

*"Once you choose Hope,
anything's possible."*
~Christopher Reeve

Lesson #1: What is Hope?



Topic: **Define Hope**

The Importance of Hope in our Health

Research suggests hope is a teachable skill (Rand and Cheavens, 2008). It has been found that a greater level of hope results in greater well-being, and that having hope is vital to success (Scioli, 2009). Higher hope corresponds to greater emotional and psychological well-being, greater academic performance, and enhanced personal relationships (Snyder, 2003).

This guidebook's purpose is to educate and equip you with the necessary brain health skills to find and maintain hope even during the most trying of times. You may apply these tools in your own life, as well as gain knowledge on how to guide others on their path to living a hopeful life.

The leading predictor of suicide is hopelessness (Association of Physicians, 2004), so we believe through understanding and practicing the pathways to hope, no matter what the experience, we improve brain health for all.

Let's Think About Hope

You may think about your responses to the following questions or feel free to write them down for yourself.

- 1) What is something that might happen soon that you're excited for and hopeful about? What is something that might happen in one or two years that you are hopeful about?
- 2) What does it feel like for you to be hopeful?
- 3) Can you think of a special person in your life that gives you hope?
- 4) Can you think of a time when you were scared or angry? What did you do to help yourself feel better?
- 5) Do you have an activity that makes you feel happy and why?

Starting the Hope Journey

Hope is a very important skill that you can learn. You can use it every day in whatever you do.

You can think of hope like running or any other sport or hobby. The more you run, the better you get at it. The better you are at running, the better you are at other activities such as baseball, soccer, hockey, dance, or gymnastics. The more you practice your hope skills, the better they become. The better your hope skills are, the better you are at living your life.

Let's think more about what the word "hope" means. There are various definitions of hope. We are going to read some of them now. In addition, you may wish to write them down.

*Dr. Anthony Scioli explains that hope is a part of a person's character or personality. You are not born with hope. Hope must be developed, like a set of muscles. There are four kinds of hope: attachment, mastery, survival, and spiritual. Each type of hope, just like each muscle, has a special purpose.

1. **Attachment hope** is used to build and keep trusting relationships, have a sense of connection to others, and have strong survival skills.
2. **Mastery hope** is used to become strong and successful, supported in your efforts, and inspired by good role models.
3. **Survival hope** is used to stay calm and find ways out of trouble or difficult situations. It allows you to manage your fears.
4. **Spiritual hope** is used to feel close to nature and all human beings and to draw extra strength and protection.

*Dr. Shane Lopez, a hope expert, says that hope is the feeling you have when you have a goal, are excited about achieving that goal, and then you figure out how you achieve your goal.¹

*The Merriam Webster Dictionary says that hope is the feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it can happen².

Hope Exercise

Let's see how you did with Lesson One. Check out a few questions below, and answer to the best of your ability. Once you have answered correctly, you will be able to move on!

1. Research suggests that a greater level of hope results in:
 - a. greater emotional and psychological well-being
 - b. enhanced personal relationships
 - c. better academic performance
 - d. all of the above

2. A leading predictor of suicide is: _____
 - a. low self-esteem
 - b. hopelessness
 - c. anxiety
 - d. high stress

¹ See University of Minnesota (2013), video interview with Dr. Lopez

² See Merriam-Webster

3. _____ is used to stay calm and find ways out of trouble or difficult situations. It allows you to manage your fears.

- a. Attachment Hope
- b. Mastery Hope
- c. **Survival Hope**
- d. Spiritual Hope

4. Dr. Shane Lopez says that hope is a feeling you have:

- a. **when you have a goal, are excited about achieving that goal, and then you figure out how you achieve your goal.**
- b. all of the time.
- c. when you are in a good mood.
- d. when surrounded by people you care about.

5. Hope is a skill that can be taught.

- a. **True**
- b. False

Things to Think About

What does hope mean to you? Write your own definition of hope and keep it in a safe place as a daily reminder and keepsake. Feel free to use the HOPE SUNFLOWER CENTER WORKSHEET provided.

“Every friend is to the other a sun and a sunflower also. He attracts and follows.” Jean Paul Richter