

Preface

After several years of preparatory work, we are proud to present the first edition of the Proceedings of the Viktor Frankl Institute. They are the natural outgrowth of three parallel movements in logotherapy. The first reflects a rediscovery of Frankl's work in the behavioral and clinical sciences, especially in positive and existential psychology (Bretherton and Ørner 2004; Wong 1998; 2009; for a comprehensive overview on the current reception of Frankl's work in positive and existential psychology, see Batthyány and Russo-Netzer 2014). The second movement reflects the growing dialogue between logotherapists and representatives of neighboring schools of psychotherapy and counseling (e.g., Corrie and Milton 2000; Ameli and Dattilio 2013) and psychology in general (Baumeister 1991; Baumeister and Vohs 2002), and the third movement refers to a growing trend towards collaboration and networking *within* the logotherapy community itself.

Arguably, neither the first nor the second movements were foreseeable when Frankl developed logotherapy and existential analysis in the first half of the past century, nor was it foreseeable that logotherapeutic concepts should one day become as prominent in academic and empirical psychology as they are today. Indeed, it appears as if Frankl's logotherapy, once only one single psychiatrist's "courageous rebellion against the [...] paradigms that dominated psychological theorizing" (Baumeister and Vohs 2002), has now, albeit belatedly, arrived at the research front of experimental, empirical, and clinical psychology.

The discovery, or rediscovery, of Frankl's work within academic psychology, however, comes with a number of scientific challenges and intellectual obligations. For once logotherapy's main tenets are scrutinized by colleagues whose approach is evidence- rather than theory-based, logotherapists will need to be able to assign a place to logotherapy and existential analysis within the larger canon of psychological theory and empirical data; and they will need to relate logotherapy to other psychological and clinical theories which have broad overlaps with Franklian psychology (such as self-determination theory [e.g., Deci and Ryan 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000], resilience and hardiness research [e.g., Maddi 2004], Self-Efficacy Theory [e.g., Bandura 1997], and Moral Reconciliation Therapy [e.g., Little and Robinson 1988]). Since these models also come with a large stock of experimental

designs and empirical data directly relevant for logotherapy, logotherapists will, in all likelihood, profit considerably from a dialogue with these neighboring schools. Indeed, a significant number of the research findings of most of the above-mentioned schools support some of the core ideas of logotherapy, but surprisingly, until now, it seems as if their work has rarely been fully acknowledged, let alone adopted, by logotherapists for their own research or clinical practice—at least not on a large scale.

There might be several reasons for the relative nonchalance with which significant research from other psychological research traditions has been greeted in our field. One is tempted to speculate that perhaps to some degree, logotherapists have become so accustomed to be, as Baumeister puts it, in constant “courageous rebellion against the [...] paradigms that dominate psychological theorizing” (Baumeister and Vohs 2002) that they also have become used to just don’t expect relevant or supporting input from current research in the behavioral and clinical sciences. Or perhaps some are simply not overly impressed when researchers and clinicians from very different backgrounds “discover” that meaning awareness and purpose do play important roles both in human coping and striving after all—and that they do so throughout the entire lifespan. Given the fact that during the past four decades, several hundreds of studies on the psychological relevance of meaning motivation and awareness have been conducted mostly by logotherapists or others influenced by Frankl’s work, which consistently support the basic tenets of Franklian psychology (for research overviews spanning the years 1975–2014, see Schulenberg 2003; Batthyány and Guttman 2005; Batthyány 2009; Thir 2012; Thir and Batthyány 2014), the logotherapists’ reluctant reaction to non-logotherapeutic meaning research is perhaps comprehensible. And yet: comprehensible it perhaps may be—but it is not necessary, and neither is it too healthy for the intellectual and scientific development of a discipline to remove itself from current scientific debate and development. Perhaps nobody saw this clearer than Frankl himself, who hinted at the inherent dangers of scientific and philosophical isolationism within the field, when he told the editor of the then newly established *International Forum*:

Why should we lose, unnecessarily and undeservedly, whole segments of the academic community, precluding them a priori from understanding how much logotherapy “speaks to the needs of the hour”? Why should we give up, right from the beginning, getting a hearing from modern researchers by considering ourselves above tests and statistics? We have no reason not to admit our need to find our discoveries supported by strictly empirical research. [...]

You cannot turn the wheel back and you won’t get a hearing unless you try to satisfy the preferences of present-time Western thinking, which means the scientific orientation or, to put it in more concrete terms, our test and statistics mindedness [...]. That’s why I welcome all sober and solid empirical research in logotherapy, however dry its outcome may sound. (Frankl in Fabry 1978/79, 5–6)

Clearly, when Frankl deposited this in the *Forum*, he not only referred to *conducting* research but also encouraged both researchers and clinicians to also make available (i.e., *publish*) their findings and thus make them accessible to logotherapists and proponents of neighboring schools of thought.

Given the noticeable tendency towards a renewed interest in existential issues in psychology and psychiatry, the idea to launch an interdisciplinary sister periodical to logotherapy's long-standing excellent *Forum of Logotherapy* (published under the auspices of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in Abilene, Texas) was born. We hope that these Proceedings will supplement its esteemed older sister as a new international peer-reviewed periodical—one which is forthright about being dedicated to the advancement of logotherapeutic theory and practice and to the same measure open to dialogue and new developments within the larger context of the behavioral and clinical sciences and the humanities in general.

Once the idea was born, the concept of the Proceedings matured during discussions at the two past biannual International Congresses on *The Future of Logotherapy* in Vienna (2012 and 2014). Here, as well as at the 2013 *World Congress of Logotherapy* in Dallas, we were pleased to witness an unprecedented growth and development of the scientific and clinical work within our field, and hence all the more felt that a dedicated international periodical would be the ideal vehicle to capture and make accessible the diverse scholarly interests of an ever more vibrant logotherapy and logotherapy-inspired research and clinical community. A further impulse to launch the Proceedings was the founding of the *International Association of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis* at the Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna last year. This initiative—arguably yet another sign of the maturation and professionalization of our field—was extremely well received, with almost all of the 120 worldwide institutes and societies (and several hundreds of individual members) applying for accreditation and membership in the *International Association*.

In brief, during the past few years since the conception of the idea of the Proceedings, we were increasingly confronted with signals that we should indeed offer a new international and interdisciplinary forum to our worldwide community, which, at the same time, is set out to be a forum of, but not only for, logotherapists. Rather, in order to take account of the developments within the behavioral sciences and the humanities mentioned above, we felt that the field needs a periodical directed towards a broad interdisciplinary readership with a wide range of intellectual and academic backgrounds and interests. In other words, the Proceedings are not an in-house publication of and for logotherapists. Rather they are equally directed towards the growing number of our colleagues who are not logotherapists themselves, but are interested in, or perhaps even intrigued by, what logotherapists have to offer to current debates within the behavioral sciences, the humanities, and the helping professions.

Next to offering a forum for presenting and discussing new empirical and theoretical research, the Proceedings's second intention is to facilitate dialogue across disciplines and research traditions. Now, it seems obvious that dialogue between and across disciplines and schools of thought has to, should, and does cut both ways, and only then deserves the term "dialogue." It is not only that "they" learn from "us," but that "we" learn from "them," too—and indeed the whole concept of "us" and "them" loses much of its former force once one enters into a sincere dialogue. For sincere dialogue means that one inevitably encounters and learns about new concepts, challenges, and ideas (or rediscovers some old concepts, challenges,

and ideas), which may well broaden or change one's own perspective on long-held and rarely questioned propositions.

This principle applies to all scientific dialogue, and, again, logotherapy is no exception. Indeed, analysis of the history of ideas in logotherapy clearly shows that especially since around the late 1960s, logotherapy steadily moved along the trajectory of many a psychotherapy tradition, i.e., from a school of thought into a research discipline. Thus we can observe a keen interest in the intellectual encounter of logotherapy with other ideas and trends within the behavioral sciences in Frankl's own work. Furthermore, once the core concepts of logotherapy were developed (around the mid-1950s), invariably each new development *within* logotherapy was triggered by developments from *without* logotherapy (Batthyány 2007). Frankl's critique of the affect-over-cognition approach of the 1960s human potential movement, for example, was instrumental for the development of logotherapy's model of meaning discovery and perception as being neither purely affect- nor cognition-based, but rather being akin to the gestalt perception process (Frankl 1966). In a similar vein, Frankl's skepticism towards the inherent epistemological constructionism of the humanistic and transpersonal psychology movements was instrumental for his coining of some of his finest and most elaborate arguments for epistemological and ontological value realism in therapeutic dialogue, which are now core elements of contemporary logotherapy and existential analysis (Frankl 1973, 1979; for more examples, see Batthyány 2013).

In brief, logotherapy owes much of its depth, growth, and maturation to the fact that Frankl and other early pioneers and proponents of logotherapy (such as J.C. Crumbaugh, L.T. Maholick, E. Weiskopf-Joelsson, E. Lukas) never shied away from entering into a constructive dialogue with, and studying and learning from, models and schools of thought which were often totally foreign, and sometimes even outright hostile to the larger non-reductionist existential tradition of which logotherapy is a part.

As I already pointed out, there is no reason to believe that the principle of growth by dialogue should have changed or that it should not also apply to contemporary logotherapy and existential analysis. Hence one hope we connect with the launching of these Proceedings is that it may help strengthen the academic exchange and debate with other schools of thought, both with those with whom we share much common ground, but also, and perhaps especially with those which may seem particularly different from logotherapy. To this end, the Proceedings not only carry articles, which engage in cross-disciplinary debate and dialogue, but also have a book review section, which covers primarily non-logotherapeutic publications.

At the same time, we also felt the necessity to collect essays on current trends and topics in applied logotherapy and existential analysis in order to provide our readers with relevant up-to-date, well-integrated, and technically sound papers that will enhance the knowledge and skills of anyone, who in one way or another applies logotherapy and existential analysis in his or her professional work and/or personal life. Thus, a further objective of the Proceedings is to bring together a wide range of views and approaches, new ideas and methods, and new applications for logotherapy and existential analysis.

The decision to regularly publish articles on research and developments in logotherapy, however, depends on whether sufficient new substantive knowledge and insight have accumulated to warrant it.

It is reassuring to see that indeed much substantive knowledge has been and continues to be accumulated—in fact, much more than we expected and much more than we were able to include in this first volume of the Proceedings. So, our task was to find a compromise between two objectives: on the one hand, we wanted to present a considerable amount of new ideas and research; on the other hand, we had to keep the size of this first volume manageable. Since the majority of the submissions were consistently and uniformly high in quality, our peer reviewers and we were forced to make some very difficult editorial decisions. Thus many papers had to be rejected which, had we had more space available, certainly would have made it into this first volume of the Proceedings. The decision on which papers to include was made between peer reviewers and the editors after careful consideration and discussion. In general, we tended to favor papers that proposed new ideas, applications, methods, or research strategies.

At the same time, we also included some core texts of logotherapy in this volume which haven't yet been available to a larger English-speaking readership—among them hitherto untranslated or privately published articles by Viktor E. Frankl and a brief but important article by Elisabeth Lukas on how to update logotherapy's model of the pathogenesis of neuroses against the background of recent findings on the neuropsychological underpinnings of a number of neuroses and personality disorders.

In brief, this first volume of the Proceedings—and many more to come—presents a wide variety of interesting and intellectually stimulating reading material for both logotherapists and non-logotherapists alike. We hope that you will be pleased with and inspired by this historical first volume. As editor-in-chief, I am happy to receive all your comments and suggestions on how to improve what is intended to be a new prime resource on anything related to logotherapy and beyond.

Vienna, Austria

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