The diagnosis of a life-threatening illness can be devastating. A life-threatening situation, however, may be the very situation that provides ultimate meaning in patients' lives. Frankl (1992) based his theory of logotherapy on the premise that life's purpose is in discovering meaning and that meaning can be found even in the worst circumstances. Despite being confronted with a life-threatening illness and potential suffering, some individuals have found purpose and meaning.

The recorded experiences of individuals and a review of literature suggest that spirituality is an important component in finding meaning with suffering. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin (1997) found purpose in describing and acknowledging how his faith helped him to find peace in his illness. He even went as far as to describe his illness as a “special gift” (Bernardin, 2001). Pastor Gerald Harper, Jr., was able to find meaning and purpose through biblical teachings of Christianity after he was diagnosed with lymphoma. His book, Living With Dying: Finding Meaning in Chronic Illness (Harper, 1992), provides an honest view of his journey toward death. Morrie Schwartz, a Jewish man who described himself as a “religious mutt” stealing his spirituality characteristics from Buddhism, Christian-