



Spiritual Pain

Andrew Goodhead

StChristopher's
More than just a hospice

A Search for Meaning

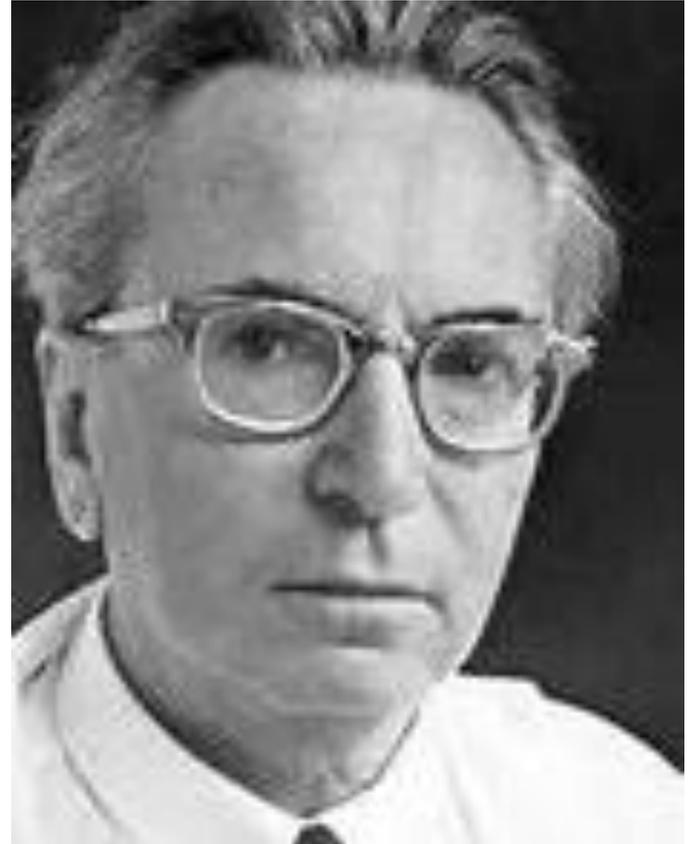
- Viktor Frankl (1905 – 1997)
- Austrian Neurologist and Psychiatrist
- Deported in 1942 with wife and parents
- Theresienstadt ghetto
- 1944 taken to Auschwitz
- Influential in humanistic psychology



Man's Search for Meaning

- **Frankl on meaning;**
 - Creating a work or deed
 - Experiencing something or encountering someone
 - Our attitude towards unavoidable suffering

We are able to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances



Spiritual Pain

An encounter with meaninglessness

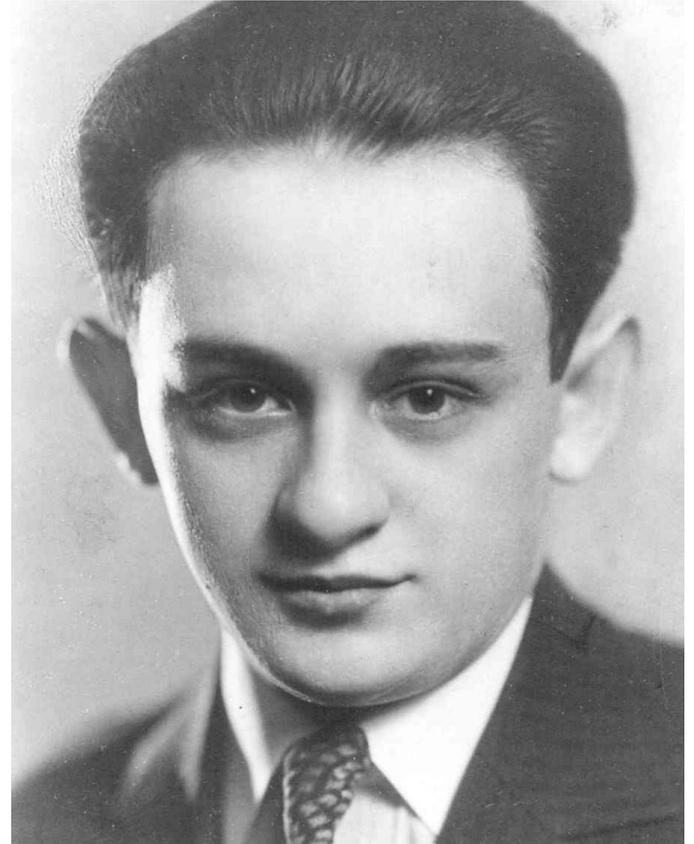
- Miss R (loneliness and lack of relationships)
- David Tasma (a window in your home)

Loss of autonomy

- Paula (I hoped)

Ela Majer (David) Tasma

- A Polish, Jewish 'refugee'
- Worked as a waiter in a restaurant
- The most important thing was for him to find somebody who would listen ... he was dying at the age of forty ... it made no difference to the world that he'd ever lived in it ...
- 'I will be a window in your home'
- Recognising



Total Pain: Emotional, Spiritual, Social, Physical

Dame Cicely Saunders and a new concept of pain, beyond that which is physical

‘She was ... tuning in to the close relationship between physical and mental suffering, but she could see that suffering had other dimensions. It included physical symptoms, spiritual distress, social problems, and emotional difficulties. She began to grapple with this and searched for inspiration to make sense of it, drinking deep from many sources.’

David Clark *Cicely Saunders a Life and Legacy* (OUP) 2018

Total Pain: Emotional, Spiritual, Social, Physical

Some reading of Cicely Saunders:

- **George Tyrell** *Water and Wine* (Jesuit priest)
- **Laurens van der Post** *A bar of Shadow* (philosopher)
- **Evan Hopkins** *The Mystery of Suffering*
- **Kahlil Gilbran** *The Prophet* (Theological thinker and writer)
- **Soren Kierkegaard** *The Gospel of Suffering* (Theologian)

Total Pain

Cicely Saunders:

‘I also felt that a search for feeling that they were wanted and still important people was a spiritual pain and so, out of what one patient said, very neatly describing her pain to me, developed the idea of ‘total pain’ with those four components. And that seemed to me to be a structure that, although it was a whole package as far as the patient is concerned, it was almost an internal checklist for you when you were listening to them top spot the main problems of their suffering.’

Cicely Saunders. Interview with David Clark. 6th June 2002

Total Pain: The Patient perspective

One person gave me more or less the following answer when I asked her a question about her pain, and in her answer she brings out the four main needs that we are trying to care for in this situation. She said, 'well doctor, the pain began in my back, but now it seems all of me is wrong.' she gave a description of various symptoms and ills and then went on to say, 'my husband and son were marvellous but they were at work and they would have had to stay off and lose their money. I could have cried for the pills and injections, although I knew I shouldn't. everything seemed to be against me and nobody seemed to understand.' and then she paused before she said, 'but it's so wonderful to begin to feel safe again'. Without any further questioning she had talked of her mental as well as physical distress, of her social problems, and of her spiritual need for security.

Saunders C. Care of Patients suffering from terminal illness at St Joseph's Hackney, London. *Nursing Mirror* 1964: February 14; vii-x

An encounter with meaninglessness

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Spiritual Pain: Case Study 1

Reg:

- **91 year old**
- **Living with his daughter in own 'flat' attached to house.**
- **Low mood and tearful.**
- **Described a loss of faith**
 - 'God is no longer present.'
- **Felt unable to talk to own vicar ('cold').**
- **Decline in ability to mobilise.**
- **Experiences in Italy in 1944/1945**

Spiritual Pain: Case Study 2

Joanne:

- **22 years old**
- **Single parent to 2 year old twins.**
- **Family distressed at Joanne's condition**
 - Receiving social work support.
- **Joanne has seen a medium**
 - Received messages from grandparents.
 - Told she is surrounded by angels.
- **Frightened of dying (will it just be darkness?)**

Where Spiritual Pain Lies

Liminality

Between living and dying

- Finding the space for meaning
- Finding the space to be autonomous
- Finding the space to be heard



