to use de-reflection to ease my tension without much success. The specialist conducted the eye examination and then sat with me and talked openly about the eye, the way two healthy individuals speak about a problem. His concentration on the task at hand, his frank explanations gave me strength to face the operation without flinching. And I thought that this doctor could be

a good example for many logo-therapists. I believe that helping another human being in pain, relieving his sorrow and sadness, and directing him or her toward a meaningful existence are an art, much more than a technique.

In ancient Greece, virtues were thought by philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as practical skills aimed at doing what is right and good. Virtues do not emanate from nature, but human beings are built by nature to be capable of acquiring and internalizing them. Aristotle differentiated between intellectual virtues and moral virtues. Both are needed by everybody and for logo-therapists these must be present in learning and in practice. In the intellectual virtues Aristotle listed wisdom, foresight and knowledge, while generosity of the heart and moderation were listed by him among the moral or ethical virtues.

The ancient Greeks thought that servants of the public, such as logo-therapists, needed to be equipped with four cardinal virtues, that come from the heart and all other virtues are related to them. First among these was and is common sense, which means the ability to envision the results and failings of our actions. In ancient Rome this ability was called being "prudential" meaning the ability to a careful weighing of the good and the bad in a given situation. Common sense should be the ethical basis in decision making by the logo-therapist.

The second cardinal virtue was called justice. As a virtue, justice means a feeling deep down in our hearts the difference between right and wrong, between decent and indecent acts. Justice may be perceived as the hinge upon which all other virtues turn. Justice as a virtue symbolizes the absolute good.

The third cardinal virtue is courage. The death of Socrates, perhaps the greatest philosopher of ancient Greece, shows what is meant by real courage. Socrates was commonly regarded by many philosophers as the "father of ethics", for he laid down the ethical foundations of moral behavior and conceived the basic rules of ethics. The foundation of his laws, or philosophy and ethics, is the following: One, never harm anybody. Two, keep a promise in its entirety. And three, respect the parents, the teachers, and the laws of the state. Socrates was interested in seeking applied knowledge. He put his trust in Logos, in the part of the human soul that helps to bring forth real understanding.

I am not ashamed to admit that I am partial to Socrates. I respect his art and his way of talking to people. His influence on Frankl's philosophy is evident in basing logo-therapy on Socrates' concept of Logos. When Socrates spoke with someone whose opinion was in contradiction to his, he would agree with him

at first and then he slowly spoke with that person and convinced him that the truth is a bit further away than he thought at first. This was the famous art of Socrates that Frankl dubbed "the Socratic dialogue" and made it into a basic technique in logotherapy. And this is the reason for my request from a good logo-therapist to master this technique to the fullest before engaging in his or her therapeutic work.

Moderation is the fourth cardinal virtue. It means refrain from extremity in action and in judgment. Moderation is extremely hard to follow, for it requires full control of the animal drives by our will power. Moderation means that a logo-therapist is not a superman, nor a superwoman. That he or she is prone to making many mistakes in decision making.

The four cardinal virtues can be summed up as drives (not in the Freudian sense) toward wisdom (that is common sense), equality in duties and rights (meaning justice), fighting for principles and values (meaning the concept of courage), and balance and self-discipline (meaning moderation or temperance). Now some words about:

The work of a good logotherapist

In 1988 Viktor Frankl received his eighteenth honorary doctorate from the University of Haifa in Israel. Eighteen in Hebrew means life. He was then 83 years old and he lived almost a decade more. In his remarkable speech accepting this honor, Frankl said that many people see only his successes and forget the failures and the pains in his career. He cited a line from the book of Job in the Old Testament: "For man is born to work as sons of fire fly upward" to emphasize that life revolves around work. He said that people fulfill a meaning when they create something, when thru their work they improve the world. For work is a world in itself. For the majority of workers in a given place of work the most important matter is a feeling of satisfaction in doing something meaningful. Feeling of satisfaction in work reflects on the stress level, on physical and mental health, on motivation and on relationships. A good logo-therapist understands his or her work in all its ramifications. You may remember Frankl's story about a man who worked as a trash collector and when he found in the trash a broken and discarded toy he took it home, cleaned and repaired it, and gave it as a present to a poor child.

In speaking about the work of a logo-therapist, the example of Frankl can serve as an excellent guide. In his Recollections, his memoire, he listed three principles that together may help any good logo-therapist in his or her work:

The first principle is to give the smallest things the same attention as the biggest, and to do the biggest as calmly as the smallest. He used to prepare his thoughts meticulously and to rely on his notes.

The second principle is to do everything as soon as possible, and not at the last moment. And his third principle was to do the unpleasant tasks before doing the pleasant ones. He admitted candidly that he didn't always held on to his principles, but then he became angry with himself – so angry at times that he didn't even speak to himself for days...

And now some words about additional requisites from a good logotherapist:

One: A basic requisite from a good logo-therapist is to adhere to the right of the client for autonomy and self- determination regarding all interventions that touch upon his or her life and fate, that is, to respect the client.

Two: A good logo-therapist must have a strong sense of humor. But he also needs to know how to use humor in practice and in teaching. A good logo-therapist must remember to be very careful when using humor with a client. Jokes have a potential for both good and bad and it is easy to be misunderstood. You should not use humor with your client unless you are certain that your client has the same associations with the words and concepts you are using. Everyone knows the power of humor but not everyone is blessed with it. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard said: Even if you are not blessed with a good sense of humor, don't despair at wanting to become your authentic self.

Three: A good logo-therapist should have a healthy zest for life. We can take for example Viktor Frankl. He was full of zest and enthusiasm even in his old age and thru these traits was able to create a fire in the hearts of people everywhere he went.

Four: A good logo-therapist accepts without anger and bitterness the fact that he or she is a servant of society. To serve means caring for the healthy aspects and welfare of other people. Service is not a chore, but an honor. As logo-therapists we have to remember our mission upon this earth. And what is our mission: To restore to individuals their sense of dignity and confidence in themselves.

A good logo-therapist understands that each human being has his and her own destination and that luck has great impact upon individual lives. Yet, there is always a certain degree of freedom in which we can make our choices for good or bad.

Five: Still another requirement from a good logo-therapist is to be aware of the meaning and importance of gratitude. Real gratitude is felt deep in someone's heart. Such gratitude is felt when something unexpectedly good happens to you, when a client feels that he or she is on the way to recovery from the internal nagging of an empty life.

Now a few words about attitude to pain and suffering: As good logo-therapists we must pay our attention to a client's emotional and spiritual needs and to the quality of his and her life. We must help in enlightening a client's inner resources when confronting a difficult challenge, such as feelings of panic and helplessness. We must remember that each person has a healthy core. Our efforts should be aimed to discover that healthy core to relieve feelings of pain, suffering and helplessness.

Suffering is always a challenge. What matters is the attitude to suffering; how much suffering can you endure; how much suffering can you sustain, and are you worthy of this challenge. When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. And we should always remember what the philosopher Kant said, namely, that we should never treat a person merely as a means to an end.

And now let's speak about the encounter with a client

A good logo-therapist can learn a lot from literary sources, such as the Old Testament about the preparations needed by the therapist for an encounter with a client. Each meeting contains an element of pain and a promise for both parties. The Biblical meeting of Jacob with his brother Esau may serve as illustration. According to the story, Jacob stole the rights of the first born from his brother Esau and fled to Babylon. He spent there many years and returned to the Land of Canaan as a rich person. But he had to meet Esau on the way. Jacob was very much afraid of that meeting, for he didn't know how Esau will react when they will meet. Thus he prepared for the meeting in three ways: With a prayer, with a gift and with a readiness to fight.

The encounter with the client requires similar preparations by a good logo-therapist. The prayer is for strength in facing him or her, especially when the client is known as one who may have unstable and unpredictable behavior, or he or she is aggressive and demanding. Contemplation and focus on the appropriate steps how to counteract such behavior can help a lot in the encounter.

The fight resembles the struggle with the client in the search for meaning. It takes lots of work and effort to change one's attitude to self and others. A good

logo-therapist is aware that it is impossible to escape this struggle without some injury to one's soul in the spiritual sense. And the gift is a reward. Jacob was rewarded by the angel with whom he struggled throughout the night with a new name, Israel.

A logo-therapist may gain a different reward: A feeling that the struggle was worth; that something valuable and meaningful happened in the encounter; that there is a feeling of change for the better by the client. And most important, that the encounter was not in vain. This feeling may be perceived by both client and therapist as a gift, as a turning point, and as a foundation for positive encounters in the future.

For the end of my presentation I wish to tell you that for me three ingredients combined together are most important for becoming a good logo-therapist: The first is love of logo-therapy. You have to love logo-therapy with your heart and soul, not just with your mind. Without loving what you are doing, without being open to continuous learning -your work will not be fruitful. The second is to have a solid foundation in terms of personality, motivation, enthusiasm and commitment for performing meaningful work. And the third ingredient is modesty, meaning that you are expected to live according to the principles and values of what you are talking or teaching about.

Now a question may be raised: What else do you need for becoming a good logo-therapist? My answer is: You have to be Real!

Real does not depends on how you are made. It's a thing that happens to you. When someone cares for you for a long time, REALLY cares for you, then you become Real".

Thank you, Spasiba