

## LOGOTHERAPY IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

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### Abstract:

*In modern knowledge societies knowledge and education have fallen apart. The educational systems are designed for efficiency in order to spill out very knowledgeable and efficient “working bees” for the highly sophisticated job market. In order to survive and succeed people have to learn more and more – especially useful, i.e., practical stuff. The result: a tremendous pressure on parents, teachers, educators, and those who suffer most: youths. Meanwhile, the education of personality and personal growth fell by the wayside. The consequences: an increase of desperation, frustration, and aggression among adolescents which may trigger social unrests. How to guide and develop juveniles in their personal growing for the sake of a healthy, peaceful, and fulfilling future society?*

*The answer lies in Viktor Frankl’s Logotherapy and Existential Analysis. Its principles are simple, but the impact is huge. With its basic anthropological premises freedom of will, will to meaning, and meaning in life it enhances the person’s ability to apply self-distancing in order to experience the “defiant power of the mind”, and self-transcendence in order to strive for a higher meaning or task. Supported by this juveniles learn to make personal, free and meaningful, but highly (also social) responsible choices. If Logotherapy is learned and applied especially by teachers and educators, or if it would be implemented in the educational body and social care system, it will help transforming the actual knowledge system into an educational, hence a real humane society.*

**Keywords:** Logotherapy, knowledge society, educational system, freedom and responsibility, will to meaning

## 1. Introduction: Nowadays' education for the "rat race"

In modern knowledge-based societies knowledge and education seem to have fallen apart. The evolution, or rather revolution, of information and computer technology has fundamentally changed our social awareness and valuation of information based knowledge. In times of easiest accessibility of knowledge data, stored in the World Wide Web and steadily growing as well as, regarding its factual correctness, becoming more and more detailed by a more or less democratic process of self-regulating control and improvement, the reliability of and trust in such kind of knowledge has deeply changed in a way that nowadays it seems to be impossible to appear somehow educated without having a tremendous stock of quantitative knowledge in mind or, at least, ready at hand. Thereby it's not meant that only encyclopedists are considered as educated, rather that especially these persons are very much acknowledged as educated who are highly crafty in the smart technology in order to always and everywhere immediately be able to present a vast amount of data which allows to have a more than comprising glance at so called facts in order to verify any kind of statement somehow spilled out by somebody. And this cloudily stored data knowledge is assumed nowadays as the basis of any education; hence it is considered as educated whoever is able to juggle with such kind of knowledge virtuosically.

It's not the intention here to claim that these days it's only knowledge or information by itself by which one is recognized as educated. For this would be only an inversion of the absurd idea, which nevertheless is rather common today, that alone the mere availability of knowledge is already the sole basic condition for education in general. In my opinion, both of these assertions are insufficient, as education is rather a balanced mixture of information gathering and a creative and rational handling of these information by inferring, deducing, drawing consequences, and prognosticating future situations in order to improve interpersonal relationships, hence social coexistence or communal life. But it seems that nowadays the concepts of knowledge and education have fallen apart exactly in the mentioned way of

availability of information considered as sole basis for education and that education is interpreted in a very reductionistic quantitative perspective.

Yet this quantification of education is under consideration of postmodern, especially liberal economical, democratic societies an inescapable consequence of the capitalist system. First, the steady developing progress of labor division, production, and productivity is based on this form of knowledge. Second, exactly this quantification is necessary in order to make productivity measurable and hence economically exploitable, i. e., transformable into capital. The consequences are fatal and already to a wide extent observable: This pervasive quantification, which reduced the appreciation of education to mere knowledge, has already also struck us humans who are living in such societies, mainly the growing up kids and juveniles.

This systemic primacy of applicability by quantification requires from youths a certain approach to education, learning, and even personal development which in the future ensures the best and most efficient exploitation of the learned, as well as of themselves as individuals, in order to survive as long as possible in a system of absolute competition without dropping out too early. In short, the educational system of capitalistic Western societies is conceptualized by highest possible efficiency in order to supply a job market which is highly know-how oriented with knowledgeable, highly efficient “worker bees”.

In order to survive and succeed in such described circumstances people have to learn more and more – especially useful, i.e., practical stuff. They need to get specialists, so called nerds, with highly developed special skills, and they need to continue to actualize their knowledge in the given pace of renewal. This demand is called “life-long learning”, which is not bad in general and is already done by most of the people naturally, though in different subjects, profoundness, and pace. But in contemporary work-life the content of additional, life-long learning is more restricted to practical, applicable stuff, and the pace is fairly high, because our world-wide

knowledge doubles almost every 15 years, as de Solla Price once claimed.<sup>1</sup> Even when de Solla Price is not right in his assumptions and information knowledge grows much slower than predicted, it is still increasing fast and in such a quantity that keeps people extremely busy to catch-up, especially those who work in technical and natural science fields. And in my opinion the demand for life-long learning under these harsh and speedy conditions is not only a by-product of the evolution of modernity and postmodernism, but has an intention, inherent to the system, that holds the ordinary living people in their situation of “worker bees”, or in other, harsher words, of capitalistic slavery.

The result of such societal situations is easy to determine: There lies a tremendous pressure on lots of people, especially on parents, teachers, educators, and those who suffer most: youths. Parents, teachers and educators have to provide a steadily increasing, already vast amount of information and knowledge in order to properly prepare the young generation for their tasks as good, hard workers for the capitalistic system. They need to get fed with appropriate applicable stuff in order to have best chances for their start of the “rat race” in the treadmill of regular employment. While the education system makes available such applicable knowledge, the education of personality and personal growth falls by the wayside. In order to catch-up with the pace of knowledge increase the youth hasn’t got much time for muse, for exploring different ways of interests and learning, or for experimenting with different working biographies resp. careers. But such freedom for experiments would build a kind of educated, matured personality with lots of experiences, a proper sense of judgment, and responsibility. And as a consequence of not being able to experiment with one’s own way of life due to entering and competing the rat-race people may develop some more or less crucial frustrations, a kind of existential emptiness and vacuum, which may lead through dissatisfaction over boredom, maybe also desperation to a certain kind of aggression. This aggression could be directed against oneself or against others.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracts of Derek J. de Solla-Price, *Little Science, Big Science* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), accessed March, 9, 2015, <http://www.ib.hu-berlin.de/~wumsta/infopub/price/price14.html>.

If such aggression among adolescents will conspire together it potentially can trigger and lead to social unrests, at last. And this would be a result which is unwanted by society as well as by juveniles themselves, and will be very difficult to get under control again once it started to get a social movement.

The question may arise, how to guide and develop juveniles in their personal growing for the sake of a healthy, peaceful, and fulfilling future society – without being ethically dogmatic or restrictive?

In my opinion, the answer lies in Viktor Frankl's *Logotherapy and Existential Analysis*.

Its principles are simple, but the impact is huge. With its basic anthropological premises *freedom to will, will to meaning, and meaning in life* Logotherapy enhances the person's ability to apply self-distancing in order to experience the "defiant power of the mind", and self-transcendence in order to strive for a higher meaning or task. Supported by this, juveniles would learn to make personal, free and meaningful, but highly responsible choices (individual as well as social). They wouldn't just run after a promised career and jump voluntarily, but headless into the treadmill of an only consume oriented working life. Rather they would consider actualizing some more meaningful goals which are more beneficial to the whole of society.

But before dreaming too much of such an idealistic scenario, we have a closer look at what is meant by this logotherapeutic approach to the youth's education, hence to change, or better enhance our current educational system.

## 2. Principles of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis

“Logotherapy and Existential Analysis”<sup>2</sup> is founded by Viktor Frankl, a Viennese neurologist, psychiatrist, and psychotherapist who lived from 1905 till 1997. Logotherapy is Frankl’s answer to reductionism and nihilism in human and medical sciences of his days and was meant as bringing back humanism into the field of psychotherapy.<sup>3</sup> In the context of European history of psychotherapy Logotherapy often is recommended as “Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy”, succeeding Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalysis and Alfred Adler’s Individual Psychology. In the American context it can be placed between humanistic & existential psychology and transpersonal psychology.<sup>4</sup> Frankl’s Logotherapy attempts helping people in their existential and essential search for meaning in life in order to overcome nowadays existential sufferings like frustration, boredom, and emptiness. The therapeutic approach (i.e., Logotherapy) is based on a particular philosophical theory (i. e., Existential Analysis) with a set of assumptions and a stringent anthropology.

As mentioned above there are three core assumptions in LthEA which will be explained below.

The main assumption is that man has freedom which allows him to exert his will. Logotherapy doesn’t follow Sartre in his statement that we are even condemned to freedom. Rather, we are free but simultaneously also restricted and determined by other forces like our physiology, health, familial and social situation, historical and

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<sup>2</sup> In the following this extended term is mostly used either in its short-term: Logotherapy, or with the abbreviation: LthEA.

For a concise understanding of these two terms we may briefly summarize: *Logotherapy* is a certain method of psychotherapy which focuses on the noetic human dimension in order to elicit the meaning in life; *Existential Analysis* is the anthropological theory of the former which focuses on the human way of existence.

<sup>3</sup> See Viktor Frankl, *Der Mensch auf der Suche nach Sinn: Zur Rehumanisierung der Psychotherapie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> See Ann V. Graber, *Viktor Frankl’s Logotherapy: Method of Choice in Ecumenical Pastoral Psychology* (Lima (Ohio): Windham Hall Press, 2004), pp. 171 – 177, esp. figure 8, p. 176.

contemporary political circumstances etc. Frankl called these restrictions our “facticity”. Nevertheless he highly valued freedom as the key prerequisite of being human, while not denying the determinants and limitations of phenomenal life. That’s why Frankl always emphasized the *positive freedom* in contrast to the negative one. The latter means “being free *of* s.th.”, whereas the former signifies the “freedom *to* s.th.”

The usual and daily understanding is rather bound to the negative freedom whereby people try to get rid of, e.g., burdens, sufferings and socio-political restrictions. But first, we cannot be absolutely free, i.e., we always will have limitations and determinations. Second, after achieving such a wished state of being, so that no restrictions exist anymore, man needs to have an idea of where to go to resp. he needs to aim at a goal. And this goal, according to Logotherapy, should be meaningful. Such an aim or purpose is envisaged by our faculty of willing, because will always has to address oneself towards something. Hence, the character of will is to be intentional. And as long as we do have a will we cannot not willing.<sup>5</sup> So the question arises what will essentially intends. The answer lies in the second principle of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis:

Man is driven by the *will to meaning*. This assumption may puzzle, because normally people do have different wishes where their willing is going to, for example more health or wealth, this or that object (like cars, jewelries) etc., especially more power and/or acknowledgement. But at the very end what only counts is the fact that all these purposes need to make any sense, need to be meaningful, or have any significance for the person. Conceded all the other will objectives, but on the highest

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<sup>5</sup> This description may function for an attempted explanation of the phenomenon that human nearly cannot cease his willing, unless with hard disciplinary and meditative work on renouncing the world and human’s rationality. But this may be also an illusion, if Nietzsche’s saying is true: Man rather wants to will nothingness than *not* to will. (“...und eher will er noch *das Nichts* wollen, als *nicht* wollen.“; Friedrich Nietzsche, „Zur Genealogie der Moral.“ In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Zur Genealogie der Moral*; KSA 5, ed. Colli, Giorgio & Montinari,azzino (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), pp. 245 – 413, here p. 339; italics in original)

level of abstraction or the deepest level of psychological yearning willing aims at a reasonable and comprehensible meaning for all the person's dimensions of being-in-the-world. To illustrate this point of view Frankl often cites Nietzsche, that if man has a "why" for his living he is capable of bearing almost every "how".<sup>6</sup> Hence, from a logotherapeutic point of view man has quite good chances living a satisfying and successful life, as long he is able to recognize or detect in principle the possibility of a reason for ones sufferings, or a "whereto" resp. a purpose for ones actions. And it is exactly this, so this second assumption, what man only and ultimately wants to achieve with his whole power of striving. As Frankl asserts, the *will to pleasure* (Freud) and the *will to power* (Nietzsche, Adler)<sup>7</sup> are only derivative will powers which gain their superiority only and foremost once the *will to meaning* is frustrated and not being fulfilled for a longer time.<sup>8</sup>

The third logotherapeutic principle answers to the now arising question, whether it is generally and in concrete possible to find meaning in spite of often experienced situations which seem rather meaningless and far away of any possibility for meaning.

Although it is often mentioned as the assumption of "meaning in life", we can formulate this third logotherapeutic principle as follows:

*Life itself, always and ever, has meaning, however bad the circumstances may be.*

And this is the touchstone of all Logotherapy, and can be considered as its most fundamental dogma. For Frankl there was no doubt about the residence of meaning in life, and he stated that even in the worst and most adverse situations man is still able

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<sup>6</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Die Psychotherapie in der Praxis* (Wien: Deuticke, 1975), p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> With these slogans Frankl characterizes the fundamental differences between his theory and the other powerful psychotherapies of his days which simultaneously have been his psychotherapeutic parentage. That Freud's Psychoanalysis as well as Adler's Individual Psychology has been more complicated as expressed in these slogans was well known to Frankl.

<sup>8</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Der unbewusste Gott: Psychotherapie und Religion* (München: dtv, 2006), p. 72.

to *find* some meaning, because life itself is meaningful. This assumption is considered as the main one of LthEA, as the whole therapeutic way wouldn't function as Logotherapy, if it is not believed in this dogmatic assertion.

To summarize, Frankl stated that for human beings it is totally essential and natural to ask for meaning, that even man's will ultimately longs for meaning, and that there is meaning in life. But, it is to ask, what is this meaning, what makes our being meaningful, and how can we discover and fulfill it?

Meaning is an idea of something that gives our lives some good reason to be lived, that gives us orientation for living in order to make good choices in the realm freedom with its multitude of possibilities, and hence not to lose track and waste our precious life-time. As such meaning is associated with the idea of a purpose or goal in each one's life which makes it worth living for. However, as everybody will know by own experiences, it's not always easy to recognize one's own, great and maybe single life task. Then we keep on searching right and left, experiment with this or that offer of life's possibilities, but possibly still cannot find it. Meanwhile we commit with some societal goals like getting rich, making a great career, staying healthy or whatever, but feeling still empty and frustrated because we haven't found our single and own purpose. Or given that we've found it and now want to achieve it, but far too often we nevertheless deviate from chasing after it due to the many other attractions which hit us on the way and distract us, or even due to some strokes of fate which renders us incapable to follow our purposes. How to deal with such daily situations, especially in our current capitalistic society, logotherapeutically?

The answer of Logotherapy is rather simple, though it knows that its actualization is quite complicate. Logotherapy starts from the experience of ordinary people. Asked what makes their life meaningful the average and natural answer is that being engaged in more or less creative activities, experiencing some wonderful natural or interpersonal moments or great art like music or paintings, or overcoming personal adversities like strokes of fate, illness, personal losses etc. by changing the inner perspective or attitude makes life meaningful. We also will get answers like "being

yourself”, “staying up-right”, “being honest, faithful, and authentic”. These answers reflect the logotherapeutic assumption that meaning is fulfilled by actualizing one’s own values and – with respect to the multitude of possible values – by the three mentioned ways of actualization: creativity, experience, and change of attitudes.<sup>9</sup> This so called meaning-triad also has its inner order and logic of prioritization. The most important value to actualize is that of creativity. It’s not meant by this that one has to be creative in a strict, artistic sense. Rather creativity means to act into the world. As long as man is able to and the situation is suitable for, one should act upon one’s own inner value system and at least try to contribute to the world with his or her engaged action. The value of creativity asks for what one has given to the world and to others. Of course, there are times to relax and refrain from doing by your own, but rather to enjoy and receive the contributions of others or of the world, so as to listen to other people or other people’s work, experiencing nature’s gifts like a wonderful sunset or a soft breeze in spring time. The value of experience hence asks for what one has received and still can receive from others or the world. And the third value of changing attitude, which comes last in the hierarchy of actualization, but first in respect of dignity, asks for the manner of dealing with situations where it’s absolutely impossible either to act upon or experience something positive from. In situations where nothing else can be done any more, where there’s no beauty to be recognized and experienced it is asked for the highest faculty man is capable for, namely to take a stance on it by rather heroically bear the situation and try not to lose dignity. To change one’s own attitude to be able to endure adverse strokes of fate is one of the most difficult, yet most dignified tasks one can master in his life. Logotherapeutically spoken, suicide is no solution.

Regarding the power of such an attitudinal change it is often referred to a saying of Jerry Long who only later, quite a while after his accident, came across with Logotherapy, and eventually lectured with Viktor Frankl and got a psychotherapist

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<sup>9</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Ärztliche Seelsorge: Grundlagen der Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse* (Wien: Deuticke, 2005), pp. 91 – 95.

himself. When Long was a young guy just finishing high school he suffered an swimming accident by jumping vigorously into shallow water and got a quadriplegic for the rest of his life. But his attitude towards life was so strong that he partly recovered and coined an impressive and illustrative saying: "I broke my neck, but it didn't break me!"<sup>10</sup> – This is a highly demonstrative story of what is meant by the value of changing one's attitude towards unchangeable fateful situations and supports in concrete to explain the logotherapeutic assumption of the "defiant power of mind".

Before explaining this, let's get back to the meaning-triad. It should be clear now that the change of attitude is one of the hardest, but dignified tasks man can ever fulfill, and this is reserved for really unchangeable situations. All other situations – which actually are the majority of our lives – are to be handled by either creative or experiential values, dependent on the situation itself. We mentioned already that there are times for creation, and times for recreation. But how can we figure out what's the actual demand of this or that situation? This question brings us back to the above quest of how to recognize meaning. Frankl is focusing on the so called "meaning of the moment". As every situation and every individual person is singular and unique, and regarding the whole of history also important and irretrievable, we need to listen to every moment's situation in order to recognize what ought to be done in especially this or that single case. It may sound difficult and exhausting to listen every single moment closely to what is to be done in order to fulfill meaning and probably weave on the fulfillment of the meaning of all man's history. This requires a rather unbearable responsibility, one may argue. First, it is not that complicate to listen to the demand of the momentary situation as we do have our inner voice, our conscience which is the integral of our personal value system and which tells us – in a very peculiar way – what ought to be done. Second, yes, it requires a huge amount of responsibility, but this is not unbearable, rather it is a kind of uncomfortable in usual common life. Responsibility is the faculty of response-ability, i. e., we do have the

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<sup>10</sup> See the impressive interview of Viktor Frankl and Jerry Long: "Frankl – I broke my neck, but it didn't breake me", accessed March 9, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_lmMI4P7cQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_lmMI4P7cQ)

ability to respond to circumstances. Additionally we do not only have the ability for that, but rather the duty as responsibility is the rear side of freedom. As we have the freedom to will, which means to have choices, we also do have the duty to make responsible, hence meaningful choices.

To summarize, we explore and experience meaningfulness by actualizing values. Abstractly there are three ways of actualization which are called in Logotherapy the creative values, experiential values, and the value of change of attitudes. All these values are highly situational and require recognizing the meaning of the moment, which means to cognize that what ought to be done in this special and singular moment. This is possible by listening to the voice of conscience which integrates all experienced and adopted personal values and shows by exclusion what would be (or at least: would have been) the right and responsible decision. The response-ability is a faculty of human being which is closely interwoven with the presupposition of freedom and the core feature of willing.

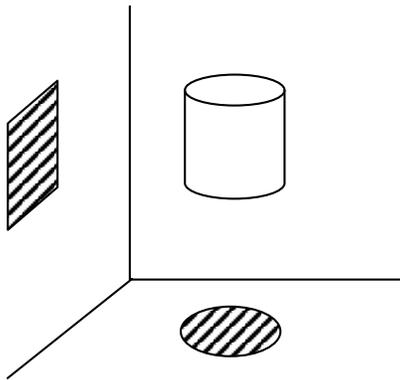
With the latter we now come to the explanation of the above mentioned “defiant power of mind” and the presentation of the LthEA underlying anthropology. With the topic of meaning we could already recognize the emphasis on the situation and its uniqueness. Likewise man is considered as an individual and unique person. Moreover, Frankl interprets each individual not only as *undividable*<sup>11</sup>, but also as *whole* and *complete*. This is explained by Frankl figuratively in the so called *dimensional ontology* where he emphasizes the wholeness and completeness of man.<sup>12</sup> Like a three-dimensional object, which cannot be fully captured by addition of

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. the Latin origin: in-dividere = not (to) divide.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding the wholeness Frankl doesn't consider it as a completed perfection, but rather it develops into such only with the end of life resp. in the death. But Frankl assumes man already and in every second of his life as complete and whole, so that he stresses that the essential feature of “existence” never could be literally analyzed, i.e., dissected, but rather be illuminated as a unitary phenomenon. Whenever we dissect the spheres or dimensions of man, then we do this only for methodological

its projections into lower dimensions, man must be taken always and ever in his three-dimensional totality. In the figure below we see a cylinder which is projected from the side and from above. One projection shows a rectangle or a square, the other a circle. If we want to understand the cylinder out of the combination of the two two-dimensional figures we will greatly fail.



Source: Graber, 2004, p. 69

Frankl hence applies this example as analogy for understanding man. We do recognize three phenomenal dimensions of man which are: the body (*physis*), the *psyche*, and the mind/spirit (*nous*). There are still virulent difficulties in sciences, namely in philosophy, to fully explain their interrelation, especially that between body and mind. Commonly the era of dualistic theories, commencing with Rene Descartes' dualism of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, is over, but still there lacks a sufficient and satisfying explanation even in monistic-materialistic theories of how the immaterial mind interacts with the body, specifically with the brain.

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reasons in order to make it descriptive and for being able to communicate about it. (See: Viktor Frankl, „Grundriß der Existenzanalyse und Logotherapie [1959].“ In *Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse: Texte aus sechs Jahrzehnten*, by Viktor Frankl (München: Piper, 1987), pp. 57 – 185, here pp. 63 – 73).

Letting these highly sophisticated debates aside, Frankl's solution is quite practical and for a certain extension convincing. The interpretation of these three phenomena as dimensions gives way to focus on each separately – like physicians mostly treat the bodily dimension, whereas psychotherapist intervene in the psychic one and for example philosophers address mainly the noetic one – by keeping in mind that only all together constitute man. Only as such the wholeness is guaranteed and perceivable. The idea of Frankl's *dimensional ontology* is the essential inseparability of these dimensions; they cannot be abstracted from each other, i. e., being isolated or extracted one from the other. If an object is three-dimensional, then there is nothing to add on or subtracted from. Another advantage of the dimensional perspective is its attributive character, which means that we do not necessarily need to take the mentioned issues as objects or substantially, but rather as attributive descriptions, like "bodily, psychic, and noetic".

Coming back to human beings, we now can state that exactly this exceeding third noetic dimension discerns man from animal. Sure, man also inhabits the physical and psychic dimensions which both are mutually interdependent, influencing and determining, but the specific feature of humanness lies in the dimensionally different faculty of the noetic, i.e., the freedom of will to meaning wherein such phenomena like freedom, responsibility, love, willing, thinking, reasoning, consciousness etc. are dwelling. Frankl describes this difference as the *psycho-physical parallelism* on one hand, and the *psycho-noetic antagonism* on the other.<sup>13</sup> Especially the latter provides two types of freedom according to two human core features which constitute the essence of man.

The first is called *self-distancing*. Man noetically has the freedom to behave either along his physical and psychic (pre-) conditions, or against them. He can take a stance on them, he can decide whether he wants to react on their signals instantly and as usual, or first reflect about it and make a mindful decision how to react upon it. As

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<sup>13</sup> Viktor Frankl, *Grundriß*, p. 62.

man is free, he is not bound to repeat always his reactions, but can say “No” and act different. This power was already mentioned above as “defiant power of mind”. Once Frankl demonstrated this faculty in one of his many tv-interviews, which I cannot exactly recall which one, when he was asked on top of his favorite mountain Rax, near Vienna, how he became such a passionate rock climber, although he suffers vertigo. His answer was stunningly simple: “I don’t need to take any nonsense from myself.”<sup>14</sup> What he means is that although there is the real and tremendous anxiety of height he still can attempt to willingly overcome it by trying his best in climbing, especially as he loved to be in the mountains and hanging off a rock. For usual daily life this example will show us that we don’t need to react upon any situation as one usually is supposed to do, but take a how small ever hiatus between stimulus and response in order to consciously decide how to respond to this or that situation.

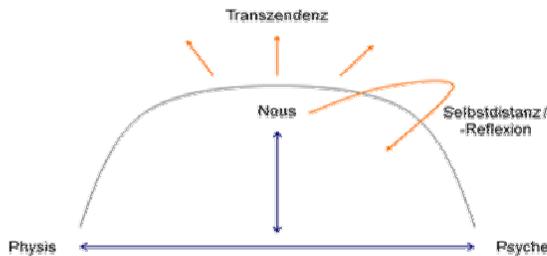
The second core feature of man is called *self-transcending*. Besides the ability of taking a stance on the situation man is situated into, he also is able to totally abstain from himself in order to address something that lies completely outside of his own mental and physical vicinity – for example another person, another living being, another item or task which transcends totally the own self-centered wishes, goals or aims. With this faculty man is able to fully transcend oneself, go out and beyond his own interests – which literally means “to exist”.<sup>15</sup>

And it is especially in this possibility of *self-transcending* where Frankl positions the quest for meaning. Man will find a real meaning, a significance which justifies the whole of the individual’s wholeness, only if he transcends, if he steps out of himself in the direction towards others, if he forgets or loses one’s self by serving other persons, a beloved one, or a higher purpose.

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<sup>14</sup> Frankl, Viktor: “Ich muss mir doch von mir selbst nicht alles gefallen lassen!”

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the original meaning of Latin: ex-sistere = stand forth, “Online Etymology Dictionary”, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://etymonline.com/?term=existence>.



Source: Andreas Schreiber

To summarize, in Frankl's logotherapy man is considered as singular, unique, indivisible, and hence phenomenally appearing as wholeness, whose structural elements are *self-transcendence and self-distance*. These basic features lie in the noetic dimension which discerns man from animal and which, though not only surpasses the dimensions of the physis and psyche, but also pervades them as it were as their inner pivot. The constitutive moments of the nous are particularly the basic conditions of freedom and the will to meaning, which pervades humankind as its motivational force. And as stated above, the power of will always is directed towards meaning that dwells in every situation as well as in the totality of the individual life.

### 3. Conclusion: Benefits of Logotherapy for educational systems

For now it should be made clear what the principles of LthEA are. It emphasizes the individual freedom which lies in the noetic dimension in order to transcend one's self towards something meaningful and take a stance on one's own reactions in order to not only follow them mechanically and half-conscious, but with full awareness of one's own "defiant power of mind" to make meaningful and responsible choices. The aim of Logotherapy is helping people in self-development in a way that these persons are no longer blaming others or circumstances for their own situations or even failures. Rather it's aimed at strong, conscious and self-responsible persons who make

their decisions based on their own and inner value system according to the objectively demand of what ought to be done resonating with their conscience.

Applying LthEA in educational systems would help juveniles to grow up with more self-respect and respect of others, with a higher awareness not only of their personal freedom of acting out their individuality, but also of their responsibility for their choices and deeds, and for their self-education. The latter means that each person is responsible by himself for developing his own character and personality by self-reflection and self-awareness. The attitude of hanging loose and/or only following the mass opinion is not supported or tolerated in LthEA.

If it could be implemented in contemporary educational systems, hence into the whole educational body and even social care systems, it will help transforming the actual knowledge-based society into an educated, real human one. For this it might be necessary to first teach the teacher and educators, so that they can act and react therapeutically whenever the situation requires it. Second, it might be also necessary and helpful on the long run to instruct also the juveniles in Logotherapy's body of thought. It is not that all should become therapists by that. Rather people who get in touch and even involved with LthEA experience already a change of attitudes towards the logotherapeutic core assumptions and anthropology, and gain a different, more self-reflected and responsible perspective on fellow humans and the world in general.

On the long run of implementation of LthEA in the educational body it is to expect that more and more people will reject to enter the capitalistic "rat race" and follow more their inner of conscience in order to actualize meaning.

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