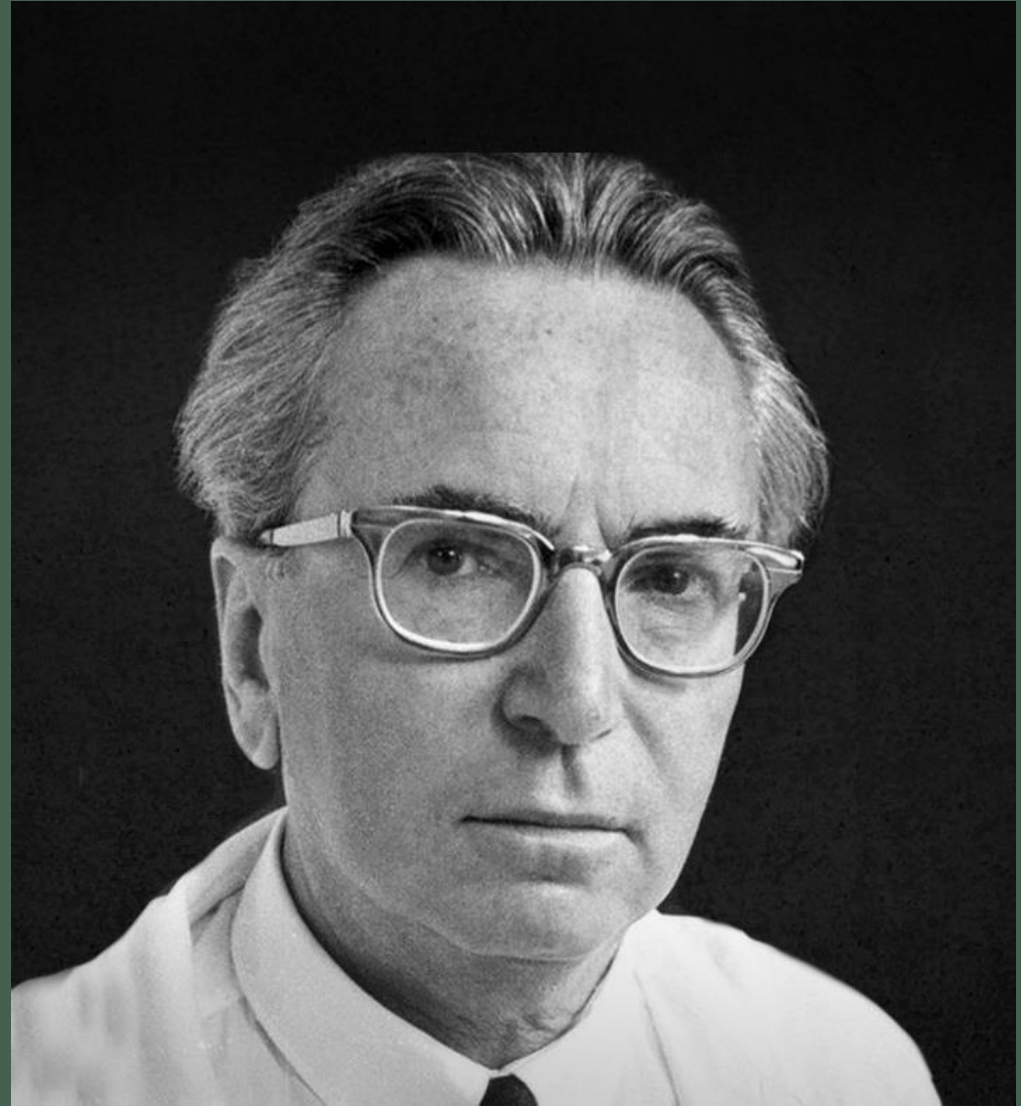




SESSION 4:

The Power of Choice

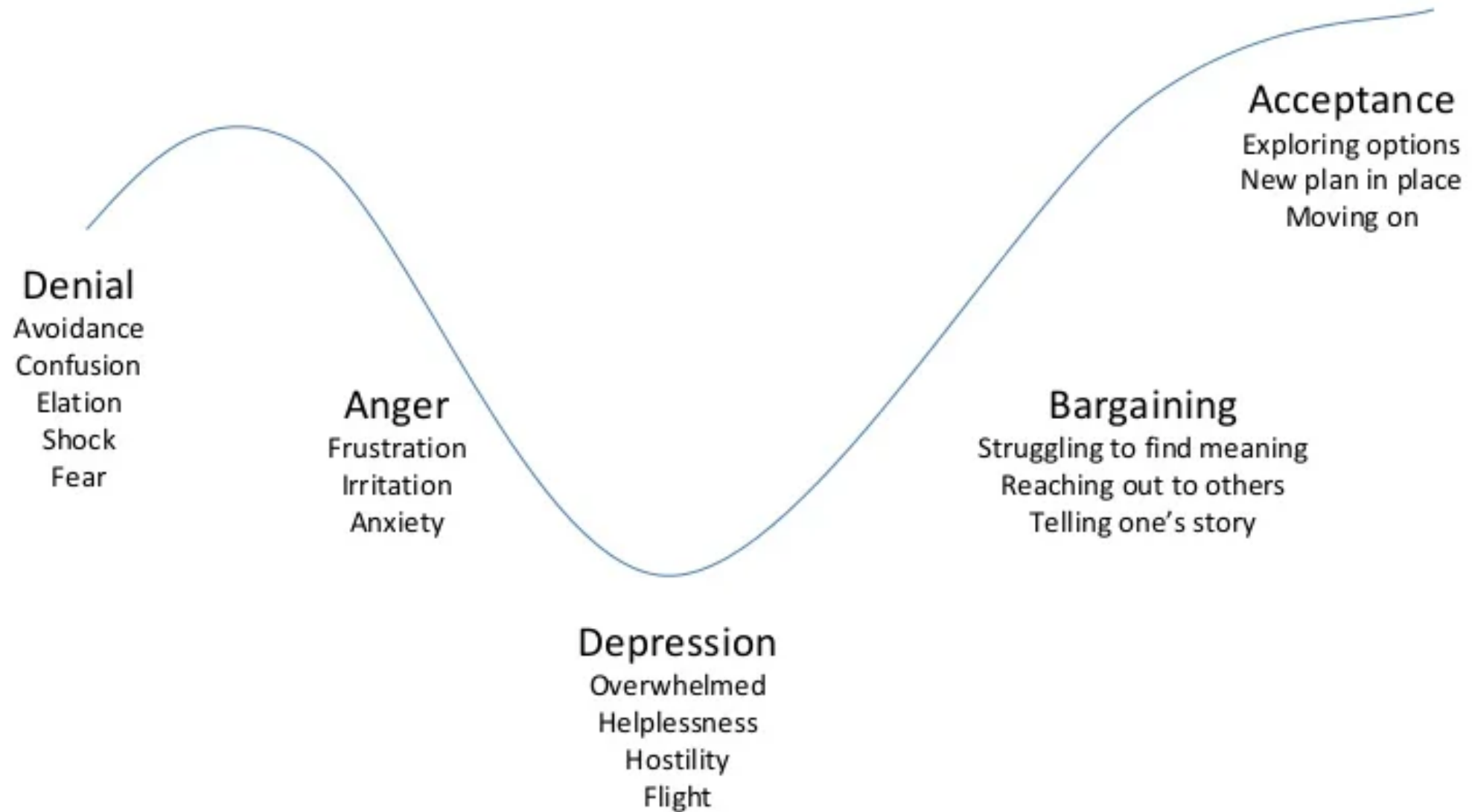
Victor Frankl's Story



“...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.”

Frankl’s Observations About Human Choice:

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



Choices to Accept

David talks
about his choice
to trust in God's
unfailing love

Jeremiah
instructs Israel's
Exiles in Babylon
to settle in

David's Complaints



FEELING
FORGOTTEN



WANTS
RESTORATION



LONGS TO SAVE
FACE

POST TRAUMA = “NEW NORMAL”

People long for
what was lost

They want to re-
establish “normal
life.”

Much of the
struggle to accept
trauma / grief is
related to the loss
of identity

Denial

- Normal and natural part of the grieving processes.
- Normal to want to go back to a time before tragedy struck.
- We must face the fact that something unwanted happened.
- Letting denial reign only delays the grief and recovery process.
- Keeps us from shifting into full and vibrant lives in the present.

You Cannot Turn Back Time

1. Don't Try to Go Back
2. Carry on with Life:



Build

- Build Houses

Plant

- Plant Vinyards

Get

- Get married

Give

- Give your children in marriage

Work

- Work for the good of your city

Recovery from Grief, Trauma and Loss Takes Time:

70 years

7 years

7 months

Lifetime

Build Houses

- Buying a home is a significant investment in a community
- Building a house signifies permanence



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Plant Vinyards





Get Married

- “Multiply there; do not decrease” (v. 6b).
- Families should continue to:
 - grow
 - develop
 - Thrive
- Continue to connect with loved ones.
- Develop new friendships and relationships.

Civic Engagement

“...pursue the well-being of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the Lord on its behalf, for when it thrives, you will thrive...”

Jeremiah 29:7



Future

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”

God does not just leave us in our grief and misery.

He tells us that he still has a plan for our lives that includes a future.

Plans that involve thriving, not just surviving.

Trauma / Grief Recovery Involves:



Helping people to accept their “New Normal”

Finding some stability in their living environment

Carrying on with family / friend relationships

Find a meaningful way to continue to provide for their needs / find something productive to do with their time

Get involved in serving others / community

David's Complaint's – Psalm 13

Forgotten

O Lord, how long will
you forget me?
Forever?

How long will you
look the other way?

How long must I
struggle with anguish
in my soul, with
sorrow in my heart
every day?

Restoration

Turn and answer me,
O Lord my God!

Restore the sparkle
to my eyes, or I will
die.

Save Face

Don't let my
enemies gloat,
saying, "We have
defeated him!"

Don't let them
rejoice at my
downfall.



Trauma and Deliberate Choice

Frankl:

- Last of the human freedoms – the ability to choose how to respond

David:

- “But I trust in *your unfailing love*. I will rejoice because *you have rescued me*. I will sing to the Lord because *he is good to me*.”

Spurgeon:

- “The worldling blesses God while he gives him plenty, but the Christian blesses him when he smites him: he believes him to be too wise to err and too good to be unkind; he trusts him where he cannot trace him, looks up to him in the darkest hour, and believes that all is well.”

David Choice & God's Unfailing Love

- Phrase unfailing love appears 121 times in the Bible:
 - “Praise the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham,” he said. “The Lord has shown **unfailing love** and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives.” (Gen. 24:27 NLT, emphasis added)
 - “With your **unfailing love** you lead the people you have redeemed. In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.” (Exod. 15:13 NLT, emphasis added)
 - “But I lavish **unfailing love** for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.” (Exod. 20:6 NLT, emphasis added)
 - The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with **unfailing love** and faithfulness.” (Exod. 34:6 NLT, emphasis added)
 - “I lavish **unfailing love** to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.” (Exod. 34:7 NLT, emphasis added)

But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ***The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!***”

(1 Sam. 17:32–37a NLT)

David's
Choice –

God's
Previous
Rescue

David Choice – God's Goodness



God is too wise to be mistaken

God is too good to be unkind

So when you don't understand

When you don't see His plan

When you can't trace His hand

Trust His heart

- Babbie Mason – *Trust His Heart*

Victim Mentality

- Post-traumatic growth often begins with a decision:
 - Trauma will not define who you are.
- When people have experienced a trauma, they feel powerless:
 - Feel like a victim.
 - Something that they did not want to happen, happened anyway
 - They were powerless to change the situation.
- To remain in the ***mindset*** of a victim is not necessary

You suffered
because of
someone
else's:

- Mistake
- Decision
- Negligence
- Aggression

- I need to stop going back in my mind to try to change what happened. I need to accept that I cannot change what has happened.
- I need to figure out the right living situation for me now. Specifically, which of these fits me?
 - I need to sell my house and make a fresh start.
 - I need to move in with family for support.
 - I need to separate from family who are keeping me from moving on with life.
 - I need to get an apartment.
 - I need to either go back to work or get a job so that I have something to keep my mind occupied.

Reflection Questions

- I need to figure out my relationships.
 - I need to try to make some new friends or reconnect with old friends.
 - I need to be more involved in the lives of my children, grandchildren, or other family members.
 - I need to start dating again.
- I need to get involved in my community or church to provide me with purpose and give back.
- I need to thank God that He has not forgotten me.
- I need to realize that God still wants me to thrive in life—that He still has a future for me.



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