Discussion Questions for
Viktor Frankl’s Man’s Search for Meaning

1. What do you think Frankl’s views of religion are and how are these reflected through his experiences and/or theories?

2. Throughout the book, particularly Part One, Frankl does not identify himself as Jewish. Why do you think this is?

3. Explain Frankl’s theory of success. Do you agree or disagree with him?

4. What is “barbed wire sickness” (p. 7)?

5. What is the significance of Frankl’s reasons for staying in Austria?

6. Identify some “Frankl-isms” that you find inspirational or with which you identify.

7. According to Frankl, “An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal.” What does he mean by this paradox? How can you relate it to a time in your own life?

8. What is the “ultimate freedom” according to Frankl?

9. Frankl says that to be alive in the camp meant that one had lost his scruples: “The best of us did not return.” What does he mean by this? How does the statement reflect life in the concentration camps during the Holocaust?

10. Why do you think that cigarettes and smoking were the last pleasures enjoyed before death? Why or how would they signal imminent death to other prisoners?

11. What do you think Frankl’s definition of love is? Does it fit into Frankl’s philosophy of existentialism?

12. How does Frankl’s wife give his life meaning?

13. According to Frankl, how do suffering and death complete life and give it meaning?

14. How do you know if or when any single situation or event in your life has been actualized? How does this movie analogy force you to reflect upon your own life?

15. According to Frankl, what are the three main avenues for reaching meaning in life?

(Questions adapted from publishers.)