

Applied Positive Psychology

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Week 7

Lecture 21: Meaning and purpose in life: Concepts and theories

I welcome you all to Module 7 of this course, titled "Applied Positive Psychology." So, module 7 is about meaning and purpose in life. So that is the main concept on which we will be focusing in this module. Today's lecture is lecture number 18; this is the first lecture of this module. So, we will talk about the concept of meaning and purpose in life. We will be talking about some of the concepts associated with this whole idea of meaning and purpose, and some of the theoretical propositions around that.

This will mostly be about conceptual clarity regarding the concept of meaning and purpose in life. So, before we talk about today's lecture, let me give you a brief recap of the last lecture, which was lecture number 17 and was part of the earlier module. So, in the last lecture, which is lecture number 17, we talked about the concept of post-traumatic growth, or in short, it is called PTG. We also discussed the various concepts associated with post-traumatic growth and some of the related concepts. We also talked about the different domains of post-traumatic growth. We also discussed the different types of traumatic events that can lead to post-traumatic growth. We also discussed models of post-traumatic growth, and we discussed how PTG, well-being, and wisdom are connected to each other. At the end, we discussed how we can facilitate PTG.

So, these are some of the major concepts we discussed in the last lecture. In today's lecture, which is lecture number 18, we will be focusing on the concept of meaning in life. We will talk about three core dimensions of meaning in life from the perspectives of research and literature, and we will be talking about how meaning in life relates to well-being. So, let us start today's lecture.

There are two concepts when we talk about the meaning of life. We need to distinguish between these two terms. One is the meaning of life versus the meaning in life. So, these are the two connotations and two concepts associated with the idea of meaning in life. So, one is the meaning of life, and another is the meaning in life.

So, let us see how these two terms differ from each other. So, when we talk about the

meaning of life, this is more of a philosophical quest to find the answer to a lot of these metaphysical questions, such as why life and the universe exist and what their purpose is. So, these are very metaphysical, theological questions that people try to address. For example, questions such as why there is life on Earth, why this universe exists, and so on. So, the meaning of life as a concept is associated with all these metaphysical questions related to existence.

Now, such questions generally cannot be scientifically investigated using scientific methodology, and hence, they are not really studied in the field of psychology. Psychology is a more inquiry-oriented discipline, a more empirical discipline. So, a lot of these philosophical questions, which cannot be addressed using scientific methodology, are generally of no interest to psychologists. So, when we talk about the meaning of life, which is associated with all these metaphysical questions—why life exists, why the universe exists, what the purpose of all this grand plan is, and so on—such questions are difficult to answer. These mostly come in the field of philosophy and theology.

But when we talk about the concept of meaning in life, this is a concept that is more aligned with the discipline of psychology. So, when we talk about meaning in life, we are talking about its subjective experience for human beings. When we ask the question, "What makes this experience meaningful in their lives?" psychologists are more interested in these concepts. So, when we talk about meaning in life, it is everybody's quest to find out what the purpose of their existence is, so it's a very subjective concept when we try to find out what the purpose of one's existence is. Whatever one is doing, is there any direction to it? Is there any purpose to it? Do I have a broader meaning in life? So, this is a very individualistic, subjective quest to find the meaning of life within that individual life domain.

So, that is where we try to understand what makes an individual's experiences meaningful. What are the ingredients associated with it? This is something we can understand and explore using scientific inquiry and scientific methodology by asking people what makes their lives meaningful. It could be very subjective and differ from person to person. So, this meaning in life is more aligned with the discipline of psychology, and psychologists are more interested in the concept of meaning in life and not the meaning of life per se. So, this is how we should understand the difference between these two terms.

Now, let us look into this concept of meaning in life, which psychologists are more interested in. Let us delve deeper into this idea of meaning in life. So, there are many ideas about it. I will just share some of the statements given by renowned personalities here. Carl Jung said life exists only when there is meaning.

So, when there is meaning, you attribute certain meanings to your existence; then life exists. Leo Tolstoy said that the sole meaning of life is to serve humanity. So, according to his definition, if you are serving humanity and making a contribution to the greater good, not just your own life, then your life is meaningful. This is how he defined it.

We will be discussing Viktor Frankl in detail, about his ideas, because he is one of the key figures in the whole research of meaning in life in psychology. He said that the meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day, and from hour to hour. So, he is saying that the meaning in life is not a fixed concept. It keeps changing from person to person and from time to time. We can create new meanings in our lives as we progress.

So, what matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general, but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment. So, what he is saying is that it is more important to understand what kind of meaning is attributed to or created by the person in a particular moment in their life. We'll talk about Viktor Frankl's ideas in more detail in this lecture, as well as in the upcoming lectures. So, both psychologists and philosophers emphasize meaning in life as a crucial dimension of human life.

So, this is something very important. As human beings, we don't just exist to survive. We also try to create a meaningful life because this is very important in terms of having a purposeful life, having a life with direction, and that is also connected to our sense of well-being. So many psychologists and psychological scholars have said that all humans strive towards meaning in terms of the need to understand the world, to know our place in it, and to have a purpose and goals. All human beings try to create these important aspects of meaning in life in terms of understanding their world, what their place is in it, how to have more purpose and goals in life, and so on.

Philosophers such as Descartes and Camus have suggested that humans have a fundamental motivation to make sense of their experiences. We all try to make sense of our experiences, whatever experiences we have in our lives; from day to day, we all try to make sense of them. For example, we think about- why are these things happening to me? What is its purpose? What can I learn from these experiences? These are the things that constantly go on in the human mind, giving meaning to their life. Viktor Frankl proposed that seeking meaning is crucial not only for well-being but also for survival. He said that meaning is not just required to have higher well-being in our lives.

It is also important for our survival. If you don't see the meaning of your existence, then it will probably be difficult to survive as well. So, he is linking it to a deeper survival process. Now, here is the photograph of Viktor Frankl, the scientist who studied the meaning of life. A more systematic study actually started from his ideas.

Viktor Frankl's seminal work on man's search for meaning. This is a book that is one of the best-selling books still available. He was a prisoner of a Nazi concentration camp, and he talked in detail about his experiences in the prisons of Nazi concentration camps and how he survived, how other people survived, even though there was no apparent reason to survive when you are in a concentration camp. We all know what has happened to the concentration camps. So, this book talks about the man's search for meaning, how people search for meaning even in the dire circumstances where there is no hope, in situations like concentration camps and so on.

So, this is a beautiful book that talks about how the search for meaning is a crucial aspect of survival and well-being. So, Viktor Frankl is commonly cited in meaning in life research as one of the central figures and founding inspirations in a lot of other theories that evolved out of meaning in life research. Frankl argued that people function best when they perceive a sense of meaning and possess a life purpose, a unique mission to strive for throughout their lives. He developed a school of psychotherapy called Logotherapy, which is aimed at helping people find meaning in their lives. So Victor Frankl, looked at this whole sense of meaning in life, how it helps people to survive, how it helps them to experience well-being, and so on.

This is something very unique to human beings in terms of their constant attempt to create meaning in their lives. Out of this understanding, he develops a school of psychotherapy called logotherapy, which is primarily aimed at understanding or creating meaning in the lives of clients because, many times, it is the lack of meaning that creates the existential vacuum, which leads to many psychological disorders, depression, etc. So, if people can find more meaning in their lives, they will probably have better well-being. Logotherapy basically looks at that aspect of human functioning. So, a meaningful life is often depicted as superior, less common, and more morally virtuous compared to a happy life.

Even when we talk about a happy life, in a lot of these philosophical literatures and theologies, a meaningful life is always considered a superior life. It is more about eudaimonic well-being than just a happy life, because a meaningful life contributes to the greater good. So, let us look at some of the more research-based definitions about the meaning of life. Now, although we have a consensus that meaning in life is very important for human functioning, human well-being, and survival; however, there are still a lot of debates around the definitions and operationalization of how to measure it. There is not much consensus about it. So, across various theories and empirical work, many definitions are available. So, although the importance is very evident, how do we define 'meaning in life'? Now, let us provide some definitions of meaning in life that emerge from the research literature.

Some of them are listed here. One is that 'meaning is about making sense of life'. So, this is one way to define it. When you say meaning in life, you are basically trying to make sense of your life. What is this life all about? So, when you try to make sense of it, evaluate it.

So, that is what gives meaning to life. Another meaning is primarily nurtured by goal-directed behavior. So, this is what it talks about: if you have a goal in life and you are working towards it, it will give you meaning in life. Another definition is that meaning is linked to transcendent and spiritual concern. So, meaning in life can also be derived when you are working towards some spiritual pursuits, some transcendental realities. When you pursue greater realities, that also gives meaning in life. Another definition is that meaning comes from a sense of self-worth, efficiency, self-justification, purpose, and so on.

Meaning also comes into one's life when you have a higher self-worth, you have decent self-worth, you feel you are worthy, you are doing something meaningful, you have a justification for what you are doing, and you have a purpose in life. Then, generally, people perceive their lives to be meaningful. So, these are some definitions given by different researchers. King and colleagues, in 2006, summarized some of the scholarly definitions of meaning as follows. Lives may be experienced as meaningful when they are felt to have significance beyond the trivial or momentary, to have a purpose or to have a coherence that transcends chaos.

This is like a summarization of a lot of these definitions into one statement. So, we can experience our lives as more meaningful when we feel them as significant. We feel our lives are significant. We are contributing to something greater. Not just spending life on trivial and momentary things.

When your life has significance beyond short-term and trivial things, then it is experienced as meaningful. When you have a purpose in life, you have a direction, you have a goal, you have a sense of coherence, you are able to make sense of what is happening in your life, and then life is generally experienced as meaningful. This is like a summarization of a lot of these specific definitions that we discussed. Similarly, Steger also defined meaning as the web of connections, understandings, and interpretations that help us comprehend our experience and formulate plans directing our energies to the achievement of our desired future. Meaning provides us with a sense that our lives matter, that they make sense, and that they are more than just some of our seconds, days, and years.

So, this is something very important in the last statement. When you are able to perceive your life as sensible, it makes sense; it matters; your life matters. Maybe it's because of

what you are doing, or maybe it's because there are loved ones who make you feel your life matters, or when you feel that your life is not just a collection of the individual time that you are spending, it is more than that. A more holistic perception of your life can give you something called greater meaning in your life.

So, these are all different definitions. Somewhere, there is also a common thread that discusses the important aspects that lead to meaning in life or experiences of meaning in life. Now, when we talk about all these definitions, researchers generally agree that meaning in life has three important dimensions or aspects. All three of these aspects actually contribute to the meaning of life. So, these are the three important dimensions that we discuss when we talk about meaning in life.

One's meaning in life is about coherence. Second, meaning in life is about purpose; meaning in life is about significance. So, these are the three important dimensions that capture all the aspects of meaning in life in these three dimensions. So, whatever we talk about the meaning of life, it will come under one of these three or maybe a combination of these three dimensions. So, let us look into these three dimensions. So, basically, when we talk about meaning in life, we are talking about coherence, purpose, and significance.

So, these can be three important aspects. This whole concept of meaning in life can be defined using all three dimensions or a combination of these three dimensions. So, let us look into the first dimension, which is called coherence. So, what is coherence? Life is coherent when one is able to understand patterns in it and make sense of it. Whatever events are happening, whatever things are happening in your life, when you see patterns, you can understand them, you can make sense of them. Then your life has coherence, and it contributes to the meaning of life.

You feel more; your life is more meaningful because you are able to understand what is happening in your life. So, life is experienced more coherently when you are able to understand your life, find patterns in what is happening, make sense of what is happening, or feel that life is comprehensible. You are able to understand things together. So, when you are able to experience coherence, that gives a sense of meaning in life. So, when we talk about coherence, it is about the feeling that one's experiences or life itself make sense.

Then, coherence is experienced, which leads to meaning in life. It is about making sense of one's life to make it comprehensible and coherent. So, this is what coherence is all about. When you feel coherence in your life, it contributes to a more meaningful life.

So, this is an important dimension. It is more of a cognitive component, which means you think about it and try to make sense of it by evaluating your life. We try to evaluate things

in our lives using a lot of thought processes, belief systems, and so on, which ultimately leads to making sense of the things or experiences in our lives. Some researchers made the assumption that humans have an inherent need to make sense of the environment, and we experience distress in situations where meaning is disrupted, stimulating our innate capacity to construct meaning. So, there is a natural inherent tendency in all of us to try to make sense of things that happen in our lives. Whenever we are not able to understand something or something bad happens, we always ask, "Why is this happening to me?" This question arises because we were not able to make sense at that time.

You ask 'why' with the idea that you are trying to make sense of it. This inherent need to make sense is a very fundamental need within all individuals. We all try to make sense of our experiences in our own individual ways. When we encounter an uncomfortable situation, we experience distress because we are not able to make sense of things that are happening. Particularly like traumatic events, very difficult situations in one's life can disrupt meaning in our lives.

So, when we are able to make sense of things, we create more coherence in our lives. Next is purpose as an important dimension of meaning in life. So, purpose is something that most people use in layman's terms synonymously with the meaning of life. Whenever we talk about meaning in life, purpose is used synonymously. But technically, what is the meaning of "purpose" here? More specifically, purpose is a dimension of meaning and refers specifically to having direction and future-oriented goals in life.

Purpose is mostly about the people who will experience purpose in their lives when they see a direction in their lives, when they have goals in their lives, and when they approach those future-oriented goals. So, when one thinks about the future, sets goals, and works towards them, then people experience life with a purpose. Viktor Frankl specifically used "purpose" to connote meaning in life.

Viktor Frankl gave a lot of importance to this dimension. Some definitions related to purpose include that purpose in life is about having goals and a sense of directedness. When you have a direction in life, set goals, and work towards them, you experience life as purposeful. Purpose is also about a sense of core goals, direction in life, and enthusiasm regarding the future, and so on. It's a very future-oriented concept. When you have some goals in the future, work towards them, have a direction to reach those goals, and then you will experience purpose in life, which contributes to meaning in life.

So, despite some differences in definition, researchers on purpose in life seem to agree that it is essentially about some future-oriented aims and goals that give direction to life. These overarching goals then lend significance to one's present actions. Therefore, your present

action becomes significant for your future goals.

It contributes to the meaning in one's life. So, this is the second dimension. First was coherence. Second was the purpose. Third is the significance or mattering.

Your life matters and has significance. Significance is an important dimension of meaning in life. So, significance has been understood to be about the worthwhileness and values of one's life. You think your life is significant if you experience that your life is valuable, worthwhile, and has some meaning and value. You experience it for reasons such as you have loved ones who perceive you as an important person or you are doing something important, etc.

But whenever you experience your life as worthwhile and significant, there is a value to your life; then we experience significance, or we experience mattering. Some researchers, such as George and Park, use the term "mattering" for this aspect of meaning. So, this means the same thing: significance or mattering. Significance, or mattering, is mostly defined as a value-laden evaluation of one's life as a whole regarding how important, worthwhile, and inherently valuable it feels.

So, the more you feel your life is worthwhile, the more it is important. It is valuable the more you experience significance in your life and the more you experience meaning in life. So, significance is related to meaning in life. So, this is another important dimension. To experience meaning or mattering is to feel that one's life has profound and lasting importance. An individual with a low sense of mattering may feel that his or her existence carries little significance and that one's non-existence would make no impact on the world.

For example, many times, people in a state of depression also feel that their lives are not significant. They don't matter whether they exist or not. If they think like that, that means that the significance dimension is lower in their perspective. Therefore, the meaning in life is lower. So, when one feels that their life is meaningful, valuable because of their actions or the relationships they built, they feel such profound, lasting importance that contributes to the significance or matters to their life.

So, this aspect of meaning received less empirical attention compared to others. So, if you look at empirical research, this aspect has received relatively less attention compared to purpose and coherence. Now mattering is more connected to the bigger existential question of whether human life has any inherent value in the larger scheme of things. Sometimes this whole dimension of significance is also looked at as a larger philosophical question that we talked about under the concept of the meaning of life. That can be related to some of these aspects. It is also possible that many cases of depression and suicide may be

connected to a lack of a sense of mattering or significance.

These are very typical symptoms of depression and suicidal tendencies. People with suicidal tendencies feel that their life is meaningless in the sense that it has no significance. They don't matter whether they exist or not. That is a typical aspect of the lack of meaning connected with depression, suicidal ideation, and so on. However, on a positive note, research shows that most people do not go through life with a sense that their lives do not matter. Research shows that for most people, fortunately, they experience their lives as significant.

They feel their lives matter. Most people also do not continuously question whether their lives matter. They also don't continuously question whether their lives matter or not. They generally feel that, regardless of the limited conditions of their life, they matter. So, generally, people don't experience significance in their lives; for most people, it is a good thing.

As the lack of this may lead to depression and other issues. Rather, most people assume their lives matter. It is an assumption that people think their lives are important and valuable. It is an assumption that people have unconsciously. In fact, things and close people in our lives give us a sense of specialness, uniqueness, and permanence.

One of the reasons for this could be that whoever is close to us makes us feel special. We feel our lives are important, significant, and valuable because of their love, their connection, and their support. One of the primary reasons for feeling valuable is the loved ones that we have around us. They make us feel special and significant. So, that is something very important. The sense of significance or mattering may be particularly heightened during a crisis or traumatic situation.

So, whenever we feel problems in our life, traumatic situations in life, or crises in life, the sense of significance is something that is very important and can contribute to survival in such situations. Trauma literature indicates that people often consider traumatic events as pointless or without significance while coping with them. People often look for a sense of significance and positive value in the events in order to better cope with them. A lot of this trauma literature says that one of the ways people try to cope with traumatic situations or challenges in their lives is to find significance or some positive value in the event.

Literature also suggests that maintaining a sense of mattering or even positive illusions, such as an exaggerated sense of control and optimism, facilitates coping and mental health. So, this sense of significance is very important in the context of coping with the problems of life, traumatic situations, and challenges in life. If you try to evaluate things or difficult

situations or traumatic events in such a way that you feel significant in your life, you will feel that your life matters, and you will be more likely to cope better. So, these are the three important dimensions of meaning; all three dimensions contribute to meaning in our life, or a combination of these three can contribute to meaning in our life. So, that is why these are the three separate dimensions; individually, they contribute to meaning in life, or in combination, they also contribute to meaning in life.

Now, let us try to separate these three dimensions and see how they differ from each other in terms of their basic nature and aspects. So, this is one statement from Martela and Steger that tries to separate these three dimensions. They are saying the coherence dimension is value-neutral and descriptive. When one is trying to make sense of their life, there is no value neutral in the sense that you are not using it as a measure of the value of life.

You are just trying to make sense of it, trying to evaluate or describe it. So it's more of a descriptive and value-neutral dimension. Whereas purpose and significance are more evaluative and normative. You feel your life has more purpose and significance, mostly by comparing it with some norms; when you feel your life is better than someone else's or better than whatever standard you think your life should have, there is a normative aspect to it. Then you feel your life has purpose and significance, generally by comparison with certain norms or standards that you set for yourself or perhaps from what you pick from society, and so on. So, these dimensions of significance and purpose are more evaluative.

You evaluate them more, and they are more normative. So, there may be some norms with which you compare yourself, and that leads to a higher purpose or significance or a lower purpose or significance. Coherence is about describing the world as it appears to individuals. So, we try to find coherence by describing or trying to make sense by using our thought processes. On the other hand, significance and purpose aim to find values in the world in the present, as well as in the world that might arise from the pursuit of one's purpose. So, significance and purpose try to find values in the world in the present as well as whatever may arise in the future.

So, human effort to find coherence is thus an attempt to create accurate mental models of the world to facilitate predictability and consistency. So, coherence is about making one's life more predictable and more consistent by making sense of the events. Human effort to find significance and purpose, in turn, is an attempt to find justification for one's actions, an enduring foundation for self-worth, and a worthwhile pursuit. Coherence is about making your life more predictable and consistent. Significance and purpose are more about finding justifications for whatever you are doing and why you are doing something.

So, you may bring it to increase your purpose in life or make your life more significant.

These are some of the aspects in which they differ across all three dimensions. This table shows the difference between the three in a tabular form. We have discussed most of the things in the earlier slide.

So, coherence is descriptive and value neutral. Purpose and significance are evaluative and normative. The focus of coherence is understanding and describing the world as it appears to the individual. While the focus of purpose and significance is about finding value in the world and shaping a meaningful future. Function of coherence is about creating accurate mental models of predictability and consistency. Function of purpose is about justifying actions, establishing self-worth, and identifying meaningful pursuits.

According to the temporal perspective, coherence is more present-focused; while purpose and significance also extend to the future. Coherence is about providing a structured and comprehensible view of reality. Purpose and significance provide motivation, direction, and a sense of worth in one's life. An example of coherence is understanding why events happen in life, such as recognizing patterns in experiences. An examples of purpose and significance include identifying meaningful goals such as helping others or contributing to society.

So, these are some examples of how these dimensions may differ in their conceptualization. Now, these three dimensions are also connected to each other. Even though they are discussed in separate, isolated ways, they are actually interconnected with each other. One can contribute to others.

These dimensions of coherence, which are also sometimes referred to as comprehension. Purpose, mattering, or significance are distinct, but they are closely related constructs. Conceptually, they are distinct, but in real life, they are always influencing each other and contributing to meaning in life. The experience of comprehension, purpose, and mattering may mutually influence one another in a way that a low level of one may lead to low levels in others and a high level of one may lead to high levels in others. When one dimension increases, this will likely contribute to an increase in other dimensions as well. For example, when you are not able to make sense of your life or events in your life, meaning a low sense of comprehension or coherence, then it would also be difficult to experience a sense of direction and purpose in life.

When you are not able to make sense of things in your life, how can you have direction and purpose in life? So, low coherence will contribute to a low purpose in life. When your life doesn't make sense, it will also further make it difficult to experience a sense of significance or mattering. Therefore, a low score in one may contribute to low scores in

others; similarly, the vice versa is also possible: a high score in one can lead to a high score in others.

So, a high sense of significance will make it easier to experience a life of coherence and direction. So, these three are very closely connected to one another and influence each other in real life. Now, let us look into how meaning in life is related to well-being according to some of the empirical literature on that. Viktor Frankl argued that humans are characterized by a will to find meaning.

This means there is an inherent will to find meaning in one's life. This is an inherent motivation in all human beings. It is an innate drive to find meaning and significance in one's life, and a failure to achieve meaning results in psychological distress. So, when you are not able to find meaning in life, in the actions you are doing, or the existence you have, you will experience psychological problems and distress. Research has supported this relationship between lack of meaning and psychological distress. So, when people experience a lack of meaning in their lives, they will experience more psychological distress and problems. Research has supported this statement or hypothesis. For example, having less meaning in life has been associated with a greater need for therapy. As these people experience more psychological disturbances, they also need more therapy to build their psychological world. They also experience more depression and anxiety.

They also experience more suicidal ideation and substance abuse, as well as other forms of distress. So, empirical literature that shows a lack of meaning could be associated with many psychological disturbances, including depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, and so on. On the other hand, having more meaning has been positively related to more work enjoyment. If they experience more meaning in the context of work, they experience more enjoyment in the work they are doing.

They experience or report greater life satisfaction. They are more satisfied with their lives. They also experience more happiness among other measures of healthy psychological functioning. So, according to George and Park, each dimension of meaning in life may be associated with well-being in a specific way. Now, these three dimensions that we talk about may also be connected to well-being in very specific ways, which may be different from each other.

Let us look into that aspect. How is coherence related to well-being? When you talk about the meaning of life, there are three dimensions. Let us talk about how each dimension contributes to well-being. We have already seen broader research. Now, let us look into each dimension and how it possibly leads to higher or lower well-being.

Now, high comprehension or coherence may be related to better well-being through some

of the following possible mechanisms. One is when one's experience has high coherence; they are able to make sense of their life and the events in their life. It minimizes uncertainty. Uncertainty in life is detrimental to well-being. When you experience too many uncertainties in life, you experience low coherence.

You don't know how to predict anything in your life. You don't know what will happen tomorrow, and so on. So, when you have such uncertainties, that may lead to lower coherence. When you have higher coherence, it minimizes these uncertainties and leads to higher well-being. So, a higher sense of comprehension or coherence minimizes the sense of uncertainty by providing a better sense of understanding in life on a day-to-day basis.

So, by minimizing uncertainty, greater coherence increases our sense of well-being. This could be one possible mechanism. Second is a greater sense of clarity. When you have more coherence, you have more clarity about life; you know what is happening, you know what to do. Your life is much more sorted, so a higher sense of comprehension or coherence may lead to greater clarity in making choices, decision-making, and smooth navigation in life. So that is how increasing clarity in one's life may lead to higher coherence may lead to greater well-being.

The third possible mechanism is that higher coherence may lead to a better ability to make sense of and cope with life crises. So higher coherence may also contribute to coping with the crises of life. Higher comprehension or coherence may facilitate making sense of life crises and trauma with them. Whenever we face any traumatic or difficult situation, if we are able to make sense of it and explain it, then we are more likely to adapt to it. It is only when we experience a more prolonged period of distress that we are not able to make sense of the things that are happening.

We are unable to explain why it is happening. The moment we are able to understand why some events are happening in one's life, and you explain it by your belief system or your thought processes, the more likely you are to adapt and cope with it. For example, let's say you appear for an interview and fail that interview. If you are not able to make sense of why you failed, if you are not able to explain, let's say you did very well, you could answer everything, but still, you failed, then you are not able to explain why you failed; then it will cause more distress in your life, you will have more trouble in your mind. On the other hand, let's say you failed, and you can explain very clearly that you were not well prepared and could not answer the questions.

As you have a clear explanation for your failure, you will easily adapt to it. You will not experience too much distress because you can explain it. You can make sense of why this has happened. On the other hand, when you are not able to make sense of it, it will be more

disturbing to you. Now, let us see how purpose in life, as a dimension of meaning in life, is related to well-being.

A higher purpose may impact well-being through the following mechanisms. One's higher purpose leads to a greater day-to-day pursuit of valued goals. Purpose is related to the pursuit of goals. The more valued goals you have, the more you pursue future goals.

So, that will lead to the day-to-day pursuit of valued goals. Pursuit and commitment to valued goals are associated with purpose. Such pursuits always lead to higher well-being. When you have a sense of direction in life, greater positive emotions generally occur when people have purpose in life. Identifying and making progress toward achieving those goals is associated with increased positive emotions.

When you have clear goals and work towards them, you experience more positive emotions. So, that is how purpose can be related to well-being. The third possible mechanism is that a higher purpose in life leads to greater concordance between pursuit goals and core values. Which means a higher purpose is generally associated with pursuing goals that are congruent with one's core values and identity. Such goals pursued enhance well-being. So, if you have a higher purpose in life, you are more likely to pursue goals that you inherently like or that align with the core values of your life.

When you work towards goals that are very congruent with your own inner values, you are more likely to experience higher well-being. So, this is how purpose in life can contribute to well-being. So, meaning in life is related to overall well-being, and higher well-being, but specific dimensions can also link to provide specific mechanisms that lead to higher well-being.

The last one is significance and how it contributes to well-being. Now, mattering may be related to well-being in the following ways. One is that significance buffers death anxiety; the more you experience significance in your life, the less likely you are to experience death-related anxieties. Research indicates that higher self-esteem leads to more positive evaluations of oneself. This higher self-esteem, which leads to a higher sense of significance, may diminish death anxiety.

So, that can also contribute to greater well-being. Higher significance also leads to greater equanimity and security in the face of threats and crises. You will be more at peace when you experience your life as significant, even in the face of threat and crisis. So, you will feel more secure. You will not be unstable. You will have more equanimity in your life. So, higher mattering may protect people from life crises and threatening situations by providing resources such as self-esteem. When you experience higher healthy self-esteem,

you don't get too overwhelmed by crises, and you become more optimistic. All this can help you cope with difficult situations, maintain equanimity, and face difficulties.

So, this particular aspect of significance and matter can also contribute to well-being. So, this is how well-being is connected to meaning in life. So, this was about some of the concepts related to meaning in life, the dimensions, and how they contribute to well-being. The next lecture will discuss a more applied intervention perspective on the meaning of life. With this, I will stop here. Thank you.