

# Hope

## A Life Essential

Hope is essentially essential. Without question, it's a "need" which distances it markedly from the dramatically less important "want." It is indeed a need of the most dramatic and critical proportions.

Hope is powerful, but it's fragile all at once. It can sustain us in the most torrential times, but it can likewise be fleeting, evasive and even altogether absent. Sometimes hope looks convincing; at other times hope looks foolish and the stuff of misty-eyed dreamers or those too fearful to face reality. We desperately desire it, but then often question it when it shows up. Hope is an interesting thing, arising from some primal place deep within us.

Hope is one of those things whose absence undermines the entirety of our existence or our ability to exist. Think about it. Take away hope and what's left? Without hope there is no reason to work or sacrifice or plan as there is nothing that will come of any of our efforts.

### **Hope Sees a Future When We Can't**

Hope holds out a promise that there exists something ahead that makes the present worthwhile. It's a lifeline of sorts, thrown into the churning and foaming seas of our days and our weeks, allowing us to believe that swimming against the forces arrayed against is somehow ultimately worthwhile. Hope frequently whispers and it sometimes screams, "It will work out!" when we have no ability to see anything working out. If then we remove hope, we have nothing. If we then have nothing, our very survival is in question.

Someone in antiquity once wrote, "Without a vision, the people perish." If we cannot believe that something lies ahead, we cannot tolerate what lies around us. If we cannot believe that there is a rationale suitable enough for what we're doing and where we're investing our lives, why do it? We must have hope in the same way that we must have oxygen and food.

### **Hope as a Core Attitude**

Hope is an attitude that is as natural a part of our humanity as any other part. When everything appears bleak and forlorn, hope does not succumb. It's that tenacious thing that defies reality and courts the impossible. It's relentless in stomping out negativity and building in possibilities. Whenever and wherever it's dark, hope casts of a light. When it's cold and damp, hope burns warm against the gray. When circumstances cloud our vision, hope cuts a sure line of vision through it. If we embrace it, it cannot be killed, it will not be deterred and it is far too bold to be thwarted.

It has held on throughout human history, raising up individuals and entire nations at times when it appeared that certain failure and pending doom were all but a matter of time. It has been the song of heroes and heroines alike. Hope captivated hearts and minds, taking hold of people in situations where surrender seemed the only sane option. It has called corporate humanity to feats deemed unreachable; lifting us to heights that display the wonder of our inherent humanity. It has been relentless since the dawn of time, being as strong and

2 - Craig D. Lounsbrough, LPC

virile today as it has ever been; writing magnificent stories across the pages of history that can be our stories as well.

### **What Hope Does**

Hope strikes at the very root of the notion of futility; that all of our life's efforts are useless and doomed to failure. It rides hard against the mentality of ruthless indifference where we admit to hopelessness, surrender to failure and fall into whatever coma the situation dictates. Hope has the audacious job of refusing to believe what life would frequently say to us.

Hope has a powerful transforming effect; turning us around to believe when we found no reason to believe. When we were consumed with surrender, it makes surrender something putrid and the stuff of fools. Hope has the power to raise us up when we had no desire to be raised up. It calls us to something beyond our own humanity even when we fear going there; to heights that defy whatever our circumstances are. At times it seems silly and naïve; emboldening us to stand when standing seems the epitome of foolishness.

But hope is not foolish. It is based on the power of the human spirit and the vastness of existence. Hope speaks of the cooperative effort of life standing with us against what we cannot stand against alone. Hope is bigger than we are. It's something larger joining us to overcome when alone we could not overcome. While it's a part of something grander than we are, it's something nonetheless fully accessible to us. It is a grand thing; a powerful thing and a sorely unused and underestimated thing.

### **It's Time to Hope**

We stand in times where hope is being lost. The economy about us continues to spin to places and levels yet unknown. Lives and homes are dissolving in the wake of an economy whirling out of control. It's here that we must seize hope, or more rightly, let it seize us. Hope sees a solution and chants victory with ever-increasing intensity. Whether that is our finances, our marriages, our families, our jobs, our self image of whatever it might be. Hope speaks "hope" into all of it. May you find hope today, or more appropriately, let it find you.