

MEANING IN LIFE

Bob Dorroh, Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge. LA

Opening Words: Life is nothing until it is lived, but it is yours to make sense of; the value of life is nothing other than the sense you choose.

Jean-Paul Sartre

Check in: Share something of personal significance.

Topic:

In his sermon on happiness, our minister, Reverend Steve Crump, spoke about the well-known and important book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl, who was a concentration camp inmate during WWII.

The following list represents Frankl's basic principles of the human psyche.

- a) Life has meaning under all circumstances, even the most miserable.
- b) Our main motivation for living is our will to find meaning in life.
- c) We have inalienable freedom to find meaning.

We can find meaning in life in three different ways:

1. by creating a work or doing a deed;
2. by what we take from life and what life gives us, what we experience. For example, in surrender to the beauty of nature or art, and above all in experiencing human beings in their uniqueness, for to experience a human being in his uniqueness is to love him. Frankl calls these experiential values.
3. by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering;

Questions for discussion:

1. Has your life experience led you to Frankl's principles: a), b), c) ? Please share that connection.
2. Share an experience of finding meaning in one or more of the "three different ways" listed above.

Closing Words: These then are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.
William James