Put the Pie-in-the-Sky on the Plate in Front of You: Building Hope in Today’s World

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Goal & Objectives

• **Hope/Optimism**
  • Understand the role of positive emotions in promoting health and wellness
  • Understand how hope, optimism, and pessimism, come from our:
    • Thoughts
    • Thinking styles
  • How to Create Hope!
Positive Psychology
Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000)

- Focus on human strengths and potentials instead of on problems and remedies
- “The aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities” (p.5).
Positive Psychology
(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

- At the subjective level involves studying:
  - Well-being, Contentment, & Satisfaction (past)
  - **Hope & Optimism** (future)
  - Flow & Happiness (present)
Positivity
(Frederickson, 1998; 2000; 2009)

- Positive emotions
  - More than the absence of negative emotions
  - Joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love
- Emotions trigger “specific action-tendencies” (Frigda, 1986)
Hope has Gotten a Bad Rap:

• Pandora’s Box
  • Prometheus stole fire from gods
  • Zeus sent a maiden with a dowry jar-Pandora
  • She was given strict instructions not to open the jar
  • Curiosity led her to open the jar-out came plague of gout, colic, spite, envy, revenge. She slammed the lid shut-only hope remained.
• Sophocles, Nietzsche, Plato, Euripides, Francis Bacon, Benjamin Franklin:
  • “He that lives on hope will die fasting”
Pie-in-the Sky

• pie in the sky:
  • If an idea or plan is pie in the sky, it seems good but is not likely to be achieved
  • Those plans of his to set up his own business are just pie in the sky.

• pie in the sky:
  • Something good that is unlikely to happen.
  • Our leaders need to offer more than pie in the sky when they talk about political and social issues.
This is an American phrase and was coined by Joe Hill in 1911. Hill was a Swedish-born itinerant labourer who migrated to the USA in 1902; leading light of the radical labour organisation *The Industrial Workers of the World* - known as the *Wobblies*, wrote radical songs for them.

Long-haired preachers come out every night, Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right; But when asked how 'bout something to eat They will answer with voices so sweet:

Chorus: You will eat, bye and bye, In that glorious land above the sky; Work and pray, live on hay, You'll get pie in the sky when you die.
Optimism
(confidence)

  - “A mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future-one which the evaluator deems as socially desirable, to his [or her] advantage or pleasure” (p. 18).

Pessimism
(doubt)

- Webster’s Dictionary
  - “An inclination to emphasize adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities or to expect the worst possible outcome.”

Optimism and hope are grounded in the connection between mind and body; and all the sensations, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors therein.
My thought…

Diet coke…

My Body’s Response: Mmmm, mouth-watering deliciousness
My Feeling: Pleasure
My Behavior: Gulp it down!
My thought...

Tobacco spit...

My body’s response: Yuck! I recoil.
My feeling…disgust!
My behavior: Turn away.
Humans Cognate!

- Event
- Behavior
- Feelings
- Beliefs

The diagram illustrates the relationship between these concepts.
Optimistic and Pessimistic Explanatory Styles (Hirsch, et al., 2009; Seligman, 2002)

Tendency to make attributions about prior negative events:

- **OPTIMISTIC**-External, specific, & transient:
  - **External**
    - “We had a crisis in the clinic so I couldn’t get the case notes read.”
    - “There are too many emails!”
  - **Specific**
    - “Professor Zetzer is unfair.”
    - “This presentation is useless.”
  - **Transient**
    - “Diets don’t work when you eat out.”
    - “You haven’t talked to me lately.”

- **PESSIMISTIC**-Internal, global, & stable:
  - **Internal**
    - “I am disorganized.”
    - “I have no self-control with email!”
  - **Global**
    - “All professors are unfair.”
    - “Presentations are useless.”
  - **Stable**
    - “Diets never work.”
    - “You never talk to me.”
Optimistic Explanatory Style
Associated with:

- Good health and longevity
- Effective problem solving
- Decreased depression
- Faster recovery from depression
- Less suicidal ideation compared to pessimistic explanatory style

(Hirsch, et al., 2009)
Realistic Optimism
(Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 2002)

- Optimism as “positive illusion,” NOT delusion (Taylor, 1989)
  - People tend to view themselves positively (unless anxious or depressed)
  - Illusions responsive to reality; delusions are not
- Optimism as “biology of hope” (Tiger, 1979)
  - An integral part of human nature
  - Developed along with our cognitive capacities
  - An “evolved psychological mechanism” with evolutionary value (Buss, 1991)
    - Easy to think; easy to learn; easy to teach
Increasing Optimism & Hope
(Seligman, 2002; Snyder, 2000)

• To Build Optimism
  • Distance self from past negative outcome
  • Recognize and dispute pessimistic thoughts

• To Build Hope
  • Concentrate on reaching desired future positive goal-related outcomes
Building Optimism
Seligman (2002)

Adversity

Energization!

Disputation

Beliefs

Consequences (Feelings)
Life is Hard!

• Barriers to Hope
  • Learning History

• Events
  • Internal (sensations, thoughts, feelings)
  • External (surprises, disruptions, losses, insults/injuries/accidents)
Crazy Heart Video
Hope
(Frederickson, 2009, p. 43)

“Deep within the core of hope is the **belief** that things can change. No matter how awful or uncertain they are at the moment, things can turn out better. **Possibilities exist.** Hope sustains you. It keeps you from collapsing into despair. It **motivates** you to **tap into your own capabilities** and inventiveness to turn things around. It **inspires you to plan** for a better **future.**”
The hope is in the desire.

The hope is in the *yearning*.
Hope Theory
(Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 1994)

- “The perceived ability to produce pathways to achieve desired goals and to motivate oneself to use those pathways” (R&C, p. 323)
- “The overall perception that one’s goals can be met” (Snyder, 2000)

You Need:
- Goal-Oriented Thoughts
- Pathways to Achievement
- Agency Thoughts
Hope Thoughts

Pathways
(developmental lessons of correlation or causality)

Agency
(developmental lessons of self as author of causal chains of events)

Emotion Set
Outcome Value

Pathways Thoughts

Agency Thoughts

Stressor

Surprise Event

Learning History

Preevent

Event Sequence

Goal Attainment or Non-Attainment

Emotions
Benefits of Hope
(Snyder, 2000)

- Higher hope associated with
  - Higher standardized achievement test scores but not intelligence tests
  - Higher GPAs
  - Better athletic performance
  - More positive comments about yourself
    - Low on hope have more negative comments about self
- Feel challenged by goals
  - Lower on hope defeated/demoralized
Benefits of Hope
(Snyder, 2000)

• Higher feelings of self-worth
• Better coping skills
• Higher levels of pain tolerance
• Better adjustment to spinal cord injury and adolescent burn injuries; fewer harmful recovery behaviors; less depression
• Less perceived pain and greater endurance for pain (cold-pressor test; Snyder, 2000)
• For cancer patients, better coping w/ disease
Hope in Today’s World
Helping Ourselves, Friends & Family Feel Hopeful
(Lopez et al., 2000)

- When talking about outcomes/events:
  - **Negative:**
    - Look for external/situational causes
  - **Positive:**
    - Look for internal/dispositional causes
  - Look towards the future
Helping Friends & Family Feel Hopeful

(Lopez et al., 2000)

- Empathy – Comfort-Validation
- Listen for the Desire
- Ask goal-setting questions:
  - What do you want to do?
  - What would it look like if you were successful at _____?
Helping Friends & Family Feel Hopeful

(Lopez et al., 2000)

• Ask questions about motivation (agency)
  • On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated are you to work towards your desired outcome?
Helping Friends & Family Feel Hopeful
(Lopez et al., 2000)

• Ask questions about steps (pathways)
  • If the original pathway to your goal doesn’t work, how easy it is for you to make other plans to reach the same goal?
  • What could you do instead? Is there another way?
Helping Friends & Family Feel Hopeful
(Lopez et al., 2000)

• Ask about common responses to blocked goals
  • When you are faced with a difficult problem, how do you react?
  • What are some alternatives?
I think I can—I think I can—I think I can—I think I can.”

Up, up, up. Faster and faster and faster and faster the little engine climbed, until at last they reached the top of the mountain. Down in the valley lay the city.
“I thought I could. I thought I could. I thought I could. I thought I could.”
Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul.
And sings the tune
Without the words,
And never stops at all.

Emily Dickinson
US poet (1830 - 1886)
Shine a Light

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=276YvPgw
GQA