

LOGOANALYSIS: FOR TREATMENT OF MOOD DISORDER DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITION

Rosemary Henrion

Logoanalysis is a special logotherapy technique and a program, initially developed in the early 70's by James Crumbaugh, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist. It presently consists of the following revised seven steps:



- Step One:** Discovering Who You Really Are.
- Step Two:** Handling Personal Loss.
- Step Three:** Developing Self-Confidence.
- Step Four:** Getting into the Mind-set necessary for Discovering New Meaning and Purpose.
- Step Five:** Encounter: Relating to Significant Others of Both Sexes.
- Step Six:** Dereflection: Defusing Liabilities and Infusing Assets.
- Step Seven:** The Final Scene: Commitment.

Viktor Frankl, MD, Ph.D., approved the technique and the program. Logoanalysis, as a formal program, was initiated 30 years ago and became a unique, holistic program. The program continues to be therapeutic and life changing for some clients after 30 years.

Since my retirement from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1998, I continue to use the Seven-Step program.¹ I volunteer my time with active duty military servicemen/women discussing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and how to cope with its symptoms. With military dependents, I discuss the unusual behaviors of their husbands returning from the war in Iraq and how to cope effectively using the logotherapeutic principles, concepts, and techniques. I also have clients in the private sector who are experiencing family/medical problems. Another position that I hold is that of consultant/educator for the St Joseph's Homes for Therapeutic Foster Care Programs in Mobile, Alabama. All of the above entities are challenging as well as rewarding.

Logoanalysis becomes preventive when clients learn in particular the process of transcending self from the psychological level (victim) to the human spirit level (survivor). The human spirit (noetic dimension) is the healing portion of the self. The individuals that I work with focus on "what

is left intact" rather than "the loss."² When healing becomes predominant, the defiant power of the human spirit is catapulted into action. In a nation that promotes victims, these clients become more positive about their future and develop visions of hope. Even in the concentration camps of World War II many prisoners who thought "what can I do in this meaningless situation" survived the horrific ordeal while those who anguished over "why me?" perished in the camps before the end of the war. This statement connects immediately with clients who presently encounter overwhelming trauma related to medical problems and who may be candidates for Logoanalysis.

A Case Example

One of the clients, let us call her Martha, who completed the Logoanalysis program created a lasting impression on me. She had a winning personality, and made acquaintances and friends wherever she went. However, Martha developed Multiple Sclerosis, a medical disease affecting her whole being.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, often debilitating, autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system. Mild symptoms usually begin with numbness of the limb extremities, difficulty in walking, pain, and loss of vision due to optic neuritis. The precise etiology of MS is unknown but scientific research indicates a number of factors including immunologic/auto-immune, environmental, viral, genetic, and trauma. Three stages that occur with this disease are: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Personal History

Martha was reaching the pinnacle of her career. She had worked hard to achieve many accolades. She had a devoted spouse and children.

A short time later, Martha began to experience numbness, generalized weakness in her lower extremities, and periodic loss of balance. Neurological tests were completed, and Martha was informed that the diagnosis was Multiple Sclerosis. Immediately Martha felt that this could not happen to her since she had so much going for her.

A few months after Martha received the diagnosis, her physical condition worsened. Her career ended abruptly. Her family became her major support system.

The family moved to a lovely home with a swimming pool where Martha could exercise and live a less stressful lifestyle. After a few years, her spouse informed her without any warning that he was moving out of the house and taking the children. This was extremely painful emotionally for Martha, especially when she felt that her spouse would stay with her during the challenging periods of their marriage as well as the pleasurable

times.

The isolation and alienation became so overwhelming that Martha referred herself to an outpatient clinic. By this time Martha was in an electric wheelchair, had obtained a special equipped van, and had the physical comforts of life; but she was emotionally distraught without meaningful relationships.

Martha was given diagnoses of: Mood Disorder Due to a General Medical Condition, and Adjustment Disorder with Depressed Mood, in addition to the Multiple Sclerosis. She was referred to a mental health therapist. Upon entering the therapist's office, Martha said, "I don't have any meaning or purpose in life. I have no reason to go on. I have Multiple Sclerosis, am wheelchair bound, and my spouse left me and took our children with him."

Martha's shoulders were bent over. She looked disheveled and was severely depressed with memory loss. I was notified to come meet this individual who needed Logoanalysis. I met Martha, spoke with her relative to her presenting symptoms, gave her a brochure describing the Logoanalysis program, and told her if she had any questions to call me. Martha would be admitted to Logoanalysis the following week when there would be an opening in the program.

Logopsychotherapy Group Treatment

The next Tuesday, Martha arrived promptly for class. She actively listened to the presentation on Your View of Life, the First Step of Logoanalysis. She learned that she had a free will, could make choices, and was responsible for her choices and the consequences for them. Immediately after the 45-minute presentation, logopsychotherapy group session began and lasted another 45 minutes. Martha was quiet, but she listened to her peers discussing their views of life. Toward the latter part of the session, Martha revealed some thoughts and feelings about her illness. Some of her peers who experienced similar feelings shared them with Martha. Martha's body language revealed that she wanted to share more about herself but was cautious. She needed to arrive at the point of lowering her "defense guard" enough to begin to trust the group. She was not at that point of trust.

Martha felt a little more relaxed during the second presentation and logopsychotherapy group session. The topic of Handling Loss, the Second Step of Logoanalysis, was of particular interest to her since Martha lost her health, her career, and her family. Martha mentioned that she felt overwhelmed with loss since her biological family lived far away and she had no real support system in the immediate area. Her peers made some positive gestures in their getting together to socialize after the sessions in Logoanalysis. They would have lunch together somewhere in the city.

Martha liked this idea very much. At least she was beginning to structure her daily activities with a meaningful schedule.

Martha attended the third session but she did not seem to be as alert and attentive as to what was occurring in class or in logopsychotherapy group. This presentation specifically focused on Developing Self-confidence, the Third Step of Logoanalysis. Most of the participants had experienced major, career-ending trauma. Each member in the Logoanalysis group shared thoughts and feelings concerning the future. They learned there were a number of possibilities. Some of them planned to make appointments after this session regarding jobs where they could feel productive.

During the fourth session, the topic discussed in class was Creative Thinking, the Fourth Step of Logoanalysis. After developing some self-confidence, the participants would need to think about their future. They would need to begin to write short-term, meaningful goals for each day's activities so they would have something to look forward to; and they would need to begin to think about long-term goals. I shared that a number of persons who had completed Logoanalysis previously changed activities, jobs, and even careers. Some made choices at the crossroads of their lives. It was such a relief and they felt good about their choices, especially when their peers validated the information that was shared. Group members felt the validation was significant enough for them to test reality and receive the necessary emotional support. Martha felt that this step was very applicable for her to choose another career.

The topic for the next class was on Encounter, the Fifth Step of Logoanalysis. In existential terms, encounter means developing a meaningful and trusting relationship with another human being. Three levels of relationship were discussed in detail - suprahuman, human, and subhuman. The suprahuman relationship includes a sense of presence or higher power. The higher power can be anything that the individual chooses it to be as long as it is greater than he or she. It is important to return to the first step of this Logoanalysis program and to further ascertain one's view of life. The human relationship occurs between two human beings sharing their innermost thoughts and feelings with one another. Trust is the basis of the relationship. If trust does not exist, a genuine relationship will not last.

Two sessions are usually held for the topic of encounter since many clients have never experienced trusting relationships. The real meaning and purpose in life in the final analysis is in relationships.

The subhuman relationship occurs between a human being and pets or animals. Some human beings are so deeply traumatized over a deep relationship(s) with another human being(s) that they prefer an animal so that they do not have to risk being hurt again on the human level. Martha

learned the difference between conditional love (I'll love you if you give me ___) as opposed to unconditional love (I love you for you) and the process for choosing future acquaintances, friends, and partners.

The next session was concerned with Dereflection, the Sixth Step of Logoanalysis. This term, coined by Viktor Frankl, means taking the focus off one's problems and refocusing on his/her assets (what is left intact as opposed to the loss). The Meaning In Life Evaluation (MILE) Scale (developed by Dr. Crumbaugh) was administered during this session. The MILE Scale is a 20-item, forced-choice assessment of personal values that each participant uses to prioritize their five top values. From these top values will come meaning and purpose for each individual. Each participant discussed their short-term goals in attaining these values. They were encouraged to assess their values with the MILE Scale annually, since life experiences may produce changes as they progress to higher values. This exercise was (and continues to be) intriguing for most individuals who learn there is a hierarchy among their values. It is workable and realistic. The group participants recognized they were actually making progress in their lives.

Martha began to take note of the values that she prioritized since she was offered a job working with underprivileged families in a major city. Lasting friendships and being of service to others were two of her top five values, so she assumed responsibility for the job immediately. This particular experience changed Martha's attitude about life tremendously since she met people who had no financial means to obtain housing, clothing, or even send their children to school. She elaborated in logopsychotherapy group one day as to her need for being creative in the job. She did not know what she would be doing until she arrived at work each day. Martha felt that she was blessed despite her not being able to continue her former career. She was more compassionate with others and felt this job was meaningful, fulfilling, and most satisfying. Martha looked forward to going to work every day.

The Seventh Step in Logoanalysis is Commitment. If the participants are genuinely engaged in this program, they will continue to work on their goals and aspire for higher values as they progress in life. Martha took this step seriously, and she became involved in support groups. She invited me to speak at one of the meetings on meaning and purpose in life, and the audience was appreciative of my sharing this unique approach with them. They were grateful that Martha invited me to make this information available to them.

After much cajoling on my part, Martha finally consented to write a letter to Dr. Frankl, informing him how Logoanalysis had been so influential in changing her life to a meaningful, fulfilling, and satisfying one despite the traumas that she experienced. Dr. Frankl responded to her

letter by phoning Martha and inquiring about the process of transcending the self from victim to that of survivor. After the 15-minute conversation, Dr. Frankl's final remark was "you have learned logotherapy." Martha was ecstatic over the phone call to think that Dr. Frankl would take the time to call her from Vienna, Austria. Martha called me immediately, feeling so overwhelmed but joyous beyond all of her wildest dreams.

Here is a perfect example of happiness being a by-product of one who is living a meaningful existence. After her medical illness was diagnosed and her mood stabilized, she lived the remainder of her life productively by helping others, which, in turn, gave her the opportunity to progress to higher values. Logoanalysis provided Martha with the tools that she needed to experience heights that she never dreamed she could achieve.

ROSEMARY HENRION, MSN, R.N., [19 Wen Mar Avenue, Pass Christian, Mississippi 39571] *is a Diplomate in Logotherapy and Faculty Member and Member of The International Board of Directors of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy.*

References

1. Crumbaugh, J., & Henrion, R. (2004). *The Power of Meaningful Intimacy: Key to Successful Relationships*. Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation.
2. Lukas, E. (2000). *Logotherapy Textbook*. Toronto: Liberty Press.