

WORLD YOUTH ALLIANCE BOOK LIST

Men's search for meaning

By Victor Frankl

"Man's Search for Meaning" is an exploration of the nature of the human person by a man who had seen all external signs of human dignity stripped away by the cruel conditions of a Nazi concentration camp. Frankl describes the amazing resilience of the human person and the ability for man to retain his dignity, even when he has lost everything else. This book is an essential component in the Track A Training of every World Youth Alliance member. Frankl gives us a better understanding of the dignity of the human person, and in the end, a better understanding of who we are.

About Victor Frankl

Viktor Emil Frankl was born in Vienna on March 26, 1905. As a high school student involved in socialist youth organizations, Frankl became interested in psychology. In 1930, he earned a doctorate in medicine and then was in charge of a ward for the treatment of female suicide candidates. When the Nazis took power in 1938, Frankl was put in charge of the neurological department of the Rothschild Hospital, the only Jewish hospital in the early Nazi years. During World War II he spent 3 years at Auschwitz, Dachau and other concentration camps. His parents, brother and new wife were killed in concentration camps. From 1946 to 1970 he was director of the Vienna Neurological Polyclinic, and continued to teach at the University of Vienna until 1990. He remarried in 1947. He died on 2 September 1997, survived by his wife and daughter.

Guide questions for discussion groups

- Describe a particular example from the first part of Frankl's book, "Experiences in a Concentration Camp," that had an impact on you.
- Based on your reading of "Experiences in a Concentration Camp," what did you learn about the human person?
- Frankl observed that prisoners, including himself, became apathetic to pain and suffering. Do

you think this lack of emotion is a necessary defense mechanism?

- Discuss the relationship between the will and the body.
- What do your life experiences mean in the context of logotherapy?
- Do you agree with ideas presented in Frankl's book? Discuss your answers.
- How relevant are Frankl's ideas in relation to the perception of the human person and meaning of life in your culture?