

The search for meaning

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PROFESSOR



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Few words about me

➤ Research interests

- Creation and legitimation of new sectors and new organizations
- Late globalization, de-globalization and de-internationalization
- High Impact International entrepreneur
- Cross-disciplinary theory building

➤ Education

- Diploma in mechanical engineering
- MSc in International Marketing
- PhD in International Entrepreneurship

➤ Business experience

- Public policy interventions
- Restructuring, rationalizing and moderating public sectors such as:
 - power, oil, military high-tech, consulting, higher education
- Three start-ups: profit and not-for-profit

➤ Project portfolio as coordinator

- TEMPUS, ERASMUS+ (KA1 & KA2), H2020 (MSC-ITN) [total ~ value 7.5 m €]

➤ Public profile

- <https://vbn.aau.dk/en/persons/romeo-turcan>



Existential questions

- **What do I expect (want) from life?**
- **What does life expect (want) from me?**

Victor Frankl



Asking existential questions

➤ 1991-1992

➤ USSR; military; stateless

- Who am I?
- What will I become?
- Where shall I go?
- What shall I do?
- Am I ready for my new reality?
- If not, how can I get ready?



Asking existential questions

(Cont'd)

- **1991-1992**
- **Did I have the answers or experience?**
- **Do the laws of our microcosm resemble those of the macrocosm? (Maurois, 2005)**
- **How can I overcome a dichotomy between what you are and what you are not? (Braman, 1931)**
- **How can I overcome alienation that is to be avoided or overcome?**

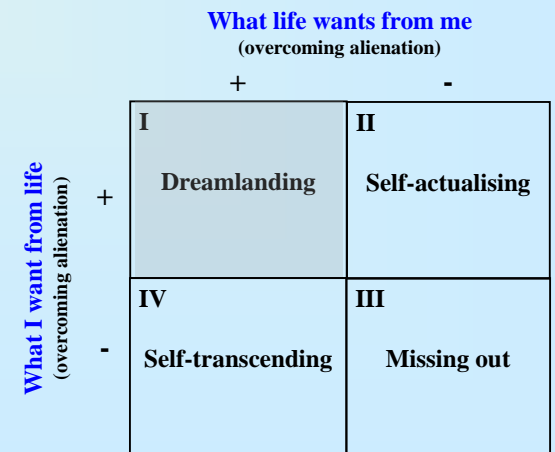
Typology of search for meaning

What I want from life
(overcoming alienation)

	+	-
+	I Dreamlanding	II Self-actualising
-	IV Self-transcending	III Missing out

Typology of search for meaning (Cont'd)

- **Dreamlanding**
 - **Selfless deeds**
 - **Black swan**
 - **Imagined or unrealistic world**
 - **Utopia or dystopia** (Bacon's New Atlantis, Cavendish's The Blazing World, More's Utopia, Neville's The Isle of Pines, Pizan's The Book of the City of Ladies, Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm and Rand's Atlas Shrugged)



Typology of search for meaning (Cont'd)

➤ Self-actualising

- **One's highest hope** (happiness, success, pleasure or any other means of self-actualization)
- **BUT, 'self-actualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it'** (Frankl, 1966; 2004)
- **Self-actualization goals are moving targets, like the horizon**
- **More weight is placed on the state to be avoided or overcome than on the state to be striven for**

		+	-
		+	-
+	I Dreamlanding	II Self-actualising	
-	IV Self-transcending	III Missing out	
-	What I want from life (overcoming alienation)		
		+	-
		+	-
		+	-

Typology of search for meaning (Cont'd)

➤ Missing out

- **Alienation is the predicament of unresolved alternatives** (Regin, 1969)
- **How can one know that they have realised their potential or explain differences in their decision-making process between considered and actual elements in the pursuit of meaning and the avoidance of alienation?**
- **Our lives become an elegy to risks untaken, opportunities avoided or unprovided, needs unmet, desires sacrificed, or possibilities refused** (Phillips, 2012)
- ***Life is too short to tolerate indecision(s)***

What life wants from me
(overcoming alienation)

		+	-
What I want from life (overcoming alienation)	+	I Dreamlanding	II Self-actualising
	-	IV Self-transcending	III Missing out

Typology of search for meaning (Cont'd)

➤ Self-transending

- **Being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfil or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself (Frankl, 2004)**
- **Embodies religious or spiritual elements, psychological elements, personality or character traits, values and virtues, and personal development (Aldwin et al., 2019)**

What life wants from me
(overcoming alienation)

		+	-
What I want from life (overcoming alienation)	+	I Dreamlanding	II Self-actualising
	-	IV Self-transcending	III Missing out

Q&A

- **What do I expect (want) from life?**
- **What does life expect (want) from me?**

