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# Bringing Wisdom to the World: Applied philosophy as existential therapy

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In a world where complexity often leads to confusion and where meaning has become elusive, there is a crying need for clarity, steadfastness and a new sense of purpose and direction. Many people seek such understanding and crave connection but are not sure how or where to find it. When there is a lack of wisdom and a surfeit of possible choices, it becomes very difficult to lead a fulfilling life.

Existential therapy addresses this vacuum of meaning and seeks to enable people to reflect on the paradoxical nature of life and to explore ways in which they might revitalise their commitment to human existence. When we are prepared to think about our predicament in a radical way, we can rediscover both a sense of self-worth and a sense of humility, awe and wonder in the face of a wider search for truth and existential freedom.

What do existential therapists do to bring such wisdom to the world and how can they foster philosophical understanding and insight to heal unspeakable pain and despair?

**Emmy van Deurzen** is a philosopher and psychologist who has worked as an existential therapist since 1973. She is an international speaker and author of 20 books, which have been translated into 26 languages. She founded the Society for Existential Analysis and its journal in 1988, as well as establishing several training organizations, including the Existential Academy. She was the driving force behind the First World Congress of Existential Therapy in London in 2015, which also saw the birth of the Federation for Existential Therapists in Europe. She is visiting professor with Middlesex University and President of the worldwide Existential Movement.

