

Hope IS a strategy! Nurturing “Wise Hope*” (final)

Intro

Yesterday, we explored how to be more resilient and improve our wellness. This morning, I'd like to tee up another ingredient to thriving personally and professionally:

“Hope IS a strategy!”

WHAT?????????

I always told my members, “Hope is not a strategy.” When you hear the word “hope”, you might think of quotes like:

“Hope for the best, hope springs eternal”

These statements refer to an optimism that anticipates things will go the way you want, hitched to a particular outcome. Things can be distorted by grasping, or by avoiding reality. It can stop us from dealing with difficulties and real crises.

Instead, I'd suggest adding a qualifier, that **“Wise Hope*”** IS a strategy.

From Desmond Tutu: *“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”*

Some other quotes I like:

“Hope is a passion for what is possible.” (Deavita)

“What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life.” (Emil Bruner, Swiss theologian)

I think of John McCain, Nelson Mandella, survivors of the Holocaust. When we reflect on important “life events”, we can think of our own examples.

**“Wise Hope” sourced from a podcast of Tara Brach, a mindfulness and meditation professional.*

What is “Wise Hope”?

Wise Hope could be referred to as mature hope, for some, spiritual hope. It is what matters most to your “wise” awake heart. It could be thought of as

“the ***aspiration to manifest a full potential, individually and collectively, and the trust that this is possible.***”

Wise Hope requires a growth mindset.

I’ll share a personal experience that some of you know. In 1995, about a year and a half after I was married to Don, he had a terrible auto accident driving out of the Lincoln Tunnel. They had to extricate him from the car with Jaws of Life, and a medical team had to resuscitate him in the helicopter flying to the trauma center in Newark. Don had a myriad of injuries, and was basically unable to do much for himself during his 6 weeks in the hospital. I was his advocate through 15 operations and a dizzying series of meetings with numerous specialists. I kept reminding people through photos on his bulletin board and stories that he wasn’t the patient they saw, but another person who I wanted to take home. Don and I were a team with the medical professionals, and somehow we knew we’d get through this. We had this faith that somehow things would work out, and it was unshakeable. We weren’t wedded to a particular outcome, other than to look forward, and take it step by step. He had a remarkable recovery, and although he can’t do mountain climbing anymore and he lost an eye, to an observer you’d never know what he went through. Looking back, I think we had Wise Hope.

Wise Hope involves the trust that you have the potential to keep evolving the capacity to awaken, to awareness, and living from it. Wise hope is a necessary part of transformation.

In stressful times, wise hope gets clouded over by fear or anxiety. When it is alive, wise hope energizes and guides you and your spiritual transformation.

(Barbara Kingsolve): *“... the very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you want, the most you can do is to live inside that hope.”*

I'll share another personal story. Don is an active outdoorsman. Five years ago after he retired, Don and I bought homes in Tubac AZ (south of Tucson) and in Evergreen CO (west of Denver), and sold our coop apartment in NYC. I had been living in NYC at that point for over 40 years, much of that with Don. I rented a pied a terre, and flew back to NYC each month to do meetings with my members. During the pandemic, I realized that I wanted to focus instead on creating a life in these new communities and spending more time with Don. I trusted that I would find ways to contribute and thrive in AZ and CO over time. Now, part of my purpose and fulfillment, and happiness in this next chapter of my life, is being actively engaged in what is important in my heart in this moment.

What is your hope for your future self? Is it to have more wisdom, creativity, peace, gratitude, kindness, acceptance?? Imagine you received it already. Sense how that opens you to possibility, and potential.

Think about people you admire who have hope. What traits do they evidence?

What gives you hope? For me, it's family, nature, faith, and my friends.

(Danna Faulds, an American poet):

*“When there's love, there's possibility, and
When there is possibility, there is energy, and
When there is energy, anything at all can happen, and
When anything at all can happen, something good will surely
come of it.”*

If things seem to be going off the rails, begin again, reconnect with Wise Hope.

You might ask yourself: Am I actively pursuing activities in my personal life that foster a meaningful commitment? For example, you might do meditation or yoga. You might spend more time experiencing nature. You might take more time to be with your family. You might participate in new ways with a community of faith.

With Wise Hope, you can pursue your goals and affect a larger community than just yourself. And though that, you will be living in Wise Hope.

For your breakout discussion, I encourage you to explore how to cultivate or continue to cultivate Wise Hope in your own life.

1. What values/beliefs are touchstones for you, and that center you?
2. What situations or when have you been hopeful? When did that work? When did it not work? What do you do when hope doesn't show up? Where did you go from there?
3. How can you nurture "Wise Hope" for yourself going forward? How might you practice this in the next year?

Thank you, and have some great conversations!