

Cultivating Greater Meaning
and Purpose to Prevent Relapse
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>>> If you have any questions for the presenter, just type them into the questions box. We'll gather the questions and pose them to the presenter during the live Q&A. Any questions we do not get to we'll collect directly from the presenter and post those question and answers on our website.

Now, let me introduce you to today's presenter. Garret Biss is a retired Marine Corps pilot transitioning from a career of military service was a traumatic chapter in Garret's life. One defined by near constant anxiety and a battle with substance abuse discovery.

This journey involved Garret earning a certification in applied positive psychology, the science of human flourishing, and a certification as a human potential trainer. Garret has used his education and experience to create the thriving recovery program offered through online trainings and live workshops, thriving in your recovery leveraged positive psychology interventions to promote increased self-esteem, greater emotional resilience and a renewed sense of meaning and

purpose.

In addition to being the president of a long-term treatment program, Garret is an award winning author of two books, the Spheres Approach and Charity, the Gifts of Giving. Through his educational and personal life journey Garret brings a wealth of oversight, developing resilience against addiction and finding ways to use one's troubled past and the challenges of today to build another tomorrow.

You may have met him at one of our annual conferences and if you choose to join our conference this year, you may meet him again. NAADAC is proud to offer this webinar.

>> Thank you, I really appreciate it. So I just want to thank everybody for taking some time to join this presentation, really excited about talking about anything that I can discuss or any ideas I can share around the topic of addiction, just understanding addiction or addiction treatment. I'm always excited for the opportunity.

Today we're going to focus specifically on meaning and meaning and purpose and how they correlate with addiction and what they can mean for people that have struggled with substance abuse disorder or addiction, especially for people that work with clients or patients that struggle.

Focusing on meaning, these are the web objectives we'll cover today for those who are tuning in, this is what you can expect to get from the presentation. It will help to identify how meaning can reduce or eliminate suffering and how to leverage it. We'll identify activities that can bring joy to one's life, develop a plan for enjoying greater joy and explain the process for identifying joy.

We're going to take a look at meaning and addiction, being able to answer the questions, what is meaning and a will to meeting, specifically. Why focus on meaning and addiction work

what the effects are and a meaning centered approach to recovery.

I want to share some interventions. I love sharing information, love having discussions but none of that is helpful, doesn't help us experience the change of a transformation so we'll look at practical interventions you can use today in the work you're doing or in your own life. That will be a big focus for this presentation. I'm excited for you guys to learn something today and take that into your work.

So before we really begin into the content of the presentation, we'll do this quick polling question. Samson I'll hand it back over to you for the question.

>> Everyone, you'll see this interaction pop up on your screen in just a moment. The polling question is asking how familiar are you with logotherapy or a person's will to meaning? As a reminder go to webinar provides us with a time tracking tool we use to verify your life participation. More information on how to get your CE certificate for this webinar will be provided towards the end. For now this is your first of several opportunities to interact with the presenter. You'll have four answer options. It looks like 70% of you have voted. I'll give you guys about ten more seconds.

Excellent, thank you so much everyone. I'm going to close the poll with 75% -- almost 80% sorry about that coming in the last stragglers voting. I'm going to close the poll and share the results and I'll turn this back over to Garret.

>> All right. I'm still seeing the results tab. This is great. Not at all familiar with logotherapy or a person's will to meaning. That's great and it looks like a couple of people are somewhat familiar, maybe heard about it once before. Awesome. I'm excited to see that because that just shows me how much more beneficial this discussion will be and maybe it will

inspire a lot of people to dig a little bit more deeply into this research and bring the efficacy of this meaning centered approach to the work they're doing.

Let me test to make sure I've got controls back. And there we go. There's your four answers. So I'll just warn everybody ahead of time that I'm trying to cram about two hours of great information and resources into a one-hour presentation. And I'm doing that because I respect your time. I know everybody's extremely busy so I want you to get the most value for your time as you can. I also know that a recording of this will be made available. If you need to go back and revisit it you can do so.

With that in mind, I'm going to cram as much as I can into this so that you can get a lot from it. To that point or to that note, I'm going to read from the slides a little bit more than I normally would. That will help me keep on pace and not go off on too many tangents.

What is a will to meaning? A study pioneered by Viktor Frankl's work. He was a survivor off the Holocaust. He purchased the Man's Search for Meaning. Logo means meaning, so meaning centered therapy is essentially what logotherapy is.

The will to meaning recognizes a person is motivated by a will to meaning or to find meaning in one's life. A lack of meaning creates an existential crisis or void or vacuum that is the cause of emptiness, stress and anxiety in somebody's life.

Liberation from that pain and suffering is not freedom from the conditions, but freedom to take a stand on whatever conditions might confront them.

So through logotherapy, through a meaning centered approach to addiction recovery, to addiction treatment or just life in general, it helps provide that liberation from pain and suffering. It doesn't mean you're removed from the conditions of it, but that you can weather it more, you can experience

greater challenge in your life and not experience as much suffering as a result.

So logotherapy's aim is not to show a client what the meaning is for a chapter of their life, or their life in general, but really empower clients with the understanding that there is a meaning, there is a meaning that can be derived from any situation or circumstance or existential crisis that one might be going through that there is some meaning that can be derived from their life and help them answer that or fill that void.

So will to meaning sometimes referred to as the Third Viennese school of psychotherapy. Freud's premise is a person is motivated by a will to pleasure and Adler says a person is motivated by a will to power. Frankl says primarily a person is motivated by their will to meaning. He recognizes the will to pleasure and power are derivatives of the will to meaning.

And that if a person's will to meaning is frustrated or they're experiencing that existential crisis, then those --

[Audio issues]

If people are experiencing that void or existential crisis, it's going to show up symptoms that are going to be boredom, confusion, emptiness and especially those that are in recovery, fueling of strong cravings. This can be a sign that something is suffering from a lack of meaning in their life.

If a will to meaning is frustrated a person's will to pleasure and power will often expand. Frankl suggests if the will to meaning is frustrated then a lot of times those other wills to pleasure and power will become the replacements. And this is really a pathway for people to avoid or escape or numb or cope or even celebrate or synthesize a sense of joy in their life.

This is my own hypothesis in which one might become

predominant in somebody's life that lacks the strong sense of meaning. A will to pleasure is a mechanism to escape or numb. So I'm thinking that somebody whose life is guided by that will to pleasure, they're more often going to experience or have a history with substance addictions. Anything they can bring in their life to cope with, numb or escape that pain that they're in because of the crisis.

The will to pleasure, an avoidance or a vying for a control. Meaning that life is suffering for those without control. So those might manifest in behavioral addictions where somebody is vying for a sense of control. Whether it's control through a sex addiction, gambling, shopping, whatever that is they're vying for a sense of control over the suffering or lack thereof in their life. That's just kind of my own thoughts or hypothesis about how it would show up differently for different people.

Why are meaning and purpose so important? A lack of meaning as was mentioned creates the existential vacuum or void. Addictive behaviors are often mechanisms to help fill that void. As we know addiction itself isn't often the thing, it's a symptom of the thing that's much deeper, the root cause of the pain or suffering. Addictions many times manifest as a way to help fill the void return once pursuits of substances and behaviors becomes a substitute for their meaning. Oftentimes that substance that is their addiction or drug or choice becomes a substitute for that sense of meaning in their life. Now the meaning of their life is to experience or to gain more of that substance or behavior in their life.

A strong sense of meaning and purpose bolsters a positive recovery by helping fill that void that addiction created or serves.

Addictions often stem from or promote suffering. As I

mentioned, so addictions often stem from the fact there is suffering, there is some kind of void and the addiction is the symptom of trying to cover up or cope with the deeper cause of suffering.

And the worst thing about addiction, the nature of addiction is that it creates more suffering in somebody's life. Suffering is no longer suffering once that suffering has meaning, which we'll talk about when we get into interventions.

So a person in active addiction as Geoffrey Thomas says, a person with active addiction lives intensely as a substitute for living meaningfully. They're often very active and busy trying to fill the void or deal with the pain in their life as a substitute for having a strong sense of meaning in their life.

How is one's will to meaning frustrated. This drew my attention out of the research. You begged this whole idea of will to meaning, how could there be such a thing as frustration? What Frankl says we don't have to spend all of our time foraging, hunting gathering to provide for our basic needs. We can still have leisure and choice with what we're going to do with the rest of our time.

We have no instinctive drive what we should do beyond survival. A lot of our instincts is what we must do for survive. Our instinct doesn't help carry us beyond that. In today's culture we're less guided by strong traditions or conventions that dictate what we should do.

There's a lot more latitude for what we can do with our life and we're not as guided as we would have been generations ago as guided by what we must do with our life, which therefore would dictate that meaning or where would we drive that meaning in our life.

With all this latitude to operate into exercise our choice, we tend to conform to what others are doing or what others wish

us to do. So a lot of times we conform to the societal expectations or what's going on around us and that leads us to into doing things that might not fill that existential void.

Because of these causes, a deviation from what our nature wants of us, what would actually provide that sense of meaning to us, we deviate from that which leaves the internal void or existential vacuum.

So just some examples of frustrations and meaning in my own life. That's not actually a picture of me, but it's a picture of how I felt inside sometimes. A couple different examples, there was a chapter in my life where I felt like things had little to no meaning. Earlier in my adulthood I didn't think anything had a sense of meaning so I coped with that with getting very busy. None of which I thought it brought meaning or had significant meaning, I just thought that's how you live life or would experience life, should experience life.

Later on I felt a divergence from the sense of meaning. So there was a time where I was engaged in work, my profession was being a pilot in the Marine Corps. but I felt like I was engaging in something that provided that meaning. Because of that, I felt the need to numb. I felt like what I should be doing or what would provide the greatest meaning was a different path and it was a divergence between the two left me in a situation where I needed to numb the pain.

Other times I felt too many meanings. Really when I started getting into this work, everything seemed to have meaning to it and then I became confused or anxious or overwhelmed because I was trying to pursue too many different things. Also left with tension or the consequences of that existential crisis or crisis of a strong definition of meaning in my life.

So ways to discover meaning. This is right out of Frankl's

work. Creating a work or doing a good deed. This is meaning that's achieved through accomplishment or in engaging in something in the moment. The other is by experiencing something or encountering someone. So meaning which is developed by an appreciation or love. So something that's in the present moment that you're deriving meaning from.

The third is by the attitude taken toward unavoidable suffering. This is a strong sense of meaning that's created from suffering. When I look at these there's a pretty obvious time orientation to these three different ways to discover meaning.

The first being future time orientation. I'm going to derive my meaning by the work I'm doing and how I believe it will manifest in the future. We're engaging in something that has meaning.

The second one is in the present moment. So I'm experiencing strong sense of meaning in my life just to the appreciation of love of whatever it is I'm encountered. The third as a past time orientation that it's meaning that's derived from or after experiencing some unavoidable suffering.

Important points to understand is meaning is found in this moment. Even if it's past or future oriented the sense of meaning is something that's going to be experienced in this moment. You wouldn't have felt a strong sense of meaning as you were going through the traumatic chapter of your life, you feel that strong sense of meaning right now. The strong sense of meaning you experience from something you're working on that would have the future time orientation, maybe you don't have that strong sense of meaning when that thing actually manifested or when you accomplish that goal. But that sense of meaning is found right here in this moment as you're working towards it. That's true of all three of these ways of finding that meaning

in your life.

So there's basic assumptions of meaning theory. Humans are meaning seeking and meaning making creatures. Some of the basic functions that lay the function for this logotherapy. Humans have two primary motivations, one is to survive and to find the meaning and the reason of their survival.

Third is meaning is complex and multidimensional. So it involves situational and existential meanings that can be subjectively or objectively defined. But meaning itself is derived by that person. The responsibility for navigating through life and for defining or fulfilling that meaning rests with the individual. This comes back to a point made on a previous slide that in the use of meaning centered approaches to recovery or to life and in logotherapy, it's not every presumed it's the therapists or the counselor or professional's job to define for the individual what the meaning is, just to hold space and help them realize there is a meaning but it relies on that individual to define and discover what that is.

Principles of a meaning centered approach. I'll do a little bit more reading here just to keep me on track. But the main point here is that it should seek a full restoration a full functioning and passion for living that allows for the holistic wellbeing and positive integration of the individual back into society. This is principles and meaning centers approaches to recovery. It's not -- the aim is not to help someone find sobriety but to continue the journey into a full restoration.

It can complement any mainstream treatment and it does so by addressing the existential and spiritual needs of the person. Whether that's done in concert with other forms of treatment or in isolation with just the meaning centered approach, it can be -- it's not adversarial to or doesn't deviate from any other work that somebody might be doing.

If we help restore a person's passion and purpose for living, it reinforces their motivation to make those changes required for a lasting recovery. The stronger sense of meaning and purpose they have in their life, the more emotional reinforcement and motivation they'll have to continue with those new thoughts, new behaviors and the changes of the need to experience the lasting recovery.

The goal of a meaning centered approach is restoration of the total person to wholeness. Complete absence is likely the outcome, that's not a threshold to or a prerequisite. Once they find that, once they establish that strong sense of meaning and purpose in their life, that's often the case for most people, but not the ultimate goal of.

So benefits. It helps people benefit from natural sources of joy and not synthesized or substitute sources of joy. It helps people experience direction and clarity and improves one's ability to suffer. And also reduces the adverse effects of trauma.

So point number four improves the ability to suffer. If you find meaning for the suffering, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds meaning. Such as the meaning for that sacrifice.

So if there's a meaning for the suffering, if you're going to the gym and tearing up your body and in excruciating pain because of the workout you're doing you're able to survive that because you know there's a meaning for it, you know there's a purpose for it. It's when you're suffering from something and there's no meaning that can be associated to it that the suffering becomes the greatest and a person's ability to endure that and continue through that suffering diminishes or becomes the worst.

Reduces adverse effects of trauma. We'll talk about in one

of the interventions how we can take the experiences of the effects of a traumatic experience and change that or use a strong sense of meaning to reduce or eliminate those adverse effects.

Next slide, how do we get there? This is the transition. We're going to look at different interventions. This is your reminder to grab those worksheets if you haven't downloaded them yet or if you have downloaded them, grab them. That's what we'll be referring to.

There were a couple of statistics I saw when I was doing some research for this. Frostmeyer did a study and she found -- she was polling people that had struggled with alcohol use disorder and found that 90% said that meaninglessness was a great source of pain or frustration in their life.

Another study found that 100% of the people that was polled that had struggled with substance abuse disorder 100% said the meaninglessness was a significant source of pain in their life.

That doesn't prove causation, it merely is a correlation. I didn't see anywhere in the research where it compared those numbers of 90% and 100% to a normal population or a population that didn't claim substance abuse disorder. It shows why this work is important for the work we do. With the population of people we work with, 90% or 100% of them are likely to suffer from or experience that meaninglessness in their life.

And here's that quote that I just mentioned. Suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds meaning. Such as the meaning of sacrifice. And that's by Viktor Frankl.

So I mentioned three time orientations, that's what we're going to focus on now. I broke the interventions into their time orientations. Meaning and suffering, we're going to look at past, the meaning of the past and finding how we can use meaning to navigate through or alleviate some of the suffering.

Human beings are meaning seeking beings. They're meaning seeks creatures. That means we're going to find meaning in everything we experience in our lives. If left to our own devices we'll find a negative meaning to the things we experience in our life. We're negatively biased. Things that are negative can become potential threats for our survival. We tend to have negative meanings for things.

For example, somebody who has suffered significant trauma in their life they're going to find a meaning for that trauma. If it's negatively oriented it's going to be that they deserve that suffering. We've all met or worked with people that have suffered great traumatic experiences in their past and the conclusion they've come to is somehow or some reason they deserve that suffering.

And if that's the meaning they come up with and somebody who deserves that suffering they're more likely to continue the self-destructive behaviors because they deserve the suffering in their life then they're going to bring about more of it into their life.

Another negative meaning could be that life is cruel and unfair. And if that's the conclusion that somebody comes to to explain the suffering that they've experienced in their life, well if life is supposed to be cruel and unfair, why not do something to deal with the pain we must experience? This is a place that I got to, a certain crossroads in my life. I came to the conclusion I was exhausted, worn out. My life wasn't fulfilling but I was exhausting everything I thought I should do and I was left exhausted and miserable. The conclusion I came to was was one of two of things, either life is supposed to be cruel and unfair and supposed to be this experience we suffer through until we ultimately pass away, or maybe there's just some fundamental belief and values in understandings I had about

the world that just weren't true. Fortunate for me at that crossroads and that was about the time I entered recovery was I held space and I began to question everything that I thought and the things I knew about life. Unfortunately, I found that I was being led by value and beliefs that were not true. Had I come to the conclusion that life was cruel and unfair, I wouldn't have had any reason to not, in my mind, in that context, wouldn't have no reason to not numb or escape.

Another consequence of a negative meaning is that it moves the locus of control outside of one's self. If a person is suffering through something in their life or in their experience, if we come up with a negative correlation that it's something that I deserve, life is just cruel and unfair, both of these assumptions move that locus of control away from the person who is struggling. That really disempowered somebody and limits what they can do to change or improve their situation.

If we come to that conclusion as I did or the potential that life is something to suffer, then why not choose our own suffering. Kind of back to the devil that you know analogy. Why not choose the devil you know, that drug of choice so we can choose our form of suffering.

If life is just something to suffer, then let me just numb that reality. This is kind of -- helps shine light into somebody who is suffering an existential crisis and struggling with substance or behavioral addiction this is the thought patterns that might be leading them to perpetuate or continue those behaviors.

So meaning and past. This would be the first intervention we can use to help discover a stronger sense of meaning in the past. With a positive meaning correlation to suffering that we've experienced in the past, suffering ceases to exist. And there's a story he shares in his book or one of his books where

he talks about a man that was actually a general practitioner who came to see Viktor Frankl and he shared about how his wife had passed away two years prior and it was extreme suffering for him. The loneliness was overwhelming here. What would have happened had your wife survived you? And the general practitioner came to the conclusion and said had my wife survived me that would be tremendous suffering and I don't know that she could have navigated that form of suffering in her life.

So what this realization that this gentleman had at that moment was because he had survived his wife, he got to bear that suffering, that pain, that misery and loneliness and save his wife from having to go through that experience. And in that moment, he found meaning or reason for his suffering and the effects of it began to go away because he knew every day he suffered he knew there was a meaning of that suffering because he was saving his wife.

It's not uncommon for trauma survivors if they can find meaning from the suffering they've experienced it can provide inspiration from that pain, for the heartache from the negative effects. A lot of times they can either transmute that pain and that suffering to motivate them to do things, you know, outrageous accomplishments or major contributions in their future, or they can at least minimize the suffering if they can see the benefits that came from this. This is especially true for people that are in recovery. If they can find meaning in their addiction or find a meaning for traveling that road they went down and realize the benefits that they gain from it, you know, recognize the increased capacity for compassion and understanding of other people because of their journey of addiction, then they're deriving meaning from it and, therefore, the consequences of it or the guilt or the shame or whatever the

other negative consequences are from that journey begin to diminish because now they can find that meaning and it brings purpose to that suffering.

And, again, this is just a reminder. It's a person's own responsibility to find that meaning. Sometimes we might see a very valid meaning for somebody else's suffering but it's up to that person to find it and to come to that conclusion on their own.

That's what this next intervention will help them do. This is the first worksheet that's outlined here. I'll give some examples. Because I've tried to explain it in the handout enough you can go back and use this intervention. Not that it's in your life but you can start using it right now or immediately on anybody you're working with.

This first interaction is called a redemptive narrative. It's a journaling exercise to seek positive meaning from something that you have. These are just reflective questions that people can answer and journal about. Have you grown as a result of the experience? Did any of your relationships strengthen? And if so, how?

What things in life do you now appreciate or value more? What do you now know that you didn't know before? What strengths do you now have that you didn't before? What opportunities are now available that weren't before? And what advice would you give to someone else who is in that same situation? Or in a similar situation.

As you can see these questions are designed to help us sift out positive benefit or positive gain that came from an experience. We're negatively biased so often our awareness are drawn to negative consequences of events and that's what fuels the shame and guilt and remorse and resentments that we have. If we can use this tool, these cues to help us investigate and

navigate to some of the positive things that came from it, well it does a couple of things. It nothing else it gives us a few moments' reprieve from stressing about negative things that came from the event. Even if it's a few minutes of time, we have that moment's reprieve, that's a great benefit in and of itself to give ourselves that emotional chance to relax and let go or let down that guilt and that shame and that remorse.

But what I found in my life what I've found with people I shared this with, this plants the seeds for us to appreciate these positive things that we gain from it. It gives us a contextual shift that we can remind ourselves of the good things that came in our past. Here's a little bit of a different twist. This is a second intervention which is write a fairy tale version of our life experience or the traumatic experience that we went through in third person.

Unique aspect of doing it in the third person because it moves -- just in the distance it gives us by talking about it in third person allows us to be more creative and positive and optimistic with it. We can be harder on ourselves than a third person, especially if it's an imaginary version. If we can write in the third person and talk about how that person was victorious or how they won or how they used whatever that challenge or struggle was for a benefit in their life. That's a little bit of a twist on it but it can promote that positive contextual shift about the experiences in your past.

With that I'll pass this over to you and you can do the next polling question.

>> Awesome, thanks. You'll see your second opportunity to interact with your presenter. The question asks would this intervention be helpful in your work? You'll see four answer options. Feel free to read through this. And also, if you have any questions for the presenter, just as a reminder, you can go

to your go to webinar control panel and quick on the questions box and send any questions you have for the presenter. We will either pose those questions to Garret during the slide webinar or we'll track the questions and send them to him in a Q&A document that will be posted on our website.

We'll give you ten more seconds to answer the polling questions. 70% of you have responded. Awesome, thank you so much, everyone. Almost three quarters of the group has responded to the poll. We're going to go ahead and close the poll. Share the results, and you'll see those results on your screen. I'll turn this back over to Garret.

>> Thank you so much for sharing that. So I'm glad that I'm sharing this intervention and I hope you find it beneficial. You'll have my contact information. I'd love to hear how it's helped you in your work. I would love that feedback. If there's any questions or anything else you can do, please feel free to reach out.

That looks at past orientation. Now we're going to look at an intervention we can use for the present intervention. Bringing about more natural joy in our life. Why joy? There's a strong correlation between joy and meaning. The happiness we experience from engaging in something that's meaningful, it's a more long-lasting source of happiness. The opposite would be the momentary sense of joy we can have from an indulgence.

Joy, that emotion of joy, emotion -- joy is often an emotional by-product of engaging in something that's meaningful to us. If we're not sure what would provide the greatest sense of meaning, looking at those things we can enjoy or naturally enjoy bring joy to our life, can be a great way to point us towards that or shine light on that.

The ability to cultivate natural joy atrophies as somebody struggles with addiction. Substance or behavioral addiction can

become a substitute for those natural sources of joy. And for anybody who has experienced it or if you're working with people, then you know that as that substance or alcohol or behavioral addiction manifests, oftentimes that becomes a primary focus of everything in their life. Those old behaviors, activities, those things that brought the natural joy have not only go away from their life but their ability to experience the emotion of joy atrophies. This is like a muscle we haven't used in a long time. If we can use the muscle we can bring back the natural source of joy and it can be the replacement, the positive replacement in our recovery of whatever that substance or that behavior or void it was trying to fill.

Busyness in life gets in the way of doing things just for the sake of enjoyment. Whatever, responsibilities at work for your family or recovery or communities, a lot of times we can feel that responsibility and as a result stop engaging in some things that are just for our natural pleasure or our natural sense of joy. Unfortunately in the business of life, this can be a reason we're not actively engaging and are bringing these things back into our life.

So polling question number three, Samson I'll pass it to you.

>> Thank you, Garret. Yes, the polling question you see on your screen here asks does a sense of guilt get in the way of you intentionally doing things that bring you joy? We're knowing to launch this poll. You'll see it on our screen in just a moment.

You'll see four answer options there. We'll give you about 20 seconds to answer this poll. Perfect. Thanks, everyone. I see some trickling in here. Almost at 70% answered the poll question. And we will close the poll and share the results. You'll see the results on your screen and we'll turn this back

over to Garret. If you have any questions for the presenter, feel free to send them into the questions box. Go to webinar control panel. Garret?

>> I got it. So 37% I often do things with joy with no sense of guilt. That's awesome. That's a great place to be. And if that's where you are, please continue to do that, continue to build the muscle and do things for yourself. The reality is the more you do for yourself, the better a place to put you in to engage in those other things, those responsibilities.

If you do feel guilt, know that's natural and a normal place to be. But it has a consequence. If you're not doing these things you naturally enjoy then there's a consequence to that and it's going to provide that long-term negative effect.

All right. Looks like we're back. So quickly I'll share this intervention. There's nothing too tricky about it. Quickly, think about make a list of 20 things that you enjoy doing. I recommend looking at different categories. Look at things you can do that may cost a little bit of money so you can plan for it or budget for it. Look at some things that are free. Look at some things you can plan so you can get them on your calendar and also look at things you can do spontaneously. If you have a free afternoon you weren't expecting or a client cancels or the weather ruins other plans you have, you have a list of things you can do spontaneously. Look at things you can do alone. Sometimes we just need some space or time to reflect, some time to be alone. It can be important to have a list of a few things we can do.

Find things you can do in a group so we can foster the connection we have with other people in a healthy way. I recommend throwing some asterisks next to it if it's something that's new since your recovery. You can offer this to anybody

you share this intervention with. It can be a sign of things that we can focus more time on or bring into our life.

If there's something we really love doing but we hadn't done because addiction got in its way or old behaviors and responsibilities got in the way and we haven't done it for a long time, then recognize that so we can give it some priority.

The important element of making this list is for one, it reminds us, two, it can give us something to refer to. One of the greatest things we can do, it puts us in a place where we can't remember these things. It shuts down our prefrontal cortex, gets us in the fight or flight mode. Coming up with that list is hard to do. That's why it's important to create this list and then we've got something we be look at. When we're stressed and need break, a little bit of reprieve, we can look at that list.

Post it where you can see it. If you don't actually bring some of these things into your life, then this list of 20 joys is going to be a list of 20 pain points -- going to be a reminder of what you love doing but you're not doing it. Share it with somebody who can hold you accountability. I challenge people to pick five things and plug it into your calendar so you can actually bring this into your life.

The next thing, now we're looking at meaning in the future. How can we derive a stronger sense of meaning in the future? I'm going to start by focusing on strengths. I help people identify their strengths. This is the applies positive psychology approach, looking at things we can leverage for more benefits. Not looking to places we fallen down or defects or weaknesses in trying to reduce that. The positive psychology approach is let's look at things we can leverage that have worked well or provided some benefit in the past and how can we leverage that for greater benefit in the future?

Our natural perception bias and humility can hide our strengths. We're biased for survival. Our perception is biased for survival. We often are reminded of or think about or ruminate the places we are not strong or the things we're embarrassed about in the past and this hides from our perception where our true strengths lie. If we don't give ourselves credit for where these true strengths are often we forget about them completely because often people don't remind them of us. Especially for people that are in a journey of recovery.

We must recognize our strengths in order to leverage them. This is the applied positive psychology approach, instead of common sating for defects, if we can leverage the strength then that helps -- empowers us more and moves the lotus of control back to ourself. One way you can do this, there's a survey you can fill out. You can go to that website and fill it out. If you're working with somebody and you want something that's a little bit quicker or much quicker, or you just want a way to jump into strengths and do this intervention, these are a list of recognized characteristic strengths. You can look at this list and look at the ones that resonate most with you or which ones you think you most exemplify. Circle them, pick your top five strengths and then the intervention is to affirm those strengths. Writing a sentence, I am. For me, I am creative.

And then remembering and giving yourself credit for one time that you demonstrated that. So one time I demonstrated my creative was when I wrote a book or when I put together a presentation. And we'll do this for the top five strengths.

This is just something I came up with for fun. Looking at the meaning in past, present and future, the intervention we talked about can help reduce or eliminate the negative pull that's pulling us back in our life or expanding the expanding existential void. Cult evaluating a sense of joy can help us

get that balance. When we look at cultivating greater meaning in the future it can pull us towards a future we want and it excites us and brings about our best qualities and characteristics and brings about the future we want.

Meaning and purpose is strongly correlated. Meaning is the subjective experience that life has significance where purpose is an overall sense of direction in life. A sense of purpose increases positive affect, increases physical health, resiliency and optimism, commitment to goals, self-esteem, all this increases as a strong sense of purpose increases.

As a sense of purpose, decreases then the opposite is true, depression and anxiety increases, psychological distress and anxiety increases as that decreases, the sense of purpose decreases.

And I love this quote, a person who has the why to live can bear almost any how. As hard as the struggle is, if you have the why, if you have that purpose, if you have that strong sense of meaning, it can help you bear any how that you might be going through.

This is the last intervention, I do this quickly. You can refer to the slides in your notes on how to do it. But it's recognizing those strengths and coming up with a life purpose statement. This can be a guiding star to provide us direction. Starting with the top characteristic strength, two or three of those five that were identified. Listing one or two ways that you or the individual likes expressing those strengths when interacting with or serving other people.

The third part is assuming the world is perfect what does it work and feel like? What are people are doing and how are they behaving? Fill in the blank whatever it would be for you. Then we'll combine the elements of one two and three to create a life purpose statement.

I like expressing creativity and learning by educating and inspiring others. In an ideal world everyone is interacting with compassion and understanding of themselves and others. When I combine those three and reword it my purpose is to use my creativity and love of learning for inspiring and empowering others in recovery to live their best life and reach their true potential for happiness, fulfillment and joy.

This next slide shows examples of what some purpose statements could be. All these life purpose statements start with to. It's a verb, it's not being to achieve. It's something you'll continue to work on.

Greater meaning and purpose helps us improve the ability to suffer, help people benefit from natural sources of joy. Experience a true sense of direction and clarity and it's a way to promote that strong sense of happiness. Bolsters one's potential for success in their recovery.

We discussed a lot. We talked about a philosophical look at meaning and addiction and practical interventions or what people can do to bring a stronger sense of meaning and purpose and joy into their life.

I have a couple questions for you, if you could share any of these, send me an e-mail afterwards. I'm curious what is one thing you heard you can use in your work. What would you help you to apply what you have learned, and what is something new you never heard or thought about before. I want to answer questions first. If you have any feedback for that, you can send me an e-mail, I would certainly appreciate it. Samson, if we want to take a couple minutes for Q&A.

>> That is awesome. Thank you so much, Garret. Yes, thank you for those questions. Everyone, here are references, suggested reading from Garret. I'll let him talk about how to connect in a just a moment. We're going to leave your image on

the screen. The first one comes from Leo, my buddy, famous fan of NAADAC. Shout you. Based on my own image of myself contributed to over four decades of my own addiction. How does meaning and purpose depend on the truth rather than perceptions that is within someone wrestling with addiction?

>> Okay, so I think -- if I understand --

>> Loaded question, I can say it again if you need me to.

>> No, so if I get it correctly you're saying a negative perception of yourself or of one's self is what contributed today the pain and suffering for a long period of time and you're wondering the difference between truth and perception. Very interesting question. I believe and what I found and what I've experienced in my own life is that life is our perception.

The truth -- as weird as it sounds truth can be subjective to somebody's perception. We can focus our perception, or we can control or change or alter the context, but it's the emotional response that fuels the behaviors and decisions we do. Two people can experience the same truth, they can experience the same event, two people can suffer the same kind of trauma. For one person it empowers them and promotes post traumatic growth and they use that experience. For another person experiencing something very similar, it has the altered -- not really holding back -- fuels all the negative thoughts and emotions that hampers their life and holds them back.

The only difference between the outcomes is the person's perception. Some of the interventions I shared, they get their power from helping somebody change that perception or their perspective and afford the opportunity to look at something that's more positive. The positive element or aspect of a situation or experience because it's only with that positive that we can leverage to build something stronger or better in the future. Does that help answer the question?

>> Excellent, Leo, yeah if you have any feedback for Garret, feel free to send it into the box. The next question from comes Stephanie, which of Viktor Frankl's books would you recommend we read?

>> Those three different ones, the will to meaning and foundation, the other one is man's search for meaning. I would search for Man's Search for Meaning. The first part is about his experience in concentration camps and then he talked about how that helped him develop and mold this logotherapy, the idea for logotherapy. You want more reading then the will to meaning and foundation and application.

>> Great, thank you so much. Yes, switched back to that reference that Garret is referring to. The next question comes from Liz in Seattle. How do you incorporate mindfulness into this approach, if you do at all?

>> Certainly -- how do you incorporate mindfulness. Mindfulness can really help us kind of create space and sit with the emotions we're feeling. Mindfulness provides us -- if we're feeling a negative emotion from my experience and my understanding of mindfulness, it can be a tool that can provide that space for us to look at where that negative emotion comes from or what created it. And then it can clue us into what we can do to change that perspective. If I'm feeling a negative emotion, mindfulness helps me recognize that and see myself experiencing that negative emotion. It gives me that space or perspective to then look backwards where did that negative emotion come from.

I think it provides space and context to apply some of the other work. The intervention on the past narrative, that is also an exercise that can help fuel that propensity toward a more mindful experience.

>> Excellent, thanks Garret. We have one last question and

I'll give you one minute so you can speak to how the audience can connect to you. I'll switch back to the slides. The last question we have comes from Frank in Virginia asks can we have permission to use your exercises or do we have to pay?

>> Absolutely, please, anything I've shared on the interventions take it and use it. Start using it today if you like. What I ask is if you reach back to me and let me know what experience you're having with it, how it's helping people. If you want more training on it, then please reach out to me. I'd love to know. Maybe I've got other resources I can send along or maybe there's some way we can do work together. I'm certainly willing to do anything that would help you and the work you do and the people you're working with.

>> Did you have anything you wanted to say on these two slides about Diamond Mind Growth?

>> Human potential training into the treatment of serving people that have struggled with addiction. These are ways I do it primarily. Leveraging technology and creating web-based platforms to help connect with more people on a scalable way.

In person workshops to guide people through learning so they can -- as I mentioned at the beginning if you're not applying the things you're learning it's not going to create a transformation. If you have any more questions or anything, please reach out to me, send me an e-mail. Let me know if you found anything that's helpful that you think aligns with this. If there's any way I can serve you in the work you do, send me an e-mail audio love to connect. If you had a question, send it to me, I'll be getting all the questions together and I'll probably record another video just to answer any questions that might have come up. You can send it to me or drop it in the box really quick before we end.

>> Thank you so much for this excellent training. Everyone

out there wondering about your CE quiz for this webinar or how to access the recording after the live event, every NAADAC webinar has its own web page that houses everything you need to know about that webinar. Immediately following the event you'll find the online quiz link on the exact same website you used to register for this webinar. Everything you need to know about this webinar will be permanently hosted at NAADAC.org/cultivating-greater-meaning-webinar.

Here's the schedule for some upcoming webinars, please tune in if you can. There's some really interesting topics with presenters in collaboration with the Great Lakes ATTC, NAADAC is proud to announce our free peer recovery support series. We've brought together some of the best experts covering topics about building successful peer recovery support curriculum, hiring and onboarding advanced recovery sports skills and techniques, recovery coaching. We've got presenters like Chris Kelly from the Great Lakes ATCC, make sure to register. Registration is free, just like this webinar. You can go to our website to register. You'll see the web page for this series at the bottom of our slide here. NAADAC.org/peer-recovery-support-webinars. As a NAADAC member there's so many benefits. The CEs are free for our members. Those who are not members do have a processing fee to pay for continuing education credits. Not to mention our annual conference and so much more. Please note that a short survey will pop up at the end. Please take some time to give us feedback and share any notes that you may have for Garret for our presenter today. You can tell us how we can improve your learning experience, your feedback is super valuable, very important to us as we continue to improve this experience. Thank you again for participating in the webinar, Garret thank you for your valuable expertise. I encourage you to browse our website and learn more about how NAADAC helps others. You can

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