



**44<sup>th</sup> University Congress**  
**Living Freedom Decisively**

---

## ONE UNIV, ONE BOOK

### **Guidelines for the discussion of *Man's Search for Meaning***

*Jeffrey Langan*

The following questions can serve as a guide for reading Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* :

1. How does Frankl characterize freedom? How do conditions affect freedom? What does he describe as the ultimate freedom? Can logotherapy ultimately provide ultimate freedom?

2. What informs the principles of logotherapy? Did anything beyond the personal experiences of the author influence this theory? How does Frankl's life experience and example embody or exemplify the principles of logotherapy? What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this theory? What do therapists practicing logotherapy do for their patients? What is the aim in logotherapy? What are its limitations?

3. Frankl describes three distinct phases in the mental life of the prisoners he lived with in concentration camps. What characterizes each of these phases? Do you believe that these phases can be seen in any other situations or circumstances? If so, list and describe how it can be applied.

4. What would Frankl say is the difference between those who are able to overcome life's problems and those who are not? What examples from the concentration camps

might he use to illustrate this difference? What role do circumstances play in their survival? What role does their mental outlook take?

5. Frankl writes, "Noogenic neuroses do not emerge from conflicts between drives and instincts but rather from conflicts between various values; in other words, from moral conflicts, or, to speak in a more general way, from spiritual problems." What role do Noogenic neuroses play in his theory of logotherapy?

6. Logotherapy is sometimes called the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy." How does Frankl compare his to these other kinds of therapy? How does he describe his patients who have gone through other kinds of therapy?

7. Frankl quotes Nietzsche multiple times in this book, writing, "He who has a why to live for can bear any how." How does this quote reflect Frankl's ideas and tone in *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*? Does his use of Nietzsche ultimately strengthen or weaken his argument? What limitations does it place on logotherapy?

8. Frankl describes the importance for the individual of finding meaning of life. He writes, "Man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life and not a 'secondary rationalization' of instinctual drives." How does he define the meaning of life? How does he suggest that people search for the meaning in their lives? What role does he give to the conditions in life that seem to fully determine behavior?