

On HOPE

Hope is important, because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear...But that is the most that hope can do for us – to make some hardship lighter. When I think deeply about the nature of hope, I see something tragic. Since we cling to our hope in the future, we do not focus our energies and capabilities on the present moment...”

[H]ope is not enough...if you dwell in the energy of hope, you will not bring yourself back entirely into the present moment. If you re-channel those energies into being aware of what is going on in the present moment, you will be able to make a breakthrough....

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*

“I know that what I am asking is impossible. But in our time, as in every time, the impossible is the least that one can demand – and one is, after all, emboldened by the spectacle of human history in general, and American Negro history in particular, for it testifies to nothing less than the perpetual achievement of the impossible.”

*James Baldwin (a 20th Century American [novelist](#), [playwright](#), [essayist](#), [poet](#), and [activist](#)) says in his book, *The Fire Next Time*, copyright 1963.*

“Impossible is not a fact, it’s an attitude...It’s only an attitude.” “Stubborn optimism,” consists of “courage, trust, hope, and solidarity.” “Optimism is...a choice...a moral choice.” The issue is how to be “contagious about stubborn optimism” ...“if we harness collective wisdom, we can figure out how to do that.”

~Christiana Figueres , a diplomat who was instrumental in getting the 2015 UN Paris (Climate Change) Agreement passed. From TED Radio Hour, Climate Mindset, 5/22/2020.

“To give up hope is to admit defeat. It took a lot of hope for many of us to have the right to sit in a classroom together and read novels written by a black man. Desegregation was once seen as something as eternal as the sun. It was considered natural and nothing under God could dismantle it. With action and tremendous faith that change could happen, a relatively small group of people were able to set this country on a course that made our Revolutionary Mixtape possible today. We were once a revolutionary thought and someone’s hope. We have to pass that forward and believe in the impossible for the generations to come.”

James Baldwin in The Fire Next Time:

The kind of hope I often think about (especially in hopeless situations like prison or the sewer) is, I believe, a state of mind, not a state of the world.

Either we have hope within us or we don't.

Baltimore and Beyond Mindfulness Community BIPOC gathering July 5 2020

Hope is not a prognostication — it's an orientation of the spirit.

Each of us must find real, fundamental hope within himself.

You can't delegate that to anyone else.

Hope in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something to succeed.

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism.

It's not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

It is this hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.

In the face of this absurdity, life is too precious a thing to permit its devaluation by living pointlessly, emptily, without meaning, without love, and, finally, without hope.

Václav Havel, Never Hope Against Hope, Esquire, 1993

*A Czech statesman, writer and former
Dissident.*

Keeping balance
on the round orb
is a masterful task
to walk amongst blades of grass
as born free beings
not the shattered descendants
of ancients whose memories
were lost in the ruins
created by the deceptions of our captors.

New memories
make their way
through old ground
old ground gives way
to new thought
for all freed beings to walk with
towards horizons rising
out of flame and famine.
Memory survives with a new name –
Hope.

Linda Joy Burke
Local Poet - Writer - Picture Maker - Percussionist

"Children Everybody, here's what to do during war: In a time of destruction,
create something. A poem. A parade. A community. A school. A vow. A
moral principle. One peaceful moment."

- *Maxine Hong Kingston*,
Chinese-American author and Professor Emerita at the University of
California, Berkeley