

## President's Annual Report 2023: Founder's Vision and Last Wishes

I am truly grateful that I narrowly escaped death twice this year for a purpose – to continue to be a lone voice warning that the Titanic is sinking. However, I am also made fully aware that I will no longer be able to communicate with you anymore the next time I am rushed to the hospital emergency department. Therefore, in this annual report, I will outline what I have done in 2023 and my wishes for 2024.

After almost 3 decades of Advancing [Frankl's mission for meaning](#) and my own vision for a new science of flourishing through suffering (Wong et al., 2023), I have identified several important new developments from me and some of INPM Board Members since [my 2022 Annual Report](#).

### From Partial Integration to Synthesis

There are different models of partial integration between existential psychology and positive psychology, but there is only one synthesis which will result in something greater and better than the sum of its parts.

## The EPP Synthesis

The synthesis between positive psychology and negative psychology into **Existential Positive Psychology** (EPP) is similar to combination reaction in chemistry – it creates something new and something more powerful than the sum of its original elements.

EPP is neither the absorbing of some aspects of existential/clinical psychology into the positive psychology framework, nor the absorbing of some aspects of positive psychology into the existential/clinical psychology framework; rather, it is a synthesis of two fields within a holistic and dialectical conceptual framework involving a new set of presuppositions.

That is why I have been advocating EPP as a synthesis of positive and negative psychology (including pathology, ultimate concerns, negative emotions or situations), which yields exciting new areas for research and interventions, such as the dual-systems model (Wong, 2012) and tragic optimism (Leung, et al., 2021).

In addition to the generating synergic energies and new frontiers, both positive and existential psychology become broadened and enriched. That is why I have been advocating EPP in the last 30 years against powerful tribal mentality and the establishment.

◆ Dr. Paul T. P. Wong

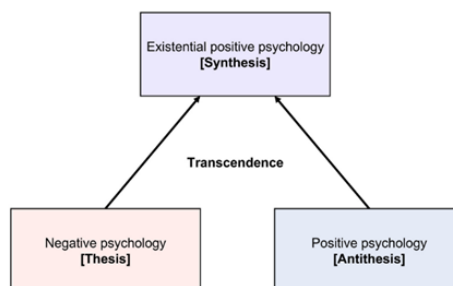


Image from Wong et al., 2022

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## The Meaning of Life

When meaning in life is defined as a faith-based, purpose-driven, and meaning-centered life, the transforming power of meaning and spirituality is an effective antidote to today's polarized world and armed conflicts.

### The Transforming Power of Meaning and Spirituality

Frankl had every reason to seek revenge for all the suffering, degradation and devastation inflicted on his family and people. But to seek revenge may make you a monster as well. In addition, his conscience told him that "no one has the right to do wrong, even if wrong has been done to them."

To him, the best revenge is to harness all the negative energies of anger, resentment, and pain to transform them into positive energies of forgiveness, love, and becoming a stronger and better person.

Thus, with God's help, the transforming power of meaning and spirituality still works even in circumstances that usually bring out people's darkest impulses.


◆ Dr. Paul T. P. Wong



“No one has the right to do wrong, even if wrong has been done to them.”

VICTOR FRANKL


Peace is possible only when more and more people learn to live a meaningful life. If you support this grand vision, please [add your signature to my petition](#) for **a day of meaningful living** as a precondition for world peace. We need all INPM members to support this new initiative for world peace.



# International Day of Meaningful Living

We will be at peace with ourselves, with others, and with God when we live a life of self-transcendence (no-self).

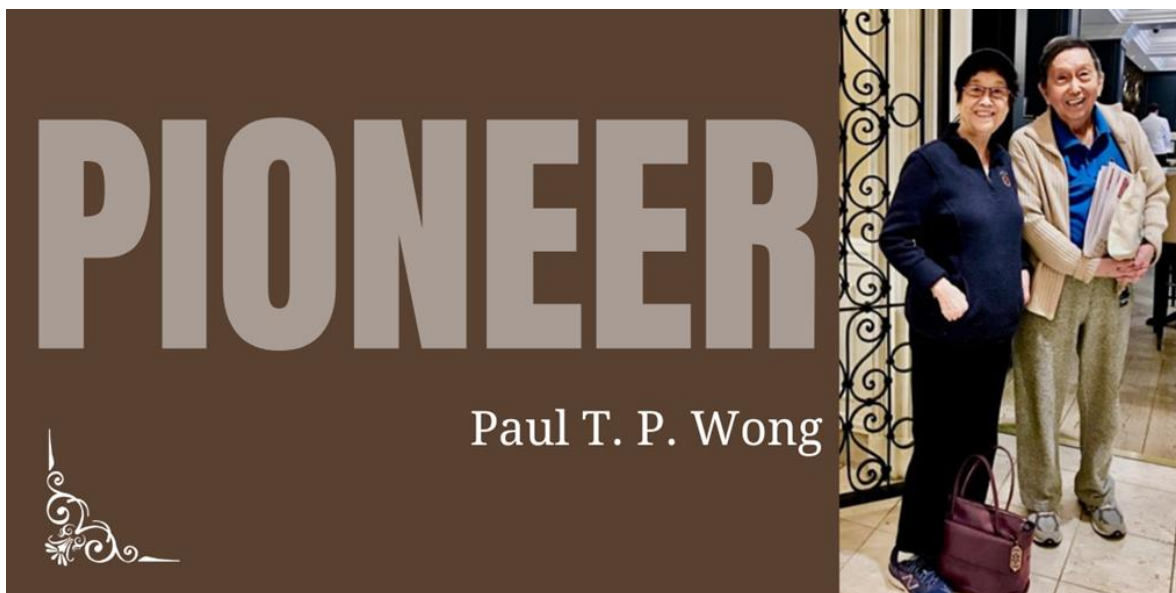
– Paul P.T. Wong



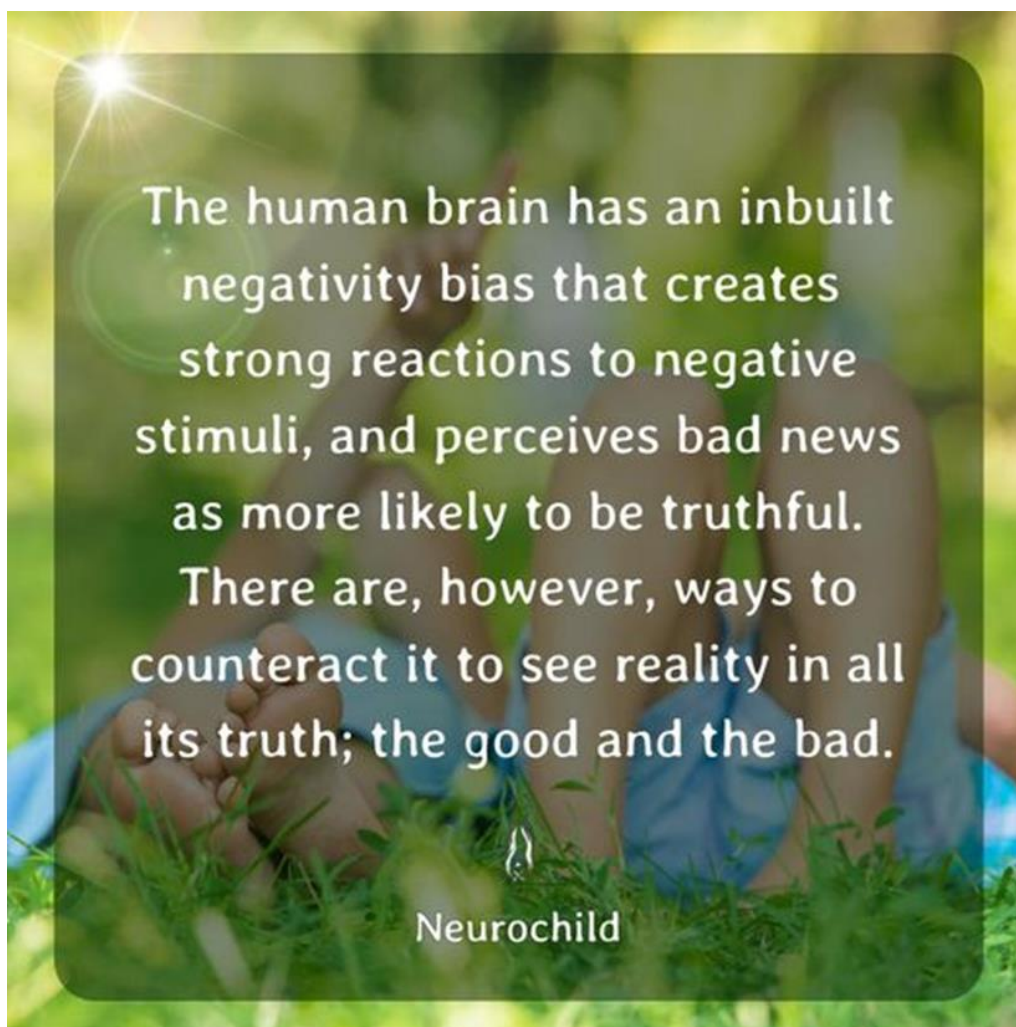

If you support this grand vision, **please add your signature to my petition** for a day of Meaningful Living as a precondition for world peace.

## The Meaning of Suffering

The meaning of suffering is one of the pillars of EPP. The science of suffering is an emerging new field I have developed several important lines of research for.



My pioneer research on flourishing through suffering has been officially recognized by *The Applied Research in Quality of Life* (Wong, 2023a).



Human beings are hardwired for negativity bias for its survival value. This applies not only for the cave men but also for civilized city folks. In some way, the negativity bias is even more important when our enemies may be disguised as our best friends.

Our challenge is twofold: on the one hand, we need to avoid catastrophizing every imagined danger, resulting in generalized anxiety disorder or PTSD. On the other hand, we also need to avoid focusing only on the positive and dismissing real warning signals. The following 5 strategies may be the most adaptive way to cope with negativity bias:

- 1) To see the world as it is unfolding with **mindful observation** as a way of avoiding impulsive reaction.
- 2) To see the hidden meaning and truth with **meaning mindset** as a way to see reality beneath the surface.
- 3) To see the world with a **dialectical mindset** as a way to see the adaptive balance between opposites.
- 4) To see the world with a **resilient mindset** as a way to find a solution
- 5) To see the world with a **transcendental mindset** as a way to overcome all our limitations and envision a better future.

## The New Science of Suffering for the Age of COVID-19 Developing a Resilient Mindset (TRAMMB):

Be **TOUGH** mentally  
to face a dangerous world,

Be **RESPONSIBLE** for  
adapting to the new reality,

**APPRECIATE** what we still have  
and for blessings in disguise,

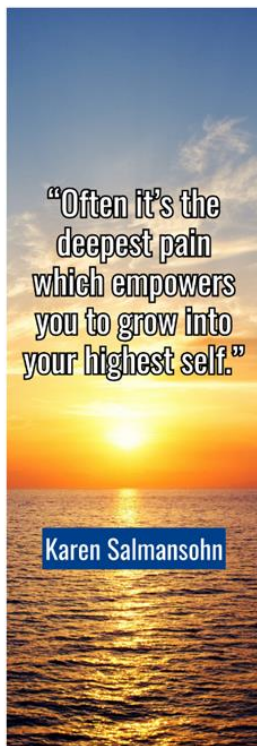
**MINDFULLY** accept life with all  
its problems and disappointments,

**MEANINGFUL** transformation  
of all things negative,

**BELIEF** in a better future through faith  
and hope in God for things beyond our control.

◆Dr. Paul T. P. Wong

Recently, Arslan and Wong (2023) developed a reliable and valid measure to advance research on the six-factor model of the resilient mindset needed for both survival and success.



## Transforming Suffering

This is one of the greatest quotes on the transforming potential of suffering.

Yes, our best self or our highest self comes from our capacity to overcome and transcend our deepest pain or greatest obstacle.

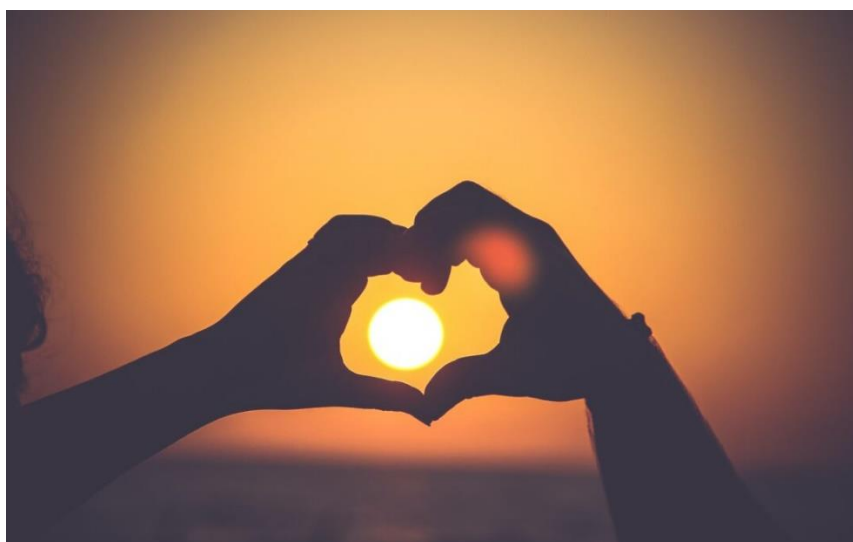
That is why meaning therapy teaches clients how to embrace their deepest wounds as their greatest opportunities for flourishing.

◆ Dr. Paul T. P. Wong

Recent publications on the transforming potential of suffering through meaning therapy includes Wong and Laird (2023) as well as Wong and Laird (in press).

My course on [unlocking the transforming power of suffering](#) will be offered this year. Hope that more INPM members will learn the latest development in Integrative Meaning Therapy.

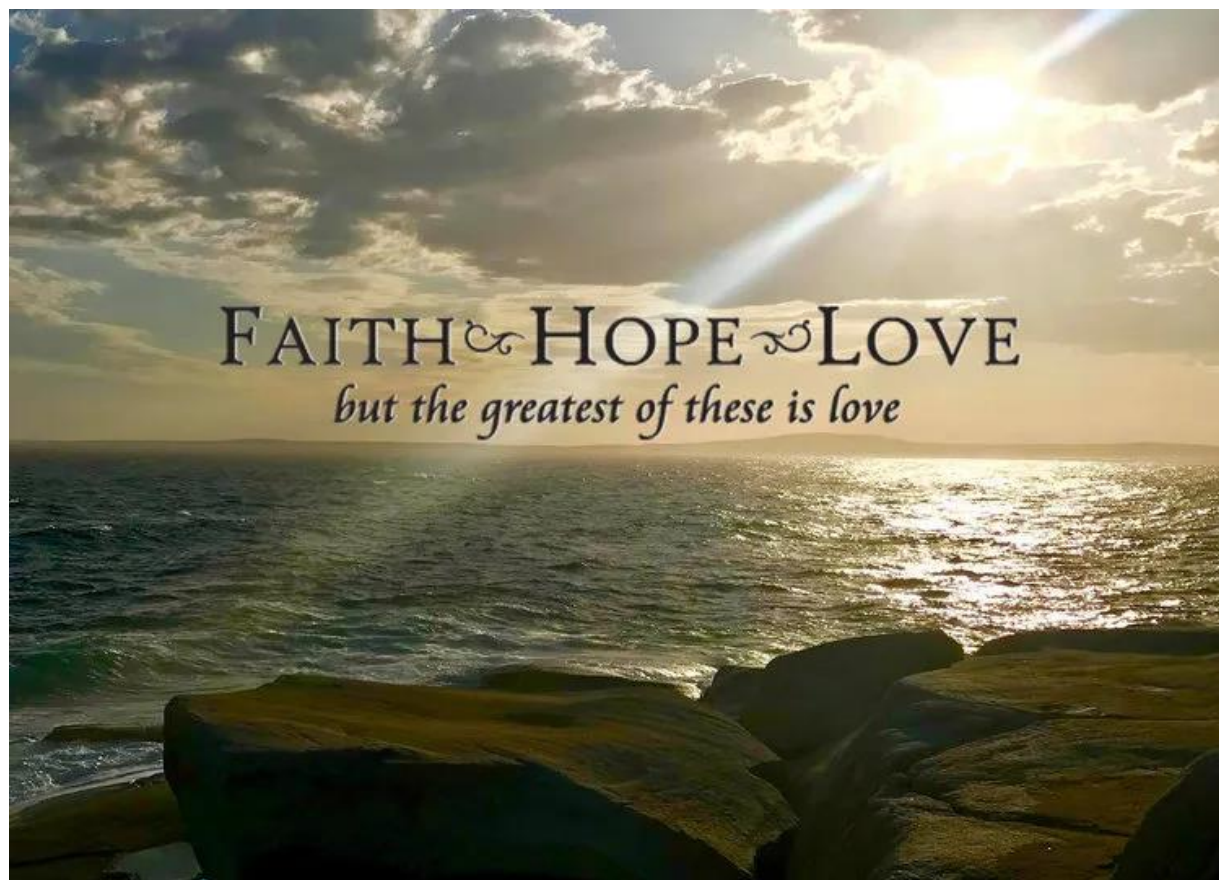
### The Meaning of Love



According to Wong and Mayer (2023), love is the most powerful passion for good and for evil. Most people are willing to do anything to protect their object of love, whatever that may be. From crimes of passion to murdering millions of innocent people for one's ideological passion, the perpetrators could be sincerely motivated by their passionate love without considering the consequences and ethical implications. This is the downside of selfless love or self-transcendence.

One way to avoid the destructive power of love is to (a) define love in terms of kindness, compassion or agape, and (b) require the existential wisdom by consult one's conscience, forebrain, cultural norms, and the highest spiritual ideals (Wong, 2023b).

How to love wisely and compassionately remains a challenging area of research. Ideally, love function best only in connection with hope and faith – the spiritual triad or holy trinity of personhood,

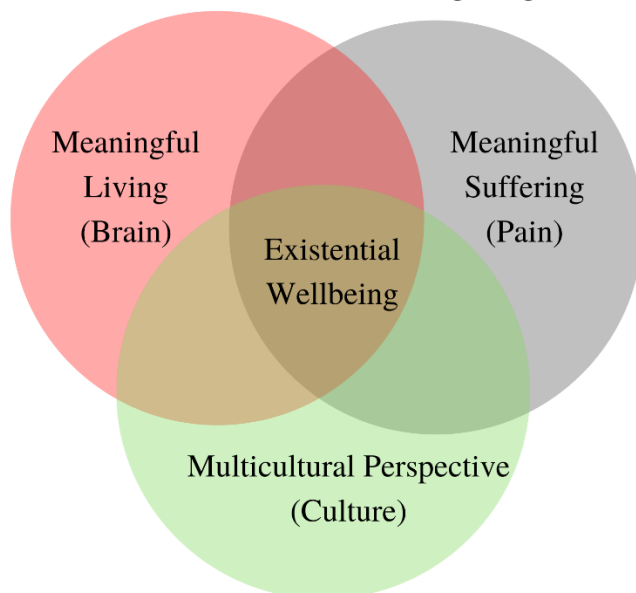


### **The Meaning of Multicultural Perspective**

This is one of the three pillars of existential positive psychology (Wong in press-a). This perspective involving two principles – (a) the need for studying existential universals, such as universal human rights and universal values, and (b) the need to study the unique experiences and expressions of indigenous psychology. Thus, it will help us understand what is common to us all, and how we also differ from each other in some way.

## An Existential Positive Psychology Framework for Global Flourishing

Wisdom of the Soul and Yin-Yang Integration



Sustainable existential wellbeing  
as the core of global flourishing

◆ Paul T. P. Wong

In this connection, we lost a giant in indigenous psychology, [Dr. K. K. Hwang](#), on July 30, 2023. I have written about my friendship with him (Wong, in press-b). Throughout the years, he supported my research and published my paper on how to enrich mainstream psychology with Asian psychology (Wong & Cowden, 2022).





## Existential Intelligence and Life Education

We have been proposing an alternative to the current dominant approach to positive education. Recently, Wong and Wong (in press) proposed an alternative view of positive education, with spirituality and religion as its cornerstones. More specifically, we emphasize the Seven Principles of Self-Transcendence which can both prevent self-indulgence and contribute to flourishing.

### THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

◆ DR. PAUL T. P. WONG

*The first five principles are proven strategies of overcoming and transcending suffering...*

1. Accept life as it is with gratitude.
2. Believe in creating a better future with help from Providence.
3. Commit to worthy goals and a life purpose.
4. Discover the hidden treasures by digging deeper.
5. Enjoy inner peace and harmony.
6. Love others as yourself.
7. Fear God and obey his commandments.

*...The last two principles are the moral foundations of caring and doing no harm.*

The chapter concludes with a vision of personal transformation and existential wellbeing based on the existential wisdom and courage (Wong, 2022; Wong et al., under review) as well as the enduring spiritual values of faith, hope, and love (Wong, 2023b).

Here is my latest thinking on the importance of existential intelligence for living a good life – one needs to know not only how to live well and how to die well, but also how to relate to people and make the best use of one’s talents and opportunities each day. On this topic, one can also read Tim Yu’s (2022) article on existential intelligence and life education; this will be his focus as a graduate student.

What is the best way to live a good life? Yes, life goes better when it goes deeper – deeper than the five senses, deeper than pleasant feelings, and deeper than the egoistic concerns and material gains. A deep life involves existential or life intelligence (LQ). LQ is the most important and yet least researched human intelligence. This will include a number of basic existential competencies such as 1) Double-vision in making daily choices by taking into account the bigger picture of existential concerns; 2) Dual-systems strategy to respond to both positives and negatives through dialectical interactions; 3) Transformation of suffering into achievement; 4) Meaning mindset to see something beautiful and good hidden in each situation; and 5) Mature happiness of harmony with self, others, and God.

One of the outcomes of LQ is that one can achieve a sense of wholeness by integrating all the opposites and finding an adaptive balance.

## Achieving Wholeness

The process of achieving wholeness is to transcend and integrate all the opposite forces within oneself until it becomes an united and balanced whole, which is bigger and better than the sum of all its parts.

The central point of a harmonious wholeness is self-transcendence.

◆ Dr. Paul T. P. Wong



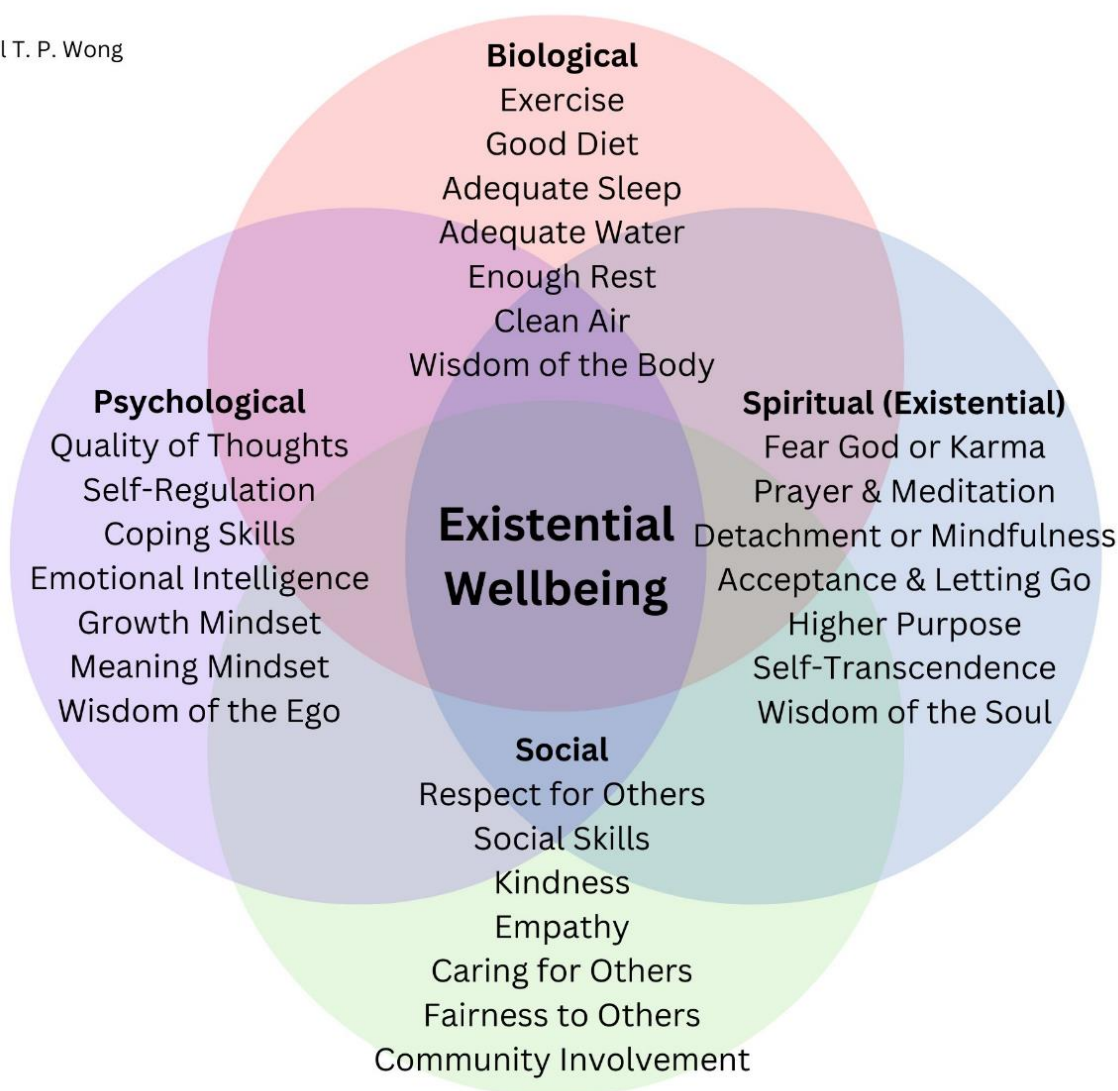
**“Wholeness is not achieved by cutting off a portion of one’s being, but by integration of the contraries.”**

Carl Gustav Jung

A sense of wholeness is only one aspect of *existential wellbeing*, which is also known as *total wellbeing* because it is the deep joy of being fully alive which involves all four dimensions of personhood as depicted in the following figure. Thus, one can enjoy a sense of existential wellbeing even when life does not go well because one can always rise above all adversities through faith and meaning transformation. One can even experience existential wellbeing during existential suffering in palliative care (Wong & Yu, 2021).

## Total Wellness Challenge Involving Bio-Psycho-Social-Spiritual Dimensions

◆ Paul T. P. Wong



### **My Plan for 2024 and My Last Wishes**

The above summary indicates that we have made some progress since my last AGM Annual Report, thanks to the support of all the Board members and God's help. My plan for this year is to:

1. Offer the [Second Module \(AEPP02\)](#) of the Applied Existential Positive Psychology Certificate Program.
2. Work with Claude-Helene Mayer, my co-director for the [Research Institute of Flourishing and Suffering](#), to apply for a research grant on the Spiritual Laws of Mental Health and Global Flourishing.
3. Publishing a special journal issue on *LQ and Existential Wellbeing in times of suffering: Theory, Research and Interventions*.

My last wishes are more urgent than ever in view of my major health crises in 2023:

- 1) We need a younger generation of psychologists to carry on the mission of INPM, which I started 26 years ago. We remain a big tent for all those interested in meaning and spirituality, even though our own vision is integration between positive psychology and existential psychology.
- 2) We need more funding to support our important work. So far, we only have a pledge of \$3,000 CAD from Carrina Chan Wong. I propose to give both Tim Yu and Tim Tan a raise this year pending on increased revenue and more donations. Tim Yu is our competent Executive Assistant and Tim Tan is responsible not only for producing all the videos on YouTube but also for managing the financial account of INPM.
- 3) Our next meaning conference will be on a smaller scale but also a more intense and intimate event with far reaching consequences. I hope that we can attract the best people to this conference, which may be the last conference I will be responsible for planning.

Respectfully submitted for your approval,

Paul T. P. Wong, President and CEO of INPM

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