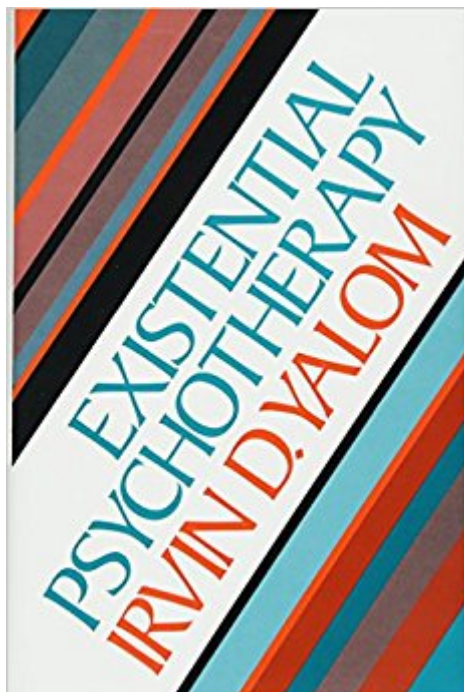


The book was found

Existential Psychotherapy



Synopsis

Existential therapy has been practiced and continues to be practiced in many forms and situations throughout the world. But until now, it has lacked a coherent structure, and analysis of its tenets, and an evaluation of its usefulness. Irvin Yalom, whose *Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* has rendered such a service to that discipline since 1970, provides existential psychotherapy with a background, a synthesis, and a framework. Organized around what Yalom identifies as the four "ultimate concerns of life"—death, freedom, existential isolation, and meaninglessness—the book takes up the meaning of each existential concern and the type of conflict that springs from our confrontation with each. He shows how these concerns are manifested in personality and psychopathology, and how treatment can be helped by our knowledge of them. Drawing from clinical experience, empirical research, philosophy, and great literature, Yalom has written a broad and comprehensive book. It will provide an intellectual home base for those psychotherapists who have sensed the incompatibility of orthodox theories with their own clinical experience, and it opens new doors for empirical research. The fundamental concerns of therapy and the central issues of human existence are woven together here as never before, with intellectual and clinical results that will surprise and enlighten all readers.

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Customer Reviews

"A classic for those studying existential psychotherapy and indeed for all clinicians." -- Rollo May
"Should be read by every psychiatry resident and every clinical psychology intern. It belongs

in the library of every psychotherapist." -- --H. Keith BrodieA

Irvin D. Yalom, M.D., is professor emeritus of psychiatry at the Stanford University School of Medicine. He was the recipient of the 1974 Edward Strecker Award and the 1979 Foundation's Fund Prize in Psychiatry. He is the author of *When Nietzsche Wept* (winner of the 1993 Commonwealth Club gold medal for fiction), *Love's Executioner*, *Every Day Gets a Little Closer* (with Ginny Elkin), and the classic textbooks *Inpatient Group Psychotherapy* and *Existential Psychotherapy*.

Irvin Yalom, Professor Emeritus at Stanford in psychiatry, has written a masterful book on the human condition (published in 1980). "Existential Psychotherapy" is singularly one of the best books I have ever read. Why? Yalom has combined 1) his intellectual insights in psychology with 2) his practical observations in therapy with 3) existential thought. He seeks to show that much of the anxiety we face as human beings, and seek comfort for in psychotherapy (or religion), originates from the existential facts of being a mortal, free being. He focuses on four main areas: death (our inner structure will go to nothing), freedom (we are forced to make momentous decisions without full information), isolation (we are alone in many fundamental ways) and meaninglessness (we don't have a clear picture of what it really means). From literature, psychology, philosophy and some theology (Tillich), Yalom has created a definitive text on what it means to open our eyes fully to our existential situation. It is not a depressive text, as the goal is to come to terms with our condition. And ironically, facing the truth of death, for example, makes life richer. This is much more than a self-help book, it is a philosophical-psychological masterpiece. I have a Ph.D. in the philosophy of religion and have published several articles in leading journals and don't give out the kind of praise I am giving here easily. It is one of the best books I have ever read, and I think a wide range of people would profit from it. Yet it's a difficult book, not an easy self-help read. But Yalom is such a clear writer that most readers could follow it. When he uses technical psychological or philosophical terms, he usually explains them. Otherwise, the dictionary must be used. This text would be helpful for people in the helping professions in giving an existential aspect to their work. Religious thinkers and those interested in philosophy should pick it up at any cost. Any educated person could profit from it greatly. It's a long text, and I had to break it up by carefully reading some from each of the main four parts simultaneously to get a view of the whole. It's a bit dry at times, but thoughtful, perceptive, educational in many fields, --it'swisdom literature....I can't think of a higher compliment.

I have recommended this book to one client who found it extremely useful as a means of managing his fear of death. Yalom's idea that the fears associated with the existential concerns of isolation, freedom, death, and sense of purpose form part of our subconscious-conscious dynamics is brilliant and original. He makes the argument that the anxieties associated with these concerns form a very early part of our experience and that they're repressed when the newborn is taught that it is not OK to experience these fears because he/she is either "special" or protected by a higher power, such as God. He states that the existential crises challenge these defenses creating depression, panic attacks, and other disorders. He develops these and many other useful notions all throughout the book. It is a long but fairly easy and clear read. If you're stymied by the length of the book you could start with his "The Gift of Therapy". Enjoy!

Very pleased, had to repurchase item since the first one was stolen out of car.

Although this is a must have for anyone, it really targets the need of psychologists. The first few chapters are for anyone interested in a deeper understanding of the human brain and who have the need to gain a better vocabulary, then the book goes into an array of personal existential issues and how a psychologist can approach helping the individual. For me, however, once you begin to comprehend our existential selves, you don't want to go into denial to get around natural human suffering and anxiety. Patient: "Dr., I feel that I am alone in the universe." Doctor: "Go dancing or play bingo or join a church."

I absolutely love Irvin Yalom for starters. He is a deep thinker and his writing is clear and inspiring. Dr. Yalom's approach gets into the givens (or the things we can't avoid) of existence and empowers people by managing the anxiety of facing things like death, meaningless, and responsibility. This book is a philosophical treasure chest!

I am a layperson so those who read this review should consider that. I have read this book slowly, very slowly and as a layperson have found it to be so very, very enlightening. This material has such depth and there were sections that I read that caused me to put the book down and consider what I had just encountered. Life is not a simple journey especially when we pick up so much detritus on the way. For years, I knocked on so many variously colored doors - entering and finding myself wanting...not them, mind you, but myself. Reading this - pointed me to a gate that swung

open to a garden area, albeit, very overgrown, untended. It is here now that I work - some of what I thought were weeds are not. Some of what I thought were flowers are not. I just want to be free and am willing to accept that responsibility. Thank you, Dr. Yalom....you sage of my generation.

This book has been indispensable for my therapy practice; consequently, I've come to see my patients and their issues in a deeper and more comprehensive light. It's the fifth book I've read by Yalom, and quite possibly the best one. Astounding, to say the least.

This book is a very enriching and expanding experience, not only for the person reading the book, but also for the people around the reader, as you simply can't help discussing the themes with friends and family. It is admirable how Yalom treats the subject without neither moral judgement nor dogmatic lecturing, opening a challenging universe, leaving it to the reader to find his or her own way through the chaos of life. Compulsory reading for anyone interested in psychology, philosophy or simply oneself and other human beings.

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