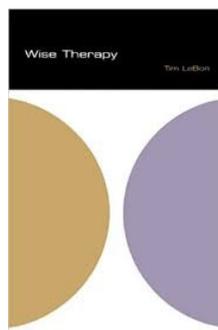


## Wise Therapy for Meaning & Purpose ... In Practice Tim LeBon



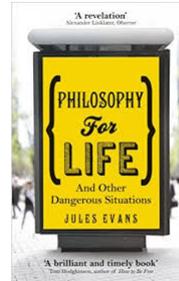
## Who am I?

- In my private practice I practice psychotherapy, CBT and life coaching in which I also incorporate philosophical perspectives & positive psychology.
- I also work part-time as a High Intensity CBT therapist in an IAPT Service treating people for anxiety and depression.
- I'm also an educator, teaching courses in Positive Psychology, Counselling, Personal Development and Practical Philosophy at City Lit, London and City University, London
- I am a founder member of *Modern Stoicism* team, a group of academics trying to make Stoicism better known and also assess whether it helps people
- I've written 2 books. *Wise Therapy* (2001) looks at how philosophy can help counsellors and therapists. My recent book *Achieve Your Potential with Positive Psychology* (2014) complements *Wise Therapy*. It provides an introduction to Positive Psychology and also looks at it with a philosophical eye.



## Psychology without Philosophy?

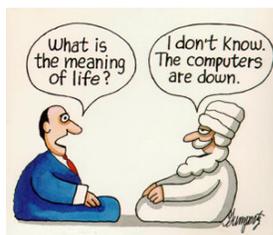
“Social science unguided by ethical philosophy is a chicken without a head... “ (Jules Evans)



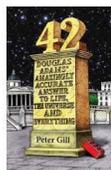
## Wise Therapy Project

- To find acceptable **philosophical ideas** about key topics such as the good life, right and wrong, reason and the emotions and the meaning of life.
- Then to assess the **implications** for counselling and psychotherapy and to develop practical methods from that understanding.
- **Today**
- Ideas from the **philosophy of the meaning of life** and meaning in life – and their implications
- Draw on **developments** since 2001, mainly in **psychology**
- **Practical** –do some philosophical life coaching together

## It's a Mistake to Search for the One Meaning of Life



Douglas Adams parodies the meaning of life question in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* where after millions of years a computer gives this answer to the ultimate question



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## Implication

### Searching for the one true meaning of life could be bad for your health

- Michael Steger – high search for meaning actually associated with lower well-being and higher anxiety.
- Probably because it leads to worry and rumination
- We know from mental health research that worry and rumination are strongly linked to anxiety and depression.



## Frankl's Chess Analogy



- Viktor Frankl compares the question to asking a grandmaster for the one best move for all positions in chess.



7

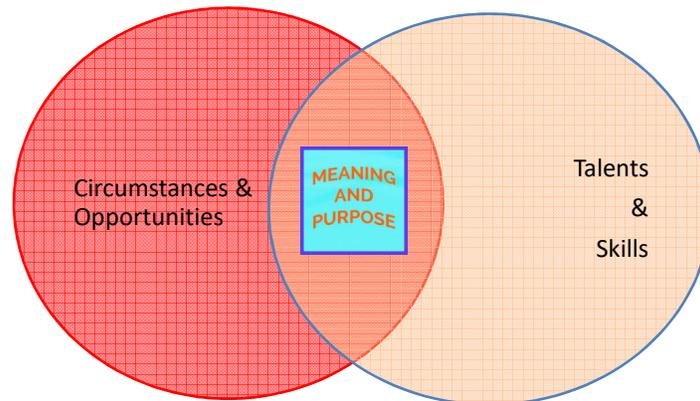
## But there is meaning to be found in your life

- Frankl believes that there is *a* meaning to be found in every life
- Meaning depends on the person and their life circumstances and talents and opportunities.
- Your life possesses its own unique potential meaning and that it is your job to *detect* this potential meaning and live it .
- Seeing this idea drawn as a Venn Diagram is useful

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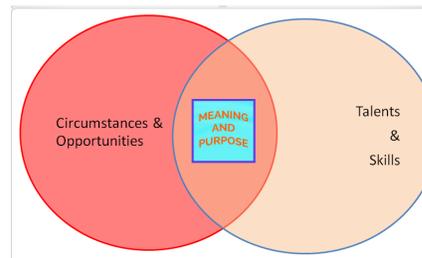
## Viktor Frankl's Theory of Meaning

Taking opportunities to use your talents given your circumstances creates meaning & purpose



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## Practice Meaning Opportunities Today



- Given your circumstances today, your talents, skills and opportunities, name 3 things you could do that would be meaningful today
- Introduce yourself to the person next to you. Briefly coach each other, coming up with 3 ideas each, then swap roles

## Using Frankl's Venn Diagram Meaning Opportunities today



### Your Ideas!

*Send emails to people who have given me business cards*

*Talk to other people –connecting*

*Ask people about their passion*

*Head back to where you belong*

*For my ideas, see the last 4 slides...*



## Effective Altruism

[About](#) [Blog](#) [Donate Effectively](#) [Resources](#) [Grants](#) [Get Involved](#)

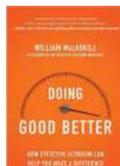
### Taking action

If you're inspired by the idea of effective altruism there are many ways you can take action.

- Take a 10% giving [pledge](#)
- Donate to [highly effective charities](#)
- [Find a fulfilling career that does good](#)
- [Attend an effective altruism conference](#)
- Find your [local meet-up group](#)

### Further Reading

If you want to read about effective altruism in more depth, there are some books you should take a look at:



[Doing Good Better](#)

*Effective altruism and how you can make a difference*

— William McAskill

[www.effectivealtruism.org](http://www.effectivealtruism.org)

[Introduction](#)

[Your opportunity](#)

[Which cause?](#)

[Which career?](#)

[Which charity?](#)

[Getting involved](#)

[Further Reading](#)

[Feedback](#)

## Big Meaning or little meaning

- Some things can appear meaningful but aren't really in the context of a whole life
- We can easily confuse being engaged in an activity, finding it pleasurable with leading a meaningful life
- My playing Bridge example
- At the time – great
- Looking back on day – not so great
- Looking back on life – not at all great
- But maybe we need a balance of Big Meanings and little meanings?
- Lets try a thought experiment to see what you think?



## The Groundhog Day Thought Experiment



- If you were to live the same day over and over again, how would you want to spend it?
- Close your eyes and imagine your Groundhog Day
- Where would you want to be?
- Who would you want to be with?
- What would you not do?

What does this say about how you should live your life now?

What could you do more?

What could you do less?

## Your Groundhog Day



Your activities in Groundhog Day

Time with wife

Nature

Communities of people with different talents - networks

Different experiences with family

What could you do more in your actual life?

What could you do less in your actual life?

*Using Phone*

*Reviewing articles*

*Social Media*

## Does Death & Impermanence Really Destroy Meaning? (Tolstoy / OZYMANDIAS (SHELLEY))

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains: round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.



- Why does something have to be permanent to be of value?
- If a child is tortured for just 20 minutes does that mean it doesn't matter, because it wasn't permanent?

## Implications of Mortality being part of the Human Condition

- Carpe Diem Seize the Day!

Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9EjOCyyCWg>

## Exercise

### 6 months to live

- If you had just six months of (healthy) living left, what would you do?
- Who would you spend it with?
- What would you do less?
  
- What does this say about what would give your life more meaning?
- What can you do differently in the next week?

## Exercise 6 months to live Your Ideas

- Painting my fingernails –feel nice
- Sell all I have enjoy the money and share it
- Would worry less
- Worry more – pressurised!
- Enjoy good moments
  
- Less work

## The Need for Wisdom

- Moral wisdom –good meaning not bad meaning
- Practical wisdom (*phronesis*) – what matters now and how to do what matters – wise decision making (Progress).
- Wisdom as balance (Sternberg) – between short-and long term, your interests and others and between adapting to, shaping and selecting new environments
- Balance between meaning and other values. For example what is the best balance between the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life?
- Wisdom is knowing about what is important in life – including what we are learning about Meaning in this Conference!



**SOCRATES**  
**SATISFIED**

Finding wisdom, happiness and meaning using philosophy and psychology

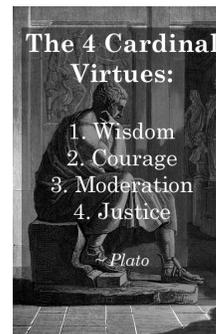


Authentic Happiness Theory



## The Need for all the Virtues in order to live a Meaningful life

- **Courage** – to do what is meaningful in the face of danger or adversity
- **Self-Control** – to do what is meaningful in the face of temptation or emotional disturbances
- **Justice & Humanity** – to do what is meaningful to connect with others and be part of a community in the face of the human beings' inclination to favour ourselves and those we like.



## Practical Implications Learn about key virtues and how to cultivate them

**CITY**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
EST 1894

Home Courses Short Courses [Positive Psychology: becoming the best version of you](#)

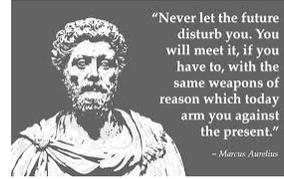
Positive Psychology: becoming the best version of you

Short Courses

Overview What will I learn? Teaching and Assessment Recommended Reading

Positive Psychology provides evidence-based techniques to enable you to do become the best version of yourself. You will learn leading-edge ways to develop strengths and virtues, such as wisdom, self-control, courage and fairness. You will also learn about mindfulness and compassion and how to be more self-compassionate. Required reading is set between classes. Weekly classes encourage discussion of these ideas and practical exercises are given to aid self-development. Students also have the option of giving a short presentation in class. You should be able to commit to 2 hours' work between classes. The two Positive Psychology courses can be taken in either order and no prior knowledge is required.

## Could Stoicism help You?



- Stoicism isn't what you probably think it is!
- Stephen Costello article – Stoicism's similarities with Logotherapy - <http://modernstoicism.com/features-stoicism-logotherapy/>
- Not aiming for a stiff upper lip (a Victorian misinterpretation).
- The real aim of the Stoic is not apathy but joy in life and equanimity in the face of adversity
- Stoicism can also enhance meaning in life

### Some Key Stoic Ideas "Control the Controllables"

“ Grant me the serenity to accept  
the things I cannot change, the  
courage to change the things  
I can, and the wisdom to tell  
the difference ”

The Serenity Prayer

## You can control whether you are an excellent human being

- Aim for excellence of character (virtue)
- So aim to be “the best possible version of yourself”
- For the Stoics, this means cultivating the virtues such as wisdom, self-control, justice and courage
- It also means having a healthy indifference to externals such as status, money and what others think of us

## Your intentions matter more than the outcome



The best way to approach life, the Stoics suggest, to think of oneself as an archer who does his or her best to fire the arrow well but accepts that once it has flown it may be blown off course and miss the target. Our intentions are like preparing to fire the arrow, but the outcome of our actions, like hitting the target, is beyond our control and partly the result of external events.



- International Living like a Stoic week run every year since 2012
- Several thousand people, over the internet, download a booklet and listen to audio recordings, talk to each other about Stoicism over Facebook etc. for a week
- We've developed a scale (the SABS) to measure how Stoic people are
- We take well-being and Stoicism measures before and after Stoic Week
- Significant increase in well-being, positive emotions and the virtues
- 15% increase in meaning
- We have also run a longer 10 week course where on average participants showed a whopping **24% increase in meaning and a 16% increase in joy**
- These are pilot studies – we need to do more research!
- For more details and resources, see <http://modernstoicism.com/>

## STOIC WEEK SUGGESTED EXERCISES

**Stoic Mindfulness**, noticing the thoughts and judgements that arise in your mind, and learning to give less weight to those concerning things outside our control. In addition, we should be more mindful of what is in our control and in particular in any situation what the best version of ourselves (someone with the virtues) would do.

**Stoic Self-Monitoring Sheet**, helping to cultivate an awareness of what is and what is not in our power.

An **Early Morning Meditation**, focussing on a Stoic principle such as “focussing only on things under our control”, or “rehearsing dealing with possible challenges in the day ahead in the way that the best version of ourselves would”.

A **Late Evening Meditation**, reviewing the day in terms of how well one has dealt with challenges, learning what one has done well but also cultivating the intention to do better the next day. Doing so with self-compassion.

## Wise Therapy about Meaning – Recap

Idea	Application/Exercise
No one meaning of life	Dispel this idea – Frank’s chess player idea, damage of worry & rumination
Many meanings of life – Frank’s Venn where opportunity & circumstance meets talent and skills leading to meaning & purpose	Frank’s Venn Diagram Meaning Opportunity Spotting Exercise
Big Meaning or little meaning	Bridge playing example. Groundhog Day Exercise.
Death & Impermanence does not destroy all meaning but it does create a challenge	Dead Poets Society clip. Carpe Diem 6 months to Live Exercise
We need wisdom. Moral wisdom to find good meaning and practical wisdom to find meaning in specific situations	Practical wisdom – Progress decision-making Learning about meaning makes us wiser. Ethical wisdom – Stoicism & ethics
We actually need all the virtues, including courage, self-control & justice and humanity	Learn evidence-based ideas how to cultivate the virtues Try practising Stoicism

Do you agree with me that philosophy can be helpful?

But that’s not the whole story!

“Social science unguided by ethical philosophy is a chicken without a head.... Philosophy ungrounded in social science is a brain in a vat.”

Jules Evans





“We [social scientists] think of theories as rather like bedtime stories: they may be true or they may not be. Mostly they are not, it turns out. So the first thing you have to do with a theory is test it; see if you can get any good evidence for it.”

David M. Clark



## Random Acts of Kindness Study

(Lyubomirsky study, 2005 – see *The How of Happiness*)

- A study asked students to perform five acts of kindness per week over the course of 6 weeks
- 2 conditions: the five acts had to be done either within a single day or across the week
- Happiness levels increased only when done in a single day
- The moral is: armchair theories may not be quite as fictional as “bedtime stories” but we do need to test them out!

## So What else does Wise Therapy need?

Wise therapy needs to be informed by both philosophy and psychology.

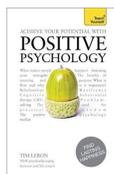
In philosophy as we have seen we do conceptual analysis, critical thinking, thought experiments.

In psychology we create taxonomies and models and create operational definitions, test out our models.

Clinically, we produce protocols and test them out and refine them

Wise therapy, I want to suggest, combines the two.

So lets talk more about the psychology of meaning.



### Frankl's 3 ways to find meaning: ACE



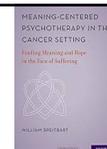
“As early as 1929 I had developed the concept of three groups of values, or three possible ways to find meaning in life - even up to the last moment, the last breath. The three possibilities are

- 1) A deed we do, a work we **create**
- 2) An **experience**, a human encounter, a love
- 3) When confronted with an unchangeable fate (such as an incurable disease), a change of **attitude** toward that fate. In which cases we can still wrest meaning from life by giving testimony to the most human of all human capacities: the ability to turn suffering into human triumph.”

VIKTOR FRANKL *Recollections*, page 64.



## Meaning-Centred Psychotherapy



- Breitbart's meaning-centred psychotherapy includes ACE and has been tested in both group and individual therapy formats among patients with advanced cancer
- Promising results. Higher spiritual well-being and reduced desire for death though not reduced depression at end of tests and after follow-up
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4861219/>

Topics, sample content, and sample experiential exercises within the 8 sessions of meaning-centered group psychotherapy<sup>a</sup>

General topic	Sample content and experiential exercises
Session 1 Concepts and sources of meaning	Introductions of group members; <i>"List 1 or 2 experiences or moments when life has felt particularly meaningful to you..."</i>
Session 2 Cancer and meaning	Identity before and after cancer diagnosis; <i>"Write down 4 answers to the question, 'Who am I?' ... and How has cancer affected your answers ...?"</i>
Session 3 Historical sources of meaning (past legacy)	Life as a legacy that has been given (past); <i>"When you look back on your life and upbringing, what are the most significant memories, relationships, traditions and so on that have made the greatest impact on who you are today...?"</i>
Session 4 Historical sources of meaning (present and future legacy)	Life as a legacy one lives (present) and gives (future); <i>"As you reflect upon who you are today, what are the meaningful activities, roles, or accomplishments that you are most proud of...?"</i>
Session 5 Attitudinal sources of meaning: encountering life's limitations	Confronting limitations imposed by cancer, prognosis and death, introduction of legacy project; <i>"What would you consider a 'good' or 'meaningful' death...?"</i>
Session 6 Creative sources of meaning: engaging in life fully	Creativity, courage, and responsibility; <i>"What are your responsibilities? What are you responsible to and for...?"</i>
Session 7 Experiential sources of meaning: connecting with life	Love, nature, art and humor; <i>"List three ways in which you 'connect with life' and feel most alive through the experiential sources of love, beauty, and humor..."</i>
Session 8 Transitions: reflections and hopes for the future	Review of sources of meaning, reflections on lessons learned in the group; <i>"Do you feel like you have a better understanding of the sources of meaning in life and are you able to use them in your daily life? If so, how...?"</i>

<sup>a</sup>Adapted from Breitbart & Applebaum, 2011, Meaning-Centered Group Psychotherapy as described in the Handbook of Psychotherapy in Cancer Care [2].

Source: [Lori P. Montross Thomas](#), [Emily A. Meier](#), and [Scott A. Irwin](#)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4861219/>

## Robert Emmons' WIST Dimensions



- Emmons empirical research suggests 4 types of values make for more meaningful lives and are associated with enhanced well-being
  - W – meaningful work & achievement – commitment to it , believing in it
  - I - intimate relationships (friendships & romantic) – relating well to others, trusting, helpful
  - S – spirituality & religion – personal and in a community
  - T – transcendence – going beyond own narrow interests, transcending the self

Emmons says this could provide a “taxonomy of personal meaning dimensions”  
 People who described their lives as living according to these values in general flourished more than those who focussed on money, status and power.

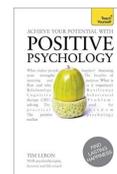
**By enhancing each of these domains we can enhance meaning and well-being.**

**WIST**

**W**ork  
**I**ntimacy  
**S**pirituality  
**T**ranscendence

**WIST**

[http://www.psychology.hku.hk/ftbcstudies/refbase/docs/emmons/2003/53\\_Emm ons2003.pdf](http://www.psychology.hku.hk/ftbcstudies/refbase/docs/emmons/2003/53_Emm ons2003.pdf) (PERSONAL GOALS, LIFE MEANING, AND VIRTUE: WELLSPRINGS OF A POSITIVE LIFE)



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## WIST taxonomy: Dimensions of personal meaning

A Consensual Taxonomy of Life Meaning

Ebersole (1998)	Emmons (1999)	Wong (1998)
Life narratives	Personal strivings	Personal meaning profile
Life work	Achievement	Achievement
Relationships	Intimacy	Relationship
Religious beliefs	Religion/spirituality	Religion
Service	Generativity	Self-transcendence

108 ROBERT A. EMMONS

“Clinicians might routinely assess a client’s level of satisfaction with WIST, design interventions to assist clients in developing sources of fulfilment within these broad life domains, and offer motivational restructuring emphasizing these domains when lives are lacking in meaningful pursuits.” (Emmons. 2003)

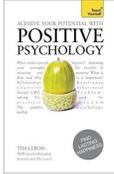
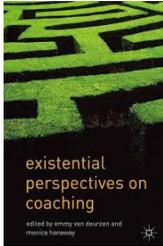


## WIST: Meaningful Work



ONEWORLD EDUCATION UK  
PROMOTING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

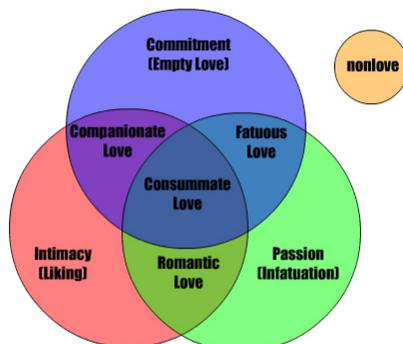
- **Roger Ebert Case Study** – finding meaning through using his talent for English, his circumstances in USA in 1970s ..opportunities at Chicago Sunday Times. TV and internet.
- **Ken Case Study**– mid-life crisis
  - Family, current job
  - Using strengths (persistence and determination)
  - Flexible thinking
  - Understanding what mattered (not shifting occupation so much as doing something meaningful and that offered some recognition)
- **Danny Case Study** – life changes – limit situation, brush with death
  - Processing and learning from emotions
  - Understanding what matters from emotions and thought experiments
  - Finding an option that satisfies most of what matters
  - Coming to terms with uncertainty, wisely (neither ruminating, avoiding, worrying or jumping in without *phronesis*)
  - Using a Wise Decision Making Process (Progress)

## Meaningful Relationships

- Positive Psychology has many ideas about how to improve relationships
  - Active and Constructive Responding
  - Good active listening skills
  - Developing empathy
  - Learn about and appreciate their strengths
  - Prioritising relationships
  - Creating shared meanings & rituals
  - All of these can be useful, as is .....

## Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

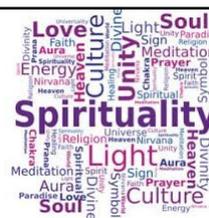


Items in [ ] indicate type of love when other components are absent.  
A relationship without any of the 3 components is nonlove.

GraphJam.com

## WIST: Spirituality

“Spirituality means something different to everyone”



- Some definitions of Spirituality
  - “Relating to the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things”
  - “Connection to something bigger than oneself”
  - “Search for meaning in life”
  - “The deepest values and meanings by which people live by”
  - “An inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/her being” meditation
  - Belief in a higher purpose
- Can atheists be spiritual? Sam Harris – the role of meditation and losing your self
- Questions: What does or could spirituality mean to you?
- Would you like to develop it?
- How can you develop spirituality?
  - Participating (more) in organised religion
  - Getting in touch with your spiritual side through private prayer, yoga .
  - What else?

## WIST: Transcendence

### Awe & the Appreciation of Beauty

Awe is the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your understanding of the world




- Viktor Frankl
- ‘Let us ask a mountain-climber who has beheld the alpine sunset and is so moved by the splendour of nature that he feels cold shudders running down his spine - let us ask him whether after such an experience his life can ever again seem wholly meaningless’
- Assignment : Awe-Seeking Expedition
- This week, set aside at least 10 minutes to appreciate beauty or get yourself into a mindset and environment where you may experience awe. Email me what you did and how you experienced it.

**Some ideas**

- Watch this Yosemite video
  - [http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/awe\\_video#data-tab-how](http://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/awe_video#data-tab-how)
- Watch this Stoic View from Above video
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEF8rNmHmJ4>
- Birdsong dawn chorus - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJXYFaxhq1U>

## Combining Frankl’s ACE & Emmons’ WIST Frameworks

WIST Emmons, Wong, Ebersole	Work	Intimacy & Relationships	Spirituality	Transcendence
ACE Frankl, Crumbaugh, Breitbart				
Attitudes				
Creations				
Experiences				



X



# Positive Psychology

## Evidence-based interventions to boost well-being

1) Meaning part of both Seligman's original Authentic Happiness theory and his more recent PERMA theory

Authentic Happiness Theory



© 2002 by Martin Seligman, Ph.D. All rights reserved. For more information, please visit www.authentic-happiness.org.

Introducing a New Theory of Well-Being



# Positive Psychology

## 2) Transcendence (includes meaning) one of 6 core virtues in the VIA

### VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

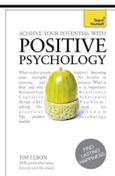
*The Character Strengths of a Flourishing Life*

WISDOM	COURAGE	HUMANITY	JUSTICE	TEMPERANCE	TRANSCENDENCE
 <b>Creativity</b> <small>Originality, imagination, ingenuity</small>	 <b>Bravery</b> <small>Valor, not shrinking from fear, standing up for what's right</small>	 <b>Love</b> <small>Both loving and being loved, working close, authentic with others</small>	 <b>Teamwork</b> <small>Citizenship, social responsibility, helpful</small>	 <b>Forgiveness</b> <small>Merely accepting other's shortcomings, doing one's own best choice</small>	 <b>Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence</b> <small>Art, wonder, elevation</small>
 <b>Curiosity</b> <small>Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience</small>	 <b>Perseverance</b> <small>Persistence, fortitude, finishing what one starts</small>	 <b>Kindness</b> <small>Generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruism, "do-gooder"</small>	 <b>Fairness</b> <small>Aid, not letting feelings bias decisions about others</small>	 <b>Humility</b> <small>Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves</small>	 <b>Gratitude</b> <small>Thanks for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed</small>
 <b>Judgment</b> <small>Critical thinking, knowing things through, open-minded</small>	 <b>Honesty</b> <small>Authenticity, integrity</small>	 <b>Social Intelligence</b> <small>Emotional intelligence, sense of the motives/feelings of self/ others, knowing what makes other people tick</small>	 <b>Leadership</b> <small>Organizing group activities, encouraging a group to get things done</small>	 <b>Prudence</b> <small>Careful, cautious, not taking undue risks</small>	 <b>Hope</b> <small>Optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation</small>
 <b>Love of Learning</b> <small>Mastering new skills, learning systematically, adding to knowledge</small>	 <b>Zest</b> <small>Vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy, being alive and activated</small>	 <b>VIA INSTITUTE ON CHARACTER</b> <small>(where the world finds strength)</small> <a href="http://www.viacharacter.org">www.viacharacter.org</a>		 <b>Self-regulation</b> <small>Self-control, disciplined, managing impulses &amp; emotions</small>	 <b>Spirituality</b> <small>Religiosity, faith, purpose, meaning</small>
 <b>Perspective</b> <small>Wisdom, seeing things in context, taking the big picture view</small>					 <b>Spirituality</b> <small>Religiosity, faith, purpose, meaning</small>

## Positive Psychology

### 3) Many evidence-based interventions have been developed and evaluated

- Three Good Things
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Savouring
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Activity Monitoring and Planning
- Best Possible Self
- Mental Contrasting
- Goal Setting
- Grit
- Gratitude Exercises
- Growth Mindset
- Using your strengths
- Expressive writing
- Active Constructing Responding
- How to cultivate virtues
- How to build habits



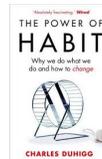
### Tailor the Positive Psychology ideas to make them more likely to lead to meaning



Positive Psychology Intervention	Tailored to provide more meaning
Three Good Things	3 things in the last 24 hours where you felt you had made the world a better place, if only in a small way or felt a sense of purpose and what you did to help make that happen
Random Acts of Kindness	At least one act of kindness that has a significant impact (e.g. effective altruism)
Best Possible Self Exercise	Your Best Possible Self is experiencing meaning and purpose (ACE & WIST)
Savouring and Savouring Expeditions	Experiencing Awe & Awe Expeditions
Goal Setting	WIST as domains for goals
Activity Monitoring and Planning	Monitor and plan for meaning as well as pleasure and achievement
Detecting and using strengths more (VIA)	Using strengths in the service of meaning

## Creating Meaning habits

- Keystone habits – practices that lay the foundation for a life of meaning
- Tiny Habits – things that take less than 30 seconds and take almost no willpower <http://www.tinyhabits.com/>
- Positive Reinforcement – rewarding yourself after doing something meaningful to establish a habit
- Exercise for Today



Think of 3 tiny habits that could lead to more meaning in your life

*Laughing, savouring food, conscious breathing & appreciation of living, first coffee morning outside, hugging, really greeting people, looking up, push-ups, saying thank you, sending someone you haven't spoken to a text message, learning a new joke, smelling flowers, stopping and listening to the world, be kind to people*

## Psychology of Meaning Recap

Idea	Evidence-based Intervention
Frankl's ACE Framework	Meaning-Centred Psychotherapy in specific settings
Emmons' WIST framework	Positive Psychology of work, relationships, spirituality and transcendence
Positive Psychology Interventions	Tailoring interventions to focus on meaning e.g. savouring expedition -> awe expedition (these need testing!)
Creating habits of meaning	Psychology of creating habits (keystone, tiny, reinforcement)

### 3 Ideas from Left-Field to Finish with 1) Meaning-Centred Therapies in IAPT/NHS?

- I'm very enthusiastic about developing more evidence-based tools to enhance meaning
- In IAPT there is increased focus on Long Term Conditions (such as cancer, pain, fibromyalgia)
- Meaning-Centred Therapy could help!
- We need more research, more RTCs, for different LTCs.
- Joel – what's the story? Is it worth having Meaning-Centred therapy free to those who need it?
- Would that be a meaningful thing to do?

### 3 Ideas from Left-Field to Finish with 1) Meaning-Centred Therapies in IAPT/NHS?

- A note of caution.
- We have been talking mainly about Therapy through Meaning.
- Lets not forget about Meaning through Therapy as another possibility
- In my NHS work I have seen many people's meaning enhanced by therapy
- Depression – people become more active and start to experience and create more meaning
- OCD – people stop torturing themselves and others with compulsions and start to do things that are really meaningful instead
- PTSD & panic – living a less restricted life, able to live meaningfully
- For example, for someone with PTSD, CBT or EMDR could well increase meaning more quickly and reliably than a meaning-centred therapy.
- If we want the NHS to agree to provide meaning-centred therapy, we need to be clear about the specific problems it can help with and likely benefits

## 2) Take a Leaf out of Modern Stoicism's book

- International Meaning & Purpose Week?
- Create a programme of meditations, exercises and readings for public to follow in a week.
- Have we been hearing enough ideas for this to be feasible?
- Create an e-learning course for people to follow over several months
- Take measures of meaning and well-being before and after
- Promote meaning and purpose for the general public.
- Would that be a meaningful thing to do?



INTERNATIONAL  
MEANING & PURPOSE  
WEEK

## 3) Is Finding Meaning & Purpose about to become even more Urgent and Important?



- Meaning could well be more relevant in the near future than ever. We live in a world of change with artificially intelligent robots already performing operations and virtual reality machines allowing us to experience something that may soon be indistinguishable from the real thing
- Technological innovations offer both opportunities and challenges for meaning

### 3) Is Finding Meaning & Purpose about to become even more Urgent and Important?

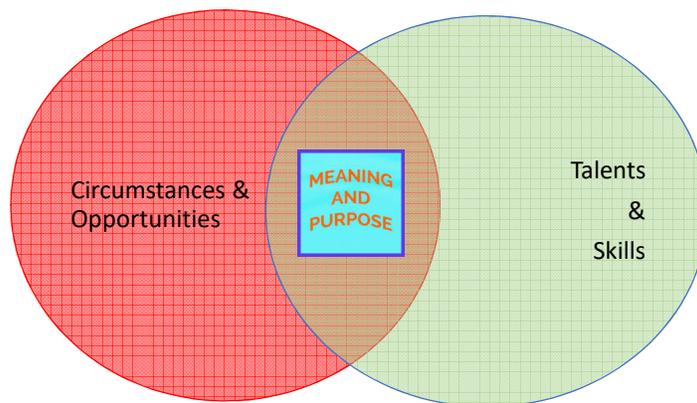


- Elon Musk (Tesla and SpaceX) knows a thing or two about technology. When asked about the biggest challenges humanity faces in the face of a lot of jobs being automated, this is what he recently said.
- “I think universal basic income will be necessary but the much harder challenge is: How will people then have meaning? A lot of people derive meaning from their employment. If you’re not needed, what is the meaning? Do you feel useless? That is a much harder problem to deal with?”

• We have important work to do

### Viktor Frankl’s Theory of Meaning

Taking opportunities to use your talents given your circumstances creates meaning & purpose



# Thank you

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### Books by Tim LeBon

Wise Therapy (Continuum, 2001)

Achieve Your Potential with Positive Psychology (Hodder, 2014)

