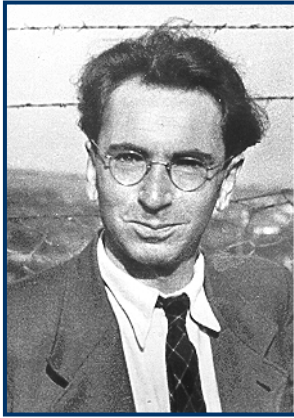


The Last of Freedoms



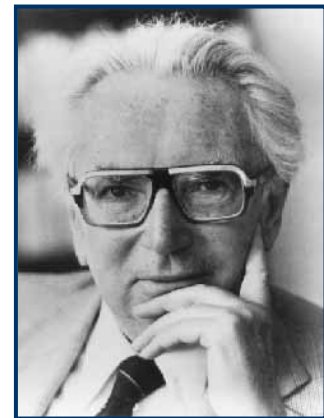
Victor Frankl was a psychiatrist and a Jew. While imprisoned in the death camps of Nazi Germany, he suffered unthinkable torture and innumerable indignities.

His parents, brother and wife all died in a camp or were sent to the gas chamber. Frankl never knew from one moment to the next if his path would lead to the ovens or if he would be among the “saved” who were forced to shovel the ashes of the ill-fated.

One day, alone and naked in a small room, Frankl became aware of what he later called “the last of the human freedoms” – the control over his inner environment and his basic identity. He could decide within himself how all of this was going to affect him. Through a series of mental, emotional and moral disciplines – largely using memory and imagination – he exercised this freedom, and it grew.

Eventually, he felt he had more freedom than his captors. They might have had the liberty to make choices in their external environment, but he had more freedom, more internal power. He became an inspiration to the prisoners around him, and even to some of the guards. He helped others discover meaning in their suffering and dignity in their prison existence.

We may not find ourselves in a prison environment, but Frankl’s conclusion holds true for us. Others may determine what happens to us on the outside, but only we and God determine our *inside* fate. Choice, you see, not chance, determines our destiny.



– Beecher Hunter