

Roadmap to Resiliency:

Medical perspectives and strategies for managing distress



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- What does it mean to be healthy?
- What does it mean to be whole?
- What does it mean to be resilient?



Meaning & Purpose

Guinness (March 11, 2016): Holocaust survivor, 112, named world's oldest man



“I don’t know the secret for long life. I believe that everything is determined from above and we shall never know the reasons why. There have been smarter, stronger and better looking men than me who are no longer alive. All that is left for us to do is to keep on working as hard as we can and rebuild what is lost.”

Mr. Israel Kristal

Viktor E. Frankl

- 1905 - 1997
- Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust Survivor
- Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl imprisoned in 4 different camps, including Auschwitz
- His mother, father, brother, and pregnant wife were imprisoned and all but Frankl perished



Frankl's Sources for Finding Meaning and Purpose

Work
(doing something significant)

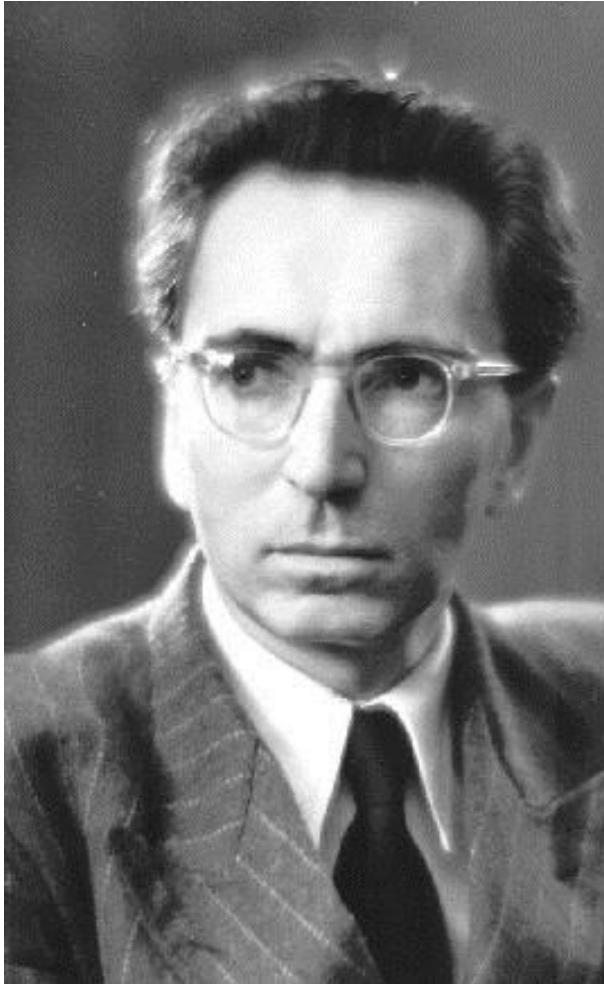


Purpose
&
Meaning

Courage
(during difficult times)

Love
(caring for another person)

Viktor Frankl



"When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves."

Viktor E. Frankl

Why Does Purpose in Life Matter?

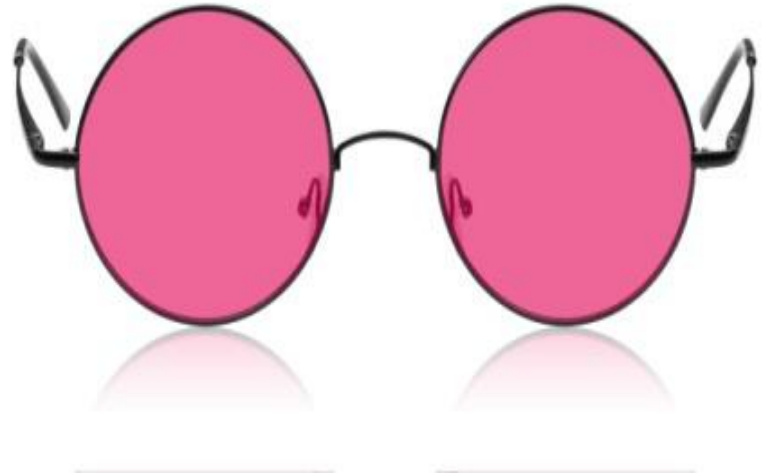
- Ten studies with a total of 136,265 participants
- Significant association with a higher purpose in life and:
 1. Reduced all-cause mortality (relative risk 0.83)
 2. Reduced cardiovascular events (relative risk 0.83)

Mastering Perspective

Perspective Management

“...only 10 percent of your long-term happiness is based on the external world, while 90 percent is based on how your brain processes the world,”

- Shawn Achor, Ph.D.



"Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own thoughts, unguarded. But once mastered, no one can help you as much, not even your father or your mother."
~Buddha~

Managing Attitude

“We who lived, in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that **everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.**”

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

The Space Between

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

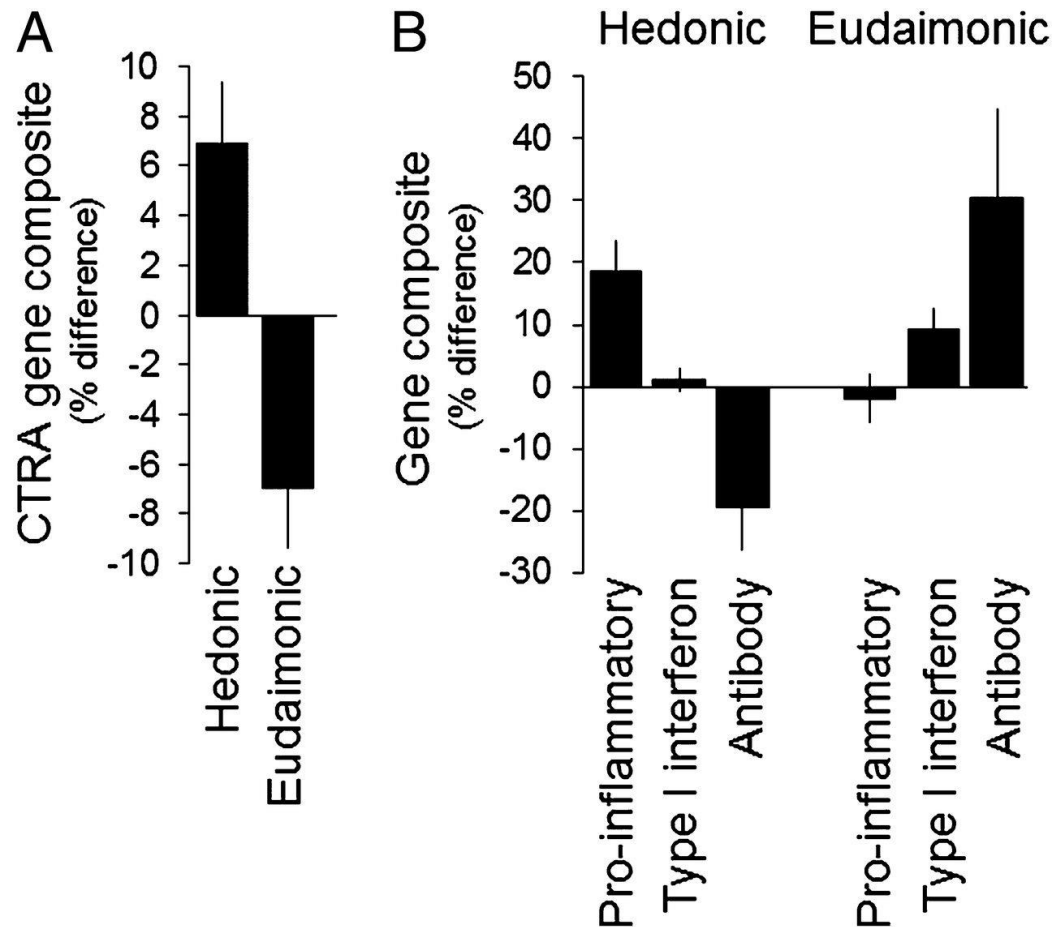
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Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic



Expression of the CTRA gene (Gene Involved with ADVERSITY): Both groups selected for HIGH Levels of WELL-BEING



Barbara L. Fredrickson et al. PNAS 2013;110:13684-13689

What does life expect from me?

(Rather than what do I expect from life?)

Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic



What do I expect from life?

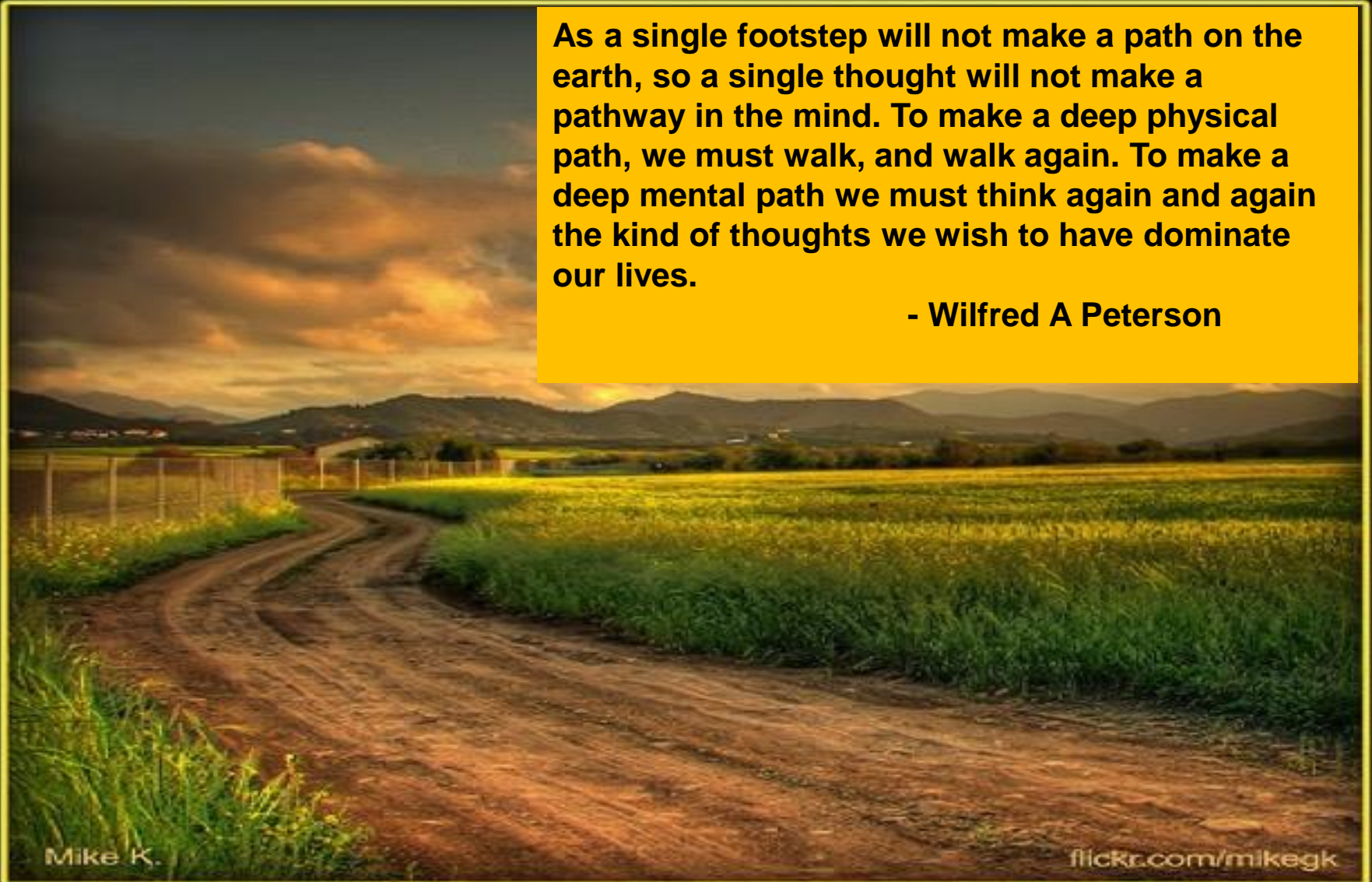


What does life expect from me?

Pathways of Thought

As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we must walk, and walk again. To make a deep mental path we must think again and again the kind of thoughts we wish to have dominate our lives.

- Wilfred A Peterson



Mike K.

[flickr.com/mikegk](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikegk/)

Cultivating Gratitude

What Good is Gratitude?

- **Gratitude allows celebration of the present**
- **Gratitude blocks help negative emotions:**
 - Anger
 - Resentment
 - Envy
- **Gratitude helps the quantity and quality of sleep**

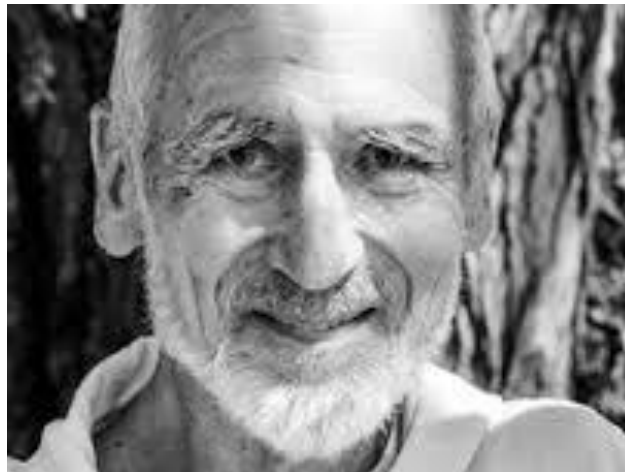
Digdon N, Koble A, *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 2011
- **Stronger immune systems**
- **Grateful people are more likely to empathize and help others**
- **Gratitude helps strengthen social ties**
- **Grateful people are more resilient to stress**

Kashdan TB et al, *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 2006

Not about thinking that life is perfect

David Steindl–Rast

- Born 1926 Vienna
- Catholic Benedictine monk notable for his active participation in interfaith dialogue and work on the interaction between spirituality and science
- “In every given moment, we can be grateful, even though we cannot be grateful for every given moment...Even when we are confronted by something terribly difficult, we can rise to the occasion and respond to the opportunity given to us.”



Connectivity

What human condition increases the risk of death as much as smoking cigarettes and more than physical inactivity or obesity?



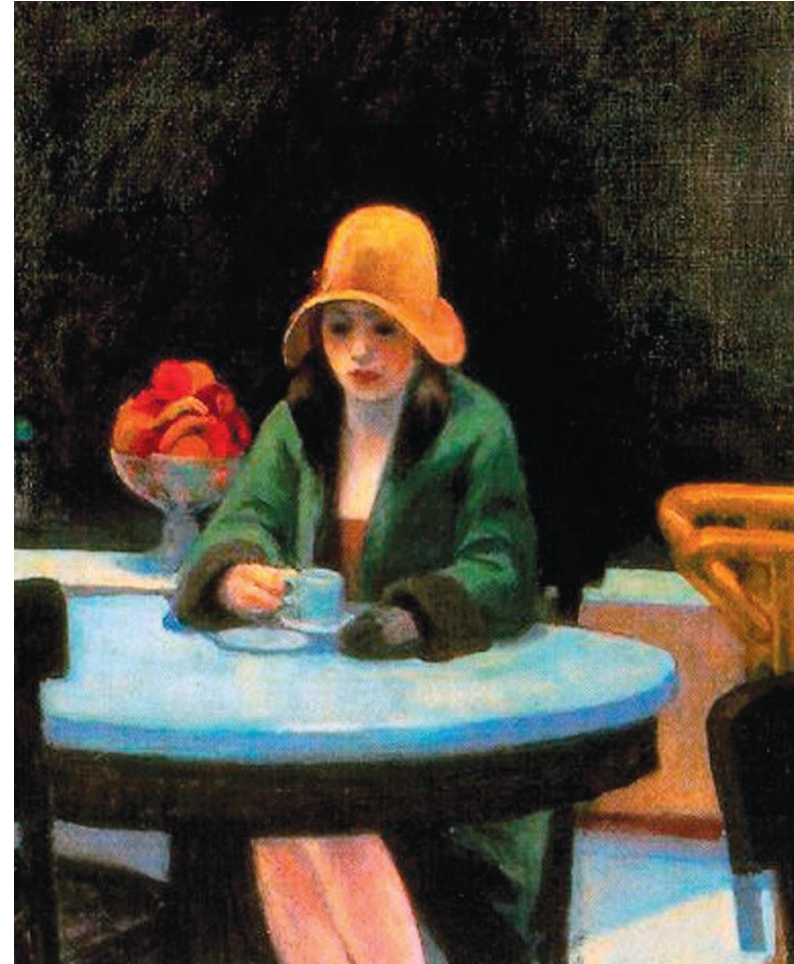
Social Isolation Impact

Social Isolation = Smoking 15
Cigarettes a Day



Chronic Loneliness

- Chronic loneliness can cause changes in the cardiovascular, immune, and nervous system
- Associated with 26% higher mortality rates in general population
- Associated with a hazard ratio of 1.7 for breast-cancer related mortality



Loneliness is a *subjective* experience

Some people are socially isolated but they are not lonely

Some people are lonely even if they have a lot of social contacts

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background, with a registered trademark symbol (®) at the end.

Loneliness Can Be Overcome

- **Stay connected**
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy**
 - Shift people's attention and interpretation of social situations in a more adaptive direction
- **“The degree of social connection that can improve our health and happiness....is both as simple and as difficult as *being open and available to others.*” (Cacioppo, 2011)**

Pearls for Enhancing Resiliency

- **Meaning-centered living**
- **Mastering perspective**
- **Living with an attitude of gratitude (try a journal)**
- **Staying connected**
- **Being mindful or meditating (however that makes sense to you)**
- **Try to maintain a sense of humor**



Thank you



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