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Viktor Frankl: A Life Worth Living

Gillian Streeter
gstreeter@fortbend.lib.tx.us

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Reviewer: Gillian Streeter  
Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult  
Rating: Outstanding  
Genre: Informational books; Biography;  
Subject: Psychotherapists--Austria--Biography--Juvenile literature; Frankl, Viktor Emil--Juvenile literature; Holocaust survivors--Austria--Biography--Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews;

Redsand eloquently describes the life of Frankl, Holocaust survivor and founder of logotherapy (in which therapists aid patients in seeking meaning in their lives). Readers not only discover Frankl the Jewish logotherapist, but also Frankl the prankster, rock-climber, and loving husband. The development of logotherapy (which he practiced even in the prison camps), his liberation by American troops, and his return to a war-ravaged Austria--through all these and more challenges, Frankl tried to exemplify his theories and imbue even the worst of his experiences with meaning. Though he died in September 1997, his writings and theories live on as testament of man's power to choose a life of meaning.

Readers will easily notice Redsand's admiration for Frankl, but she deals fairly with him—she does not paint him as a saint, but as a man struggling against great odds, trying (and sometimes failing) to live up to his beliefs. Though his concentration camp experiences are discussed, most of the book deals with his life before and after his imprisonment. Black and white photos and illustrations flesh out the engaging stories about Frankl. In addition to Frankl's life, the author describes the politics of pre- and post-Nazi Austria, following Hitler's development in parallel to Frankl's. The author not only includes an introduction and an author's note on her experiences researching Frankl, but she also provides a chapter-by-chapter source list, a bibliography, further reading suggestions, and an index (all of which frequently mention Frankl's famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*). This thoroughly researched book would be an excellent addition to a school library and a great starting-point for projects about Frankl himself, famous Jews, logotherapy, or simply the Holocaust.