

Lesson #8: A Hopeful Approach to Change

“You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.”
~Michelle Obama



Topic: **It is important to anticipate obstacles and create plans ahead of time to overcome them.**

Using Our Hope to Overcome Anticipated Obstacles and Challenges

To keep ourselves hopeful (along with all our hope tools), we must approach life knowing that obstacles will arise. Obstacles are challenges we can overcome. Once we overcome them, we have more wisdom, tools, and the capacity to be hopeful.

When we set our goals or consider our passion and purpose, we also need to envision what might get in the way.

Let's think about an example together. Sara wants to go to a good college.

What might be some challenges Sara faces in her plan to go to college?

Examples: She needs to get good grades, she needs to apply and be accepted, and she needs to find the money to pay for school.

By thinking ahead about the problems she might face, Sara can create solutions ahead of time for potential challenges.

What might be some challenges Sara faces in her plan to go to college?

Examples: Asking for help from school counselors, practicing deep breathing when she feels overwhelmed, or having a fundraiser at her church.

With our own goals, we want to envision the obstacles that might come along, so that we can also think about solutions to these obstacles. Then, we are prepared for challenges. This preparation will keep us hopeful because we don't feel defeated when obstacles arise. Instead, we are prepared to overcome them.



Kendra's Obstacle

We are going to revisit Kendra's story about the girl who set running goals.

Although we learned that Kendra eventually ran 10 miles in 10th grade, what we didn't learn was that Kendra faced some obstacles to her goals that she had not planned for at first.

For example, part of Kendra's plan was to join the group of high school students who ran at the community center in her town. The center was three miles away. For the first few weeks, Kendra's older sister took her to the center, but eventually, her sister got busy and couldn't always drive Kendra to the center.

Kendra knew that she had to keep up her running schedule in order to keep her lungs and legs strong. Not having a ride to the community center made it hard for Kendra to work toward her goals.

Kendra had a choice to make.

1. Stay home on Saturdays and feel sad or disappointed.
2. Find a way around this obstacle.

Kendra asked everyone she knew for a ride to the center. This worked for a while, but eventually she was back to square one without a ride to her running group.

At that point, Kendra started walking to the center on Saturday mornings. Kendra was dedicated and was not going to let this obstacle interfere with her goal.

Through this experience, Kendra realized that for any goal she set, including her running goals for the future, obstacles were going to arise.

Learning how to overcome her obstacle of getting to the community center gave Kendra hope. It taught Kendra that she could be creative and resourceful and find ways around obstacles. It also taught her that we can keep moving toward our goals if we anticipate obstacles and figure out how to overcome them.

Obstacles are bound to cross our paths. No matter what is going on for you now, your past does not determine your future. You can use all your hope tools, along with thinking ahead about obstacles and planning potential solutions, to create a successful life for yourself. Hope is fundamental to your happiness. By using these tools to anticipate and overcome obstacles, you can create hope for yourself.

"You may have to fight the battle more than once to win it." Margaret Thatcher

Hope Exercise

Let's see how you did with Lesson 8: A Hopeful Approach to Change. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Obstacles will always prevent us from reaching our goals:

- a) True
- b) False

2. When we envision challenges to our goal:

- a) we see it is not worth pursuing.
- b) we will always overcome them.
- c) should feel defeated.
- d) we can think about solutions and prepare ourselves.

In the story, Kendra:

- a) found one solution and it worked successfully in getting her to the community center.
- b) needed to think of multiple ways to solve her problem of getting to the community center.
- c) stopped running because she no longer had a ride to the community center.
- d) none of the above.

Things To Think About

Answer the following questions for yourself. Write down your responses in a safe place, as a reminder of what challenges you may face, as you journey toward your goal. What solutions will you find? Feel free to use the [Hope Sunflower Worksheet](#).

For the goal that you identified in the last lesson, brainstorm three potential obstacles you might face trying to achieve this goal. What are some pathways around that obstacle?

Potential Obstacles

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Pathways Around Those Obstacles

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.