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Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl, Beacon, 2006

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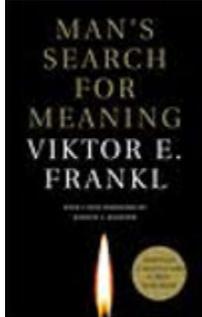
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Recommended Readings



Man's Search for Meaning

by Viktor E. Frankl, Beacon, 2006

Reviewed by Allison O'Malley

Readers seeking a turn away from the happiness movement's hedonistic orientation will cherish Viktor E. Frankl's timeless, graceful reminder that meaning can be found in the most miserable of conditions. Frankl, a renowned Viennese psychiatrist, recounts his experiences in the concentration camps with a voice that is simultaneously analytical and sentimental. Frankl's testimony, written over the course of 9 days in 1945, acknowledges the relativity of suffering while providing uplifting lessons in the art of living. Originally titled *From Death-Camp to Existentialism*, its current title opens the book up to a wider audience. *Man's Search for Meaning* is a quick and quotable read; you'll find yourself rehearsing passage after passage, trying to memorize Frankl's observations so you can reproduce them at will. Readers with an interest in psychology may enjoy the accessible description of logotherapy, Frankl's influential existentialist theory that is one part therapy and one part philosophy. His insights into the mindsets of prisoners-regulating violent impulses, making decisions when all of the decision options are dreadful, drawing pleasure from scarcely pleasurable moments -are particularly gripping in their relevance to life beyond the hellholes of the Holocaust. No matter our fate, we have the freedom-our "last freedom"-to choose how we accept it.

- Allison O'Malley is assistant professor of psychology at Butler University.