

Four small letters for a great word: hope

Written by Luwam Brhane

In the ups and downs of life each of us grasp for that invisible thing which promotes one of our darkest hours to be a time of prosperity. This concept that gives us a sense of hope and peace is indeed hope. Hope is the state which endorses the belief in an outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life. Hope is the "feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best" or the act of "looking forward to something with desire and reasonable confidence" or "feeling that something desired may happen". Other definitions are "to cherish a desire with anticipation"; "to desire with expectation of obtainment"; or "to expect with confidence". Although it can be defined and explained in many ways the feeling is the one and only for anyone and everyone.

Hope can first be seen in ancient Greek mythology with the story of Zeus and Prometheus. As the myth tells a story of how Prometheus stole fire from the god Zeus, which infuriated the supreme god. And then Zeus created a box that contained all manners of evil. After a while Pandora opened the box after being warned not to, and those evils were released into the world; hope, which lay at the bottom of the box, remained. This is how and when people started talking about hope and its outcome.

A lot of researchers, after defining their concept of hope, have created ways of how to measure the actual psychological construct. Charles R. Snyder's in his research and book of hope proposed a "Hope Scale": which measures a person's intended succession in congruence to their goals. Generally, their determination to achieve their goal is their measured hope.

In Snyder's book, "Hope Theory", there is a difference between the measures given to kids and adults. The adult Hope Scale contains 12 questions some measuring 'pathways thinking' others measuring 'agency thinking' and so on.

Some confuse the concept of hope with the concept of optimism. Even though they might seem similar the difference is that hope requires pathways and thoughts to an aimed goal, while optimism leads one to "expect the best, but it does not necessarily provide any critical thinking about how we are going to get to the goal that we have set".

Snyder said and I quote: "we can best understand emotion and self-esteem as a by-product of how effective we are in the pursuit of goals".

Other theories and philosophies could be: "Because positive emotions arise in response to diffuse opportunities, rather than narrowly focused threats, positive emotions momentarily broaden people's attention and thinking, enabling them to draw on higher-level connections and a wider-than-usual range of percepts or ideas through cognitive, psychology, physical, or social

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resources” Frederickson.

Dr. Frederickson is explaining hope in a moment of great need. With the sense of hope come positive emotions such as happiness and joy, courage, and empowerment. She describes these “positive emotions” as coming from four different areas of one’s self: from a cognitive, psychological, social, or physical perspective.

Without forgetting that in religion hope and faith are the key words. “In many traditional religious texts, the word is an indication of certainty and a positive expectation of future reward. “Hope” in the Holy books mean “a strong and confident expectation.” Many trust that it is because of hope that many believers in the past were saved from persecutions

This simple word has one of the strongest meaning and affect in one’s life. And it is an evitable concept absolutely necessary to guide a blissful and serene life.