

Meaning

# The Science of Happiness: Theory and Practice

## Meaning

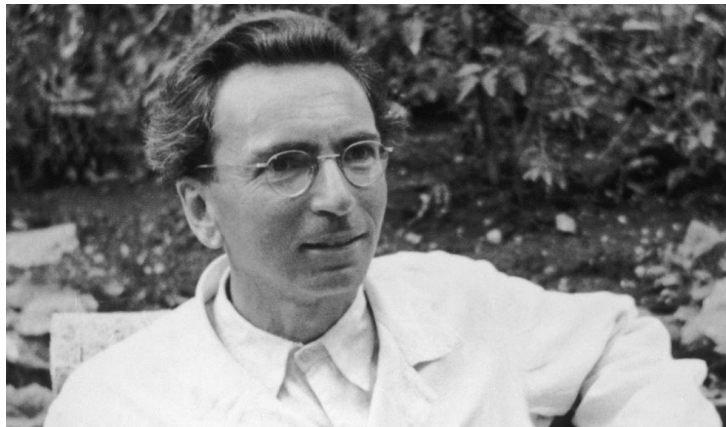


# Pioneers of Meaning



## William James

- Challenges and tragedies can be seen not as obstacles to happiness, but instead as the means to achieve a deeper and more enduring happiness.



## Viktor Frankl

- Underlying motivation of human life is the urge to find meaning
- Happiness is a by-product of the discovery of meaning

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# Finding Meaning through Adversity



Ma Li and  
Zhai Xiaowei

# The Three Components of a Meaningful Life



Rosa Parks

- A sense of cohesion
  - We feel that life makes sense
- A sense of purpose
  - We have a clear direction
- A sense of significance
  - We feel part of something bigger than ourselves

Martela and Steger

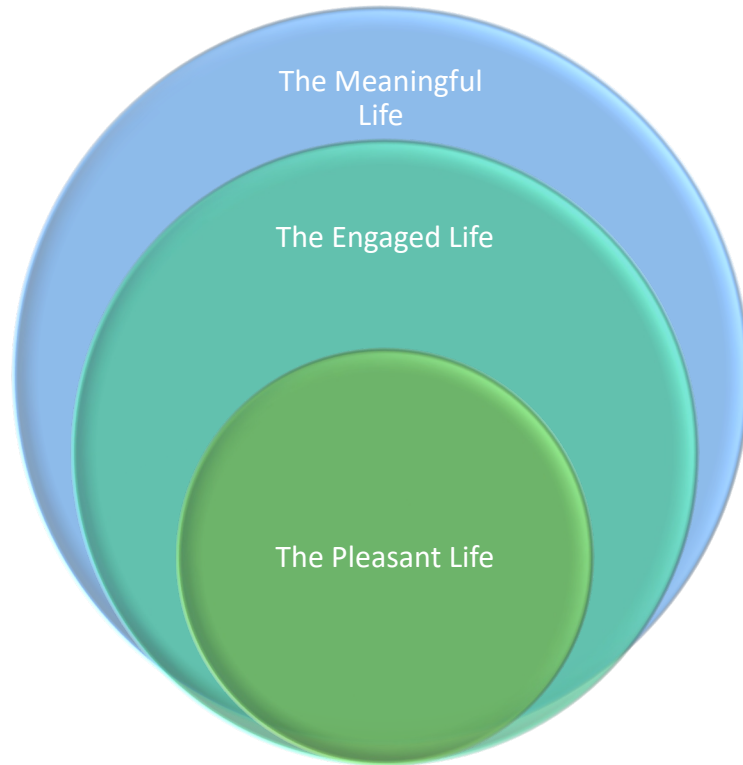
# Set your own Goals



Setting and implementing goals that *you* value:

- Shifts locus of control away from external forces to the self
- Intrinsically liberating
- Provides a sense of meaning

## A Meaningful Life is the Happiest Life



### The Three Dimensions of Happiness

#### The Pleasant Life

- Enjoying the moment

#### The Engaged Life

- Use of signature strengths to enrich one's own life

#### The Meaningful Life:

- Use of signature strengths for a greater purpose.
- Through the use of strengths, we still achieve self-improvement while we enrich the world around us
- Through the pursuit of meaningful goals, we feel more valuable and so experience greater self-esteem.

## Meaning: Key Points



- Goal setting promotes personal freedom and happiness
  - We are “pulled” by the goals that we set instead of getting “pushed” by instincts
- By setting and pursuing goals that we value, we discover meaning
- A meaningful life is the happiest life
  - Use signature strengths not only to enrich one’s own life, but to discover meaning in the service of a greater purpose

## Key Scientific Studies on Meaning

- **Meaning in Life and Psychological Well-Being:**
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- Gan, L. L., Gong, S., & Kissane, D. W. (2021). Mental state of demoralisation across diverse clinical settings: A systematic review, meta-analysis and proposal for its use as a 'specifier' in mental illness. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 48674211060746. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674211060746>
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## Life Purpose and Psychological Well-Being

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- Morton, E., Foxworth, P., Dardess, P., Altimus, C., DePaulo, J. R., Talluri, S. S., Michalak, E. E., Rinvelt, P. D., Corrigan, P. W., & Turvey, C. (2022). "Supporting Wellness": A depression and bipolar support alliance mixed-methods investigation of lived experience perspectives and priorities for mood disorder treatment. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 299, 575–584. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.12.032>
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