



# FINDING MEANING

Man can only find meaning  
for his existence in  
something outside himself.

Viktor E. Frankl



**THE SCIENCE** of meaning has made substantial strides in recent years. Surprisingly, stress and meaning often go hand in hand. Scientists have found that stress is strongly and positively linked with meaning in life.

In “The Strengths-Based Workbook for Stress Relief”, the author Ryan Niemiec, PsyD describes that when you go through the physical and psychological challenges of stress, you take something considerable from the experience. You see life with greater perspective, you feel that those stressors were not suffered in vain, that they meant something important, and you feel different in some way.

By studying the work of philosophers, theologians, educators, and scientists over the centuries, researchers have been able to break meaning down into three types:

1. **Coherence:** making sense of life (thinking-oriented)
2. **Significance:** sensing life’s value, that it is worth living (feeling-oriented)
3. **Purpose:** having a particular life direction, goals and aims in life (behavior-oriented)

Breaking meaning down in this way can help you better understand yourself and discover where you are strong and where you can use a lift. Taken together, these three types of meaning represent your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that underlie what is meaningful to you.

In one of my previous articles, I mentioned character strengths as the positive parts of your personality that impact how you think, feel, and behave. Knowing and applying your highest character strengths (known as signature strengths) is the key to you being your best self. They are essential (Core to who you are), energizing (Uplifting and give you a boost of energy or joy), and effortless (Come easy and natural to you).

Researchers have discovered that the following character strengths may play a role in creating more life meaning:

1. **Curiosity:** Being open to new experiences. Desire to build knowledge.
2. **Perspective:** Ability to see the bigger picture in life.
3. **Social Intelligence:** Aware of motives and feelings of themselves and others, and how to fit into different social situations.
4. **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence:** Ability to notice

and appreciate beauty, uniqueness, virtue, skill, and the exceptional in everyday life.

5. **Gratitude:** Feeling and expressing a deep sense of thankfulness in life and to others.

6. **Spirituality:** Meaning, purpose, life calling, the expression of virtue/ goodness, and practices that connect with the transcendent.

If your job feels meaningless, focus on your core values. Scientists have found that employees who used four or more of their signature character strengths had more positive work experiences and were more likely to consider their work-as-a-calling than those who expressed less than four.

For instance, craft your current job with an eye towards purpose. Job shaping is a strategy that can help spark your dormant enthusiasm for work. Reflect on how your signature character strengths, talents/ skills, and passions could help your organization deal with the current moment’s challenges. The overall goal is to align your core values and purpose with the work that you do and with the values and culture of the organization. As a result, an aligned organization will perform better to key metrics.

If you want to learn more about creating organizational alignment and employee engagement to improve business results, contact AlliancesHub, a CEO Advisory and Coaching firm.

Interested in discovering your signature character strengths profile? Take the free Values in Action (VIA) Survey by accessing the following link:

<https://www.viacharacter.org/pro/allianceshub/account/register> ●



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