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

Allison O'Malley
Butler University, aomalley@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/las_bookreviews/66

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in LAS Faculty Book Reviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@butler.edu.
Because Ideas Matter...

The faculty and staff of Butler University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences presents

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.