

"Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl:

16 Takeaways with Chronic Illness

01. The Importance of Retaining Self-Respect



The last of one's liberties is your choice of attitude towards the situations that life presents to you. If you can maintain a thread of dignity and sense of self-worth, then you will find the strength to carry on.



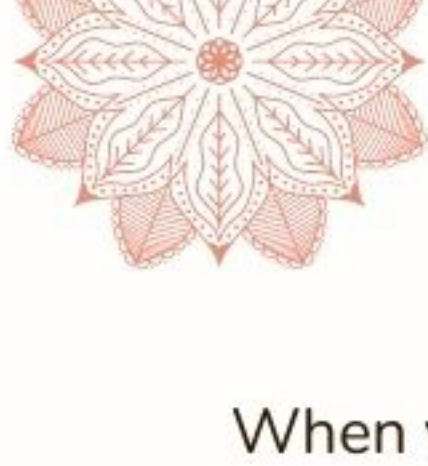
02. The Most Depressing Influence: The Unknown

There is no beginning or end to chronic illness, which can take a toll on a person. There is no real victory in overcoming a pain flare, only a moment of relief. You live to fight more meaningless pain another day.

03. Looking at Others, From the Inside Out



I often felt trapped within my own body; an observer of life and rarely a participator. However, Frankl warns that the danger lies in the opportunities we end up missing out on, as there's always the possibility of creating something positive out of the terrible.



04. Looking at Yourself, From the Outside in

When you observe pain through a different lens, it can feel liberating. Whilst the pain doesn't disappear, it gives me something to observe, study and think about.

05. It Doesn't Really Matter What We Expect From Life



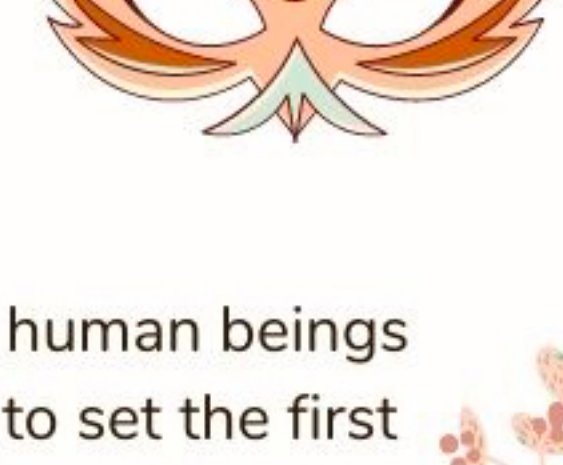
Instead of asking, "What do I want out of life", ask yourself, "What does life expect from me?". What is it that only **you** can accomplish in the current situation? This makes your task unique, and gives it purpose.



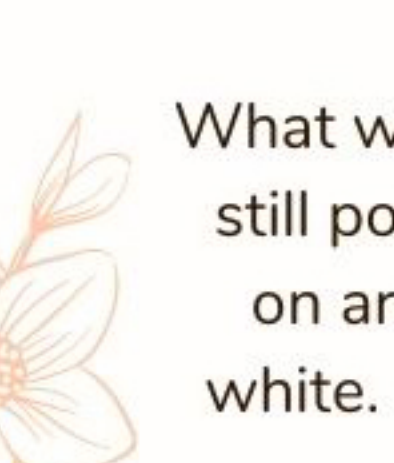
06. Self Defense Mechanisms We Employ

Psychological self defense mechanisms that we pick up are often illogical and often leads to apathy. Instead of burying emotions and fears, acknowledge and give them space to come and go. Humour is also a powerful tool for self-preservation.

07. Be Careful of Becoming the Monster You Hate



If we want others to accept as the normal human beings that we are and to be kind, then we need to set the first example. We need to keep an open mind, and show compassion towards ourselves and towards others.



08. The Disillusionment of 'Happiness' as the End Goal

What would make us happy is often imagined. There are still pockets of joy we can find despite all that is going on around us. Life isn't linear, constant or black and white. Conflicting thoughts and emotions can co-exist.

09. There is No Limit to Suffering



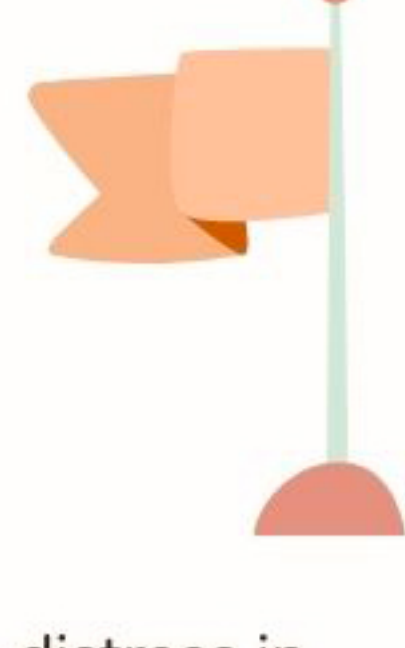
You think to yourself when you've hit rock bottom, "How much worse can this really get?". Only to discover that the bottom is infinite. This can lead to a fear of impending pain and expectation of suffering.



10. Opening Our Minds to New Ways of Thinking

As human beings, it is normal to feel depressed at times. Existential distress doesn't always equate to a mental illness, however. Sometimes, all we need to do is to open our minds to new ways of thinking.

11. A Tenseless State vs Struggling For a Worthwhile Goal



Boredom has become a bigger problem than distress in modern society. What we need in life is not a tenseless state, that is, one free of any worry or problem. Instead, what we need is a worthwhile goal to strive for, and the suffering that comes with it.



12. The Meaning of Life in Each Moment

Everyone's life is unique and bears purpose. There is only you standing in this very spot right now in the whole world. What is it that only **you** can accomplish, right here and right now?

13. Our Current Mental (Un)hygiene & Over Demand for Happiness



We end up being twice as unhappy, because we are unhappy that we are unhappy! Modern society often sees it as a sign of failure.



14. Why Are Decent Men Called Saints?

Frankl mentioned that him being nice or kind to men in the camps didn't make him a particularly good person. Shouldn't these be normal actions that decent people do?

15. Potential vs Actualisations: The Young vs the Old



By spending your life, you are buying it. At the end of our lives, the quality of our memories comes from the meaning we have created out of all the little moments over the years.



16. The Formation of Stigma Through Collective Guilt

Stigma requires a collectiveness to it. It grows or diminishes in strength based on the number of persons in the group. Don't become part of the problem.

