



Friday Folder

A Reason to Hope

Viktor Frankl is a man who could have lost all hope. During World War II, Frankl was imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. His father, mother, brother, and wife all died in Auschwitz or similar camps. But after living through three degrading years of torture, Frankl was released at the end of the war.

Frankl wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* based on his experience. In that book, he tells why he continued to be optimistic about the future despite the deplorable inhuman conditions he lived in.

His book continues to provide a source of hope for people in difficult, seemingly hopeless situations. His

words of wisdom include:

- "There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is meaning in one's life."
- "He (or she) who has a *why* to live for can bear with almost any *how*."
- Everything can be taken from a person, but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances to choose one's own way."

Although very few if any of use will ever experience the horrifying life of a concentration camp, Frankl's experience reveals the impor-

tance of hope. An optimistic, hopeful attitude gives children the courage to venture forward, to make plans, to dream, and to live with the belief that they can accomplish their dreams.



Think and Do

- At home focus on solutions instead of problems. Identify areas of hope in difficult situations. Be creative, adjust, and be flexible as you create new ways to deal with old problems.

Time Together:

Three ways to help your child become more optimistic about the future:

1. React positively when your child tells you her or his dreams — no matter how far-fetched or unreachable they may seem. Together choose one way to make a dream a reality.
2. Point out hopeful signs that you see when you're out and about, watching the television or a movie, or reading the newspaper. Encourage your child to do the same. One family clips articles about good things people are doing to improve the world.
3. Together draw pictures of your fears about the future. Talk about them and then rip them up. Discuss how you have the power to deal with difficult, scary, and painful situations when they arise.