

GROW

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Hope is the foundation for happiness and wellbeing. It is impossible to grow or be happy without hope. Despite your present situation or past experiences, hope is the belief that a bright future still awaits you (even though you can't see it yet). Therefore, hope is based on faith, not evidence. Despite this, many people who have survived critical incidents or tragic circumstances often feel like they have no hope. However, so long as you are still breathing, you have hope.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This session is designed to help you:

- (a) understand the difference between authentic hope and wishful thinking
- (b) develop a future outlook based on substantive things within
- (c) how to fine tune your focus and develop a vision for your future



HOPE HOLD. ON. PAIN. ENDS.

PEOPLE IN DESPAIR MAY FIND THEMSELVES SAYING: 'I FEEL HOPELESS'. FEELING HOPE-LESS IS NOT HAVING 'NO HOPE', IT'S SIMPLY HAVING LESS HOPE. HOPELESSNESS IS PREVALENT WHEN THERE'S A MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN 'AUTHENTIC HOPE' AND 'WISHFUL THINKING'.

Know the Difference

Happiness and wellbeing do not come from things outside of us. True authentic hope and happiness is cultivated from within. If we can develop the true substance of hope on the inside, we won't be fooled, lured or tricked by the promise of happiness from things on the outside.



From the following 'wishful thinking' list, see if you can identify the 3 examples of 'Authentic Hope'.

I WOULD BE SO HAPPY AND FULFILLED IF I COULD JUST...

GET A PAY RISE
RECEIVE MY VISA ACCEPTANCE
FORGIVE AND MOVE ON
FIND A GIRLFRIEND
RECOVER FROM ILLNESS
WIN THE LOTTERY
BE MORE LOVING
GET PREGNANT
BUY A NEW HOME
GO ON AN OVERSEAS HOLIDAY
TRUST GOD CARES ABOUT ME
GET A NEW CAR
GET OUT OF DEBT

Flames of Life

Striving to improve one's safety and security, social standing, economic stability, physical health and appearance can be quite noble. In fact, favourable circumstance, material possession and relationships are highly sought after by most societies around the world. However, placing your hope for happiness and fulfilment in people, positions or possessions will be sure to disappoint.



Identify what flames of life (future challenges or problems) might burst the following wishful-thinking-balloons.

WISHFUL THINKING	FLAMES OF LIFE
Get a job promotion	<i>(e.g., become sick, unable to work)</i>
New government come into power	<i>(e.g., ruling party will likely change again)</i>
Greater fortune and wealth	
Recover from disability or illness	
Give birth to a newborn baby	
Marry the most wonderful person	
Move to a new city or country	
Have a new boss at work	
Get accepted to college	

Q: What things have you placed your hope for happiness and fulfillment in, that you now recognise are just wishful-thinking-balloons?

Hope for a future

Research has shown that authentic hope is the leading indicator of success in almost every aspect of life. For example, business leaders who nurture hope typically do better in business than people with little hope. Students who hope to do well in their exams achieve significantly better results than students who have little hope. Even couples going through relationship difficulties, if they hold onto hope for their marriage, they are likely to see improvement in their relationship. Authentic hope is very powerful.

There was a successful businessman who had two sons. The two sons were young, married, with children of their own. Both sons worked for their father's business and spent a considerable amount of time with him. The father was a hardworking man who pushed his employees very hard, including his sons. Although the father loved his sons, he rarely showed it or told them. However, the two sons were very good friends and spent almost all their time together. One day, while the two sons were working in the family business, a fire broke out. The father ran into the business in an attempt to save some of the valuables, but became overwhelmed by the smoke and flames, and unfortunately, he perished in the fire. Everything was destroyed. Yet, the two sons responded in completely different ways:

OLDER SON'S RESPONSE

"How am I going to survive? I have lost my father, the only man who has ever been important to me. Now I have no one to guide me or show me the way. The business is ruined. As the oldest son, I was planning to inherit all my father's wealth someday, but now the fire has taken it all and I have nothing. I have also lost my job. My father paid me well but now I have no money and no way to provide for my family. My wife will be ashamed of our new situation and will lose respect for me. I have lost everything in one day! Now I have no father, no job, no money and no respect. I do not see how I'm going to survive."

YOUNGER SON'S RESPONSE

"I am so grateful my brother and I survived the fire, and that we are still alive to support our wives and children. This disaster has made me realise how vulnerable and precious life is. Losing my father and the business is so terribly sad for me, but at the same time, it has made me realise what's important. I don't just want to focus on making money, but also on things that matter - I want to make meaning. The fact that I am still alive suggests to me that God's not finished with me yet. There are still greater things to be accomplished, lessons to learn, and values to pass on. And look, together we will be able to build a new business and pass on to our children the skills that our father taught us."

1.

What had the older son placed his hope in that resulted in subsequent devastation (when his 'wishful-thinking-balloon' was burst)?

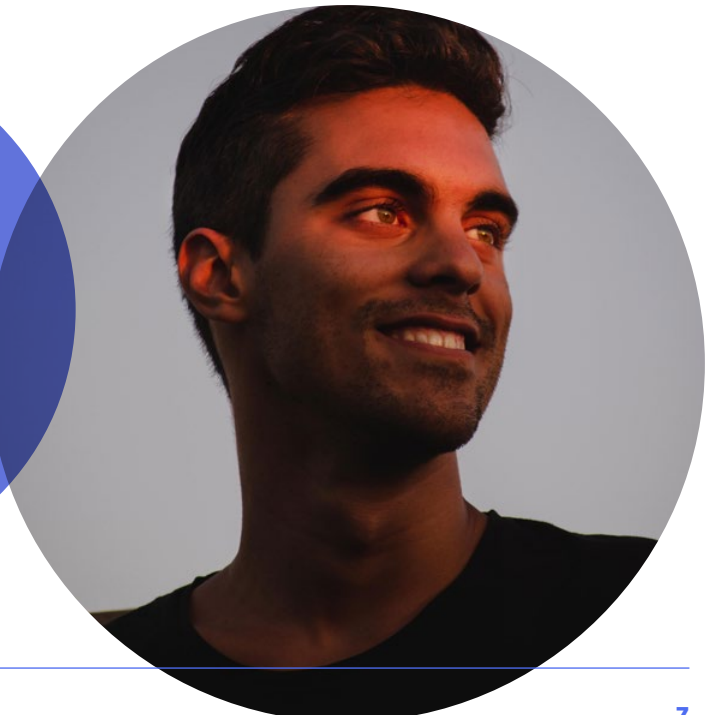
2.

How did the younger son cultivate authentic hope and develop such a positive and confident future outlook?



- He held on to hope that a Divine Creator cared for him
- He remained grateful despite the circumstances
- He displayed kindness and consideration towards others
- He had the courage to look to the future and rebuild
- All of the above

**HOPE IS THE
BELIEF THAT
YOUR TOMORROW
WILL BE BETTER
THAN TODAY OR
YESTERDAY.**



Fine-tune your Focus

When it comes to focus, there are two types of vision: (a) what you see physically with your eyes, and (b) what you perceive in your heart and mind. When you're exclusively focused on your immediate problems (eyes), it is easy to miss what matters most (heart and mind). When you can no longer see what matters, your internal blindness affects your hope and confidence. To cultivate confidence, you need to fine tune your focus.

Q: What are some things in your past that you sometimes focus on which you recognise do not cultivate hope or confidence?

WHATEVER YOU

FOCUS

**YOUR ATTENTION ON
YOU CULTIVATE**

Q: What are some things in your future that you could focus on which you recognise might help cultivate hope or confidence?

IMAGINE YOU'VE TRAVELLED FORWARD IN TIME (5 TO 10 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE). CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHAT KIND OF LIFE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE LIVING, AND WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE? TO HELP MAKE YOUR IMAGINED 'FUTURE' BECOME YOUR REALITY, WHAT ADVICE COULD YOU GIVE TO YOURSELF NOW?

Q: Rather than placing your hope in external things (people, positions, possessions), what timeless internal values could you focus on (e.g., what do you believe in, what are you grateful for, what would you like more of)?

Q: Rather than waiting for others to help you, what would your future look like if you took the initiative?

Q: How could you take the spotlight off yourself, and shine it in the direction you want to go (helping to also illuminate the way for others)?