



Health and Wellness Quarterly

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What is Hope?!?!

What is Hope?!? How does one define “hope”? This word was coined around 900 A.D. to describe a feeling of expectation and a desire for a particular event to occur or be resolved. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines hope as : (1) to desire with expectation of attainment. (2) to expect with confidence. How do we develop something that is, at times, very difficult to understand and comprehend. Hope is an abstract and concrete emotion and concept. It is something that we all want to have when times are tough, and it is hard to hold on when things seem impossible. Let’s dive into this concept to try and understand its impact on our lives and how it influences our wellbeing.



Physical Health

Medicine has provided a means to relieve pain related to a physical or emotional ailment. The successful treatment of diseases that cause pain can enhance the quality of life and may even prolong it. Cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, heart and vascular disease, diabetes and lung disease left untreated can lead to debilitating untoward complications from heart attacks, strokes, infections, and even infections.

Living with chronic symptoms can invoke a cry for help for relief, and drive encouragement for hope in advancement in medical technology to take away the emotional and physical pains of chronic symptoms. The field of medicine continues to offer hope and new possibilities for tomorrow. Healthcare professionals play a key role in the dissemination of hope, treatment of medical diseases, and educating the public about ways to prevent the process of ailments.

It has been proven that exercise, healthy eating, and avoiding substance abuse reduces the risks of cardiovascular disease which is the number one cause of death worldwide. As medical research continues and breakthroughs for effective treatment of advanced diseases are refined, people will continue to have hope for the ability to navigate their physical and emotional challenges to medical ailments. The expert compassionate care of healthcare providers and a patient-centered team approach to treating medical ailments provides encouragement and serves as a beacon of hope for patient empowerment to keep fighting the good fight for cure.



Mental Wellbeing



Hope is an essential component of our well-being. According to Snyder et al. (1991) hope is a positive cognitive state based on a sense of successful goal-directed determination and planning to meet these goals. In other words, hope is like a snapshot of a person's current goal-directed thinking, highlighting the motivated pursuit of goals and the expectation that those goals can be achieved. Hope can be an opportunity for us to process events that seem insurmountable. When grounded in realism, hope serves many positive functions.

While some approaches conceptualize hope in the realm of *being*, Snyder et al. (1991) emphasized the relevance of hope in the context of *doing* – that is the capacity to achieve goals. A person's hope — even when facing an illness that will end their life — can be aimed at finding joy or comfort. According to Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder et al., 1991), hopefulness is a life-sustaining human strength comprised of three distinct but related components:

- *Patient Hope* – a hope that everything will work out well in the end.
- *Generalized Hope* – hope not directed toward a specific outcome.
- *Universal Hope* – a general belief in the future and a defense against despair in the face of challenges.

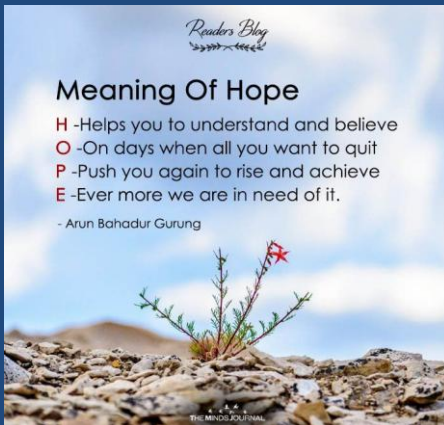
- *Goals Thinking* – the clear conceptualization of valuable goals.
- *Pathways Thinking* – the capacity to develop specific strategies to reach those goals.
- *Agency Thinking* – the ability to initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies.

Hope can be defined in 4 distinct ways to provide the range of how it impacts our lives:

1. **Realistic Hope** Realistic hope is hope for an outcome that is reasonable or probable (Wiles, Cott, & Gibson, 2008).
2. **Utopian Hope** This way of hoping is a collectively oriented hope that collaborative action can lead to a better future for all. According to (Webb, 2013) the utopian hoper critically negates the present and is driven by hope to affirm a better alternative.
3. **Hope** Hope not only helps us live with a difficult present but also with an uncertain future.
4. **Transcendent Hope** According to Eaves, Nichter, and Ritenbaugh (2016), transcendent hope encompasses three types of hope, namely:

Benefits of Having Hope

1. Hope is significantly correlated with superior academic and athletic performance, greater physical and psychological wellbeing, improved self-esteem, and enhanced interpersonal relationships (Rand & Cheavens, 2012).
2. Individuals with high hope are more likely to view stressful situations as challenging rather than threatening.
3. Hope can be perceived as a protective factor against the development of chronic anxiety.
4. Hope is a motivational factor that helps initiate and sustain action toward long-term goals, including the flexible management of obstacles that get in the way of goal attainment.
5. Hope is positively related to overall life satisfaction.



Spirituality

In our modern day and age we put our trust in many things, typically technology and innovation. When we pay our utility bills, we hope that when we flip the light switch the lights will come on. We Trust that since we have the latest iPhone or Android that we can make phone calls and receive them, send emails, text messages, and use GPS. We hope that when we go to work for a 40-hour week that our paychecks will be directly deposited. We also hope the people who we love, and trust will be there for us like technology in our time of need. But what happens when all that fails? Do we lose hope? Do we become untrustworthy of people and modern inventions? What do we do when our health may fail, or do we walk into a season of darkness, strife, and uncertainty? In whom or what do we put our trust and hopes to deliver us from the darkest valley?

Modern technology and people are a great resource, but we must remember where the source of all comfort and convenience comes from and that is God and God alone. In my humble opinion hope begins with putting our trust in God. The book of Matthew in the 6th chapter Jesus is teaching his disciples a lesson about not worrying in life. They were not to worry about eating, drinking, or having clothes (**v.25**). Jesus goes on to say that this is the worries of the Gentiles and not for believers. Jesus says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." Seeking God puts us in direct alignment of hope and trust that we have nothing to worry about. Scripture teaches us that the righteous has never been forsaken. So, we must be righteous which means we must have "right living" with God and man. Even when we don't see what we hope for there is another word that may be synonymous with hope and that is faith. **Hebrews 11:1** teaches us that "faith is confidence of what we hope for and the evidence of what we do not see." This is no different than the many frivolous things that we work tirelessly for, and we bring into fruition but does that truly reassure our hope in life? No! Our hope is built on nothing less than the word of God and our divine earthly Master Jesus the Christ. Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand says the songwriter!

As we are believers and knowers of God and the faith, we must stand in absolute confidence that God is our deliverer. Our hope should not be in earthly things nor in the ability of our own hands but in the reassurance that our faith, hope, and trust is in our Divine Savior who delivered us from this broken world into a place of ultimate blessings. I pray that our hope increases in the Lord and not in this world. I leave you with this passage as a reminder of God's love for us. **Romans 15:13**: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing."

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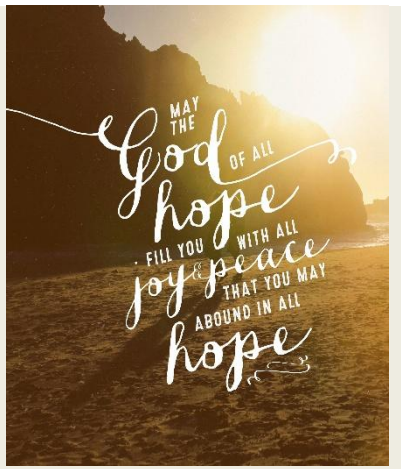
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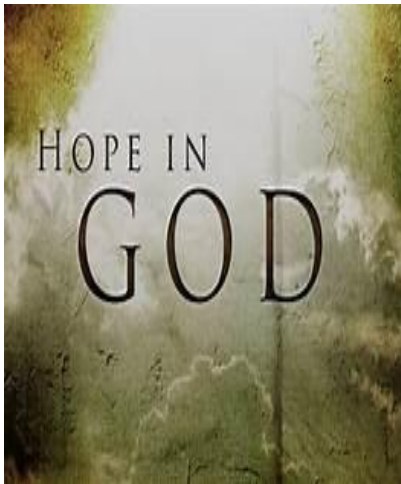
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Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.



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