

## UNIT 5

# Some Logotherapy Techniques

## Course Notes

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Attitudinal Change Course notes Unit 5 Ver 1 26 Feb 2022

Page 1 of 11

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### SOME LOGOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES

#### Logotherapy and its application in therapy.

This Section will introduce you to some logotherapy techniques. A full overview of the techniques of logotherapy forms for basis of later work in this course. The techniques considered in this section will be confined to self-transcendence along with self-distancing and humour. In reading your text later in this section you will find reference in Frankl to other techniques that will be treated as part of Units 6 and 7. To help you to situate logotherapy within the whole concept of psychotherapy the following short reading from Crumbaugh (1985) provides a good overview. As you read take note of the five principles that are outlined for psychotherapy and how logotherapy includes these principles within its approach.

#### Attitude Change Reading 5.1      Logotherapy in the psychotherapeutic smorgasbord.

Before proceeding access this reading from James Crumbaugh.

Your reading mentioned the four step approach of Lukas to a logotherapy intervention and Crumbaugh's own five step approach. Lukas' approach will be outlined in more detail, along with other approaches, in later work. For the moment to keep some consistency in this section we will stay with Crumbaugh's approach. Now access reading 2 on exercises of logoanalysis in which Crumbaugh's approach is outlined.

#### Attitude Change Reading 5.2 Exercises in Logoanalysis

Before proceeding access this reading which outlines Crumbaugh's approach to logoanalysis. Note that it centres on identifying aspects of the Meaning Triangle.

Then access an optional video lecture to supplement the course notes for this unit before moving on. Simply click on the link to start.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1h6fo6xstdts8d3/Unit%20%20Section%204%20Remastered.mp4?dl=0>

#### Self-Transcendence

For much of his life Frankl battled against the concept which was popular at the time, and possibly still is, that human beings are basically concerned with gratifying personal needs and satisfying personal drives and instincts. The concept is that humans, in the final analysis, want to alleviate the inner tension created by drives and instincts and maintain or restore an inner equilibrium called "homeostasis."

Frankl (2000) disagrees:

I for one think that man is never primarily concerned with any inner condition, such as the inner equilibrium, but rather with something or someone out there in the world, be it a cause to serve or a partner to

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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love-and if he really loves the partner, he certainly does not just use him as a more or less apt means to satisfy his own needs.

Thus, human existence – at least as long as it has not been neurotically distorted – is always directed to something, or someone, other than itself, be it a meaning to fulfil or another human being to encounter lovingly. I have termed this constitutive characteristic of human existence “self-transcendence.” What is called “self-actualization” is ultimately an effect, the unintentional by product of self-transcendence. (p.84)

Frankl (2000) goes on to quote Maslow who suggests that the “business of self-actualization” can best be carried out “by a commitment to an important job.” (p.84) Frankl sees this as supporting his concept that purpose and meaning are the highest human values.

He goes on to say:

Just as self-actualization can be obtained only through a detour, through the fulfilment of meaning, so identity is available only through responsibility, through being responsible for the fulfilment of meaning..... Therefore man is originally characterized by his “search for meaning” rather than his “search for himself.” The more he forgets himself – giving himself to a cause or another person- the more *human* he is. The more he is immersed and absorbed in something or someone other than himself the more he really becomes *himself*.

As in so many other places in his writing Frankl (2000) tries to convey his concept by using simple examples. In this case he suggests that we could regard the eye as an example of self-transcendence. The moment the eye perceives something of itself then its capacity to perceive the surrounding world visually has deteriorated. He uses the example of cataracts which are perceived by the eye as a cloud. In a further example, that of glaucoma, the eye perceives a rainbow halo around lights. Its vision has deteriorated. Normally the eye does not see anything of itself. So, as soon as the eye does not focus outward, and begins to perceive itself in some way, that is evidence of some type of defect. In the same way, when human beings focus outwards and are intent on self-transcendence they are achieving what they are capable of becoming. Once they lose sight of that vision, as inevitably we all do, they are something less than they can be.

Frankl (2000) concludes that “one of the two aspects of self-transcendence namely, reaching out for a meaning to fulfil, is identical with what I have come to call ‘the will to meaning.’ ” The other aspect of self-transcendence, according to Frankl, is that man is at his most human when he forgets himself and simply overlooks himself for something other than himself.

So in summary self-transcendence is our ability to rise above and beyond the self and to direct ourselves to something or someone other than ourselves. This can be a meaning to fulfil or can be other human beings to encounter lovingly.

Self-transcendence is quite a different concept to self-awareness, which can be the focus of some other therapies. Lukas (2000) describes the difference succinctly in her book on Logotherapy.

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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### **Attitude Change Reading 5.3      Self-awareness and dealing with oneself.**

Before proceeding access this reading from Lukas (pp. 54-57)

### **Attitude Change Worksheet 5.1      A self- reflection on meaning in life.**

Before proceeding complete worksheet 1.

First download the Word version of the Worksheet so that you can respond on that worksheet

If you are working in a group take time to share this with the group before you go on. If you are working online send the responses to your supervisor by uploading them to the LMS

It is through self-transcendence that human beings experience life and meaning. While the five sources of meaning listed self-transcendence as the fifth source, this list was not intended in any way to be a hierarchy of values, with one leading to the other. Such things as self-discovery, choice, uniqueness and responsibility are often experienced through self-transcendence. Thus the therapist begins wherever it is appropriate to begin; logotherapy is not simply a stepped process. In this section it is intended to concentrate on only a couple of techniques and to work more on the other techniques and how to combine them into a logotherapy consultation in Unit 3.

We will now move on to a description of some of the techniques that can be used with clients. Fabry (1988) mentions a number of them but we will concentrate in detail on three in this section – guided fantasy, role models and examples from the past.

### **Attitude Change Reading 5.4      Guideposts to self-transcendence**

Before proceeding access reading 14 from Fabry (1988) on techniques that can be used to help with self-transcendence.

#### **Guided Fantasy**

Fabry (1988) goes into more detail in other places about the types of guided fantasy that can be used. The fantasy is assisted with symbols and images and the individual is invited to think about a particular kind of setting and then is assisted to define that further in specific terms.

For instance, a forest could be used to represent the way a person sees their life – perhaps dark, threatening, confusing or on the other hand green and fragrant with hills and flowers. There could be no path, or a very clear path, a lot of forks in the road, a lot of undergrowth. There could be roots to stumble over or fruits to pick. A mountain could be used to represent striving, and hopes. It could be steep with no path, it could be rugged and frightening on the other hand it could be inviting with broad rocks that encourage climbing.

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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A creek or stream can represent the course of life. You can follow it to your source – your past, or to its mouth – your future. It might flow peacefully or might gently rush or it could be inviting or may be threatening. It could have waterfalls or it may flow slowly through a meadow full of flowers. It can finish on a plain or a desert or a swamp.

A building could be used to represent a person, that of the client. Is it a simple farm house or a palace? Is it a large apartment building or a small ramshackle hut? What is surrounding it – vegetables or flower gardens? Are they well groomed or wild? Such things can be difficult for individuals and some clients may prefer a more guided fantasy, one where the therapist begins the process for them. It can address a specific problem.

Fabry gives the following example (p.21)

### Lack of self confidence

The client is guided towards a situation that will strengthen self-image. To encourage the client to begin the fantasy, the therapist makes suggestions:

“You are standing in a meadow full of flowers. It is a sunny day. The sky is blue and birds are singing. You walk slowly through the meadow, on a path towards a building. When you get there, you find that the door is locked. You ring the bell, but no one answers, you want to get into the building. You walk around it, trying other doors. Finally you find one that is open. You go inside and find yourself in a room full of people. They are all talking in small groups. They are all people you know, some of them friends, some casual acquaintances. You are aware that they cannot see you. You are surprised that they are all talking about you, and they are all saying positive things. You go from one group to another, listening. What are they saying?”

The whole of this imagery is based on the premise that deep down we actually know our strong points but we have tended to repress these and we need to make them conscious.

Another way to do this could be achieved through another guided fantasy, one based on the client’s realisation that at a funeral service only the good aspects of the deceased are mentioned.

“Imagine that you are attending your own memorial service. Your favourite music is being played. Your favourite minister gives a eulogy and then asked those present to speak up and tell what they remember about you, and why they are sad that you have died.”

### **Attitude Change Worksheet 5.2 Using Guided fantasy**

Before proceeding complete worksheet 2 for this unit.

First download the Word version of the Worksheet so that you can respond on that worksheet

If you are working in a group take time to share this with the group before you go on. If you are working online send the responses to your supervisor by uploading them to the LMS

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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### Self-Distancing and Humour

Helping clients to access the self-transcendent is the ultimate aim of logotherapy. Remember that self-transcendence is our ability to rise above and beyond the self and to direct ourselves to something or someone other than ourselves. This can be a meaning to fulfil or can be other human beings to encounter lovingly. However if a person is bound up in the problems they experience it can be difficult to take the first steps towards self-transcendence.

Dr. Frankl wrote of what he called the uniquely human quality of self-detachment. This human quality enables us to step away from ourselves, look at ourselves from the outside, to oppose ourselves if need be, and even laugh at ourselves at times. This capacity for self-distancing manifests itself through the defiant power of the human spirit. However, we see this self-distancing quality, perhaps most clearly, through the sense of humour.

Human beings have the unique ability, not only to laugh, but to laugh at self and the circumstances of self. This quality is a critical element in the healing process for individuals. As Frankl (2004) points out in *Man's Search for Meaning*, "Humour is another of the soul's weapon in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that Humour, more than anything else in the human makeup, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds" (p. 54). In other words, logotherapy uses Humour as a means of distancing self from behaviours and fears.

The reason humour begins the healing process is that it enables us to self-distance so that we can see ourselves whole. Franklian Psychotherapy uses self-distancing techniques such as humour to help client's distance from symptoms. Sometimes by stepping away from ourselves and looking at ourselves with a sense of humour we are able to see the ridiculousness of our behaviour and fears. Frankl was fond of quoting Gordon Allport's observation: A patient who is able to laugh at himself is on the way to recovery (Sahakian 1995, p. 8).

The moment we laugh at our fears, some sense of the fear dissipates. The laughing is not the kind of nervous laughter that comes when we are unsure of what will happen next. This is a genuine humour, a laughing at the exaggerated situation. Elisabeth Lukas says that what makes us smile cannot cause horror. However, both client and counsellor must understand that the target of humour is the ridiculous fears and emotional absurdities, not the client. This is why self-distancing is so important. The client needs assistance in creating distance between self and the behaviour or fear before they are able to laugh at or ridicule the behaviour or fear.

Graber (2004) suggest that the first task of the logotherapist is to assist the client to gain some distance from the burden they carry and through which they often identify themselves. This in turn will provide a clear vision for courses of action open to them or reveal areas of freedom still available to take a stand towards their condition. She believes that the first task is to convince the client that they are not identical to their symptoms. What follows are a selection of self-distancing techniques.

### Singing, silly voices and repetition

A sometimes useful self-distancing technique is to ease the anxiety of the client by

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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helping them to address the ridiculous nature of some of it.

For instance, a person might experience anxiety because they perceive that in their own workplace their manager is demanding to the extent of wanting to analyse their every move. (Not the same as harassment, which would demand different advice from a counsellor or therapist, but a tendency to micro-manage by standing next to you and looking over your shoulder at what you are doing.) One method of easing the tension in what might be a difficult circumstance to actually change is for the person to compose a sentence that describes their angst and sing it in their head to the tune to a well-known song, such as “happy birthday”. For instance

“He’s being a pest again, He’s being a pest again, He’s *being a pest again* (slow), He’s being a pest again.”

It is not long before the somewhat pestilent nature of the manager is no longer a problem that causes anxiety or even anger, just something the person has to put up with and they are aware of – they have come to terms with it provided that the person concerned can concentrate on singing “happy birthday” in their mind whenever they are confronted by the anxiety feeling, and this will probably be when the manager arrives!

Two things must be emphasised. First, this is simply as means to take away the immediate anxiety and to self distance. Other forms of therapy such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) regard this as an example of the “observing self” standing back from the “thinking self”. The concept in Logotherapy would be that self-distancing is a step towards in engaging with the noetic dimension. Once the client has been able to self-distance using such a method there is still a need in Logotherapeutic treatment to engage with meaning.

A similar technique uses constant repetition of a word or phrase. We have probably all used this technique at times without deliberately focusing on it as a self-distancing technique. For instance, the word “lemon”. This word repeated over and over in your mind or out loud as fast as possible for a thirty second period becomes just a meaningless sound.

“LemonsLemonsLemonsLemonsLemonsLemonsLemonsLemons.....”

Again, this is but a first step to self-distancing and Logotherapy needs to move into a concept of engaging with meaning.

### **The stage play**

Graber (2004) outlines this technique and says that she favours it as a method of self-distancing for the client. It is a technique which invites the client to become the audience and look at a situation in life that is a problem for them. She recommends introducing it by saying something along these lines:

In order to make sure that I (the therapist) understand the full extent of your distress (problem, situation, circumstance, symptom, pain, etc) let me into the theatre of your life with you. Let’s put your situation on the stage of this theatre as if it was a play and together we will watch it unfold. Would you (the client) please join me in the audience and describe to me what is going on on the stage. Only you can adequately see and feel and describe the play

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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unfolding before us. (Graber, 2004, p.108)

Using such a technique can assist the person to stand back from a problem that they have taken onboard as their personal issue and which seems to govern their waking moments. For the logotherapist it has the advantage of not only self-distancing but also moving into an engagement with meaning simultaneously.

Once we have described what is happening on the stage we can move on to other questions:

“What does the audience think about what is happening? Are they sympathetic, angry, supportive .. etc.?”

From there we can look at the next move, and this is particularly helpful if the client is coming to terms with forming and finding their own meaningful decisions for the future.

“What are the audience hoping will happen now? Why?”

Or “When the curtain comes up for the next act (given this is the end of act 1) what will they be hoping the main character does?”

Possibilities for various endings and changes of attitude are opened up by exploring optional endings with the client. One of my own clients once commented: “If the second act is as boring as the first, they will probably go home!” For that person the self-distancing process was a moment of change even though at that time and in the session the person was unsure what to change, it was clear they wanted to make change.

### **Meditation**

Meditation can take place with only the therapist and client or there can be meditation groups formed. Either way the technique is to use stories and parables that stimulate thoughtful meditation and discussion. These can come from Logotherapy literature, world literature, the scriptures if the person is of the Christian faith, fairytales or mythology.

Harris (2009) uses a similar technique for a meditation he calls “leaves on a stream”. He recommends imagining that every thought that comes into your head, positive or negative is placed on a leaf and let float down the stream. His purpose is to “unhook” the person from their thoughts.

Logotherapy utilises similar techniques but with an aim of providing a meaningful direction.

For instance Fabry (1988) suggests that some exercises might include:

- The wall calendar from which we tear off a sheet each day can be observed sadly by noting that there are fewer and fewer sheets and days remaining. On the other hand a person or group can be lead to reflect on the torn off sheets as representing events experienced and that nobody can take from you or perhaps the value of the days remaining and what must now be done with

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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them.

- The unique quality of an aircraft are revealed only after it has taken off – just as individuals specifically human qualities become most evident after that person has “taken off” into the dimension of the spirit. Individuals or groups can be helped to imagine themselves “taking off” into this dimension and how it might feel.

As a logotherapist it is good to make a collection of stories as one comes upon them and to file them away as useful means to assist clients to self distance.

### **The Role Model Exercise**

The role model exercise in another way to help a person clarify what they really value in life. Who are the people you most respect? Why, what makes you look up to them? These are clarifying questions about your won values. The step into the noetic and possible to self-transcendence is made when a person is then challenged to live the values they admire and aspire to in so far as they can.

For instance we may look up to someone because they are a great singer, yet our own talent in this area is abysmal. But digging deeper it becomes apparent that this person is special to use for other reasons as well. There are lots of great singers, but our role model got to be famous through hard work and dedication for instance, or we admire the person because in spite of their fame they are able to present as down to earth and interested in ordinary people or perhaps they are exceedingly generous in sharing their wealth etc. When we dig a little beneath the surface of what we really admire in others it becomes apparent what we value.

### **Attitude Change Worksheet 5.3 The Role Model Exercise**

Before proceeding complete worksheet 3.

First download the Word version of the Worksheet so that you can respond on that worksheet

If you are working in a group take time to share this with the group before you go on. If you are working online send the responses to your supervisor by uploading them to the LMS

### **Examples from the past**

Reading 5.4 above contained an excellent section on using examples from the past as did many of the questions about sources of meaning from Section 2 in this unit. Revisit these before moving on to the first assessment exercise.

### **Act as if**

(Fabry 1988) describes this technique I detail. There is a significant amount of preparation required but if a client can be assisted to “act as if” they really were the confident person they want to be this technique can be most helpful. It is best to let Fabry describe this method himself.

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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### **Attitude Change Reading 5.5      Act as if.**

To finalise your readings access this short reading from Fabry (1988) on the Act as if method.

### **Attitude Change Assessment 5.1**

#### **A case study in Identifying values and directions with a client**

Before proceeding to Unit 6 complete the assessment for this section.  
When completed upload your assignment to the LMS.

If you are doing this course in a group your supervisor will negotiate submission of your assignment with the group.

## Attitude Change – Unit 5

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### References:

- Crumbaugh, J. (1985) Logotherapy in the psychotherapeutic smorgasbord. *The international forum for logotherapy: Journal of search for meaning*. Vol 8, No. 1 Spring/Summer, pp. 28-33.
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- Lukas, E. (2000) *Logotherapy textbook*. Toronto, Ontario. Liberty Press.
- Sahakian, W.S. (1995). Logotherapy's place in philosophy in *Finding meaning in life: logotherapy*. (Fabry, J.B., Bulka, P.B., Sahakian, W.S. eds.) Northvale, NJ. Jason Aronson Inc.