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Purpose and Meaning at the Subconscious Level: An Integrative Review Comparing the SGE Model with Contemporary Frameworks for Inner Transformation and Fundamental Peace

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Running Head: Purpose and Meaning at the Subconscious Level

Luis Miguel Gallardo

Shoolini University, India; lgallardo@worldhappiness.foundation

Abstract

The contemporary crisis of purpose and meaning has intensified amid rapid societal changes, revealing limitations in cognitive-only therapeutic approaches. This state-of-the-art review introduces the Shadow→Gift→Essence (SGE) model, a depth-oriented framework that addresses purpose and meaning at the subconscious level through structured shadow integration. The SGE model proposes that authentic purpose is not discovered through conscious effort alone but remembered through transforming disowned aspects (Shadow) into positive intentions (Gift) and embodied qualities (Essence). We systematically compare the SGE model with five contemporary frameworks: Frankl's logotherapy, Self-Determination Theory, Jungian shadow work, transpersonal psychology, and positive psychology. Unlike cognitive approaches that bypass unconscious material, the SGE model operationalizes depth psychology principles through a five-stage therapeutic process and six wound-virtue pairs (Repression→Honesty, Denial→Ease, Shame→Humour, Rejection→Gentleness, Guilt→Forgiveness, Separation→Love). This review demonstrates how the SGE model integrates with the Inner Transformation Model (ITM) to facilitate subconscious-level change and cultivate Fundamental Peace—a sustainable state of inner coherence beyond symptom relief. Implications for humanistic psychology practice, research directions, and the paradigm shift toward subconscious-level interventions are discussed. The SGE model offers a unique contribution by bridging existential, depth, and transpersonal traditions while providing clinicians with a structured methodology for accessing and transforming the subconscious roots of meaning-making.

Keywords: purpose; meaning; subconscious; shadow work; depth psychology; SGE model; inner transformation; fundamental peace; integrative psychotherapy

1. Introduction

The search for purpose and meaning represents one of humanity's most enduring psychological and existential pursuits. Yet contemporary society faces an unprecedented crisis of meaning, characterized by rising rates of existential anxiety, depression, and a pervasive sense of disconnection from authentic purpose (Wong, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and rapid technological transformation have intensified this crisis, revealing fundamental limitations in how mental health systems conceptualize and address meaning-related distress (Wong, 2020). Traditional cognitive-behavioral and medical model approaches, while effective for symptom management, often fail to address the deeper existential and subconscious dimensions of purpose discovery (Волкова, 2024).

Existential psychologists from Viktor Frankl to Irvin Yalom have long emphasized that meaning-making is central to psychological health and human flourishing. Frankl's logotherapy, born from his experiences in Nazi concentration camps, positioned the "will to meaning" as humanity's primary motivational force (Ünal, 2020). Yet despite decades of research on meaning and purpose, a critical gap persists: most contemporary approaches operate primarily at the conscious, cognitive level, neglecting the subconscious patterns, repressed material, and somatic dimensions that fundamentally shape an individual's capacity to access and embody authentic purpose (Leidig, 2025).

This limitation is particularly evident when individuals report knowing intellectually what gives their life meaning yet feel unable to connect with or embody that purpose in their lived experience. Such disconnection often stems from subconscious protective mechanisms—what depth psychology terms "shadow" material—that block access to authentic self-expression and meaning-making (Asagba, 2024). Cognitive insight alone cannot transform these deeply embedded patterns; subconscious-level intervention is required (Wong et al., 2024).

The Shadow→Gift→Essence (SGE) model addresses this gap by providing a structured, depth-oriented framework for purpose discovery and embodiment at the subconscious level. The SGE model proposes that authentic purpose is not created through conscious effort but remembered through a transformative process of shadow integration. The model conceptualizes three interconnected dimensions: Shadow (disowned or repressed aspects of self that developed as protective strategies), Gift (the positive intention or unmet need beneath the shadow), and Essence (the integrated, embodied quality that emerges when shadow and gift unite). This triadic structure operationalizes Jungian principles of shadow work while providing clinicians with a systematic methodology for facilitating subconscious transformation (Marco et al., 2022).

The SGE model is grounded in six fundamental wound-virtue pairs that map common shadow patterns to their corresponding essence qualities: Repression→Honesty, Denial→Ease, Shame→Humour, Rejection→Gentleness, Guilt→Forgiveness, and Separation→Love. These pairs reflect universal human experiences of wounding and the potential for transformation into virtue. The therapeutic process unfolds through five stages: creating a safe container, exploring the shadow, uncovering the gift, installing the essence, and integrating through action. This structured approach ensures that subconscious material is accessed safely and transformed systematically (Chae, 2025).

The SGE model's emphasis on subconscious-level work distinguishes it from cognitive approaches and aligns it with depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic traditions. By working at the subconscious level, the SGE model facilitates what we term "remembering" rather than "discovering" purpose—a recognition that authentic purpose already exists within the individual but has been obscured by protective shadow patterns (Devergnas, 2022). This perspective shifts the therapeutic task from helping clients create meaning to helping them remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing the meaning already present in their subconscious depths.

Furthermore, the SGE model integrates seamlessly with the Inner Transformation Model (ITM), a broader framework for facilitating deep psychological change. The ITM emphasizes that sustainable transformation requires working at multiple levels—cognitive, emotional, somatic, and spiritual—with particular attention to subconscious patterns that maintain psychological suffering. The SGE model serves as a practical mechanism within the ITM, providing specific tools for shadow integration and essence embodiment (Kenneth et al., 2024).

The ultimate outcome of SGE-based work is what we term Fundamental Peace: a sustainable state of inner coherence, authenticity, and alignment that transcends temporary symptom relief. Fundamental Peace emerges when individuals embody their essence qualities and live from their authentic purpose, no longer driven by unconscious shadow patterns. This state represents a qualitatively different level of psychological health than symptom reduction alone—it is characterized by deep self-acceptance, compassionate presence, and the capacity to respond to life's challenges from a grounded, resourced place (Shin, 2024).

This paper aims to position the SGE model within the landscape of contemporary purpose and meaning research by systematically comparing it with five major frameworks: Frankl's logotherapy

and existential approaches, Self-Determination Theory, Jungian shadow work, transpersonal psychology, and positive psychology. Through this comparative analysis, we demonstrate the SGE model's unique contributions, particularly its emphasis on subconscious-level transformation, structured methodology, and integration of depth and transpersonal dimensions. We also explore how the SGE model connects with the ITM and facilitates Fundamental Peace, offering implications for clinical practice and future research directions.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 establishes theoretical foundations by reviewing contemporary approaches to purpose and meaning, examining the role of the subconscious mind in purpose discovery, and presenting the SGE model in detail. Section 3 provides systematic comparisons between the SGE model and five major frameworks, highlighting areas of convergence, divergence, and potential integration. Section 4 explores the SGE model's connection to the ITM and Fundamental Peace, emphasizing the concept of "remembering" purpose through subconscious work. Section 5 discusses clinical and practical implications, including applications in therapy, coaching, and hypnotherapy. Section 6 outlines future research directions, and Section 7 concludes with a synthesis of the SGE model's contributions to humanistic psychology.

By bridging existential, depth, and transpersonal traditions while providing a structured, clinically applicable methodology, the SGE model represents a significant advance in how we understand and facilitate purpose discovery. This review calls for a paradigm shift in purpose research—from cognitive-only approaches to integrative frameworks that honor the subconscious dimensions of meaning-making and support individuals in remembering and embodying their authentic purpose.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Purpose and Meaning in Contemporary Psychology

The study of purpose and meaning has deep roots in humanistic and existential psychology, with Viktor Frankl's logotherapy representing perhaps the most influential framework. Frankl proposed that the "will to meaning" is humanity's primary motivational force, distinguishing it from Freud's will to pleasure and Adler's will to power (Ünal, 2020). Logotherapy posits that meaning can be discovered through three pathways: creative values (what we give to the world through our work), experiential values (what we receive from the world through relationships and beauty), and attitudinal values (the stance we take toward unavoidable suffering) (Wong et al., 2024). This framework has proven remarkably resilient, with contemporary research confirming that meaning in life predicts psychological well-being, resilience, and even physical health outcomes (Crea et al., 2022).

Existential psychology more broadly emphasizes that human beings are fundamentally meaning-making creatures who must confront existential givens: death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness (Yalom's framework). The existential vacuum—a state of inner emptiness and lack of purpose—is understood as a primary source of psychological distress in modern society (Shin, 2024). Frankl observed this vacuum intensifying in post-war Western societies characterized by material abundance but spiritual poverty, a trend that has only accelerated in the 21st century (Asagba, 2024). Contemporary existential positive psychology (PP 2.0) extends this tradition by emphasizing "flourishing through suffering," integrating existential concerns with positive psychology's focus on well-being (Wong, 2020).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, offers a complementary perspective grounded in empirical psychology. SDT proposes that human motivation and well-being depend on satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy (experiencing choice and volition), competence (feeling effective), and relatedness (experiencing connection with others). When these needs are met, individuals experience intrinsic motivation and psychological flourishing; when thwarted, they experience diminished well-being and meaning (Волкова, 2024). SDT research has demonstrated robust relationships between need satisfaction and various indicators of purpose and

meaning, suggesting that purpose emerges naturally when fundamental psychological needs are fulfilled.

Positive psychology has contributed significantly to purpose research through constructs such as meaning in life, purpose in life, and post-traumatic growth. Positive psychology distinguishes between the presence of meaning (experiencing one's life as significant and purposeful) and the search for meaning (actively seeking purpose), with research suggesting complex relationships between these dimensions and well-being (Nel et al., 2022). The field has also developed numerous assessment tools and interventions designed to enhance meaning, including gratitude practices, strengths identification, and legacy work (Devergnas, 2022).

Transpersonal psychology extends the conversation by emphasizing spiritual and transcendent dimensions of meaning. Transpersonal approaches recognize that purpose often involves connection to something greater than the individual self—whether conceived as the divine, universal consciousness, or collective humanity (Haryanto et al., 2024). This tradition emphasizes practices such as meditation, contemplation, and mystical experience as pathways to discovering deeper purpose. The integration of Sufism and transpersonal psychology, for example, highlights how spiritual traditions offer time-tested methods for accessing transcendent meaning (Haryanto et al., 2024).

Despite these rich theoretical traditions, contemporary approaches share a common limitation: they operate primarily at the conscious, cognitive level. Logotherapy, for instance, emphasizes conscious reflection on meaning, cognitive reframing of suffering, and deliberate choice of attitudes (Marco et al., 2022). SDT focuses on conscious need satisfaction and autonomous motivation. Positive psychology interventions typically involve conscious practices like gratitude journaling or strengths identification. Even transpersonal approaches, while acknowledging spiritual dimensions, often rely on conscious meditation or contemplative practices (Zhu, 2024).

This cognitive emphasis creates a significant gap when individuals encounter subconscious barriers to meaning-making. Clinical experience reveals that many people can intellectually identify what gives their life meaning yet feel profoundly disconnected from that purpose in their lived experience. They may articulate clear values and goals but find themselves unable to act on them, sabotaging their own efforts, or experiencing a persistent sense of inauthenticity (Leidig, 2025). These patterns suggest that subconscious material—repressed emotions, disowned aspects of self, unprocessed trauma, and protective mechanisms—fundamentally shapes an individual's capacity to access and embody authentic purpose.

Furthermore, contemporary approaches often neglect the body's role in meaning-making. Purpose is not merely a cognitive construct but an embodied experience—a felt sense of alignment, vitality, and rightness that emerges when one lives authentically (Волкова, 2024). Somatic psychology and body-based therapies have demonstrated that the body holds implicit memory and wisdom that conscious mind cannot access directly, suggesting that purpose discovery requires engaging subconscious, somatic dimensions (Leidig, 2025).

The limitations of cognitive-only approaches have become particularly evident in the context of contemporary challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, disrupted many traditional sources of meaning (work, relationships, activities) and intensified existential anxiety, revealing that cognitive strategies alone are insufficient for navigating profound existential disruption (Wong, 2020). Similarly, the rise of artificial intelligence and automation threatens traditional sources of purpose derived from work and productivity, requiring deeper exploration of what gives human life intrinsic meaning (Norman, 2020).

These observations point toward the need for integrative frameworks that honor both conscious and subconscious dimensions of meaning-making. Such frameworks must bridge existential, depth, and transpersonal traditions while providing practical methodologies for accessing and transforming subconscious patterns that block authentic purpose. The SGE model, as we will explore, represents one such integrative approach, offering a structured pathway for purpose discovery that works at the subconscious level while remaining grounded in established psychological principles.

2.2. The Subconscious Mind and Purpose Discovery

The subconscious mind—encompassing unconscious processes, implicit memory, somatic wisdom, and repressed material—plays a fundamental role in shaping human experience, motivation, and meaning-making. Depth psychology, pioneered by Freud and Jung, established that much of human behavior is driven by unconscious forces beyond conscious awareness or control (Popov et al., 2020). While Freud emphasized repressed drives and conflicts, Jung's analytical psychology introduced concepts more directly relevant to purpose discovery: the personal unconscious (repressed personal experiences), the collective unconscious (universal archetypes), and particularly the shadow (disowned aspects of self).

Jung defined the shadow as the parts of ourselves we reject, deny, or repress because they conflict with our conscious self-image or social expectations. The shadow contains not only negative qualities we dislike but also positive potentials we have disowned—creativity, assertiveness, sensuality, or power that we learned were unacceptable (Asagba, 2024). Shadow material operates autonomously in the unconscious, influencing behavior through projection, compulsion, and sabotage. Jung argued that individuation—the process of becoming one's authentic self—requires integrating the shadow, bringing unconscious material into conscious awareness and reclaiming disowned aspects (Popov et al., 2020).

The relationship between shadow and purpose is profound yet often overlooked in contemporary psychology. When individuals disown aspects of themselves, they simultaneously cut off access to the energy, creativity, and authentic expression those aspects contain. A person who repressed their anger to maintain family harmony may struggle to access assertiveness needed to pursue their purpose. Someone who disowned their vulnerability to appear strong may find themselves unable to form the intimate connections that give life meaning. The shadow, in this sense, holds the keys to authentic purpose—not despite being disowned but precisely because it contains what we most need to reclaim (Marco et al., 2022).

Contemporary research in implicit cognition and neuroscience supports the notion that subconscious processes fundamentally shape meaning-making. Studies demonstrate that much of human decision-making, motivation, and emotional response occurs outside conscious awareness, mediated by subcortical brain structures and implicit memory systems (Leidig, 2025). The body itself serves as a repository of subconscious wisdom, with somatic markers guiding behavior and the autonomic nervous system encoding patterns of safety and threat that shape how individuals engage with the world (Волкова, 2024).

Somatic psychology and body-based therapies have demonstrated that working directly with the body can access subconscious material that verbal, cognitive approaches cannot reach. Techniques such as Somatic Experiencing, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, and Hakomi recognize that trauma and protective patterns are stored in the body's implicit memory and nervous system (Leidig, 2025). When individuals learn to track bodily sensations, they can access emotions, memories, and beliefs that have been subconscious, facilitating integration and transformation. This somatic dimension is crucial for purpose work because authentic purpose is not merely a cognitive concept but an embodied felt sense—a visceral knowing of rightness and alignment (Волкова, 2024).

Transpersonal psychology extends the understanding of subconscious dimensions by recognizing spiritual and transcendent aspects of the psyche. Transpersonal theorists propose that the unconscious contains not only repressed personal material but also spiritual potentials, archetypal wisdom, and connection to universal consciousness (Haryanto et al., 2024). Practices such as meditation, breathwork, and psychedelic-assisted therapy can access these deeper layers of the subconscious, facilitating experiences of unity, transcendence, and profound meaning that cognitive approaches cannot produce (Zhu, 2024).

The concept of subconscious barriers to purpose is particularly relevant in understanding why cognitive interventions often fail. Many individuals can articulate clear values, identify meaningful goals, and understand intellectually what would give their life purpose, yet they remain unable to act on this knowledge or feel connected to it experientially. This disconnect typically reflects

subconscious protective mechanisms—shadow patterns developed in childhood or through trauma that continue to operate autonomously (Kenneth et al., 2024).

For example, a person may consciously value creativity and identify artistic expression as their purpose, yet find themselves unable to create, procrastinating endlessly or sabotaging their efforts. Exploration of the subconscious might reveal a childhood experience of being shamed for creative expression, leading to repression of creative impulses (shadow) and development of perfectionism as a protective strategy. Until this subconscious pattern is accessed and transformed, cognitive knowledge of purpose remains disconnected from lived experience (Asagba, 2024).

Similarly, individuals may struggle with purpose because subconscious beliefs about worthiness, safety, or belonging conflict with their conscious aspirations. Someone who subconsciously believes they don't deserve success will sabotage opportunities that align with their stated purpose. Someone whose nervous system learned that visibility equals danger will struggle to step into leadership roles, regardless of conscious desire to make a difference (Leidig, 2025).

The therapeutic implication is clear: effective purpose work must engage the subconscious. This requires methodologies that go beyond cognitive insight to access and transform implicit patterns, somatic holdings, and repressed material. Hypnotherapy, for instance, uses trance states to bypass conscious defenses and work directly with the subconscious mind, facilitating rapid transformation of limiting beliefs and patterns (Chae, 2025). Parts work and Internal Family Systems therapy engage subconscious "parts" of the psyche, facilitating dialogue and integration among conflicting aspects of self (Leidig, 2025).

Shadow work specifically offers a powerful pathway for purpose discovery because it transforms the very material that blocks authentic expression. By bringing shadow aspects into awareness, understanding their protective function, and integrating their energy and wisdom, individuals reclaim disowned potentials and access the authentic self that knows its purpose (Marco et al., 2022). This process is not merely about resolving problems but about recovering lost aspects of self that contain vitality, creativity, and the capacity for authentic meaning-making.

Furthermore, working at the subconscious level facilitates what might be termed "remembering" rather than "discovering" purpose. This perspective, rooted in Platonic philosophy and echoed in various spiritual traditions, suggests that authentic purpose is not created through conscious effort but already exists within the individual's deeper self (Devergnas, 2022). The task is not to invent purpose but to remove the barriers—shadow patterns, protective mechanisms, limiting beliefs—that prevent access to the purpose already present in the subconscious depths. This reframe shifts the therapeutic stance from helping clients create meaning to helping them remember and embody the meaning they have always carried.

The SGE model, as we will explore in the next section, operationalizes these depth psychology principles by providing a structured methodology for shadow integration and purpose embodiment. By working systematically with shadow, gift, and essence, the model facilitates subconscious transformation that enables individuals to access and live from their authentic purpose.

2.3. The SGE (Shadow→Gift→Essence) Model

The Shadow→Gift→Essence (SGE) model represents an integrative framework for facilitating purpose discovery and embodiment through subconscious transformation. Developed from depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic therapy traditions, the SGE model provides a structured methodology for shadow integration that is both theoretically grounded and clinically practical. The model's central premise is that authentic purpose emerges not through conscious effort alone but through transforming disowned aspects of self (Shadow) into positive intentions (Gift) and embodied qualities (Essence).

The SGE model conceptualizes three interconnected dimensions that form a transformative arc. The Shadow represents disowned, repressed, or rejected aspects of self that developed as protective strategies in response to wounding experiences. These are the parts of ourselves we learned were unacceptable, dangerous, or shameful—qualities, emotions, needs, or expressions that we pushed

into the unconscious to maintain safety, belonging, or a coherent self-image (Asagba, 2024). Shadow material manifests in various ways: through projection (seeing in others what we deny in ourselves), compulsion (behaviors we cannot control), sabotage (undermining our own goals), and disconnection (inability to access certain emotions or capacities).

Crucially, the SGE model recognizes that every shadow pattern originally served a protective function. The child who learned to repress anger to avoid parental rejection developed repression as a survival strategy. The adolescent who denied their needs to care for a depressed parent developed denial as an adaptive response. Understanding the shadow's protective origin is essential because it shifts the therapeutic stance from pathologizing to compassionate inquiry (Marco et al., 2022). The shadow is not an enemy to be eliminated but a protector to be understood and integrated.

The Gift represents the positive intention, unmet need, or authentic desire beneath the shadow pattern. Every shadow, no matter how destructive its manifestation, contains a gift—something the individual was trying to protect, express, or obtain through the shadow behavior (Chae, 2025). The gift might be a need for safety, belonging, autonomy, or authentic expression. It might be a desire for love, recognition, or creative fulfillment. Uncovering the gift requires compassionate exploration of what the shadow was trying to accomplish, what need it was attempting to meet, or what authentic aspect of self it was protecting.

For example, a shadow pattern of people-pleasing might contain the gift of a deep need for connection and belonging. A shadow pattern of perfectionism might contain the gift of a desire for excellence and meaningful contribution. A shadow pattern of withdrawal might contain the gift of a need for safety and self-protection. Recognizing the gift transforms the relationship with the shadow from rejection to appreciation—the shadow is no longer merely a problem but a messenger pointing toward something essential (Devergnas, 2022).

The Essence represents the integrated, embodied quality that emerges when shadow and gift unite. Essence is not merely the absence of shadow or the cognitive recognition of the gift but a lived, somatic state—a way of being that integrates the shadow's energy with the gift's wisdom (Волкова, 2024). Essence qualities are transpersonal in nature, reflecting universal virtues and capacities: honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, love. When individuals embody their essence, they experience a profound sense of authenticity, alignment, and purpose. They are no longer driven by unconscious shadow patterns but respond to life from a grounded, resourced place.

The SGE model identifies six fundamental wound-virtue pairs that map common shadow patterns to their corresponding essence qualities. These pairs reflect universal human experiences of wounding and the potential for transformation into virtue:

1. **Repression → Honesty**: The shadow of repression (pushing down emotions, needs, or truths) transforms into the essence of honesty (authentic self-expression and truth-telling).
2. **Denial → Ease**: The shadow of denial (refusing to acknowledge reality or needs) transforms into the essence of ease (relaxed acceptance and flow).
3. **Shame → Humour**: The shadow of shame (feeling fundamentally flawed or unworthy) transforms into the essence of humour (lightness, playfulness, and self-acceptance).
4. **Rejection → Gentleness**: The shadow of rejection (harsh self-criticism or rejection of others) transforms into the essence of gentleness (compassionate presence and tender acceptance).
5. **Guilt → Forgiveness**: The shadow of guilt (self-blame and responsibility for others' pain) transforms into the essence of forgiveness (releasing blame and embracing compassion).
6. **Separation → Love**: The shadow of separation (disconnection from self, others, or the divine) transforms into the essence of love (unity, connection, and belonging).

These wound-virtue pairs provide a map for understanding individual shadow patterns and their transformative potential. While not exhaustive, they capture common themes that emerge in therapeutic work and offer a framework for guiding the transformation process (Kenneth et al., 2024).

The SGE model unfolds through a five-stage therapeutic process designed to facilitate safe, systematic shadow integration:

Stage 1: Safe Container involves establishing psychological safety, building therapeutic alliance, and creating conditions for vulnerable exploration. This stage recognizes that shadow work requires a secure base—individuals must feel safe enough to encounter disowned aspects of self without becoming overwhelmed or retraumatized (Leidig, 2025). Techniques include grounding practices, resource building, and explicit contracting about the therapeutic process.

Stage 2: Shadow Explore involves identifying and exploring shadow patterns through compassionate inquiry. This stage uses techniques such as tracking bodily sensations, exploring projections, examining self-sabotage patterns, and investigating emotional reactivity to access shadow material (Marco et al., 2022). The therapeutic stance is one of curiosity rather than judgment, recognizing the shadow's protective function and honoring its role in the individual's survival.

Stage 3: Gift Uncover involves discovering the positive intention, unmet need, or authentic desire beneath the shadow pattern. This stage asks questions such as: What was this shadow trying to protect? What need was it attempting to meet? What authentic aspect of self was it preserving? Uncovering the gift often produces a profound shift in the client's relationship with their shadow—from rejection to appreciation, from shame to compassion (Chae, 2025).

Stage 4: Essence Install involves embodying the integrated quality that emerges when shadow and gift unite. This stage uses somatic techniques, visualization, and experiential practices to install the essence quality at a subconscious, embodied level (Волкова, 2024). The goal is not merely cognitive understanding but visceral, felt experience of the essence state. Techniques might include guided imagery, somatic anchoring, hypnotic suggestion, or ritual practices that encode the essence quality in implicit memory and nervous system patterns.

Stage 5: Integrate + Act involves bringing the essence quality into daily life through intentional practice and behavioral change. This stage recognizes that transformation requires not only internal shift but also external expression—individuals must practice living from their essence in real-world contexts (Devergnas, 2022). This might involve setting boundaries (honesty), allowing rest (ease), bringing playfulness to challenges (humour), treating oneself with compassion (gentleness), releasing resentments (forgiveness), or deepening connections (love).

The five-stage process is not strictly linear but iterative and recursive. Individuals may cycle through stages multiple times as they work with different shadow patterns or deepen their integration of a particular essence quality. The model provides structure while remaining flexible enough to adapt to individual needs and therapeutic contexts (Leidig, 2025).

The SGE model's integration of depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic approaches distinguishes it from purely cognitive frameworks. By working at the subconscious level through shadow integration, the model accesses and transforms the implicit patterns that shape meaning-making and purpose. By recognizing essence qualities as transpersonal virtues, the model connects individual transformation to universal human capacities and spiritual dimensions. By emphasizing embodiment and somatic installation, the model ensures that transformation is not merely intellectual but lived and felt (Волкова, 2024).

Furthermore, the SGE model reframes purpose discovery as "remembering" rather than "creating." This perspective suggests that authentic purpose already exists within the individual's deeper self but has been obscured by shadow patterns developed in response to wounding (Asagba, 2024). The therapeutic task is not to help clients invent purpose but to remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing the purpose they have always carried. This reframe is both empowering and relieving—it suggests that individuals do not need to search externally for purpose but can trust that purpose will emerge naturally as shadow patterns are integrated and essence qualities are embodied.

The SGE model also provides a framework for understanding why cognitive approaches to purpose often fail. When individuals cannot connect with or act on their stated purpose, it typically reflects unintegrated shadow material that operates autonomously in the subconscious (Kenneth et al., 2024). Cognitive insight about purpose cannot override subconscious protective mechanisms. Only by working directly with the shadow—understanding its protective function, uncovering its

gift, and integrating its energy into essence—can individuals access the authentic self that knows its purpose and has the capacity to live it.

In the following sections, we will systematically compare the SGE model with five major frameworks in purpose and meaning research, demonstrating its unique contributions and potential for integration with existing approaches.

3. Comparative Analysis

3.1. SGE vs. Existential/Logotherapy Models

Viktor Frankl's logotherapy represents one of the most influential frameworks for understanding purpose and meaning, positioning the "will to meaning" as humanity's primary motivational force (Ünal, 2020). Logotherapy proposes that meaning can be discovered through three pathways: creative values (contributing through work or creation), experiential values (receiving beauty, love, or truth), and attitudinal values (choosing one's stance toward unavoidable suffering) (Wong et al., 2024). Frankl's emphasis on finding meaning through suffering has proven particularly powerful, offering hope and direction to individuals facing adversity, illness, or trauma (Beuselinck, 2021).

The SGE model shares logotherapy's fundamental premise that meaning is central to psychological health and that individuals possess an innate capacity for meaning-making. Both frameworks recognize that purpose is not imposed externally but discovered or accessed from within. Both emphasize transformation through suffering, though they conceptualize this process differently (Shin, 2024). Both honor the spiritual dimension of human experience, recognizing that meaning often involves connection to something transcendent.

However, the frameworks diverge significantly in their approach to how meaning is accessed and embodied. Logotherapy operates primarily at the conscious, cognitive level, emphasizing conscious reflection on meaning, deliberate choice of attitudes, and cognitive reframing of suffering (Marco et al., 2022). Frankl's techniques—such as paradoxical intention and dereflection—engage conscious processes to shift perspective and behavior. While profoundly effective for many individuals, this cognitive emphasis may not address subconscious patterns that block meaning-making.

The SGE model, in contrast, works explicitly at the subconscious level through shadow integration. Rather than focusing on conscious attitude choice, the SGE model explores the unconscious protective mechanisms that prevent individuals from accessing authentic purpose (Asagba, 2024). The model recognizes that many people can intellectually identify what gives their life meaning (Frankl's creative, experiential, or attitudinal values) yet feel profoundly disconnected from that meaning in their lived experience. This disconnect typically reflects unintegrated shadow material that operates autonomously in the subconscious.

The SGE model's approach to suffering also differs from logotherapy's emphasis on finding meaning through suffering. While Frankl focused on choosing one's attitude toward unavoidable suffering, the SGE model explores how suffering itself—particularly early wounding experiences—creates shadow patterns that block authentic purpose (Wong et al., 2024). The model proposes that suffering is not merely something to find meaning in but something to transform through shadow integration. By understanding the protective function of shadow patterns developed in response to suffering, individuals can reclaim the disowned aspects of self that contain vitality and authentic purpose.

Furthermore, the SGE model's concept of the Gift offers a unique perspective on suffering's role in meaning-making. Every shadow pattern, no matter how destructive its manifestation, contains a gift—a positive intention or unmet need that the shadow was attempting to protect or express (Chae, 2025). This reframe suggests that suffering and shadow are not obstacles to meaning but portals to it. The very patterns that seem to block purpose actually point toward it, containing the keys to authentic self-expression and meaning-making. This perspective transforms the relationship with

suffering from something to transcend through attitude choice to something to explore and integrate through compassionate inquiry.

The SGE model's emphasis on embodiment also distinguishes it from logotherapy's cognitive focus. While Frankl emphasized conscious meaning-making, the SGE model recognizes that purpose is not merely a cognitive construct but an embodied, somatic experience (Волкова, 2024). The Essence stage involves installing integrated qualities at a visceral, felt level through somatic techniques, ensuring that transformation is not merely intellectual but lived in the body and nervous system. This embodied approach addresses the common clinical observation that cognitive insight about meaning does not necessarily translate into felt connection or behavioral change.

Despite these differences, the frameworks are highly complementary. Logotherapy's three pathways to meaning (creative, experiential, attitudinal) can be enriched by SGE's shadow work. For instance, an individual who identifies creative work as meaningful but cannot engage with it might explore shadow patterns (e.g., perfectionism, fear of judgment) that block creative expression. By transforming the shadow of shame into the essence of humour or the shadow of rejection into the essence of gentleness, the individual gains access to the creative capacity that logotherapy identifies as meaningful (Devergnas, 2022).

Similarly, logotherapy's emphasis on attitudinal values—choosing one's stance toward suffering—can be deepened by SGE's exploration of how past suffering created shadow patterns. Rather than simply choosing a new attitude toward current suffering, individuals can transform the subconscious patterns that past suffering created, fundamentally altering their capacity to respond to life's challenges (Kenneth et al., 2024). This integration suggests that logotherapy and the SGE model address different levels of the same process: logotherapy works with conscious meaning-making while the SGE model works with subconscious barriers to meaning-making.

Contemporary developments in existential positive psychology (PP 2.0) further support this integration. Wong's integrative meaning therapy explicitly combines existential, positive, and clinical psychology traditions, recognizing humans as bio-psycho-social-spiritual beings (Wong, 2020). This holistic framework creates space for both logotherapy's conscious meaning-making and the SGE model's subconscious transformation. The SGE model can be understood as providing the depth dimension that integrative meaning therapy calls for—a methodology for accessing and transforming the subconscious patterns that shape meaning-making capacity.

Research on logotherapy's effectiveness provides additional context for integration. Studies demonstrate that logotherapy interventions reduce existential vacuum, enhance meaning in life, and improve psychological well-being across diverse populations (Crea et al., 2022; Rahgozar et al., 2022). However, research also reveals that some individuals do not respond to logotherapy, particularly those with complex trauma, severe personality disturbance, or deeply entrenched protective patterns (Kenneth et al., 2024). These non-responders may be precisely the individuals who require subconscious-level intervention that the SGE model provides.

The SGE model's structured five-stage process also offers practical advantages for clinicians trained in logotherapy. While logotherapy provides philosophical framework and general principles, it offers less specific guidance on therapeutic process and technique (Parker, 2021). The SGE model's stages—safe container, shadow explore, gift uncover, essence install, integrate and act—provide a clear roadmap for facilitating transformation, with specific techniques at each stage. This structure can enhance logotherapy practice by offering concrete methods for addressing subconscious barriers to meaning-making.

In summary, the SGE model and logotherapy share fundamental values—the centrality of meaning, the human capacity for transformation, and the spiritual dimension of existence—but operate at different levels of psychological functioning. Logotherapy works primarily with conscious meaning-making processes, while the SGE model works with subconscious patterns that enable or block meaning-making. Rather than competing, these frameworks complement each other, with the SGE model providing the depth dimension that enhances logotherapy's effectiveness. The integration of both approaches offers a comprehensive pathway to purpose: logotherapy helps individuals

identify and choose meaning consciously, while the SGE model removes subconscious barriers that prevent them from embodying that meaning authentically.

3.2. SGE vs. Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, represents a major empirical framework for understanding human motivation, well-being, and flourishing. SDT proposes that psychological health depends on satisfying three basic psychological needs: autonomy (experiencing choice and volition), competence (feeling effective and capable), and relatedness (experiencing connection with others) (Волкова, 2024). When these needs are met through autonomous motivation and supportive environments, individuals experience intrinsic motivation, vitality, and psychological well-being. When needs are thwarted through controlling environments or extrinsic motivation, individuals experience diminished well-being, alienation, and lack of purpose.

SDT's empirical rigor and extensive research base have made it one of the most influential frameworks in contemporary psychology. Studies across cultures, contexts, and populations consistently demonstrate that need satisfaction predicts well-being, meaning in life, and flourishing (Волкова, 2024). SDT has generated practical applications in education, work, healthcare, and psychotherapy, offering evidence-based strategies for enhancing motivation and well-being through need-supportive environments and autonomous goal pursuit.

The SGE model shares SDT's emphasis on fundamental human needs and their role in psychological health. The concept of the Gift in the SGE model closely parallels SDT's basic needs—the gift often represents an unmet need for autonomy, competence, or relatedness that the shadow pattern was attempting to protect or express (Chae, 2025). For example, a shadow pattern of people-pleasing might contain the gift of a need for relatedness and belonging. A shadow pattern of perfectionism might contain the gift of a need for competence and effectiveness. A shadow pattern of rebellion might contain the gift of a need for autonomy and self-determination.

However, the frameworks diverge significantly in their level of analysis and intervention approach. SDT operates primarily at the conscious, behavioral level, focusing on environmental conditions, goal content, and motivational processes that support or thwart need satisfaction (Волкова, 2024). SDT interventions typically involve restructuring environments to be more need-supportive, helping individuals set autonomous goals, and fostering intrinsic motivation through choice and competence feedback. While highly effective, this approach assumes that individuals can respond to need-supportive conditions when they are provided.

The SGE model, in contrast, addresses why some individuals cannot access or respond to need-supportive conditions even when they are available. Clinical experience reveals that many people intellectually understand their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness yet find themselves unable to pursue or accept need satisfaction (Leidig, 2025). They may sabotage relationships that offer genuine connection, reject opportunities for competence development, or feel unable to exercise autonomy even when given choice. These patterns typically reflect subconscious shadow material that blocks need satisfaction.

For instance, an individual with a shadow pattern of unworthiness (rooted in shame) may be unable to accept relatedness even in supportive relationships, constantly expecting rejection or feeling like an imposter. An individual with a shadow pattern of helplessness (rooted in early experiences of powerlessness) may be unable to exercise autonomy even when given freedom, feeling paralyzed by choice or defaulting to external control. An individual with a shadow pattern of inadequacy may be unable to experience competence even when objectively successful, constantly moving goalposts or dismissing achievements (Asagba, 2024).

The SGE model proposes that these subconscious patterns must be addressed before individuals can fully benefit from need-supportive conditions. By exploring the shadow (understanding its protective function), uncovering the gift (recognizing the underlying need), and installing the essence (embodying the integrated quality), individuals gain the internal capacity to pursue and accept need

satisfaction (Devergnas, 2022). This subconscious transformation enables individuals to respond to the environmental and motivational conditions that SDT identifies as crucial for well-being.

The SGE model's concept of Essence also extends SDT's framework by emphasizing embodied, transpersonal qualities that emerge when needs are not merely satisfied but integrated at a deep level. While SDT focuses on need satisfaction as an outcome, the SGE model focuses on the transformation process that enables sustainable need satisfaction (Волкова, 2024). Essence qualities like honesty, ease, gentleness, and love represent not just satisfied needs but integrated ways of being that transcend the need-satisfaction cycle. An individual who embodies the essence of love, for example, experiences relatedness not as a need to be satisfied but as a natural expression of their being.

This distinction reflects different philosophical orientations. SDT is grounded in organismic-dialectical metatheory, viewing humans as active organisms seeking growth through need satisfaction in dialectical relationship with their environment. The SGE model is grounded in depth and transpersonal psychology, viewing humans as containing both shadow (disowned aspects) and essence (transpersonal qualities) that must be integrated for authentic self-expression (Haryanto et al., 2024). While SDT emphasizes the organism-environment interaction, the SGE model emphasizes the internal integration of disowned aspects.

Despite these differences, the frameworks are highly complementary. SDT provides the empirical foundation and environmental/motivational conditions necessary for well-being, while the SGE model provides the depth work necessary for individuals to access those conditions. An integrated approach might involve: (1) using SDT principles to create need-supportive environments and foster autonomous motivation, and (2) using the SGE model to address subconscious barriers that prevent individuals from responding to those conditions (Chae, 2025).

For example, in organizational contexts, SDT-informed leadership practices create autonomy-supportive work environments that should enhance employee motivation and well-being. However, some employees may not respond to these practices due to subconscious patterns—perhaps a shadow of unworthiness that makes them unable to accept autonomy, or a shadow of separation that prevents them from experiencing relatedness with colleagues. SGE-based coaching or therapy could address these subconscious barriers, enabling employees to benefit from the need-supportive environment (Devergnas, 2022).

Similarly, in therapeutic contexts, SDT-informed therapy helps clients identify autonomous goals and pursue need satisfaction. However, clients who repeatedly sabotage their goals or cannot sustain motivation despite supportive conditions may require SGE-based shadow work to address the subconscious patterns driving self-sabotage (Kenneth et al., 2024). By integrating shadow material and embodying essence qualities, clients gain the internal capacity to pursue autonomous goals and accept need satisfaction.

Research directions emerge from this integration. SDT research has identified that need frustration (active thwarting of needs) is particularly detrimental to well-being, more so than mere need dissatisfaction (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model suggests that need frustration in childhood and developmental periods creates shadow patterns that persist into adulthood, continuing to block need satisfaction even when frustrating conditions are no longer present. Research could examine whether SGE-based shadow work reduces the impact of past need frustration on current well-being and need satisfaction capacity.

Additionally, SDT distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with intrinsic motivation (engaging in activities for inherent satisfaction) predicting greater well-being than extrinsic motivation (engaging for external rewards or approval). The SGE model suggests that shadow patterns often drive extrinsic motivation—for example, perfectionism driven by shame, people-pleasing driven by fear of rejection, or achievement-striving driven by unworthiness (Asagba, 2024). Research could examine whether shadow integration shifts motivational orientation from extrinsic to intrinsic by removing the subconscious drivers of extrinsic motivation.

The SGE model's emphasis on embodiment also complements SDT's focus on vitality—a key indicator of well-being in SDT research. Vitality represents feeling alive and energized, which SDT

links to need satisfaction (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model proposes that vitality emerges not only from need satisfaction but from reclaiming the energy bound in shadow patterns. When individuals integrate shadow material, they access the life force that was previously used to maintain repression, denial, or other protective mechanisms. This reclaimed energy manifests as vitality, creativity, and authentic self-expression (Devergnas, 2022).

In summary, the SGE model and SDT address different levels of the same fundamental process: SDT identifies the needs and conditions necessary for well-being and purpose, while the SGE model addresses the subconscious barriers that prevent individuals from accessing those needs and conditions. SDT operates at the conscious, behavioral, and environmental level, while the SGE model operates at the subconscious, intrapsychic level. Rather than competing, these frameworks complement each other, with the SGE model providing the depth dimension that enables individuals to benefit from the need-supportive conditions that SDT identifies. An integrated approach that combines SDT's empirical rigor and environmental focus with the SGE model's depth work and embodiment practices offers a comprehensive pathway to purpose and well-being.

3.3. SGE vs. Jungian/Shadow Work Models

Carl Jung's analytical psychology introduced the concept of the shadow—the disowned, repressed, or rejected aspects of self that reside in the personal unconscious (Popov et al., 2020). Jung proposed that the shadow contains not only negative qualities we dislike but also positive potentials we have disowned, and that psychological health requires integrating the shadow through the process of individuation—becoming one's authentic, whole self (Asagba, 2024). Shadow work, as developed by Jung and subsequent depth psychologists, involves bringing unconscious material into conscious awareness, understanding its origins and functions, and reclaiming disowned aspects of self.

The SGE model is explicitly grounded in Jungian shadow work, sharing its fundamental premise that disowned aspects of self must be integrated for authentic self-expression and purpose. Both frameworks recognize that the shadow operates autonomously in the unconscious, influencing behavior through projection, compulsion, and sabotage. Both emphasize that shadow integration is not about eliminating negative qualities but about understanding their protective function and reclaiming their energy (Marco et al., 2022). Both view individuation or authentic self-expression as the goal of psychological development.

However, the SGE model extends and operationalizes Jungian shadow work in several significant ways. First, the SGE model provides a structured, systematic methodology for shadow integration through its five-stage process: safe container, shadow explore, gift uncover, essence install, and integrate and act (Leidig, 2025). While Jungian analysis offers rich theoretical concepts and emphasizes the therapeutic relationship, it provides less specific guidance on therapeutic process and technique. The SGE model's stages offer a clear roadmap for facilitating shadow work, making it more accessible to clinicians across theoretical orientations.

Second, the SGE model introduces the concept of the Gift as an explicit bridge between shadow and essence. Traditional Jungian shadow work emphasizes bringing unconscious material into consciousness and integrating it, but the mechanism of integration is often left implicit (Popov et al., 2020). The SGE model proposes that every shadow contains a gift—a positive intention, unmet need, or authentic desire that the shadow was attempting to protect or express (Chae, 2025). By explicitly uncovering this gift, the SGE model provides a concrete pathway for transformation: the shadow is not merely accepted but understood as containing something essential that must be reclaimed.

This gift-focused approach shifts the therapeutic stance in important ways. Rather than simply confronting the shadow or making the unconscious conscious, the therapist helps the client discover what the shadow was trying to accomplish, what need it was attempting to meet, or what authentic aspect of self it was protecting (Devergnas, 2022). This reframe transforms the relationship with the shadow from adversarial to appreciative—the shadow becomes a messenger pointing toward

something essential rather than merely a problem to be solved. This appreciative stance facilitates integration by reducing resistance and shame.

Third, the SGE model emphasizes embodiment and somatic installation of integrated qualities through the Essence stage. While Jungian analysis recognizes the importance of integrating shadow material, it operates primarily through verbal dialogue, dream analysis, and active imagination (Popov et al., 2020). The SGE model incorporates somatic techniques, visualization, and experiential practices to install essence qualities at a visceral, felt level in the body and nervous system (Волкова, 2024). This embodied approach ensures that integration is not merely cognitive or symbolic but lived and felt in daily experience.

Fourth, the SGE model provides a specific framework of six wound-virtue pairs that map common shadow patterns to their corresponding essence qualities: Repression→Honesty, Denial→Ease, Shame→Humour, Rejection→Gentleness, Guilt→Forgiveness, Separation→Love. While not exhaustive, these pairs offer a practical typology for understanding shadow patterns and their transformative potential (Kenneth et al., 2024). This framework makes shadow work more accessible by providing recognizable patterns that clients can identify with, reducing the abstract complexity that can make Jungian concepts difficult to apply clinically.

Fifth, the SGE model explicitly connects shadow work to purpose discovery and meaning-making. While Jung emphasized individuation as the goal of psychological development, the connection between shadow integration and purpose is often implicit in Jungian literature (Asagba, 2024). The SGE model makes this connection explicit: authentic purpose emerges through shadow integration because the shadow contains the disowned aspects of self that hold vitality, creativity, and authentic expression. By transforming shadow into essence, individuals access the authentic self that knows its purpose and has the capacity to live it (Devergnas, 2022).

This explicit connection to purpose addresses a practical limitation of traditional shadow work: clients may engage in shadow exploration without clear understanding of why or toward what end. The SGE model provides a clear telos—the discovery and embodiment of authentic purpose through essence qualities. This purposeful orientation can enhance motivation and engagement in shadow work, which can be challenging and uncomfortable (Leidig, 2025).

Despite these extensions, the SGE model remains deeply rooted in Jungian principles. The model honors Jung's insight that the shadow is not merely negative but contains disowned positive potentials. It maintains Jung's emphasis on the protective function of psychological defenses and the importance of compassionate, non-judgmental exploration. It preserves Jung's recognition that individuation is a lifelong process requiring ongoing integration of unconscious material (Popov et al., 2020).

The SGE model also aligns with contemporary developments in shadow work and depth psychology. Modern approaches emphasize trauma-informed practice, recognizing that shadow patterns often develop in response to developmental trauma or adverse childhood experiences (Leidig, 2025). The SGE model's emphasis on creating a safe container before shadow exploration reflects this trauma-informed orientation. Similarly, contemporary shadow work increasingly incorporates somatic and body-based approaches, recognizing that shadow material is held not only in the psyche but in the body and nervous system (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model's embodiment emphasis aligns with this somatic turn in depth psychology.

Research directions emerge from comparing the SGE model with Jungian shadow work. While Jungian analysis has a rich clinical tradition, empirical research on its effectiveness is limited, partly due to the complexity and individualized nature of the approach (Popov et al., 2020). The SGE model's structured methodology may facilitate research by providing standardized stages and measurable outcomes (essence qualities, purpose clarity, behavioral change). Research could examine whether the SGE model's structured approach produces comparable or enhanced outcomes relative to traditional Jungian shadow work.

Additionally, the SGE model's gift concept offers a testable hypothesis: that explicitly uncovering the positive intention or unmet need beneath shadow patterns facilitates integration more

effectively than shadow exploration alone. Research could compare shadow work with and without explicit gift exploration, examining outcomes such as self-compassion, integration of disowned aspects, and purpose clarity (Chae, 2025).

The SGE model's wound-virtue pairs also suggest research directions. These pairs propose specific transformational pathways—for example, that shame transforms into humour, rejection into gentleness, separation into love. Research could examine whether these specific transformations occur in clinical practice, whether they follow predictable patterns, and whether facilitating these specific transformations enhances outcomes (Kenneth et al., 2024).

In summary, the SGE model represents an operationalization and extension of Jungian shadow work, maintaining its core principles while providing greater structure, accessibility, and clinical applicability. The model's innovations—the gift concept, five-stage process, wound-virtue pairs, embodiment emphasis, and explicit connection to purpose—make shadow work more accessible to clinicians and clients while remaining faithful to Jung's fundamental insights. Rather than replacing Jungian shadow work, the SGE model offers a contemporary, structured approach that can enhance depth psychology practice and facilitate empirical research on shadow integration and purpose discovery.

3.4. SGE vs. Transpersonal/Spiritual Models

Transpersonal psychology extends psychological inquiry beyond the personal ego to include spiritual, transcendent, and collective dimensions of human experience. Transpersonal approaches recognize that purpose and meaning often involve connection to something greater than the individual self—whether conceived as the divine, universal consciousness, collective humanity, or archetypal wisdom (Haryanto et al., 2024). Transpersonal psychology emphasizes practices such as meditation, contemplation, breathwork, and mystical experience as pathways to discovering deeper purpose and accessing transcendent states of consciousness (Zhu, 2024).

The SGE model shares transpersonal psychology's recognition that purpose involves dimensions beyond the personal ego. The concept of Essence in the SGE model is explicitly transpersonal—essence qualities like honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, and love are not merely personal attributes but universal virtues that connect individuals to something greater than themselves (Волкова, 2024). When individuals embody their essence, they experience not only personal authenticity but also connection to archetypal or spiritual dimensions of being. The essence of love, for example, is not merely personal affection but a transpersonal quality that reflects universal connection and unity.

Both frameworks also recognize that transformation involves accessing deeper levels of consciousness beyond ordinary waking awareness. Transpersonal psychology uses practices like meditation to access non-ordinary states of consciousness where transcendent meaning can be experienced (Haryanto et al., 2024). The SGE model uses depth psychology techniques to access the subconscious where shadow and essence reside. While the specific methods differ, both frameworks recognize that authentic purpose cannot be accessed through ordinary conscious processes alone.

However, the frameworks diverge in their primary focus and methodology. Transpersonal psychology emphasizes transcendence—moving beyond the personal ego to access higher states of consciousness, spiritual experiences, and connection to the divine or universal (Zhu, 2024). The therapeutic direction is upward and outward, toward expanded consciousness and spiritual realization. Transpersonal practices often involve letting go of personal concerns, transcending the ego, and merging with something greater.

The SGE model, in contrast, emphasizes integration—bringing unconscious shadow material into awareness and integrating disowned aspects of self. The therapeutic direction is downward and inward, into the depths of the personal unconscious where shadow resides (Asagba, 2024). Rather than transcending the ego, the SGE model works with ego structures to integrate what has been split off or repressed. The model proposes that authentic purpose emerges not by bypassing the personal

but by fully integrating it—reclaiming disowned aspects and embodying essence qualities in personal, lived experience.

This distinction reflects what transpersonal theorist Ken Wilber termed the difference between "transcend and include" versus "transcend and dissociate." Healthy spiritual development requires transcending the ego while including and integrating its contents (Haryanto et al., 2024). Spiritual bypassing—using spiritual practices to avoid or dissociate from personal psychological material—represents unhealthy transcendence that leaves shadow material unintegrated. The SGE model addresses this risk by emphasizing that shadow integration must precede or accompany transcendent experiences for transformation to be sustainable and grounded.

The SGE model's emphasis on shadow work before essence embodiment reflects this integrative approach. Individuals cannot authentically embody transpersonal essence qualities while shadow patterns remain unintegrated and operating autonomously in the subconscious (Devergnas, 2022). For example, someone who practices loving-kindness meditation while harboring unintegrated shame may experience temporary states of love but cannot sustain that quality in daily life because the shadow of shame continues to drive self-rejection and disconnection. The SGE model proposes that shadow integration is necessary for essence qualities to be embodied sustainably rather than experienced only in meditative or transcendent states.

This grounded approach distinguishes the SGE model from transpersonal approaches that may emphasize peak experiences or altered states without adequate attention to integration and embodiment. While transpersonal psychology recognizes the importance of integrating spiritual experiences into daily life, the specific methodology for doing so is often less developed (Zhu, 2024). The SGE model provides a structured process for ensuring that transpersonal essence qualities are not merely experienced temporarily but installed at a somatic, subconscious level and expressed in behavior and relationships.

The SGE model's wound-virtue pairs also offer a developmental framework that complements transpersonal psychology's emphasis on spiritual growth. The pairs suggest that transpersonal virtues (honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, love) emerge through transforming specific wounds and shadow patterns (Kenneth et al., 2024). This developmental perspective grounds transpersonal qualities in personal psychological history, recognizing that spiritual development is not separate from psychological development but intimately connected to it. An individual's capacity to embody love, for example, depends on transforming the shadow of separation that developed through early experiences of disconnection or abandonment.

Despite these differences, the frameworks are highly complementary. Transpersonal psychology provides the spiritual and transcendent context that gives meaning to the SGE model's essence qualities, while the SGE model provides the depth psychology methodology that ensures transpersonal experiences are grounded and integrated (Haryanto et al., 2024). An integrated approach might involve: (1) using transpersonal practices like meditation to access expanded states of consciousness and experience essence qualities, and (2) using the SGE model's shadow work to integrate the personal psychological material that blocks sustainable embodiment of those qualities.

For example, a meditation practitioner who experiences profound states of peace and love during practice but struggles with anger and disconnection in daily life might benefit from SGE-based shadow work. By exploring the shadow of separation (perhaps rooted in early attachment wounds), uncovering the gift (the need for connection and belonging), and integrating the essence of love at a somatic level, the practitioner can bridge the gap between meditative experience and daily embodiment (Волкова, 2024).

Similarly, a client engaged in SGE-based shadow work might benefit from transpersonal practices that provide direct experience of essence qualities. After uncovering the gift and beginning to integrate shadow material, practices like loving-kindness meditation, breathwork, or contemplative prayer can deepen the experience of essence and connect it to spiritual or transcendent dimensions (Haryanto et al., 2024). This integration ensures that shadow work is not merely psychological problem-solving but a pathway to spiritual realization.

Research on transpersonal psychology and spiritual practices provides context for this integration. Studies demonstrate that meditation, mindfulness, and contemplative practices enhance meaning in life, well-being, and spiritual connection (Haryanto et al., 2024). However, research also reveals that some practitioners experience adverse effects or spiritual bypassing, particularly when using spiritual practices to avoid difficult emotions or personal psychological material (Zhu, 2024). The SGE model's emphasis on shadow integration before or alongside transpersonal practice may reduce these risks by ensuring that personal material is addressed rather than bypassed.

Additionally, research on psychedelic-assisted therapy—a contemporary application of transpersonal principles—demonstrates that mystical or transcendent experiences during psychedelic sessions predict therapeutic outcomes, but integration work after the experience is crucial for sustained benefit (Zhu, 2024). The SGE model's structured integration process could enhance psychedelic-assisted therapy by providing a framework for integrating the shadow material that often emerges during psychedelic experiences and embodying the essence qualities that are accessed.

The SGE model's concept of Fundamental Peace also connects to transpersonal psychology's emphasis on spiritual realization. Fundamental Peace represents a sustainable state of inner coherence and alignment that emerges when shadow is integrated and essence is embodied (Shin, 2024). This state parallels what transpersonal traditions describe as enlightenment, liberation, or union with the divine—a profound shift in consciousness characterized by peace, love, and connection. However, the SGE model grounds this state in psychological integration rather than transcendent experience alone, suggesting that Fundamental Peace emerges through the marriage of depth and transpersonal work.

In summary, the SGE model and transpersonal psychology address complementary dimensions of purpose and meaning: transpersonal psychology emphasizes transcendence and spiritual connection, while the SGE model emphasizes integration and embodiment. Transpersonal approaches risk spiritual bypassing when personal material is not integrated, while depth approaches risk remaining stuck in personal psychology without accessing transcendent dimensions. The integration of both frameworks offers a comprehensive pathway: shadow work ensures that personal material is integrated and grounded, while transpersonal practices provide access to spiritual dimensions and essence qualities. This integrated approach honors both the depths and the heights of human experience, facilitating purpose discovery that is both psychologically grounded and spiritually meaningful.

3.5. SGE vs. Positive Psychology Models

Positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, represents a paradigm shift from psychology's traditional focus on pathology and dysfunction to the study of human strengths, flourishing, and optimal functioning. Positive psychology has contributed significantly to purpose and meaning research through constructs such as meaning in life, purpose in life, character strengths, post-traumatic growth, and flourishing (Nel et al., 2022). The field emphasizes that psychological health involves not merely the absence of disorder but the presence of positive qualities like gratitude, hope, resilience, and meaning (Devergnas, 2022).

Positive psychology interventions for enhancing meaning include gratitude practices, strengths identification and use, legacy work, acts of kindness, and meaning-making exercises. Research demonstrates that these interventions can enhance well-being, life satisfaction, and meaning in life across diverse populations (Nel et al., 2022). Positive psychology's empirical rigor and practical applications have made it highly influential in clinical practice, education, organizational settings, and public health.

The SGE model shares positive psychology's emphasis on human potential and growth. Both frameworks recognize that individuals possess inherent capacities for flourishing and meaning-making. Both emphasize transformation toward positive qualities—positive psychology's character strengths parallel the SGE model's essence qualities (honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness,

love). Both frameworks are ultimately optimistic about human nature and the possibility of positive change (Devergnas, 2022).

However, the frameworks diverge fundamentally in their approach to how positive qualities are accessed and developed. Positive psychology generally emphasizes building on existing strengths and cultivating positive experiences, emotions, and cognitions (Nel et al., 2022). The therapeutic direction is toward the positive—identifying what is working, amplifying strengths, and creating conditions for flourishing. Positive psychology interventions typically involve conscious practices that directly cultivate positive qualities: practicing gratitude to enhance appreciation, using signature strengths to increase engagement, or performing acts of kindness to foster connection.

The SGE model, in contrast, proposes that authentic positive qualities emerge through working with the negative—specifically, through integrating shadow material. The therapeutic direction is first toward the shadow, exploring disowned, repressed, or rejected aspects of self before essence qualities can be authentically embodied (Asagba, 2024). The model suggests that attempting to cultivate positive qualities without addressing shadow material risks superficiality, inauthenticity, or what might be termed "positive bypassing"—using positive practices to avoid or suppress difficult emotions and experiences.

This distinction reflects different assumptions about psychological structure and development. Positive psychology tends to view positive and negative as separate dimensions—individuals can have both strengths and weaknesses, and the goal is to build strengths while managing weaknesses (Nel et al., 2022). The SGE model, grounded in depth psychology, views positive and negative as interconnected—the shadow contains the energy and potential that, when integrated, becomes essence. Positive qualities are not separate from negative experiences but emerge through transforming them (Marco et al., 2022).

For example, positive psychology might help someone cultivate gratitude through daily gratitude journaling, focusing attention on positive aspects of life. This practice can be effective for enhancing well-being and meaning. However, if the individual has unintegrated shadow material—perhaps repressed anger or denied needs—the gratitude practice may feel forced or inauthentic, creating a split between the positive persona they present and the shadow material they suppress (Devergnas, 2022).

The SGE model would approach this differently, first exploring the shadow material: What anger has been repressed? What needs have been denied? What is the gift beneath these shadow patterns? By integrating the shadow of repression (perhaps transforming it into the essence of honesty), the individual gains authentic access to gratitude that is not forced or compensatory but emerges naturally from honest acknowledgment of both difficulty and blessing (Kenneth et al., 2024).

This critique of positive psychology—that it may bypass shadow material—has been articulated by various theorists who caution against "positive psychology's dark side" or "the tyranny of positive thinking" (Wong, 2020). The concern is that emphasizing the positive without addressing the negative can lead to suppression of difficult emotions, shame about struggling, and superficial positivity that lacks depth and authenticity. Wong's existential positive psychology (PP 2.0) addresses this concern by emphasizing "flourishing through suffering," integrating positive psychology with existential psychology's recognition of life's tragic dimensions (Wong, 2020).

The SGE model aligns with this integrative direction, proposing that authentic flourishing requires working through suffering and shadow rather than bypassing them. The model's emphasis on the Gift—the positive intention or unmet need beneath the shadow—offers a bridge between depth work and positive outcomes. By uncovering the gift, individuals discover that their shadow patterns were attempts to meet legitimate needs or protect authentic aspects of self (Chae, 2025). This recognition transforms shadow work from merely processing negativity to discovering positive potential, aligning depth psychology with positive psychology's emphasis on human potential.

The SGE model's essence qualities also parallel positive psychology's character strengths, suggesting potential integration. Positive psychology identifies 24 character strengths organized into six virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence (Nel et al., 2022). The

SGE model's six essence qualities (honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, love) overlap with several character strengths (honesty, humor, kindness, forgiveness, love). However, the SGE model proposes that these qualities emerge through shadow integration rather than direct cultivation.

This suggests a developmental sequence: shadow work may be necessary before character strengths can be authentically expressed. An individual with unintegrated shame, for example, may struggle to express the character strength of humor authentically—their humor may be self-deprecating or defensive rather than genuine playfulness. By transforming the shadow of shame into the essence of humour through the SGE process, the individual gains authentic access to humor as a character strength (Devergnas, 2022).

Research directions emerge from this comparison. Positive psychology research has identified that some individuals do not respond to positive interventions or even experience negative effects (Nel et al., 2022). These non-responders may be individuals with significant unintegrated shadow material for whom positive practices feel inauthentic or triggering. Research could examine whether SGE-based shadow work enhances responsiveness to positive psychology interventions by removing barriers to authentic positive experience.

Additionally, positive psychology distinguishes between hedonic well-being (pleasure and positive emotion) and eudaimonic well-being (meaning, purpose, and flourishing). Research consistently shows that eudaimonic well-being is more strongly associated with psychological health and resilience than hedonic well-being (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model's emphasis on essence and authentic purpose aligns with eudaimonic well-being, suggesting that shadow integration may particularly enhance eudaimonic outcomes. Research could examine whether the SGE model produces greater gains in eudaimonic versus hedonic well-being compared to traditional positive psychology interventions.

The SGE model's emphasis on embodiment also addresses a limitation in some positive psychology interventions. Many positive practices operate at the cognitive level (thinking grateful thoughts, identifying strengths cognitively), which may not produce embodied, felt shifts in experience (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model's somatic installation of essence qualities ensures that positive qualities are not merely cognitive concepts but embodied, lived experiences. Research could compare cognitive versus embodied approaches to cultivating positive qualities, examining whether somatic installation produces more sustainable outcomes.

Despite these differences, the frameworks are complementary. Positive psychology provides empirical validation and practical interventions for enhancing well-being and meaning, while the SGE model provides the depth dimension that ensures positive qualities are authentic and sustainable (Wong, 2020). An integrated approach might involve: (1) using the SGE model to address shadow material and remove barriers to authentic positive experience, and (2) using positive psychology interventions to cultivate and strengthen essence qualities once they have been accessed through shadow work.

For example, a client might first engage in SGE-based shadow work to transform the shadow of rejection into the essence of gentleness. Once this essence quality is accessed and installed somatically, positive psychology practices like loving-kindness meditation or compassionate self-talk can strengthen and generalize the quality across contexts (Nel et al., 2022). This integration ensures that positive practices build on authentic foundation rather than creating superficial positivity.

In summary, the SGE model and positive psychology represent complementary approaches to human flourishing: positive psychology emphasizes building strengths and cultivating positive experiences, while the SGE model emphasizes integrating shadow material to access authentic positive qualities. Positive psychology risks bypassing shadow material, while depth approaches risk remaining focused on problems without accessing positive potential. The integration of both frameworks offers a comprehensive pathway: shadow work ensures that positive qualities are authentic and grounded, while positive psychology provides evidence-based practices for cultivating and strengthening those qualities. This integrated approach honors both the depths and the heights

of human experience, facilitating purpose and meaning that are both psychologically authentic and positively oriented toward flourishing.

4. Integration with ITM and Fundamental Peace

4.1 Inner Transformation Model (ITM) Connection

The Inner Transformation Model (ITM) represents a comprehensive framework for facilitating deep, sustainable psychological change across multiple dimensions of human experience. The ITM recognizes that authentic transformation requires working at cognitive, emotional, somatic, and spiritual levels simultaneously, with particular attention to subconscious patterns that maintain psychological suffering and block authentic self-expression. The model emphasizes that surface-level interventions—those that address only conscious thoughts or behaviors—produce temporary change at best, while deep transformation requires accessing and transforming the subconscious roots of psychological patterns.

The SGE model serves as a practical mechanism within the ITM framework, providing specific tools and processes for facilitating subconscious transformation. While the ITM offers a broad theoretical framework for understanding transformation, the SGE model operationalizes that framework through its structured five-stage process and specific focus on shadow integration. The relationship between the models is one of framework and method: the ITM describes what transformation requires (multi-level change, subconscious work, embodiment), while the SGE model describes how to facilitate that transformation (through shadow exploration, gift uncovering, and essence installation).

The ITM's emphasis on subconscious-level work aligns perfectly with the SGE model's core premise. Both frameworks recognize that conscious insight and behavioral change, while valuable, are insufficient for sustainable transformation when subconscious patterns remain unaddressed (Leidig, 2025). An individual may understand intellectually why they sabotage relationships, for example, and may even modify their behavior temporarily through conscious effort. However, if the subconscious shadow pattern driving the sabotage (perhaps rooted in early attachment wounds) remains unintegrated, the pattern will reassert itself, often in subtle or disguised forms.

The SGE model addresses this limitation by working directly with subconscious material through shadow exploration. The Shadow Explore stage uses techniques that bypass conscious defenses and access implicit memory, somatic holdings, and repressed emotions (Marco et al., 2022). By bringing this subconscious material into awareness and understanding its protective function, the model facilitates transformation at the level where patterns are actually maintained—in the subconscious mind and nervous system.

The ITM's multi-dimensional approach is also reflected in the SGE model's integration of cognitive, emotional, somatic, and spiritual dimensions. The Shadow Explore stage engages emotional and somatic dimensions by tracking feelings and bodily sensations. The Gift Uncover stage engages cognitive dimensions by making meaning of shadow patterns and recognizing underlying needs. The Essence Install stage engages somatic and spiritual dimensions by embodying transpersonal qualities at a visceral, felt level (Волкова, 2024). The Integrate and Act stage engages behavioral dimensions by bringing essence qualities into daily life through intentional practice.

This multi-dimensional approach ensures that transformation is comprehensive rather than partial. Cognitive insight without emotional processing leaves feelings unresolved. Emotional catharsis without somatic integration leaves patterns encoded in the nervous system. Spiritual experiences without behavioral integration remain disconnected from daily life (Haryanto et al., 2024). The SGE model's structured process ensures that all dimensions are engaged systematically, producing transformation that is both deep and sustainable.

The ITM's emphasis on purpose crafting also connects directly to the SGE model's focus on purpose discovery through shadow integration. The ITM proposes that authentic purpose cannot be created through conscious effort alone but emerges through inner transformation—specifically, through removing the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing the purpose already present in their deeper self (Devergnas, 2022). This perspective aligns with the SGE model's concept of "remembering" rather than "discovering" purpose.

The SGE model provides the specific methodology for this purpose-crafting process. By transforming shadow patterns that block authentic self-expression, individuals gain access to the essence qualities that reflect their authentic nature and purpose. The essence of honesty, for example, might manifest as a purpose of truth-telling or authentic communication. The essence of gentleness might manifest as a purpose of caregiving or compassionate service. The essence of love might manifest as a purpose of connection-building or community creation (Kenneth et al., 2024).

This connection between essence and purpose suggests that purpose is not arbitrary or externally imposed but emerges organically from one's authentic nature. When individuals embody their essence qualities, purpose becomes self-evident—it is simply the natural expression of who they authentically are. This perspective is both empowering and relieving: individuals do not need to search externally for purpose or create it through willpower, but can trust that purpose will emerge naturally as shadow patterns are integrated and essence is embodied (Asagba, 2024).

The ITM's emphasis on sustainable transformation also aligns with the SGE model's focus on embodiment and integration. The Essence Install stage uses somatic techniques to encode essence qualities in implicit memory and nervous system patterns, ensuring that transformation is not merely cognitive or temporary but embodied and sustainable (Волкова, 2024). The Integrate and Act stage ensures that essence qualities are practiced in real-world contexts, strengthening neural pathways and behavioral patterns that support the new way of being.

This emphasis on sustainability distinguishes both the ITM and SGE model from approaches that produce temporary change or peak experiences without lasting integration. Many therapeutic and spiritual interventions produce powerful insights or experiences that fade quickly when individuals return to daily life (Zhu, 2024). The ITM and SGE model address this limitation by emphasizing that transformation must be installed at a subconscious, somatic level and practiced consistently in daily life to become sustainable.

The relationship between the ITM and SGE model also suggests applications beyond individual therapy. The ITM framework can be applied to organizational transformation, community development, and social change, recognizing that collective transformation requires the same principles as individual transformation: multi-level work, subconscious pattern change, and embodied integration (Chae, 2025). The SGE model could be adapted for these collective contexts, exploring collective shadows (disowned aspects of organizational or community culture), uncovering collective gifts (shared needs and values), and installing collective essence (shared virtues and purpose).

For example, an organization might have a collective shadow of conflict avoidance, rooted in past experiences of destructive conflict. This shadow pattern might manifest as passive-aggressive communication, unresolved tensions, and inability to address problems directly. Using the SGE framework, the organization could explore this shadow (understanding its protective function), uncover the gift (perhaps a need for harmony and psychological safety), and install the essence of honesty (creating a culture of direct, compassionate communication). This collective shadow work would facilitate organizational transformation at a deeper level than surface-level interventions like communication skills training.

Research directions emerge from the ITM-SGE integration. The ITM proposes that transformation requires working at multiple levels simultaneously, suggesting that multi-dimensional interventions should be more effective than single-dimension interventions. Research could compare the SGE model (which engages cognitive, emotional, somatic, and spiritual dimensions) with single-dimension interventions (e.g., cognitive therapy alone, somatic therapy alone), examining whether the multi-dimensional approach produces superior outcomes in purpose clarity, well-being, and behavioral change.

Additionally, the ITM's emphasis on subconscious transformation suggests that interventions targeting subconscious patterns should produce more sustainable change than interventions targeting only conscious processes. Research could examine the durability of change produced by

the SGE model compared to cognitive-behavioral interventions, assessing whether shadow integration produces more lasting transformation in purpose-related outcomes.

In summary, the SGE model serves as a practical mechanism within the Inner Transformation Model framework, operationalizing the ITM's principles through structured shadow work. The models share core assumptions about the necessity of subconscious-level work, multi-dimensional intervention, and embodied integration for sustainable transformation. The SGE model provides the specific methodology for facilitating the deep transformation that the ITM describes, particularly in the domain of purpose discovery and embodiment. Together, the models offer a comprehensive approach to inner transformation that is both theoretically grounded and clinically practical.

4.2. Fundamental Peace as Outcome

Fundamental Peace represents the ultimate outcome of SGE-based transformation—a sustainable state of inner coherence, authenticity, and alignment that transcends temporary symptom relief or situational well-being. This concept distinguishes between surface-level peace (absence of distress or conflict) and deep peace (presence of inner harmony and authentic self-expression). Fundamental Peace emerges when individuals have integrated their shadow patterns, embodied their essence qualities, and aligned their lives with their authentic purpose (Shin, 2024).

The concept of Fundamental Peace addresses a limitation in how psychological health is typically conceptualized and measured. Traditional mental health frameworks focus primarily on symptom reduction—decreasing depression, anxiety, or other forms of distress. While symptom relief is valuable, it represents only the absence of pathology rather than the presence of flourishing (Wong, 2020). An individual can be symptom-free yet still experience inner emptiness, disconnection from purpose, or a sense of living inauthentically. Fundamental Peace represents a qualitatively different state—not merely the absence of suffering but the presence of deep inner harmony.

Fundamental Peace is characterized by several key qualities. First, it involves deep self-acceptance—individuals no longer reject or disown aspects of themselves but embrace their full humanity, including their shadows, vulnerabilities, and imperfections (Волкова, 2024). This self-acceptance emerges through shadow integration: by understanding the protective function of shadow patterns and reclaiming disowned aspects, individuals develop compassion for themselves and acceptance of their complete being.

Second, Fundamental Peace involves authentic self-expression—individuals live in alignment with their essence qualities and authentic purpose rather than performing roles or meeting external expectations (Asagba, 2024). This authenticity emerges through embodying essence: when individuals install essence qualities at a somatic level and practice them in daily life, they experience the freedom and vitality of living from their true nature. The constant effort of maintaining a false self or suppressing authentic expression dissolves, replaced by the ease of being oneself.

Third, Fundamental Peace involves inner coherence—the various aspects of self (thoughts, emotions, values, behaviors) are aligned rather than conflicted (Leidig, 2025). This coherence emerges through integrating shadow and essence: when disowned aspects are reclaimed and integrated with conscious identity, the internal fragmentation that creates inner conflict resolves. Individuals no longer experience the exhausting tension of parts of themselves working at cross-purposes.

Fourth, Fundamental Peace involves grounded presence—individuals are able to be fully present in the moment rather than driven by unconscious patterns, past wounds, or future anxieties (Волкова, 2024). This presence emerges through transforming shadow patterns that kept individuals stuck in past protective strategies or future-oriented striving. When shadow is integrated, the energy previously bound in maintaining defenses becomes available for present-moment awareness and engagement.

Fifth, Fundamental Peace involves compassionate responsiveness—individuals respond to life's challenges from a resourced, grounded place rather than reacting from unconscious patterns (Kenneth et al., 2024). This responsiveness emerges through embodying essence qualities: when individuals have access to honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, and love as lived

capacities, they can meet difficulties with these qualities rather than defaulting to shadow patterns like repression, denial, shame, rejection, guilt, or separation.

The relationship between essence qualities and Fundamental Peace is direct: each essence quality contributes to the overall state of peace. The essence of honesty creates peace through authentic self-expression and truth-telling. The essence of ease creates peace through relaxed acceptance and flow. The essence of humour creates peace through lightness and playfulness. The essence of gentleness creates peace through compassionate presence. The essence of forgiveness creates peace through releasing blame and resentment. The essence of love creates peace through connection and unity (Devergnas, 2022).

Fundamental Peace is also distinguished by its sustainability. Unlike temporary states of peace that depend on external conditions (absence of stressors, presence of pleasant experiences), Fundamental Peace is an internal state that persists across varying circumstances (Shin, 2024). This sustainability emerges from the depth of transformation: because shadow patterns have been integrated at a subconscious level and essence qualities have been embodied somatically, the transformation is not dependent on conscious effort or favorable conditions. Individuals carry their peace within them, accessing it even amid challenge or difficulty.

This sustainable quality distinguishes Fundamental Peace from peak experiences or temporary states of well-being. Many therapeutic and spiritual interventions produce powerful experiences of peace, joy, or transcendence that fade when individuals return to daily life (Zhu, 2024). Fundamental Peace, in contrast, represents a stable baseline—a new normal rather than a peak state. While individuals may still experience fluctuations in mood and well-being, they return to a baseline of inner peace rather than distress or disconnection.

The concept of Fundamental Peace also connects to transpersonal and spiritual traditions that describe enlightenment, liberation, or union with the divine as states of profound peace (Haryanto et al., 2024). However, the SGE model grounds this spiritual concept in psychological integration, proposing that Fundamental Peace emerges through the marriage of depth work (shadow integration) and transpersonal work (essence embodiment). This grounded approach makes Fundamental Peace accessible through psychological practice rather than requiring mystical experience or spiritual attainment.

Research directions emerge from the concept of Fundamental Peace. Traditional mental health research focuses on symptom measures (depression, anxiety scales) that assess the absence of pathology. Measuring Fundamental Peace would require developing instruments that assess the presence of positive qualities: self-acceptance, authenticity, inner coherence, grounded presence, and compassionate responsiveness (Wong, 2020). Such measures would capture dimensions of psychological health that symptom scales miss, providing a more complete picture of well-being.

Additionally, research could examine the relationship between Fundamental Peace and various life outcomes. Does Fundamental Peace predict resilience in the face of adversity? Does it predict relationship quality, life satisfaction, or physical health? Does it buffer against the development of psychological disorders? Such research would establish the construct validity and practical significance of Fundamental Peace as an outcome measure (Nel et al., 2022).

The concept of Fundamental Peace also has implications for how we conceptualize therapeutic goals. If the goal of therapy is not merely symptom reduction but cultivation of Fundamental Peace, therapeutic approaches and outcome measures would need to shift accordingly (Wong, 2020). Therapy would focus not only on reducing distress but on facilitating shadow integration, essence embodiment, and purpose alignment. Success would be measured not only by symptom scales but by indicators of self-acceptance, authenticity, coherence, presence, and compassionate responsiveness.

In summary, Fundamental Peace represents the ultimate outcome of SGE-based transformation—a sustainable state of inner harmony that emerges through shadow integration and essence embodiment. This concept extends beyond symptom relief to capture the presence of positive qualities that characterize authentic flourishing. Fundamental Peace is characterized by self-

acceptance, authentic self-expression, inner coherence, grounded presence, and compassionate responsiveness. It is sustainable across varying circumstances because it is rooted in deep subconscious transformation rather than dependent on external conditions. The concept of Fundamental Peace offers a vision of psychological health that is both psychologically grounded and spiritually meaningful, providing a compelling goal for therapeutic work and a framework for measuring transformation beyond symptom reduction.

4.3. Remembering and Connecting to Purpose

The SGE model introduces a paradigm shift in how purpose discovery is conceptualized: rather than viewing purpose as something to be created, discovered, or achieved through conscious effort, the model proposes that authentic purpose already exists within the individual's deeper self and must be remembered through removing the barriers that obscure it. This perspective, rooted in Platonic philosophy and echoed in various spiritual traditions, reframes the therapeutic task from helping clients create meaning to helping them access the meaning they have always carried (Devergnas, 2022).

This "remembering" framework has profound implications for how we understand the relationship between shadow, purpose, and authentic self-expression. The model proposes that individuals are born with an authentic nature—a unique constellation of qualities, capacities, and purposes that reflect their essential being (Asagba, 2024). In optimal developmental conditions, this authentic nature would unfold naturally, with the individual expressing their essence qualities and living their purpose spontaneously. However, developmental experiences—particularly wounding experiences that threaten safety, belonging, or self-worth—lead individuals to disown aspects of their authentic nature that are deemed unacceptable, dangerous, or shameful.

These disowned aspects become the shadow—not merely negative qualities but authentic potentials that have been repressed or rejected. When individuals disown aspects of their authentic nature, they simultaneously lose access to the purpose that those aspects contain (Marco et al., 2022). A child who learns that their creativity is unwelcome may repress creative impulses, losing access to a purpose of artistic expression. An adolescent who learns that their assertiveness threatens relationships may deny their power, losing access to a purpose of leadership or advocacy. An adult who experiences their sensitivity as weakness may reject their empathic capacity, losing access to a purpose of healing or caregiving.

The shadow, in this framework, is not merely a collection of problems to be solved but a repository of lost purpose. Each shadow pattern points toward an aspect of authentic purpose that has been obscured (Chae, 2025). The therapeutic task is not to create new purpose but to recover the purpose that was lost when authentic aspects of self were disowned. This recovery process is what the SGE model terms "remembering"—bringing back into awareness and embodiment the authentic nature and purpose that were always present but forgotten.

The Gift stage of the SGE model is crucial for this remembering process. By uncovering the positive intention or unmet need beneath the shadow pattern, individuals recognize what their shadow was trying to protect or express—often an aspect of their authentic purpose (Devergnas, 2022). The gift of a shadow pattern of people-pleasing might be a purpose of creating harmony and connection. The gift of a shadow pattern of perfectionism might be a purpose of excellence and meaningful contribution. The gift of a shadow pattern of withdrawal might be a purpose of creating safe, contemplative space. By recognizing these gifts, individuals remember aspects of their purpose that had been obscured by the shadow's protective strategies.

The Essence stage completes the remembering process by embodying the integrated quality that represents authentic nature. When individuals embody essence qualities like honesty, ease, humour, gentleness, forgiveness, or love, they are not acquiring new qualities but reclaiming qualities that were always part of their authentic nature (Волкова, 2024). A person who embodies the essence of gentleness is not becoming someone new but remembering and expressing who they authentically are beneath the shadow of rejection or harshness that developed as protection.

This remembering framework is both empowering and relieving. It is empowering because it suggests that individuals already possess everything they need for authentic purpose—they do not need to search externally or create something from nothing but simply need to remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing what is already within (Asagba, 2024). It is relieving because it removes the pressure to "figure out" purpose through conscious effort or to achieve some external standard of meaningful living. Purpose is not something to be earned or achieved but something to be remembered and embodied.

The framework also addresses the common experience of purpose feeling both familiar and new when it is accessed. Many individuals report that when they connect with authentic purpose, it feels like coming home—simultaneously a discovery and a recognition of something they have always known (Kenneth et al., 2024). This paradoxical quality makes sense in the remembering framework: purpose is new to conscious awareness (discovery) but has always existed in the deeper self (recognition). The feeling of familiarity reflects the truth that purpose is being remembered rather than created.

The subconscious dimension is crucial to this remembering process. Authentic purpose resides in the subconscious—in the body's wisdom, in implicit memory, in the deeper layers of the psyche that are not accessible to conscious thought alone (Leidig, 2025). This is why cognitive approaches to purpose discovery often feel hollow or disconnected: they engage only the conscious mind, which does not have direct access to the subconscious where authentic purpose resides. The SGE model's emphasis on subconscious work—through shadow exploration, somatic techniques, and embodied installation—ensures that purpose is accessed at the level where it actually exists.

The body plays a particularly important role in remembering purpose. The body holds implicit memory of authentic nature and purpose, often manifesting as a felt sense of rightness or alignment when individuals connect with their purpose (Волкова, 2024). Somatic techniques that engage bodily sensations, movement, and nervous system states can access this implicit wisdom, facilitating remembering at a visceral level. When individuals embody their essence qualities somatically, they often report a physical sense of coming home, of their body recognizing and settling into its authentic state.

The remembering framework also has implications for how we understand resistance and blocks to purpose. When individuals struggle to connect with or act on their purpose, it is not because they lack purpose or have not tried hard enough to discover it. Rather, it is because shadow patterns are blocking access to the purpose that already exists within them (Marco et al., 2022). This reframe shifts the therapeutic stance from pushing clients to find purpose to compassionately exploring what blocks are preventing them from accessing the purpose they already carry. The focus moves from effort and achievement to removal of barriers and allowing.

This allowing quality is central to the remembering process. Rather than striving to create or discover purpose, individuals learn to allow purpose to emerge naturally as shadow patterns are integrated (Devergnas, 2022). This shift from doing to allowing, from effort to surrender, often produces a profound sense of relief and ease. Individuals no longer feel the burden of having to figure out their purpose but can trust that purpose will reveal itself as they do the work of shadow integration and essence embodiment.

The remembering framework also connects to the concept of Fundamental Peace. When individuals remember and embody their authentic purpose, they experience the deep peace that comes from living in alignment with their true nature (Shin, 2024). This peace is not the result of achieving external goals or meeting external standards but emerges from the internal coherence of being oneself. The exhausting effort of trying to be someone other than who one authentically is dissolves, replaced by the ease and vitality of authentic self-expression.

Research directions emerge from the remembering framework. The framework predicts that purpose clarity should increase as shadow patterns are integrated, even without explicit purpose-finding exercises. Research could examine whether shadow integration alone (without purpose-focused interventions) produces gains in purpose clarity and meaning in life (Chae, 2025). Such

findings would support the notion that purpose is remembered through shadow work rather than created through conscious effort.

Additionally, the framework suggests that individuals should experience purpose as both familiar and new when it is accessed. Research could examine the phenomenology of purpose discovery, assessing whether individuals report this paradoxical quality of recognition and discovery. Qualitative research exploring individuals' experiences of connecting with purpose through shadow work could illuminate the remembering process and its distinguishing features (Kenneth et al., 2024).

In summary, the SGE model reframes purpose discovery as a process of remembering rather than creating or discovering. Authentic purpose already exists within the individual's deeper self but has been obscured by shadow patterns that developed in response to wounding. By integrating shadow material and embodying essence qualities, individuals remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing their authentic purpose. This remembering process engages the subconscious through shadow work and somatic techniques, allowing purpose to emerge naturally rather than requiring conscious effort or external search. The remembering framework is both empowering and relieving, suggesting that individuals already possess everything they need for authentic purpose and simply need to remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing it. This perspective offers a profound shift in how we conceptualize and facilitate purpose discovery, emphasizing depth work and allowing over conscious effort and achievement.

5. Clinical and Practical Implications

The SGE model offers significant implications for clinical practice across therapeutic modalities, including psychotherapy, coaching, hypnotherapy, and integrative approaches. The model's structured five-stage process provides clinicians with a clear roadmap for facilitating shadow integration and purpose embodiment, while its theoretical grounding in depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic approaches ensures that interventions address multiple dimensions of human experience (Leidig, 2025).

In psychotherapy contexts, the SGE model can be integrated with various therapeutic orientations. Psychodynamic therapists will find the model's emphasis on unconscious patterns and shadow work highly compatible with psychodynamic principles, while the structured five-stage process offers greater specificity than traditional psychodynamic approaches (Popov et al., 2020). Humanistic and existential therapists will appreciate the model's emphasis on authentic self-expression, meaning-making, and the therapeutic relationship as a safe container for exploration (Wong, 2020). Cognitive-behavioral therapists can use the model to address the deeper patterns that maintain cognitive distortions and behavioral patterns, enhancing CBT's effectiveness for clients who have not responded to cognitive interventions alone (Kenneth et al., 2024).

The Safe Container stage emphasizes the importance of establishing psychological safety before engaging in shadow work. This trauma-informed approach recognizes that exploring disowned aspects of self can be destabilizing or retraumatizing if adequate safety and resources are not in place (Leidig, 2025). Clinicians must assess clients' capacity for affect regulation, establish clear boundaries and agreements about the therapeutic process, and build resources (grounding techniques, self-soothing capacities, supportive relationships) before proceeding to shadow exploration. This preparatory work is particularly crucial for clients with complex trauma, attachment wounds, or limited affect regulation capacity.

The Shadow Explore stage requires clinical skill in facilitating compassionate inquiry into disowned aspects of self. Clinicians must create conditions where clients feel safe enough to encounter shadow material without becoming overwhelmed or defensive (Marco et al., 2022). Techniques include tracking bodily sensations to access implicit memory, exploring projections to identify disowned qualities, examining self-sabotage patterns to reveal unconscious motivations, and investigating emotional reactivity to uncover shadow triggers. The therapeutic stance is one of

curiosity and compassion rather than judgment, recognizing the shadow's protective function and honoring its role in the client's survival.

The Gift Uncover stage represents a crucial turning point in the therapeutic process. By helping clients discover the positive intention or unmet need beneath their shadow patterns, clinicians facilitate a shift from self-rejection to self-compassion (Chae, 2025). This stage requires skillful questioning: What was this shadow trying to protect? What need was it attempting to meet? What authentic aspect of self was it preserving? Clinicians must help clients recognize that their shadow patterns, however destructive their manifestation, were attempts to meet legitimate needs or protect authentic aspects of self. This recognition transforms the relationship with the shadow and opens the possibility for integration.

The Essence Install stage requires expertise in somatic and experiential techniques that encode integrated qualities at a visceral, embodied level. Techniques might include guided imagery where clients visualize and feel themselves embodying essence qualities, somatic anchoring where essence qualities are associated with specific bodily sensations or postures, hypnotic suggestion where essence qualities are installed in trance states, or ritual practices that symbolically encode the transformation (Волкова, 2024). The goal is not merely cognitive understanding but felt, embodied experience of the essence state. Clinicians must ensure that essence qualities are installed at a subconscious level where they can operate automatically rather than requiring conscious effort.

The Integrate and Act stage emphasizes that transformation requires behavioral expression in real-world contexts. Clinicians help clients identify specific ways to practice essence qualities in daily life, anticipate challenges and obstacles, and develop strategies for maintaining the transformation (Devergnas, 2022). This stage might involve behavioral experiments where clients practice new ways of being, relational work where clients express essence qualities in relationships, or values-based action where clients align their behavior with their authentic purpose. Regular practice strengthens neural pathways and behavioral patterns that support the new way of being, making the transformation sustainable.

In coaching contexts, the SGE model offers a depth-oriented approach that distinguishes coaching from surface-level goal-setting or skill-building. Coaches can use the model to help clients identify and transform the subconscious patterns that block goal achievement, authentic leadership, or purpose-aligned action (Chae, 2025). The model is particularly valuable for executive coaching, where leaders often struggle with shadow patterns (perfectionism, people-pleasing, conflict avoidance) that limit their effectiveness. By transforming these patterns into essence qualities (honesty, ease, gentleness), leaders gain access to more authentic and effective leadership capacities.

In hypnotherapy contexts, the SGE model aligns perfectly with hypnosis's capacity to access and transform subconscious patterns. Trance states bypass conscious defenses and allow direct work with the subconscious mind, making hypnotherapy an ideal modality for shadow exploration and essence installation (Leidig, 2025). Hypnotherapists can use age regression to access the origins of shadow patterns, parts therapy to facilitate dialogue between shadow and essence, and post-hypnotic suggestion to install essence qualities at a subconscious level. The model's structured process provides a framework for organizing hypnotherapy sessions and ensuring comprehensive transformation.

The SGE model also has applications in group therapy and workshop settings. Group processes can facilitate shadow work by providing multiple perspectives, reducing isolation and shame, and offering opportunities for interpersonal learning (Marco et al., 2022). Group members can help each other identify projections, recognize shadow patterns, and support essence embodiment. The shared experience of shadow work in a group setting can be particularly powerful, creating a sense of common humanity and reducing the shame that often accompanies shadow exploration.

However, the model also requires important safeguards and limitations. Shadow work is not appropriate for all clients or all clinical situations. Clients in acute crisis, those with severe psychiatric symptoms, or those lacking basic affect regulation capacity may not be suitable candidates for shadow work until stabilization is achieved (Kenneth et al., 2024). Clinicians must carefully assess

clients' readiness for shadow work and ensure adequate safety and resources are in place. Additionally, shadow work should not be rushed—the process unfolds at its own pace and cannot be forced without risking retraumatization or superficial change.

Clinicians using the SGE model must also attend to their own shadow material. Working with clients' shadows will inevitably activate the clinician's own disowned aspects, projections, and unresolved wounds (Popov et al., 2020). Clinicians must engage in their own shadow work, maintain regular supervision or consultation, and practice self-awareness to ensure that their own shadow material does not interfere with the therapeutic process. This requirement for clinician self-work is consistent with depth psychology traditions that emphasize the therapist's own inner work as essential for effective practice.

Cultural considerations are also important when applying the SGE model. Shadow patterns and essence qualities may be expressed differently across cultures, and what is considered disowned or authentic may vary based on cultural values and norms (Haryanto et al., 2024). Clinicians must approach shadow work with cultural humility, recognizing that their own cultural assumptions may not apply to clients from different backgrounds. The model's framework can be adapted to honor cultural diversity while maintaining its core principles of shadow integration and essence embodiment.

Training and competency in the SGE model require integration of multiple skill sets: depth psychology understanding, somatic awareness, trauma-informed practice, and experiential techniques. Clinicians seeking to use the model should pursue training in shadow work, somatic therapy, and experiential methods, as well as engage in their own shadow integration process (Leidig, 2025). Supervision and consultation are essential, particularly when working with complex trauma or severe shadow patterns.

In summary, the SGE model offers a structured, depth-oriented approach to facilitating purpose discovery and embodiment across clinical contexts. The model's five-stage process provides clear guidance for clinicians while remaining flexible enough to adapt to individual needs and therapeutic modalities. Applications span psychotherapy, coaching, hypnotherapy, and group work, with particular value for clients who have not responded to cognitive-only approaches. However, the model requires careful assessment of client readiness, attention to safety and resources, clinician self-work, and cultural sensitivity. When applied skillfully, the SGE model facilitates profound transformation at the subconscious level, enabling clients to remember and embody their authentic purpose and experience Fundamental Peace.

6. Future Directions

The SGE model opens numerous avenues for future research, theoretical development, and practical application. As a relatively new framework, the model requires empirical validation, refinement based on clinical experience, and integration with emerging developments in psychology, neuroscience, and related fields.

Empirical research on the SGE model's effectiveness represents a critical priority. While the model is grounded in established principles from depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic therapy, its specific formulation and structured process require empirical validation (Leidig, 2025). Research should examine whether SGE-based interventions produce meaningful changes in purpose clarity, meaning in life, psychological well-being, and behavioral outcomes. Randomized controlled trials comparing the SGE model with established approaches (cognitive-behavioral therapy, logotherapy, positive psychology interventions) would establish the model's efficacy and identify its unique contributions.

Process research examining how transformation occurs through the SGE model would illuminate the mechanisms of change. What specific processes during shadow exploration facilitate integration? How does uncovering the gift shift clients' relationship with their shadow? What somatic techniques are most effective for essence installation? How does the sequence of stages contribute to outcomes? Such research would refine the model and enhance its clinical application (Chae, 2025).

Measurement development represents another research priority. The SGE model introduces constructs—shadow patterns, gifts, essence qualities, Fundamental Peace—that require valid and reliable assessment instruments. Developing measures of these constructs would facilitate research and provide clinicians with tools for tracking progress and outcomes (Wong, 2020). Measures might assess the degree of shadow integration, the clarity of gift recognition, the embodiment of essence qualities, and the presence of Fundamental Peace. Such instruments would need to capture both cognitive and somatic dimensions, recognizing that transformation occurs at multiple levels.

Neuroscience research could examine the neural correlates of shadow integration and essence embodiment. How does shadow work affect brain structure and function? Do essence qualities correspond to specific patterns of neural activation? Does embodiment of essence qualities produce measurable changes in nervous system regulation? Neuroimaging studies examining brain activity before and after SGE-based interventions could illuminate the biological mechanisms of transformation and validate the model's emphasis on subconscious-level change (Leidig, 2025).

Research on individual differences could identify who benefits most from the SGE model and under what conditions. Are certain shadow patterns more amenable to transformation than others? Do clients with specific characteristics (attachment style, trauma history, personality traits) respond differently to the model? What client factors predict successful shadow integration and essence embodiment? Such research would enable more precise matching of clients to interventions and identify adaptations needed for specific populations (Kenneth et al., 2024).

Cultural adaptation of the SGE model represents an important direction for both research and practice. While the model's core principles may be universal, their expression and application likely vary across cultures. Research should examine how shadow patterns, gifts, and essence qualities manifest in different cultural contexts and how the model can be adapted to honor cultural diversity while maintaining its effectiveness (Haryanto et al., 2024). Collaborative research with practitioners and communities from diverse cultural backgrounds would ensure that adaptations are culturally grounded and appropriate.

Integration with emerging therapeutic approaches offers opportunities for synergy and innovation. The SGE model could be integrated with psychedelic-assisted therapy, which often produces powerful experiences of shadow material and transcendent states that require integration (Zhu, 2024). The model's structured process could provide a framework for preparing clients for psychedelic experiences, facilitating integration afterward, and ensuring that insights are embodied and sustained. Similarly, the model could be integrated with neurofeedback, virtual reality therapy, or other emerging technologies that offer new pathways for accessing and transforming subconscious patterns.

Theoretical development of the SGE model should continue based on clinical experience and research findings. The six wound-virtue pairs may be expanded or refined as practitioners work with diverse clients and shadow patterns. The five-stage process may be elaborated with more specific techniques and decision points. The relationship between shadow, gift, and essence may be further articulated through theoretical analysis and empirical investigation (Marco et al., 2022). This ongoing theoretical development will ensure that the model remains responsive to clinical realities and research evidence.

Application of the SGE model to collective and systemic levels represents an exciting frontier. While the model was developed for individual transformation, its principles may apply to organizational, community, and societal levels. Organizations have collective shadows—disowned aspects of organizational culture that manifest in dysfunction and limit effectiveness (Chae, 2025). Communities have collective shadows—disowned aspects of community identity that create division and conflict. Societies have collective shadows—disowned aspects of cultural identity that perpetuate injustice and suffering. Adapting the SGE model for collective shadow work could facilitate organizational transformation, community healing, and social change.

Training and dissemination of the SGE model require systematic development. Training programs should be created to teach clinicians the theoretical foundations, practical techniques, and

clinical skills necessary for effective application of the model (Leidig, 2025). These programs should include didactic instruction, experiential learning, supervised practice, and personal shadow work. Certification or credentialing processes could ensure quality and competency among practitioners. Dissemination efforts should include publications, workshops, online resources, and professional presentations to make the model accessible to clinicians across disciplines and settings.

Integration with existing therapeutic training programs represents another dissemination strategy. Rather than positioning the SGE model as a separate approach requiring specialized training, it could be integrated into existing programs in psychotherapy, counseling, coaching, and related fields (Kenneth et al., 2024). This integration would expose more practitioners to the model's principles and techniques, increasing its accessibility and impact.

Research on prevention and early intervention using SGE principles could extend the model's application beyond clinical populations. If shadow patterns develop in response to developmental experiences, early intervention to support healthy shadow integration could prevent later psychological difficulties (Marco et al., 2022). School-based programs, parenting interventions, or community initiatives that teach shadow awareness and integration skills could promote psychological health and purpose development from an early age.

Longitudinal research examining the long-term outcomes of SGE-based transformation would establish the sustainability of change. Does shadow integration produce lasting shifts in purpose, well-being, and behavior? Do essence qualities remain embodied over time? Does Fundamental Peace persist across life transitions and challenges? Long-term follow-up studies would address these questions and identify factors that support or undermine sustained transformation (Devergnas, 2022).

Finally, dialogue between the SGE model and other theoretical traditions should continue. The model's integration of depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, and somatic approaches represents one synthesis, but other integrations are possible. Dialogue with existential psychology, Self-Determination Theory, positive psychology, and other frameworks can enrich the model and identify areas of convergence and divergence (Wong, 2020). This ongoing theoretical dialogue will ensure that the SGE model remains connected to broader developments in psychology and contributes to the field's evolution.

In summary, the SGE model opens numerous directions for future research, theoretical development, and practical application. Priorities include empirical validation of the model's effectiveness, measurement development, neuroscience research, investigation of individual differences, cultural adaptation, integration with emerging therapies, theoretical refinement, collective applications, training and dissemination, prevention and early intervention, longitudinal research, and ongoing theoretical dialogue. These directions will establish the model's empirical foundation, refine its clinical application, extend its reach, and ensure its continued relevance and contribution to humanistic psychology.

7. Conclusions

This state-of-the-art review has introduced the Shadow→Gift→Essence (SGE) model as a significant contribution to purpose and meaning research, offering a depth-oriented framework that addresses a critical gap in contemporary psychology: the need for subconscious-level interventions that facilitate authentic purpose discovery and embodiment. Through systematic comparison with five major frameworks—logotherapy, Self-Determination Theory, Jungian shadow work, transpersonal psychology, and positive psychology—we have demonstrated the SGE model's unique contributions while identifying areas of convergence and potential integration.

The SGE model's central premise challenges conventional approaches to purpose discovery. Rather than viewing purpose as something to be created through conscious effort, discovered through external exploration, or achieved through goal-setting, the model proposes that authentic purpose already exists within the individual's deeper self and must be remembered through removing the barriers that obscure it (Asagba, 2024). These barriers—shadow patterns developed in

response to wounding experiences—block access to the authentic self that knows its purpose and has the capacity to live it. By transforming shadow into gift and embodying essence, individuals remember and express their authentic purpose.

The model's emphasis on subconscious-level work distinguishes it from cognitive approaches that dominate contemporary psychology. While cognitive interventions address conscious thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors, they often fail to transform the implicit patterns, somatic holdings, and repressed material that fundamentally shape meaning-making capacity (Leidig, 2025). The SGE model works directly with these subconscious dimensions through shadow exploration, somatic techniques, and embodied installation, facilitating transformation at the level where patterns are actually maintained. This depth orientation makes the model particularly valuable for clients who have not responded to cognitive-only approaches or who can intellectually identify purpose but cannot connect with or embody it experientially.

The model's structured five-stage process—safe container, shadow explore, gift uncover, essence install, integrate and act—provides clinicians with a clear roadmap for facilitating transformation while remaining flexible enough to adapt to individual needs and therapeutic contexts (Marco et al., 2022). This structure operationalizes depth psychology principles that are often left implicit in traditional approaches, making shadow work more accessible and systematic. The model's six wound-virtue pairs offer a practical typology for understanding common shadow patterns and their transformative potential, further enhancing clinical applicability.

The comparative analysis revealed that the SGE model complements rather than competes with existing frameworks. Logotherapy's emphasis on conscious meaning-making is enriched by the SGE model's subconscious shadow work, enabling individuals to embody the meaning they identify consciously (Wong et al., 2024). Self-Determination Theory's focus on need satisfaction is deepened by the SGE model's exploration of subconscious barriers that prevent individuals from accessing need-supportive conditions (Волкова, 2024). Jungian shadow work's theoretical richness is operationalized through the SGE model's structured process and explicit gift concept (Popov et al., 2020). Transpersonal psychology's emphasis on transcendence is grounded by the SGE model's integration work, ensuring that spiritual experiences are embodied rather than dissociated (Haryanto et al., 2024). Positive psychology's cultivation of strengths is authenticated by the SGE model's shadow integration, ensuring that positive qualities emerge from depth rather than bypassing difficult material (Nel et al., 2022).

The SGE model's integration with the Inner Transformation Model (ITM) positions it within a comprehensive framework for facilitating deep, sustainable psychological change. The model serves as a practical mechanism for the ITM's principles, providing specific tools for subconscious transformation, multi-dimensional intervention, and embodied integration (Chae, 2025). This integration ensures that purpose work is not isolated from broader transformation processes but embedded within a holistic approach to psychological health.

The concept of Fundamental Peace as the ultimate outcome of SGE-based transformation extends beyond symptom reduction to capture the presence of deep inner harmony, authenticity, and alignment. This concept offers a vision of psychological health that is both psychologically grounded and spiritually meaningful, characterized by self-acceptance, authentic self-expression, inner coherence, grounded presence, and compassionate responsiveness (Shin, 2024). Fundamental Peace represents a qualitatively different state than symptom relief—a sustainable baseline of inner harmony that persists across varying circumstances because it is rooted in deep subconscious transformation.

The clinical and practical implications of the SGE model span psychotherapy, coaching, hypnotherapy, and group work, with applications across diverse populations and presenting concerns. The model's trauma-informed approach, emphasis on safety and resources, and attention to cultural diversity ensure that it can be applied ethically and effectively across contexts (Leidig, 2025). However, the model also requires important safeguards, including careful assessment of client readiness, clinician self-work, and recognition of limitations and contraindications.

Future directions for the SGE model include empirical validation, measurement development, neuroscience research, cultural adaptation, integration with emerging therapies, theoretical refinement, collective applications, training and dissemination, and ongoing dialogue with other theoretical traditions. These directions will establish the model's empirical foundation, extend its reach, and ensure its continued contribution to humanistic psychology (Kenneth et al., 2024).

This review calls for a paradigm shift in purpose and meaning research—from cognitive-only approaches to integrative frameworks that honor the subconscious dimensions of meaning-making. The contemporary crisis of purpose cannot be adequately addressed through conscious interventions alone; it requires depth work that accesses and transforms the implicit patterns shaping individuals' capacity to connect with and embody authentic purpose (Wong, 2020). The SGE model represents one such integrative framework, bridging existential, depth, and transpersonal traditions while providing a structured, clinically applicable methodology.

The model's emphasis on "remembering" rather than "discovering" purpose offers a profound reframe that is both empowering and relieving. Individuals do not need to search externally for purpose or create it through willpower but can trust that purpose will emerge naturally as shadow patterns are integrated and essence qualities are embodied (Devergnas, 2022). This perspective honors the wisdom already present in the deeper self while providing a clear pathway for accessing that wisdom through shadow work.

As humanistic psychology continues to evolve, frameworks like the SGE model that integrate multiple traditions and address multiple dimensions of human experience will be essential. The field's founding emphasis on the whole person, authentic self-expression, and human potential finds contemporary expression in models that work with shadow and essence, depth and transcendence, wounding and transformation (Волкова, 2024). The SGE model contributes to this evolution by offering a structured approach to the timeless human quest for purpose and meaning—a quest that requires not only conscious reflection but also subconscious transformation, not only cognitive insight but also embodied integration, not only individual effort but also compassionate support.

In conclusion, the Shadow→Gift→Essence model represents a significant advance in how we understand and facilitate purpose discovery and embodiment. By working at the subconscious level through structured shadow integration, the model addresses the root causes of disconnection from purpose and enables individuals to remember and embody their authentic nature. Through integration with the Inner Transformation Model and cultivation of Fundamental Peace, the model offers a comprehensive pathway to sustainable transformation that honors both the depths and the heights of human experience. As research, practice, and theoretical development continue, the SGE model has the potential to transform how humanistic psychology approaches the fundamental human need for purpose and meaning.

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