Prisoners of Our Thoughts
Viktor Frankl's Principles at Work
By Alex Pattakos
Foreword by Stephen R. Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

World-renowned psychiatrist Viktor Frankl is the author of the bestselling *Man's Search for Meaning*, in which he vividly details his horrific experiences as a prisoner held captive in a World War II Nazi concentration camp. In his book, Dr. Frankl discusses how it is possible to find real meaning in a life that is filled with suffering and difficulty. A dedicated student of his teachings, Alex Pattakos, Ph.D. was urged by Dr. Frankl himself to write *Prisoners of Our Thoughts*, which expands on Dr. Frankl's psychological approach and widens the market for it by introducing an entirely new way of looking at work and the workplace. Pattakos brings the search for meaning at work within the grasp of every reader. Never before have Dr. Frankl's teachings been described in such an easy to understand and easy to apply way—one that clearly shows how and why Dr. Frankl regarded the search for meaning as the primary human motivation. By demonstrating how Dr. Frankl's key principles can be applied to all kinds of work situations, *Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl's Principles at Work* opens up new opportunities for finding personal meaning and living an authentic work life.

In *Prisoners of Our Thoughts*, Pattakos encapsulates Dr. Frankl's therapeutic system in seven core principles. Each of these principles, in turn, is described in easy to understand terms and applied to various work situations so that the reader can relate personally to the principle as well as learn when and how to use it. The seven principles are as follows:

1. **Exercise the freedom to choose your attitude:** In all situations, no matter how desperate they may appear or actually be, you always have the ultimate freedom to choose your attitude.
2. **Realize your will to meaning:** Commit authentically to meaningful values and goals that only you can actualize and fulfill.
3. **Detect the meaning of life's moments:** Only you can answer for your own life by detecting the meaning of any given moment and assuming responsibility for weaving your unique tapestry of existence.
4. **Don't work against yourself:** Avoid becoming so obsessed with or fixated on an intent or outcome that you actually work against the desired result.
5. **Look at yourself from a distance:** Only human beings possess the capacity to look at themselves out of some perspective or distance, including the uniquely human trait known as your "sense of humor."
6. **Shift your focus of attention:** Deflect your attention from a problem situation to something else and build your coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and change.
7. **Extend beyond yourself:** Manifest the human spirit at work by relating and being directed to something more than yourself.

More...
As Dr. Frankl believed, we all have the opportunity to choose how we view any situation. We can also choose to be part of the problem or part of the solution. In this connection, the search for meaning at work begins with us and, as Dr. Frankl would say, only we, as individuals, can answer for our own life by detecting the meaning at any given moment and assuming the responsibility for weaving our own and unique tapestry of existence. The search for meaning at work offers all of us both formidable challenges and ample opportunities for working and living an authentic life. The journey awaits us and *Prisoners of Our Thoughts* offers us all meaningful guideposts along the way.

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"It has been a long wait—a very long wait! But, Viktor Frankl's principles and methods have at last been set free to be used and enjoyed and practised in the work situation."

—Dr. Patti Havenga Coetzer, Founder, Viktor Frankl Foundation of South Africa

"If you are completely satisfied with your way of life, and your way of being in the world, you don't need this book. But if, like most of us, you hunger for a greater sense of meaning, purpose and freedom in your life, *Prisoners of Our Thoughts* will provide you the stories, concepts, and opportunities that will help you to break free from old patterns of thought and action."

—Judi Neal, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for Spirit at Work, University of New Haven

"The search for meaning at work, in work, and through work concerns us all. In bringing Viktor Frankl into the workplace, Alex Pattakos has produced a thoughtful and powerful guide that offers insight and wisdom."

—Alan M. Webber, Founding Editor, *Fast Company* magazine

“Alex Pattakos' book is a unique blend of erudition and creativity. He presents a vivid and clear rendering of Viktor Frankl's concept of the "Will to Meaning" underlying all our doings. We are invited and coached to apply this concept in our everyday life and work. Not averse to giving 'recipes', Pattakos makes them transparent and convincing enough, and he amply supports them by personal observations and experiences, by testimonies and quotations, by anecdotes and proven wisdom, adding more than a sprinkle of wit and common sense. And he does it all in an immensely readable style."

—Prof. Dr. Franz J. Vesely, Director of Documentation, Viktor Frankl Institute, Vienna, Austria

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*Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl's Principles at Work*

By Alex Pattakos


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