

You are always free in some way, even if you can't feel it, even in the most unfair situation. Even if you locked yourself into consequences. You can choose your attitude, and find freedom in your mind through coping mechanisms, even you just have meditation or mindfulness. If you choose to ignore or "do nothing" that is actually not nothing, it is your choice to be inactive. There is always a way to make a situation that seems impossible even a little better or worse. You are most powerful when you take responsibility for yourself and your actions. There are millions of possibilities for your life, so many lifestyles or opportunities you can take advantage of. Even if you must be patient, such as a child or a student or financially insecure, you can take control of your own life someday even if you must think outside the box. You can choose to work towards the best outcome. You can choose to be kind or cruel. You are free to love what and who you'd like, express that love how you'd like, and you can focus on what you care about at any time to get through tough times.

Isolation is the reason we get freedom; they are two sides of the same coin. We all have our own destinies. We cannot share thoughts or control anyone else. We can only fully understand ourselves. Every single person is vulnerable in this same way, so it's important to consider how other's insecurities may be affecting situations. It's important to realize that you may have similar situations someday and want mercy for yourself. There will be times when you're the only person who sees things your way. It is your choice whether you want to align with other people, and it may not feel as close as you'd like; you can also lose yourself in others which makes you vulnerable in hard times because nobody can be 100% reliable for you while they tend to themselves too. Being around other people is one of the most amazing privileges in life, not a lifelong right. It takes work, starting with mutual respect, to maintain the relationship. You should be comfortable being yourself, being alone with yourself, forgiving yourself, understanding your comfort zone, and changing independently. You can set boundaries and respect other people's boundaries. You can admire who you are when you are alone and with others and uphold the important parts of yourself no matter what so you can be in tune with your existence.

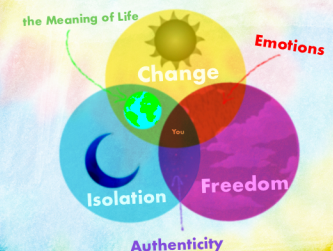
Finally, the meaning of life is up to you. It is green because we are humans, so the Earth and growth may be a huge part of it. Also, if you hold two mirrors together, at the very center it turns green, which signifies how it's unique to you. Nobody's meaning for life is exactly the same as anyone else's, it can involve religion, family, friendship, creativity, learning, a hobby, a special interest, a career, a mission, a goal. It can be constantly evolving and involve many things.

And remember, there are no bad emotions, just inappropriate reactions. If you are angry, sad, embarrassed, jealous, guilty, scared, that shows it matters to you and that's important to realize. You are free to find the best reaction and you must deal with the consequences of those actions, for better or worse.

*Grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*
— Reinhold Niebuhr

Welcome to Existentialism

Change, Freedom,
Isolation,
and the Meaning of
Life



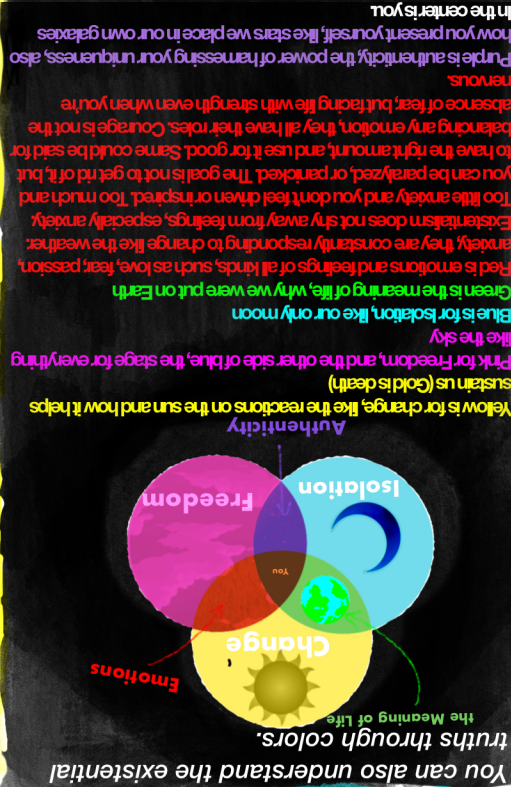
From excards42.com

This zine is about existentialism, which is a counselling theory I learned in my master's degree program. It is one of the main ways I make decisions about how I treat you in therapy. It is also a theory I use to get through my own life, including living alone and going to college far away during COVID-19. "Ex-is-ten-chu-is-m"
Existentialism is all about dealing with why a person exists on Earth, and at the end of it all, you must find your own meaning for your life. The goal is to be authentic as often as possible, which means true to yourself. As your therapist, I also aim to be authentic, not only when I'm with you, but while I go through life so I can understand as many experiences as possible.

There is no instruction guide for life, so existentialism is a good way to cover life's uncertainties.

There are four major truths that can be difficult to accept and sometimes make it hard to be authentic. There is fear of meaninglessness, fear of isolation, fear of freedom, and fear of change, which includes the ultimate change: death. Someone who is inauthentic could deal with being stuck in the past, resistant to growth, avoiding making decisions/a follower, enmeshed in other people or dissociated so they have no sense of self, and unable to move on or learn.

However, if you begin to understand and embrace the aspects of isolation, freedom, and change, and then work towards fulfilling your own meaningful parts of life, you can live an authentic life. It is important to make choices that fit who you want to be, know your values, and be honest with yourself. If you are authentic, you can live through some of the most difficult situations. In fact, a major counselor, Viktor Frankl, who wrote on this theory was a Jew who used it to survive the Holocaust with many lessons. Another, Rollo May, attended Oberlin College in OH where I got my bachelor's degree in creative writing and psychology with an education concentration while working for and designing many campus publications.



We are all impacted by different changes that we cannot control. Change is scary because you're never quite the same as you were before it happened. At the very least, you learned or realized something new. It can be tempting to try to stay in the past, and normal to be very anxious or disappointed about changes. However, the best way to stay on top of life is to embrace change, because that's how you can reach your potential. You can accept new things without ruining your memories of other times in your life. Every change is an opportunity, even the ones that hurt the most or you wish had never happened. As someone has said about grief, the pain does not get smaller, but we get bigger so that it doesn't affect us as much. The same could be said about any kind of change. Nothing endures but change.