



Plenary Abstract

The Search for Medicine

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"If we are seen to be idealist and overestimating and overrating man, then...we promote him to what he really can be." In 1972, the legendary Viktor Frankl quoted Goethe at a lecture to Toronto youth, endorsing this belief as, "the most apt maxim and motto for any Psychotherapeutic activity." We psychiatrists understand that the practice of psychotherapy is truly the practice of practicing life, and thus Frankl's stated maxim to "presuppose in this man... there must be a spark of search for meaning," is a central life task. We all are not only connected through our search for meaning, but also our shared duty to believe in the ability of others to search and discover meaning. At a time in the world where belief and trust appear to run thin, and conspiracy and chaos create divide among us, this need to return to our shared duty ranks supreme. It is us psychiatrists, trained in the matters of emotional regulation, collaboration, wellness, and leadership, who can dispense this maxim and undo the mistrust and dysfunction that has entered the modern medical model. We, as the educators and guides to the next generation of physician leaders, must look deeply within ourselves and question, "Do I believe in what I am doing? Can I be trusted to fan the spark of passion into a flame whose light shines with purpose toward the discovery of meaning?"

In this session, we will explore the framework of Intentional Evolution as a heuristic to rebuilding the basic tenants of self-determination and purpose. It is my hope through evaluating the criticisms of our current disembodied processes within the modern medicalized model that we will really highlight the remarkable ability of persons within to find and share the search for meaning. Through your presence and your being, my dear psychiatrists, your organization is better positioned now than ever to search for the soul of medicine. I wish you well, as you share that search equitably and justly with the trainees and trainers that surround you. You are the search for medicine. For any who may be concerned this presentation is a tulip through a field of woo-woo, it is not. It is an earnest look at the central tenants of our craft and how to reasonably balance those along with the realities modern medicine presents. Although, if this does not bely your worry, then I shall simply again quote Frankl from the same lecture: "You'll excuse me, I know I am speaking a marvelous accent without the slightest English."