

anti-Liberalism, Starhemberg clearly advocated the idea of an independent "Austrianism" as a "better" and untarnished Germanic identity. Starhembergs Heimwehr decisively helped the Austrian government to successfully withstand the onslaught from Austrian Nazis and the pressure coming from the Third Reich in the critical time between spring 1933 and summer 1934. The government successfully withstood with a support of the Heimwehr the onslaught from the Austrian Nazis and the pressure coming from the Third Reich. The Italian dictator Mussolini provided foreign backing. From this perspective, the independence of Austria was maintained owing to the effort of Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg and Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who paid for it with his life in Summer 1934. At the same time, however, the authoritarian course that his government had led the country to civil war. A few months before the NSDAP coup in Vienna (July 25, 1934), in February 1934, the Social Democrats had also been put out of operation. The Heimwehr was the winner. But owing to weaknesses inside the regime, and insufficient support from abroad, in a long term, it did not succeed in posing a lasting barrier to the spread of Hitler's nacism. With the Anschluss in 1938, Austria was annexed to the Third Reich.

## Monika Punová a Pavel Navrátil

### Resilience in Life and Work of Viktor Emanuel Frankl

#### Abstract

*This paper focuses on one of the great men of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who devoted his life to questions regarding the quest for the meaning of life. We portray the life and work of a man who was not spared a number of pains that reached beyond human capabilities, especially in the concentration camps, where he spent two and a half years. How did he face suffering, when it was extremely hard "to say yes to life"? Logotherapy and existential analysis (which he verified by his own drastical observations) give us answers to these and other questions. Both Frankl's life and a number of his works testify about a great resilience of the human spirit. It is this resilience we focus on in the following text. Our goal is to answer the question: "How did resilience manifest itself in life and work of V. E. Frankl?"*

Key words: Frankl, Resilience, Logotherapy, Existential analysis, Freud, Adler

#### 1. Introduction

*"A century is ending that saw two world wars and a number of local wars. A century of a growing disrespect of men, a time period, during which people grew insensitive to the environment and to the conditions essential for sustainable life on this planet. Concentration camps and the suffering caused by them were followed by an even graver danger of a nuclear disaster, threats by fundamentalists of all kinds, and also dangers linked with a sphere that seemed to promise a nearly-miraculous intensification of life – the illusive*

*virtual reality that can capture human mind and fill it with a pseudo-meaning to a greater extent than drugs and all forms of mass indoctrination all together, virtual reality that begins to replace the quest for real meaning” (Smékal in Frankl 1997a, 5).*

*“It seems that nowadays we witness a crisis of meaning. The world appears to be so complicated and we so insignificant in it. What is left except letting us be carried by the waves of history and keep trying to stay on the surface? Maybe we could attempt to find models in history that give an example of how to live, or to draw inspiration from those who had found them” (Rohr and Feister 2004, 9).*

The search for an answer to the question about the sense of life has been provoking the mankind for centuries; and all the time, voices were raised addressing a crisis of meaning. After all, the authors of the quotations above point out this crisis. It is worth the effort to deal with the crisis of meaning? If we decide so, like Rohr and Feister (2004), who shall we turn to in our search for inspiration regarding the questions about the meaning of human existence? This paper focuses on one of the great men of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who devoted his life to questions regarding the quest for the meaning of life. We portray the life and work of a man who was not spared a number of pains that reached beyond human capabilities, especially in the concentration camps, where he spent two and a half years. How did he face suffering, when it was extremely hard “to say yes to life”? From where did he draw strength to survive? What was his suffering good for? May a miserable existence in a concentration camp, an existence reaching beyond the limits of human capabilities, have a sense? Logotherapy and existential analysis (which he verified by his own drastical observations) give us answers to these and other questions. Both Frankl’s life and a number of his works testify about a great resilience of the human spirit! It is this resilience we focus on in the following text. Our goal is to answer the question: “How did resilience manifest itself in life and work of V. E. Frankl?”

The paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter depicts the main stages of Frankl’s life. The following two chapters outline his theories. We ponder the professional context, in which he created his theory. It was not easy to form a new theory next to the well-established psychotherapeutic approaches, such as the Freud’s psychoanalysis or the Adler’s individual psychology. The fourth chapter covers the key topic of this paper – the resilience in life and work of V. E. Frankl. We first introduce the concept of resilience and then point out, based on selected works by Frankl, how he employed this resilience during his stay in concentration camps and shortly after liberation. We also ponder the relationship between resilience and his theory about the meaning of life. It is a symbolic goal of our work to show an honourable example of a person’s resilience, which, in our opinion, reached beyond human capabilities, primary during the stay in concentration camps.

## 2. Biography

*“Modern thinking is fascinated by its ability to exert influence over things: it is capable of modifying genes, chromosomes and atoms, it is able to forecast future events; all this evokes*

*a feeling of quasi-divine power. We tend to think that we are capable of overcoming the mystery of death. Modernists believed that everything would keep improving. This worldview took various shapes but, in essence, it is the basis for what we today call the modern world. This view influenced all of us deeply, especially us in the West. It suggested that education, intellect and science would make the world better. Then Holocaust became a reality, right in a country that might have had the best educated people in the world, and that loved logics and reason. We know already these days that there has to be something superior to physics. Pphysics has made us powerful and highly efficient; however, at the same time, it destructed the most important spheres of humanity. It has not filled the inner world of meaning” (Rohr and Feister 2004, 11–12).*

Viktor Emanuel Frankl was born in Vienna on March 26, 1905. He has roots in our country. His father Gabriel came from Pohořelice in Moravia and his mother Elsa was born into a prominent Prague Jewish family. Frankl says that he inherited deep emotionality from his mother and extreme rationality from his father (Frankl 1997a). He had a younger sister Stella and an older brother Walter. Since his childhood, Frankl wanted to become a doctor. This dream came true later.

He became neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist and philosopher. In 1928, at the beginning of his professional career, he ran free-of-charge youth counselling centres (first in Vienna and later in six other towns) focusing on psychological counselling to young people. Two years later, at the time when high school students were getting report cards, he organised (in the counselling centres) a program called “School report related counselling”, which aimed at preventing student suicide. This program proved very successful. That year, not a single Viennese student committed suicide after a long time. The success earned Frankl an invitation to hold lectures in Berlin and at the universities of Prague and Budapest.

In 1926, he first used the term “logotherapy” at conferences held in Germany. Later, in 1933, when Frankl was working in the “suicidal women’s pavilion” at the Vienna Psychiatric Clinic, he presented the concept of existential analysis, which he worked out in detail in 1939, in an article called “Philosophy and psychotherapy” – To the foundations of existential analysis.” At that time he also focused on analysing young people’s unemployment; in his article “Economic crisis and soul life from the viewpoint of a youth counsellor” he pointed out the fact that young people suffer more from a feeling of emptiness than from an activity carried out without pay. In this context he uses the term “unemployment-related neurosis”.

In 1938, shortly after having opened his private neurological and psychiatric practice, Hitler troops invaded Vienna. At that time, Frankl became the head of the Department of Neurology at the Rothschild Hospital. This position saved both him and his parents from transports to concentration camps. Later, Frankl obtained a visa enabling him to travel to the USA. He let it lapse, because he did not want to leave his parents. Thanks to staying in Vienna, he met his first wife Tilly in the hospital, where she worked

as a nurse. Frankl married her in December 1941. They belonged among the last Jewish couples, whom the Nazis allowed to marry. Tilly had to have an abortion, to sacrifice their unborn baby in order to avoid transport. It is this child, whom Frankl dedicated his book „The Unheard Cry for Meaning“ (Frankl 1978).

In 1942, nine months after the marriage, he, along with his wife and his parents, were deported to Theresienstadt. Later he was transported to Auschwitz (his wife joined the transport voluntarily, in order to stay with him). Their ways parted there. Only Frankl's sister Stella escaped the transports, as she had resettled to Australia. Nearly the whole Frankl's family died in the concentration camps. As a doctor, he took care of his father until his death in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Frankl's mother was killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, his brother died working in a mine. The most painful loss he experienced was the loss of his first wife Tilly, who died from epidemic typhoid fever in the concentration camp shortly after liberation. Frankl survived four concentration camps (Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Kaufering III and Türkheim – the latter two belonged to the infamous Dachau Ghetto), spending nearly three years there.

He returned back to Vienna after liberation, struck by the death of his wife, who passed away after the liberation of the concentration camp by the English troops. Frankl's friends and his work helped him in the uneasy task to return to a life outside the concentration camp. He became the head of the Vienna Polyclinic of Neurology and started writing books. First, he composed his third version of “Medical care of the soul” and dictated, within nine days, his experience in the concentration camp. It was published under the title “Saying Yes to Live in Spite of Everything”. He first published the book anonymously. Later, he confirmed the contents by making his name public.

In the after-war years, Frankl devoted his efforts to writing and lecturing. He published 31 books, which were translated into 25 languages. He received 27 honorary doctorate degrees, was awarded professorships in Vienna and the USA (Harvard, California, Dallas and Pittsburgh). Frankl received the Great Gold Medal of the Masaryk University in Brno in 1994. In April 1994 he was awarded the honorary doctorate degree of the Charles' University in Prague. Since the fifties, Frankl gave lectures at a number of universities (209 in total). His last lecture took place at the University of Vienna in October 1996, one year before his death. Frankl married his second wife Elleonore Katharina, with whom he celebrated the golden wedding. They had one daughter Gabriela and two grandchildren. Until eighty years of age, Frankl was a passionate climber. He became a certified mountain guide. Several climbing trails in the Austrian Alps were named after him. Frankl took flying lessons and at 67 obtained his pilot's licence. He died on 2 September 1997, of heart failure, at the age of 92. Alfred Längle (1997), one of his important followers, held a speech at his funeral, titled “Viktor Frankl – defender of humanity”.

### 3. Beginnings of Logotherapy: Frankl between Freud and Adler

In the previous chapter, we have outlined Frankl's life. In this chapter, bearing in mind his biography, we ponder the professional context, in which his theory was created. As Frankl explains in his autobiography, he was attracted by psychoanalysis at high school. He even exchanged letters with Freud, its founder, who he esteemed highly and who also let a Frankl's article to be published in an international specialist magazine on psychoanalysis (the article was published in 1924). At that time, Frankl began to lean towards individual psychology represented by Alfred Adler. Gradually, Frankl started forming a definite view of psychoanalysis. In 1925, Frankl joined the Vienna Association of Individual Psychology. He published an article in its specialist magazine, at the age of twenty, in which he ponders the borderlines between philosophy and psychotherapy. However, Frankl did not stick to Adler's theory for long. He started developing a theory he called logotherapy.<sup>1</sup> He mentioned it first in Vienna in 1926 in a lecture of the Academic Association for Medical Psychiatry (Freud was also its member). Adler did not agree with Frankl's new concept and proposed him to be expelled from the Association for Individual Psychology, which happened in 1927.

Frankl began his career as practitioner and kept elaborating his theory. He describes the beginnings of logotherapy as follows (Frankl 1997a, 52): *“Torello said once I would go down in history of psychiatry as a man, who as a therapist started fighting the illness of our century, i.e. a the feeling about the loss of meaning. Well, that is true, as logotherapy was created for this purpose, among other things.”* Meaning of life as a topic was not accentuated sufficiently either by Freud or Adler, which was one of the main reasons, why Frankl took such a critical stance towards these theories that were, in his opinion, more harmful than helpful to the patients (Frankl 1997a, 52): *“If someone asks me about the ultimate cause and the deepest roots, about the hidden reason for my motivation to create logotherapy, then I can name only one reason that brought me and that is leading me to continue my work tirelessly: the compassion with the victims of the current cynism, which thrives in psychotherapy, this miserable branch. By the word “branch” I want to hint at its becoming a business and by “miserable” at something that is unclean from scientific point of view. Whenever I face people who are not only plagued by psychic suffering, but also damaged by psychotherapy, it breaks my heart. The true red thread leading through all my works is the battle against depersonalising and dehumanising tendencies that grow out of psychologism in psychotherapy.”*

Let us now turn our attention to some aspects, in which Frankl's logotherapy, sometimes also called the third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, differs from the two above mentioned theories. Logotherapy is based on the premise that human person's

1) This term originates from the Greek word „logos“, which means speech, word, reason and, above all, meaning.

fundamental need is a „will to meaning“. This premise differs completely from the cornerstone of psychoanalysis, i.e. “will to pleasure” and “will to power” that is typical for individual psychology. Frankl criticised both concepts, primarily because of their reductionism.

Frankl comments on Adler’s individual psychology (Frankl 1996, 21): “*Scheler pointed out in one remarkable observation that individual psychology holds true, actually, for one specific human type only, i.e. for an ambitious careerist. We do not have to go on criticising any further; however, we believe that individual psychology has overlooked, while trying to seek its validation, which it thought to find always and everywhere, that many people possess more radical ambitions than common ambitions – an effort that cannot be fulfilled at all by earthly tributes, but craves for more, for self-immortalisation.*”

In a similar way he criticized reductionism in psychoanalysis (Frankl 2006b, 9–10): “*However, psychoanalysis not only indulged in eternity, it became addicted to it: eternity, in its consequence, led to reification of the individual. Psychoanalysis views the patient as an object dominated by (drive-based) mechanisms; in this concept, doctor plays the role of a person who can handle such mechanisms. How much cynicism is hidden behind such a concept of psychotherapy as a technique, as a “psychic technique”*”. Whereas psychoanalysis is often called “depth psychotherapy” (because it deals with drives), Frankl’s logotherapy is frequently named “height psychotherapy”.

#### 4. Logotherapy and Existential Analysis According to Frankl

As described above, Frankl’s teaching is based on the premise that every person longs for a meaningful life. According to Frankl, the counsellor’s goal is neither to interpret any repressed events nor to change the environment or secure missing resources. His / her goal is to provide help with searching, accepting and fulfilling life goals – these should be meaningful (Balcar 1997). Frankl created his theory in a situation, in which many counsellors were confronted with their clients’ feelings of senselessness. Frankl called this phenomenon “existential vacuum” (Frankl 1996). According to Frankl, the existential vacuum appeared after humans had lost their basic instincts and traditions.

The existential vacuum was validated empirically by a row of scientists (Crumbaugh and Maholick 1964; Lukášová 1997; Navrátil 2000; Popielski ed. 1987). If a person is not able, in the long term, to find answers to the question about the meaning of life (he / she suffers from existential frustration), it may cause “neogenous neurosis” in him / her (Frankl 1999), or it can lead to other problems, arising from the person’s effort to overcome the feeling of inner vacuum (see for example various types of risk behaviour). A row of empirical studies<sup>2</sup> have shown the relationship between risk behaviour and existential neurosis.

Frankl distinguished biological, psychological, social and noetic dimensions of personality. It is not possible to reduce a person to any of these dimensions; however, we can understand a human being, only if we accentuate all his / her dimensions. Frankl pointed out in case of interpreting a person’s situation from biological, psychological or sociological point of view only, the dimensions may be in contradiction and may not give a picture of the whole person. It is the holistic approach to a person that is characteristic of Frankl’s theory.

Frankl (1996, 36–37) defined another premise of dimensional ontology as follows: “*Various things, projected from their dimension in one and the same dimension that is at lower level than the own dimension, are depicted by such a way that their projections are ambiguous.*” If we interpret life of such personalities as Dostoevsky, Bernardette Soubirous or John Forbes Nash from a psychiatric point of view only, Dostoevsky appears to be epileptic, Bernardette a hysterical woman suffering from visionary hallucinations and John Forbers Nash, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, a paranoid schizophrenic (the terms used reveal a reductionist way of thinking). Anything else cannot be seen on this level. Frankl does not deny that such diagnoses are adequate; however, he explains that this fact does not change anything about their benefit to humanity. If we reduce their life and work to one level, we also devalue true spiritual, intellectual and cultural values created and represented by these personalities. Diversity of their work and life can be reduced to a one-dimensional picture (mathematical genius to a schizophrenic).

The question about *the meaning of life* is, according to Frankl, specific to humans. A person can survive (difficulties), only if he / she “live for something”. By this, Frankl rejects Freud’s principle that an ill person questions the meaning of life. Human beings only (unlike animals) can experience their existence as problematic and open. The meaning of life does not equal to the *final purpose of the world*. The meaning understood in such a way belongs to the sphere of religious faith, which is not replaced by logotherapy and existential analysis that deal with the question about meaning only with regard to a specific person and his / her situation.

Frankl put emphasis on values that are, according to him, paths that lead to discovering the meaning; people have responsibility to put them into practice in everyday life. Frankl distinguishes creative, experiential and conviction-based values.

Frankl points out that questions like “*Has life still a meaning to me?*” are inadequate. However, if we accept the idea that it is life itself that brings questions about the meaning and that it is our task to answer them, we will than discover the true possibilities of how to live. This turn in the approach to the question about the

2) For example: Brown, Casciani, Crumbaugh, Dansart, Durlak, Kratochvíl, Lukášová,

Lunceford, Mason, Meier, Murphy, Plaňava, Popielski, Richmond, Roberts, Ruch, Salee, Smith, Yarnell a Young (Frankl 1999)

meaning of life is often called the *Copernican turn*. This change of perspective brings about tension that stimulates the client. Frankl talks about the so called noodynamics in connection with the tension, which exists between a human person and questions about the meaning of a life situation.

According to Frankl, moral behaviour consists in discovering and fulfilling the meaning of a situation. All that helps to fulfil the meaning is good; all that prevents it is bad. The *conscience* is responsible for moral reflexion. Conscience is a phenomenon specific to humans. Frankl defines it as the organ of meaning. According to Frankl, conscience has an intuitive capability of revealing a one-time and unique meaning of situations. The conscience may be wrong. In spite of it, every person has to search for meaning and live his / her life accordingly.

### 5. Resilience in Frankl's Life

Many specialists study the legacy of Frankl's teaching. To international scientist, who continue his legacy, belong Popielski, Lukasová and the above mentioned Längle (both the latter authors published some of their works in Czech language – see Lukasová 1997 and 1998, Längle 1997 and 2002). Czech authors are represented, for example, by Smékal (2004), Křivohlavý (2010), Balcar (1997) and Navrátil (2000). Let us mention the International Society of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis with headquarters in Vienna and branches in ten countries,<sup>3</sup> including the Czech Republic. The Czech branch, which was founded in 1998, has a legal form of a citizens' association. Its main goal is to provide training in logotherapy and existential analysis by means of accredited psychotherapeutic courses, conferences and publications. Frankl has a number of followers, who study his theory from different points of view. Yalom (2006, 447) points out that at times one has a feeling that some of Frankl's followers only "*rephrase his statements*".

It is not our aim to present Frankl's theory; we refer our readers to Frankl's works or the works of the above mentioned authors. The aim of this paper is to look at Frankl's personality from a different angle. To be specific, we want to hint at one fundamental phenomenon, which was apparent in his life and work – his resilience. We observe that Frankl's life was an example of resilience par excellence. His attitude manifested itself most clearly during his stay in concentration camps. In this chapter, we will focus on examples showing, in our opinion, Frankl's explicit resilient behaviour during his stay in the ghetto. Our observations are based, primarily, on two works, in which Frankl described his experience in the concentration camp – his autobiography called *What is missing in my books* (Frankl 1997a) and his book *Saying Yes to Life in Spite of Everything* (Frankl 2006a). The latter work became the second best-selling book (after

the Bible) in the field of psychology in the early sixties. Over 9 million copies of "Saying Yes to Life" have been sold.

### 5.1. The Concept of Resilience – Introduction

Let us first ponder what resilience is and what characteristics can be attributed to it. The term "resilience" originates from the Latin word "*resilio, resilere*", which means to spring back, rebound or leap back. The English language uses the term "*resiliency*", which stands for tenacity, elasticity, flexibility or pliancy.<sup>4</sup> Its opposite is vulnerability – succumbing to hard circumstances of life.

Mrs. Masten, a developmental psychologist, is a key leading figure in the research of resilience. She defines, together with Mrs. Powel, resilience as a process, capability and a result of a person's successful adaptation, in spite of significant adversities or dangers.

She characterises resilience as an ability to face life difficulties (Masten and Powel 2003). Punová (2012, 97) defines resilience as a "*concept describing dynamic developmental processes thanks to which a person (or other systems, e.g. family, community) adapts and responds well to significant pressure (adversities, risks, stress), both internally and externally.*" It is also typical of resilience that it not only helps overcoming difficult life circumstances, but also leads to prosperity, well-being and profit resulting from a difficult experience.

Lutharová (2003) pointed out that a person cannot be considered resilient, with regard to content, as this would mean that we diagnose or assess such person. Resilience relates to general characteristics; a person, however, becomes resilient, only if such characteristics have manifested themselves in his / her life. It is more adequate to talk about a person that acts resiliently in a situation (i.e. the person shows characteristics of resilience in that situation). A person can be resilient in his / her life on occasions and non-resilient on other occasions. Resilience cannot be held for a trait of character, as it is a lived capability proven in various life situations.

The nature of resilience implies that a person can manifest it only if he / she experience a difficult trial. Adversity is necessary, or risk factors, as we call them, or stressful situations. Their presence may threaten a person's adaptation mechanisms; however, protective factors have an impact too; therefore, it cannot be said for sure that actual risk factors have to weaken a person's resilience. Protective factors may exist both in a person and in his / her environment. They can play a role of "shock absorbers,

3) Except for Czech Republic, there are branches in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, Argentina, Canada, Chile, and Mexico.

4) Scientific resources contain a row of equivalents and related terms – Invulnerability, resistance to pressure, stress-resistance, hardiness, adaptation, coping, adjustment, mastery, plasticity, setting a person-environment fit, adaptation, social buffering, self-efficacy.

airbags and buffers" against the person's vulnerability or adverse environmental influence: "Their existence as such does not have to lead to resilience. Sometimes, the factors are strong enough and they do not manage to ease and overcome the vulnerability or his / her difficult life situation. In such a case, it is necessary to cultivate and strengthen them. In some cases, the factors may bring about improvement by both protecting a person and strengthening his / her adaptation mechanisms" (Punová 2012, 98). Every situation, regardless of how difficult, bears both risk and protective factors. From this point of view there is no "hopeless" situation in a person's life.

## 5.2. A Resilient "Yes to Life" by Prisoner No. 119104

*"The rift dividing good from evil, which goes through all human beings, reaches into the lowest depths and becomes apparent even on the bottom of the abyss which is laid open by the concentration camp. ...Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with a prayer on his lips"* (Frankl 2006a, 99).

The phenomenon of resilience testifies to human strength, which enables him / her to overcome even the hardest life trials. The very life of Frankl shows a number of moments, in which he manifested incredible resilience, will to life, will to find a way out of a seemingly hopeless situation. His attitude to life in the concentration camp shows this most clearly. Křivohlavý (2010, 79–80) aptly characterised Frankl's resilience, while talking about his arrival in the first concentration camp: *"He brought a manuscript of his habilitation work with him required as he wanted to receive a professor degree in medicine in Vienna. At once, he faced inconceivable suffering. There were 100.000 Jewish people waiting for their moment in Auschwitz – Birkenau. Waiting for what? – For their turn to go be sent to the gas chambers. Nine thousands of them were killed there every day – men, women and small children. Frankl experienced in this "human inferno" organised by the Nazi Germans that it is possible not to panic in hard life situations, but to choose a dignified, brave and honourable attitude to life and suffering."*

Let us turn our attention to one key moment that preceded Frankl's departure to the ghetto; a moment in which he manifested resilience to a great extent. There was the issue of the immigration visa. As we stated in the first chapter, Frankl, together with this parents, was protected from transports due to his position as the head of the Neurology Department. However, this protection proved insecure and he found himself facing a difficult choice. At that time Frankl received an invitation to come to the American Consulate in Vienna to pick up his long-expected immigration visa, valid for him only. It secured freedom for Frankl, but meant that his parents were, most probably, condemned to the transport. How did he react to this challenge? – To live in freedom or in camp?

*"Irresolutely, I left the house and went for a walk. I pondered the problem this way and that but could not arrive at a solution; this was the type of dilemma that made one*

*wish for "a hint from Heaven," as the phrase goes. It was then that I noticed a piece of marble lying on a table at home. When I asked my father about it, he explained that he had found it on the site where the National Socialists had burned down the largest Viennese synagogue. He had taken the piece home because it was a part of the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. One gilded Hebrew letter was engraved on the piece; my father explained that this letter stood for one of the Commandments. Eagerly I asked, "Which one is it?" He answered, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land." At that moment I decided to stay with my father and my mother upon the land, and to let the American visa lapse. This is the story about a tiny piece of marble"* (Frankl 1997a, 65).

This piece of marble became a testing piece of his courage to face life difficulties. We do not find any regrets or doubts regarding this step in Frankl's works, despite his suffering in the concentration camps. On the contrary, Frankl expressed later that he was grateful for this decision, as it enabled him to protect his family from transports for one more year and let him get to know his first wife Tilly, who he married and with whom he lived some time before the transport.

Then the feared transport to the concentration camp came. There is no doubt that Frankl went through hell in the concentration camps. Let us look at passages that testify about his resilience (the texts are taken from the book "Saying Yes to Life Despite Everything" (Frankl 2006a). Frankl distinguishes three phases of his stay in camp: admission to the camp, life in camp and relaxation after liberation.

Frankl experiences the arrival at Auschwitz and the first days in the ghetto as a shock.

*"The engine's whistle had an uncanny sound, like a cry for help sent out in commiseration for the unhappy load which it was destined to lead into perdition. Then the train shunted, obviously nearing a main station. Suddenly a cry broke from the ranks of the anxious passengers, "There is a sign, Auschwitz!" Everyone's heart missed a beat at that moment. [...] I was horrified, but this was just as well, because step by step we had to become accustomed to a terrible and immense horror"* (Frankl 2006a, 20).

It is remarkable that Frankl can see something positive about such a terrifying and paralysing horror. If we use the terminology of resilience we observe that Frankl can see protective factors (he points out the advantage of step-by-step introduction to severe reality through negative shock) there, where significant risk factors are present (first of all, when they find out that they are going to Auschwitz – a place having the worst possible reputation among the deportees).

There are other sections in Frankl's book, in which he mentions the fundamental principle of resilience: there is a solution for even the most hopeless situation (in words of logotherapy – it has a meaning) and it pays off to fight. It becomes obvious in the first evening, during the selection of prisoners. Although they had to leave all their belongings in the carriages, Frankl secretly hid his haversack under his coat. It took

great courage and could have had cost him his life. During the selection Frankl tried to straighten up so that the SS officer couldn't find the haversack. The officer sent him to the right, as the 10 per cent of the prisoners. All the others, who were sent to the left, died on the same day in the crematorium.

Frankl observes that after the initial shock follows reconciliation with the situation. A person becomes aware that naked existence is the only thing left to him. Also in the first days in camp, we can notice Frankl's active attitude to life:

*"The thought of suicide was entertained by nearly everyone, if only for a brief time. It was born of the hopelessness of the situation, the constant danger of death looming over us daily and hourly, and the closeness of the deaths suffered by many of the others. From personal convictions I made myself a firm promise, on my first evening in camp that I would not "run into the wire." This was a phrase used in camp to describe the most popular method of suicide—touching the electrically charged barbed-wire fence" (Frankl 2006a, 28–29).* Frankl kept his promise, although later in proved to be difficult.

The second phase, dominated by apathy and routine, followed after the admission to the camp and the first days of imprisonment. *"The prisoner passed from the first to the second phase; the phase of relative apathy, in which he achieved a kind of emotional death [...] The newly arrived prisoner experienced the tortures of other most painful emotions, all of which he tried to deaden. First of all, there was his boundless longing for his home and his family. This often could become so acute that he felt himself consumed by longing. Then there was disgust; disgust with all the ugliness which surrounded him, even in its mere external forms [...] The sufferers, the dying and the dead, became such commonplace sights to him after a few weeks of camp life that they could not move him any more" (Frankl 2006a, 31–32)* Frankl gives apathy a protective meaning: *"Apathy, the main symptom of the second phase, was a necessary mechanism of self-defence. Reality dimmed, and all efforts and all emotions were centered on one task: preserving one's own life" (Frankl 2006a, 38).* In another work Frankl describes the second phase of camp life as a period of regress to primitiveness, when apathy becomes a self-preserving mechanism of the soul (Frankl 1996).

If we understand resilience as a positive development in spite of adverse life circumstances, we have to ask, which factors could foster resilience in Frankl's case. Let us abandon external factors; there were not many of them Frankl could experience. On the contrary, Frankl talks about constant hunger that led, among other things, to painful swellings and total decline of human body, about frequent beatings (sometimes lasting more than one hour), about diseases, death, dying and, mainly, about a total humiliation of human beings, which troubled him most. Indeed, it was hard to find something positive in his environment. Nevertheless, Frankl took hold in his inner world, in the spiritual and psychic dimensions of his personality.

The research of resilience has shown that if a person develops his / her spiritual dimension, it can contribute to his / her resilience. Frankl confirmed this observation;

he pointed out an interesting fact – the stay in camp had a less destructive impact on people rooted in spirituality: *"Only in this way can one explain the apparent paradox that some prisoners of a less hardy makeup often seemed to survive camp life better than did those of a robust nature" (Frankl 2006a, 46).* Another text passage reads: *"Psychological observations of the prisoners have shown that only the men who allowed their inner hold on their moral and spiritual selves to subside eventually fell victim to the camp's degenerating influences" (2006a, 82).* In another section Frankl talks about an aspect that is also considered protective with regard to resilience – an optimistic attitude: *"Like a drowning man clutching a straw, my inborn optimism (which has often controlled my feelings even in the most desperate situations) clung to this thought" (Frankl 2006a, 20).* It is easy to be optimistic, if everything is going well. The more difficult is to stay optimistic, if extreme situations occur, which Frankl confirms in a number of text passages.

Active attitude to life is considered another positive factor that contributes to resilience – attitude of person who keeps fighting and does not give up: *"[...] In a last violent protest against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through the enveloping gloom. I felt it transcend that hopeless, meaningless world, and from somewhere I heard a victorious "Yes" in answer to my question of the existence of an ultimate purpose" (Frankl 2006a, 51)* In another section Frankl admits that it was not at all easy to find strength and courage to live: *"Regarding our "provisional existence" as unreal was in itself an important factor in causing the prisoners to lose their hold on life; everything in a way became pointless. Such people forgot that often it is just such an exceptionally difficult external situation which gives man the opportunity to grow spiritually beyond himself" (Frankl 2006a, 84).*

Frankl talked also about the protective relationship between hope and resilience; He pointed out that it is essential for a person to have faith in the future, especially in the most severe moments of his / her life. He used an example of his fellow prisoners: *"The prisoner who had lost faith in the future – his future – was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay" (Frankl 2006a, 86).* In this context, he talked about resilience directly: *"Those who know how close the connection is between the state of mind of a man – his courage and hope, or lack of them – and the state of immunity of his body will understand that the sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect" (Frankl 2006a, 88).* With regard to hope, Frankl stressed that such hope shall not be naïve, but shall be built upon solid fundamentals. He gives an example, a doctor of the concentration camp shared with him. The doctor observed that the death rate in the week between Christmas 1944 and New Year's, 1945, increased in camp beyond previous experience, although the external conditions did not change. In the doctor's opinion, and also in Frankl's opinion, the explanation for this fact lies in the naïve hope the prisoners had that they would be liberated and be home again at Christmas. As there was no encouraging news regarding an approaching liberation, the prisoners lost courage and a great number of them died.

By pondering the above mentioned quotations we realize that there is a very close link between resilience and the meaning of life (according to Frankl's concept). The following sections express this explicitly: *"It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life – daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual"* (Frankl 2006a, 89). In Frankl's opinion, our life is a question, or a set of everyday questions. And it is up to us, how we deal with them. Frankl put stress on everyday life, on the fact that every day we have to make a choice and if we face suffering, we shall employ resilience. It is the way of our response to suffering that conceals the meaning of it.

In Frankl's opinion, what matters in life is that a person fulfils his / her life, that he / she achieve a goal through his / her own acts. Frankl understood the meaning of life in its complexity, which also includes suffering and death. This was the meaning of life he fought for: *"The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity – even under the most difficult circumstances – to add a deeper meaning to his life. It may remain brave, dignified and unselfish. Or in the bitter fight for self-preservation he may forget his human dignity and become no more than an animal. Here lies the chance for a man either to make use of or to forgo the opportunities of attaining the moral values that a difficult situation may afford him. And this decides whether he is worthy of his sufferings or not"* (Frankl 2006a, 79).

In another section, Frankl talks again about the connection between the meaning of life and resilience: *"Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life, no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on. He was soon lost. Such man lost his inner hold completely and accepted his decline"* (Frankl 2006a, 89). Based on the pondering of Frankl's texts, we can assume that he held resilience as such to be meaningful. In other words, the meaning of life is fulfilled, fully lived, by employing resilience.

Frankl devotes six pages of his book to describe the last phase he had to deal with – the situation after liberation from the imprisonment. He writes about a state of depersonalisation. Freedom appears unreal. A relaxation follows later, whereas each of the person's dimensions reacts in a different way. The body wakes up first. It begins to eat ravenously. Concerning the psychic and social dimensions, the relaxation manifests itself in a person's desire to meet his / her relatives and to talk, often for hours. Then the spiritual dimension wakes up. Frankl describes this process as follows: *"There was no one to be seen for miles around; there was nothing but the wide earth and sky and the larks' jubilation and the freedom of space. I stopped, looked around, and up to the sky – and then I went down on my knees. At that moment there was very little I knew of myself or of the world – I had but one sentence in mind – always the same: "I called to the Lord from my narrow prison and He answered me in the freedom of space." How long I knelt there and*

*repeated this sentence memory can no longer recall. But I know that on that day, in that hour, my new life started. Step for step I progressed, until I again became a human being"* (Frankl 2006a, 102).

In Frankl's opinion, there are a number of risks present in this phase of relaxation. Even he was not spared from feelings of bitterness and disappointment regarding the new reality. As we have described in his biography, Frankl was deeply affected by the death of his wife. His love for her and the longing to meet her again gave him a great hope to him that helped him survive. Frankl realised that nearly his whole family died in the camp. This situation was hard to cope with. Frankl mentions that his friend worried about him that he would take his life after the return to the hard reality. However, Frankl does not abandon his key topic – the meaning of life, even in this situation. Immediately after his return to Vienna, he opened his heart to a friend: *"Paul, I have to confess that it certainly has a sense, when a man is affected so much, when he has to undergo such a trial. I feel I cannot express it in other words, as if something were waiting for me, as if something were expected from me, as if I were destined for something"* (Frankl 2007, 85–86).

It is probably this Frankl's attitude that prevented him from seeking revenge. On the contrary, it displeased him that some of the oppressed became oppressors, instigators of wilful force and injustice. After liberation, Frankl hid a colleague of his who had possessed an honorary Hitler Youth badge and who was wanted by the police that required him to be judged by a people's court (there were two possible verdicts by such a court: acquittal or death sentence). Frankl expressed his attitude to the past most clearly in his lectures on collective guilt. Although it was not popular in the after-war atmosphere, Frankl made a public speech against it in 1946 already. He never abandoned his disapproving attitude towards collective guilt. The most famous speech on this topic was made by Frankl on the occasion of a commemorative event held on the square in front of the Vienna Town Hall in 1998. Frankl said, among other things: *"And in spite of it I beg you don't expect a word of hatred from me. Who should I hate? I know the victims, but I don't know the offenders. And I reject the concept of collective guilt. Collective guilt does not exist. Guilt can be, in any case, only personal"* (Frankl 2006a, 169). Frankl's life after the wars described in his biography, in chapter 1.

## 6. Conclusion

*"Man can possess more inner strength than an external adversity of fate, not only in a concentration camp"* (Frankl 2006a, 80).

We have pondered the following question in this paper: "How did resilience manifest itself in life and work of V. E. Frankl?" It was a symbolic goal of our work to point out an honourable example of a man's resilience, which, in our opinion, reached beyond the human capabilities in the concentration camps. The camp experience enabled Frankl to link his theory about the meaningfulness of human existence with real life. This gives his theory more realistic fundamentals.



Frankl was not broken by a two and a half years long stay in concentration camps. He proved one of the fundamental rules of resilience, logotherapy and existential analysis – resilience not only enables to survive a hard life trial; a person can benefit from such experience, gain “assets” for the future. Frankl uses similar words in his book “Will to Meaning” (Frankl 1997b) by referring to the famous Nietzsche’s aphorism: “*That which does not kill me, makes me stronger*”. Frankl has shown by his rich creative life that his suffering has had a great meaning.

“*Life in a concentration camp tore open the human soul and exposed its depths. Is it surprising that in those depths we again found only human qualities which in their very nature were a mixture of good and evil*” (Frankl 2006a, 99)? It was this suffering and Frankl’s incredibly resilient response to it, which enabled him to develop his theory about the meaning of life and form out of it a therapeutic approach that plays an irreplaceable role next to other, equally well-known approaches.

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**Gabriel Clemens**  
**Jobst Herzig**  
**Arno Herzig**