



Wellbeing Insights

Hope

Hope needs to play as central a role in our lives now as much as it may always have in the history of humans. It has been referred to as the antidote to despair and in the Christian context, losing hope is an occasion of sin. Whether you ascribe to this Christian notion of 'sin', or use the term in your own belief structures, hopelessness is certainly an extremely parlous state and despair is life threatening.

In the service that we provide at **my manifesto**, hope is at its core. We as coaches, work with you to draw out your concept of your ideal self and your ideal future. Beyond that though, we must also arouse in you the possibility that you are capable of achieving both. That possibility may be named as 'hope'. The VIA Institute lists 'hope' among the 24-character strengths, and places it within the virtue category of transcendence. The transcendent virtues help connect you to the larger universe and provide meaning. Hope, therefore, is a strength to draw upon to lift us out of the 'here and now', especially when our current reality may be lacking in some way, and to take us towards our best self and our preferred future.

Nick Cave (of the Bad Seeds fame), recently grieving for the loss of a second son, was quoted in The Age, May 11th, as saying, "It took a devastation to understand the idea of mortal value, and it took a devastation to find hope." Sometimes we humans need a metaphoric catastrophic blow to the head to arrive at awareness, to construct our meanings. Interestingly, Cave adds further insight into his concept of hope with, "Hopefulness is not a neutral position...it is adversarial. It is the warrior emotion that can lay waste to cynicism." These words allude to the courage that is often required to maintain hope in the face of life's events, counter intuitively, when cynicism poses as the 'stronger' option.

Hope can be built, however – it is not something which we either have or have not got – it is not a fixed state either, as indeed nothing, in the abstract world can be said to be fixed. Heart can be taken by the ways, Richard Boyatzis, an emotional intelligence expert and Weatherhead School of Management colleagues, list in order to build a sense of hope*:

1. Talking about our dreams and personal vision
2. Receiving or expressing compassion
3. Using positive emotional contagion
4. Practising mindfulness
5. Being playful
6. Walking in nature
7. Having a resonant helping/coaching relationship

We at **my manifesto** seek to create the coaching relationship that will cultivate your hope, which will spread positive contagion, which will counter the tendency to despair, and without a massive blow to the head, pique your awareness of the value of your life lived authentically.



* These are expanded upon in *Helping people change: Coaching with Compassion for lifelong learning and Growth* by Richard Boyatzis, Melvin Smith, and Ellen Van Oosten.