

HOPE By John W. Herdman, Ph.D.

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I'd like to talk to you about hope. Hope. Hope is. Hope is a feeling. Do you know that you control only three things in life. Do you know what they are? (PAUSE) You control your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. That is good news and bad news. The good news is that you only have to worry about three things. The bad news is that you only control three things. You do not control he/she/they/them or it. Repeat after me..." No one or nothing outside of me makes me feel. I am responsible for my feelings". Your thinking causes your feeling and your behavior. If you have hopeful thoughts, you will feel hope.

The idea that you control only three things has been around a long time. In Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinks within himself, so he is". Abe Lincoln said "Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be". And, Mary Gilbride says "Hope breeds a turtle".

There are four basic emotions. Three are negative and you have likely experienced all three to varying degrees. Those three are anger, anxiety, and, depression. The fourth basic emotion is contentment. A sub-emotion under the contentment umbrella is HOPE. If you want to feel hopeful, you have to think hopeful thoughts. Desmond Tutu said "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness".

The concept of emotional intelligence has only been around since 1996. The first two levels of emotional intelligence are all so important for having hope. Level one: Recognize your own emotions. Level two: Manage your emotions. If you don't manage your emotions, they manage you. If your emotions are negative and self-defeating, change your thinking.

Sometimes, no oftentimes, people feel hopeless because they have thoughts that are not based on facts. Confusing *truth* with *fact* is one of the most common causes of stress and clinical

emotional distress. Is there a difference between truth and fact? If you answered “yes” you are correct. Let me explain the difference between truth and fact.

ACCEPTED TRUTH is an idea that someone believes. Believing an idea makes it true for that believer. But personal beliefs, and therefore truth, often have little or nothing to do with the facts of the situation, and a lot to do with a person’s hopes, fears, likes, dislikes, and expectations.

OBVIOUS FACT exists in the real world, independent of what people think or believe. Obvious fact exists whether or not people know about it, accept it, believe it, or like it. **IT IS WHAT IT IS! What are you going to change about your thinking?**

We are all fallible human beings, FHBs if you would. We all make mistakes. We make mistakes when we think “I’m worthless”, or “I’m a failure”. Neither of these thoughts are based on fact! Debate them. Think different thoughts that are based on fact, not your truth. Think instead “Just because I made a really big mistake does not mean I’m worthless or a failure. I can hope to learn from this mistake and work on not doing it again. I’m responsible for my feelings and I do not control what others think of me.”

The world is exactly as it should be right now – the good and the bad. In a world filled with challenges and uncertainties, it's easy to lose sight of hope. But hope is a powerful force that resides within each one of us. Here is a script that will reignite your hope and inspire positive change.

Let's begin by acknowledging the difficulties we face. Life is a journey filled with ups and downs, but it's often the challenges that shape us and make us stronger. Embrace the challenges as opportunities for growth.

Remember, it's not the circumstances themselves, but how we perceive them that makes all the difference. A shift in perspective can turn obstacles into stepping stones. Let's choose to see the glass as half full, not half empty.

Now, let's talk about resilience. Think back to moments when you thought you couldn't go on, but you did. That inner strength is your resilience, and it's always there, waiting to be called upon. It's a reminder that you can overcome anything.

Hope thrives in the actions we take, no matter how small. Start by setting achievable goals.

Remember, progress is progress, no matter how slow. Celebrate your victories, no matter how minor they seem.

We're not alone in this journey. Reach out to loved ones, friends, or professionals for support.

Connection and shared experiences can provide comfort and strengthen your hope.

Gratitude is a powerful tool. Take a moment each day to reflect on the things you're grateful for.

Even in the toughest times, there are blessings to be found.

Close your eyes and imagine a future where your hopes and dreams have become a reality. Feel the emotions associated with that achievement. This mental image will serve as your beacon of hope.

Hope isn't a distant destination; it's a journey you embark on every day. It's a **manifestation** that lights the path to a brighter future. As you go forward, remember that hope is not something outside of you; it's within you. Think hopeful thoughts. Nurture it, embrace it. You can create a life filled with positivity, resilience, and endless possibilities.

Here are 10 activities you can chose to do.

1. **Gratitude Practice:** Take time each day to reflect on things you're grateful for. It can be as simple as a beautiful sunset or a kind word from a friend.
2. **Set Goals:** Identify small, achievable goals that you can work towards. Progress, no matter how small, can be a powerful source of hope.
3. **Connect with Positive People:** Surround yourself with supportive and positive individuals. Sharing experiences and thoughts with them can uplift your spirits.
4. **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Practice mindfulness or meditation to focus on the present moment, reducing stress and anxiety while fostering a hopeful mindset.
5. **Seek Inspiration:** Read books, watch movies, or listen to music that inspires and uplifts you. Sometimes, a powerful story or song can reignite hope.
6. **Help Others:** Volunteering or helping others in need can give a sense of purpose and contribute to a more hopeful world.
7. **Learn and Grow:** Engage in learning new skills or hobbies. The process of learning something new can be invigorating and create a sense of progress and hope.
8. **Reflect on Past Successes:** Remind yourself of challenges you've overcome in the past. Recognizing your resilience can give you hope for the future.
9. **Visualize a Positive Future:** Spend time imagining a positive future for yourself. Visualizing success and happiness can help manifest those realities.
10. **Embrace Change:** Understand that change is a constant part of life. Embrace it as an opportunity for growth and new experiences.

Remember, cultivating hope is a practice that takes time and effort. Be patient with yourself and celebrate the small victories along the way!

So, in the spirit of the Rotary International theme for the 2023-2024 year, “CREATE HOPE in the WORLD.