

Hope

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Often when people think of hope they think of a general intention to cross your fingers and hope for the best. However, hope science and research indicates that hope is more than wishful thinking and is actually a cognitive process that enhances motivation and inspires action.

Hope is *"thinking about the future, expecting that desired events and outcomes will occur, and acting in ways believed to make them more likely"*¹.

This approach recognizes that many worthwhile goals require persistence, dedication, and the ability to overcome setbacks and difficulties. Differences in hope can explain why some people persist when pursuing meaningful goals, even when faced with unexpected challenges, whereas others give up easily.

The Hope Model

Researcher Rick Snyder proposed a cognitive-motivational model of hope comprised of three components²:

- **Goals:** Targets for motivation and action.
- **Pathways:** Strategies to achieve the goals.
- **Agency:** Motivation to pursue the goal pathways.

When hope is high, goals are specific and realistic, pathways are numerous and structured, and motivation is present – even in the face of difficulties and obstacles.

When hope is low, goals are unspecific and unrealistic, only a few, low-quality pathways are created, motivation is low, and there is a low sense of control.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

Thomas Edison

"Hope arouses, as nothing else can arouse, a passion for the possible."

William Sloan Coffin

Hope Measures

The Adult Hope Scale (AHS)

The Children's Hope Scale (CHS)

Books

Snyder. Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There from Here. New York: Free Press, 2003.

Snyder. Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, and Applications. San Diego: Academic Press. 2000.

Question

? Think of a time you achieved something meaningful and challenging. What helped you to succeed in this situation?

The Benefits of Hope

Empirically, high hope has been associated with²⁻⁷:

- Increased wellbeing, life satisfaction, and positive affect.
- Fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, enhanced capacity to cope with stressful life events, and improved recovery from mental illness.
- Enhanced academic outcomes including motivation, performance, retention, and effort.
- Superior athletic performance.
- Increased social competence and confidence.

Increasing Hope

Hope can be increased by setting higher-quality goals and by developing pathways and agency thinking.

Setting Goals

- Explore individual strengths and values to set goals that are authentic and exciting.
- Set high quality goals (SMART goals; approach goals).

Developing Pathways

- Break down large goals into smaller, manageable steps.
- Practice brainstorming several pathways (i.e., back-up options) to worthwhile goals.
- Remember it is OK to ask for help and support.

Developing Agency

- Working with others is a great way to enhance motivation.
- Use stretch goals or goals that are progressively more challenging (e.g., running 2 kilometers today; 3 kilometers next week and so on).
- Build on past successes and identify times in the past where goals have been achieved and challenges overcome.

GET INVOLVED

The Band4Hope Project is an innovative not-for-profit social enterprise that exists to build hope and encourage acts of kindness [Actions4Hope] and raise funds and awareness for charities through travelling, trackable copper wristbands.

Twitter @Band4Hope
www.band4hope.com

I hope to...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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4. Gilman, R., Dooley, J., & Florell, D. (2006). Relative levels of hope and their relationship with academic and psychological indicators among adolescents. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25, 166-178.
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6. Curry, L.A., Snyder, C.R., Cook, D.L., Ruby, B.C., & Rehm, M. (1997). Role of hope in academic and sport achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 1257-1267.
7. Cheavens, J.S., Feldman, D.B., Gum, A., Michael, S.T., & Snyder, C.R. (2006). Hope therapy in a community sample: A pilot investigation. *Social Indicators Research*, 77, 61-78.
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