

Candice Schutter: Hi, Welcome to The Deeper Pulse.

I'm here with you today because it is four days before the United States general election. And I want to remind everyone out there to please vote. Please vote.

I know it can sometimes feel like our voices exist in a vacuum, but I can assure you that the expression of your truth is never wasted. So, if you haven't already please cast your ballot.

And today's episode that I'm sharing with you is one that I just recently dropped over on Patreon. On a day when I was feeling the exhilaration, the anxiety. The dread and the hopefulness.

And I wanted to share it here as well, just to, as again, another call to action. And also I'm hoping that the topic is something that brings at least a bit of perspective and perhaps some [00:01:00] relief as I look at this whole idea of hope. This word that gets thrown around all the time. What it really means. And how we can proactively connect to it. Especially in the face of so much unknown.

So, thanks for listening. If you want to hear more from me. I am over on Patreon regularly at patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

Hey, y'all welcome back to another episode of The Deeper Pulse on Patreon. Thank you for being here. Whether you're watching this on video or listening on the go, I appreciate your support of the podcast and this continued exploration that we're doing together.

I'm back here with you today solo. The next [00:02:00] drop, which will be coming up in just a couple of weeks, will be another interview, which I'm super excited to share with you. So you can look forward to that.

But this week, I wanted to just do a little bit more musing aloud coming from the heart. I don't know about y'all, but I've just been in the feels lately. Which isn't unfamiliar to me. Um, if you've been listening to the podcast for awhile, you know that I have a long history of anxiety and that for most of my childhood and a lot of my early adulthood, I battled a generalized anxiety disorder and also some complex PTSD thrown in for good measure.

So I am not unfamiliar with anxiety. Anxiety is a sensation that I know really well in my body and my bones. And in the last decade or so of my life, I've experienced a lot less of it. Some of that due to the privilege of being able to do a lot [00:03:00] of, of healing and therapy. Which has helped to give me some strategies to better navigate my anxiety. Some of the body awareness practices that I did really helped me to learn to self regulate my nervous system. And so there's a lot of inner work that happened.

And also.

My anxiety levels, I believe, have faded in recent years because of social determinants of anxiety. Just like there are social determinants of every aspect of our health. It's true of our mental health. And what I mean by that is that a lot of my anxiety was a function of

relationships that I was in. As a child, relationships that chose me. And then later, relationships that I chose, patterns that I continued to step into, which I've talked about on the podcast. So the social environment I was in. But also the financial stressors, that I dealt with day in and day out for decades, that took a real toll on my health. And the anxiety that I felt [00:04:00] was very justified in many ways.

I know people very intimately, in fact, who battle chronic illnesses that lead to feelings of anxiety and powerlessness that are very valid. So I guess the first thing I just want to underscore when we talk about anxiety, is that we really need to understand that this wellness overcorrection and this self-help tendency of saying like, it's always an inside job and we need to manage our anxiety and that we should be able to take care of it on our own. We really need to take a much more, um, wider perspective around what leads to feelings of anxiety and powerlessness.

For me, the way that I experienced anxiety, and I think it's different for different people. For me, it feels like this low-grade tremor on the inside. I feel it a lot in my solar plexus and in my gut. It impacts my breath and my ability to breathe deeply and freely, which is why doing body awareness and breathwork practices really do [00:05:00] help. But it's not always enough, right.

And so, the sensation of anxiety is something that I have been feeling again more recently. And a lot of it is connected to what's going on in the country, what's going on worldwide and these power struggles that are inevitably impacting all of us on some level.

It's, it's, it's real, y'all. It's real. And I'm sharing this in case you're feeling anxious. Because even if you're not in the U.S., even if it's not about this election, I know people who are going through massive transitions in their lives. Anxiety is a very real thing. And the fear, as James Hollis talks about, sort of, the two aspects of that fear are a sense of overwhelm. Feeling overwhelmed by the muchness of it. Or feeling lethargic. Like [00:06:00] a sense of inertia, a sense of paralysis around at all. And I'm just here to normalize those responses to the anxiety of life in a flesh and blood body and how everything, for many of us, is amplified right now.

And, you know, make no mistake, this election is, it really is going to determine the course of, American history for the next few decades. I really believe that. And when you see, when I see, for example, the MAGA rally at Madison Square Garden and the vitriol, the racism, the hatred, the cheering crowds. It's a bit frightening.

And also, I see Kamala Harris at her rallies. And I see the cheering crowds there and the support and the hopeful messages and the sense of coalition and people stepping forward who understand that it is essential to keep Donald Trump out of The [00:07:00] White House. When I see all of that, I feel sort of the surge of hopefulness.

And so what I want to talk about today is anxiety and hope. And that relationship.

I want to define hope in the psychological sense. Because when we use the word hope, I think it's really important to get super clear on what we mean. Especially for those of us who come out of a new age spiritual setting, or are still in one, where there is spiritual bypassing and a bit of magical thinking going on. And so what's the difference between hoping and that?

And I have circled back to the very foundations of the work that I'm now doing, which goes back almost 30 years, to really look at the root of that question. And I feel like it's an anchor I want to share with you.

So that's where we're going to go today.

[00:08:00] So, what is hope? Is a big question. And I'm not here to say that I have the right answer. I'm going to share with you what, um, sort of from a research-based perspective, hope has been shown to be. And then from my own personal experience.

But I asked today before I came on to press record, I posted in a couple different places on Facebook, I posted the question, *when you hear the word hope, what comes to mind?* Without any other prompting, just to see what would arise for folks.

And I want to share, I'm not going to share them all with you, but I want to share just a few just to demonstrate the variety of responses.

Um, *Finding gratitude and love in anything, no matter how small.*

Belief in better.

Someone quoted *Rebecca Solnit, "hope is an embrace of the unknown."*

Others wrote, *a deep longing for an outcome we wish to see unfold.*

A desired [00:09:00] outcome.

Someone described how it felt as a sensation. *My body expands and my heart and face lift. I breathe a little more deeply.*

Others were really specific about the election and *people waking up to ideology.* Others wrote *Barack Obama, Kamala Harris, a peaceful transfer of power.*

Someone who's facing some challenges in their personal life wrote, hope is *what I'm leaning into ever so slightly these days, despite my facing the deepest and most intense moments of my life.*

Someone else wrote hope is *what we do together.*

And one more that I really love is also a quote. Apparently it's from someone named Matthew @CrowsFault.

"People speak of hope as if it is this delicate ephemeral thing made of whispers and spiders webs. It's not. Hope has dirt on her face, blood on her knuckles, the grit of the cobblestones in her hair, and just [00:10:00] spat out a tooth as she rises for another go."

Good stuff.

So I'm going to share with you what I've learned about hope. This is not to say, this is the only definition of hope. But I think you'll find that this framework that I'm going to share with you is going to touch upon all of those answers in some way. Which is really the purpose of this episode is to underscore the way in which hope can be actualized and experienced. And that it's not this nebulous force that we can sometimes connect to and sometimes not. That it is a practice that is pragmatic, practical, and useful.

So let's dig in.

So I'm going to take you [00:11:00] back to 1996, '97 when I was an undergrad going to the University of Kansas. And I had to find a mentor for my honors thesis.

Um, funny side note there. So I, I did well in school in most subjects. But that particular year, I was planning to write my thesis and graduate in four years. But I needed one more science course. So I decided to take geology. I have no idea why I chose geology. I think it was just offered at the right time of day on, so that I would have the days off that I wanted. And I was so profoundly disinterested in the subject. And I found it so impossible to grok, care about let alone really taken the information, learn it. And I just was not into it. And I barely went to the class. And I thought to myself, I'm a great student so, no worries. I'll just, [00:12:00] you know, all I have to do is pass this course so that I can graduate. Well, I failed it. I got a big fat F. And so I had to do another year.

And so, I share that because usually the process of, doing your, your research dissertation for an honors program at a research university like the one that I went to in the psychology department, you know, it's like a few months process. But I ended up spending about a year and a half on my thesis. And the mentor that I chose was C.R. Snyder. He's known as C.R. Snyder in the literature. Dr. Rick Snyder. We all called him Rick.

And he is known as a pioneer in the field of Positive Psychology. He actually wrote the first textbook by that name. And his research is cited, you know, internationally in the world of psychology. He passed in 2006. And I want to share with you a little bit about his work. Because one of the things that he was an expert [00:13:00] in was hope. He's sort of known as the hope guy. The guy who first studied hope, really helped us to understand it, how it connects to human agency.

He was my mentor. He was the director of the Clinical Psychology program at KU. He was the director for 34 years. He was just a really cool guy. Super grounded, super warm. He had sort of this understated intelligence. He was very supportive as a mentor. And as one of his students described it, I was reading some testimonies from some other of his former students, he had "a quiet dignity" about him.

And Dr. Rick Snyder was really specifically interested in the intersection between hope and pain. What does hope do? How does it impact the way that we experience pain?

And this feels super relevant right [00:14:00] now because there's a lot of pain in the world. And so I wanted to share with you a little bit about Dr. Snyder's work, how he defined hope, and the research that we did when I was there with him at KU and what it revealed.

So, first of all, his definition of hope is as follows:

"Hope is the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways."

Ooh, super heady. So I'm going to break that down. But the main point is that hope is not some pie in the sky, disembodied, dissociative way of looking at the world. Hope was a verb, essentially.

So I'll tell you about the research we did, and then I'll break down his definition of hope a little bit more so that it makes it a little bit more tangible sense.

So when I did my honors thesis, it was on the impact [00:15:00] of hope on pain tolerance. And the way it worked was this. So I would go to campus to Fraser Hall. I would go to the third floor, and I would open the research lab. And, one by one, usually freshmen, would show up. Because when you're a freshman, you may know this if you went to a liberal arts school. It's very common when you're a freshman. If you took like a psychology class, you had to participate in a certain number of research studies as part of your course. So these freshmen would show up, somewhat reluctantly, usually hungover, to, to do these research tasks.

And in my case, I would be wearing my white lab coat. I would bring them in one by one, and I would have them fill out what was called The Hope Scale. So it was basically a survey that Dr. Snyder had created that would measure their, sort of, set point around hopefulness. And I'll talk a little bit more about the parameters of that in a minute.

So they would fill out [00:16:00] this assessment. And then randomly, they would be assigned to one of three groups. The first group was called the high-hope group. So they would sit down, and I would lead them in a visualization, eyes closed, sort of like a guided meditation, leading them to reconnect with a memory and a time in their life when they felt a real sense of possibility. When something went really, really well, maybe even exceeded their expectations. And I would invite them to go deep into that memory and sort of go into that state change, if you will. Feeling that sense of possibility and hopefulness. So that was the high-hope group.

The low-hope group would also experience a visualization. But I would invite them to, you know, think back on an experience when something didn't go as well as they had hoped. And connecting them to a moment when they felt a sense of disappointment, when things didn't work out as well as they might've hoped.

So there was the high-hope [00:17:00] visualization group, the low-hope visualization group, and then the third group was the control group. And I would just have them sit and basically lead them through just relaxation. So we had to control for the fact that, you know, the other

folks were experiencing something slightly meditative that might impact their nervous system. So we basically gave the control group an opportunity to just sit and, and be. So the third group had sort of a neutral experience of relaxation prior to the experiment.

The experiment was something called the cold pressor task. This is something I had never heard of prior to working with Dr. Snyder, and nor have I seen it ever again. But it's basically a huge, it almost looks like a clear cooler, um, maybe like, I don't know, two foot by three foot. My job before they would show up would be to fill it with ice and then water. So it's a big vat of ice water. And then the person would put their hand [00:18:00] in the water and hold it there for as long as they could. And I would time them.

So the experiment was really about, does someone's primary set point around hopefulness impact pain tolerance? And if you interfere with that set point, high-hope versus low-hope, does it impact their response to pain?

Now, keep in mind, this is a scientific lab. So it wasn't as though we did this one time with a 100 or 200 freshmen and there was a conclusion that was come to. This was something that Dr. Snyder repeated with others like me, other mentees, multiple times. I did the experiment this time, wrote my thesis on our results. They did show a correlation between high hope and higher pain tolerance. But there were other conflicting variables to weed out, which you might even be able to think of a few yourself. So it wasn't conclusive on this one experiment alone. But over time, Dr. Snyder's research did show a relationship between [00:19:00] pain tolerance and hopefulness.

It was two, two and a half years after I graduated that Dr. Rick was on Good Morning America in the year 2000. And he decided to do the cold pressor task experiment on Good Morning America with, uh, the host of the show, a medical expert, and the weather guy. And he didn't tell them anything about, I mean, they knew he was a hope researcher. He didn't tell them anything about like the purpose of the experiment or anything like that. He invited them to do this cold pressor experiment, putting their hands in the water and holding it there as long as they could.

Prior to doing that, he did have them fill out The Hope Scale questionnaire. And it turned out that, in a way he, he got lucky or he knew his stuff, because there was a direct correlation between the people who held their hand in the water longer and their sense of hopefulness. So essentially higher hope leads to greater pain tolerance. [00:20:00]

Which is sort of fascinating and it might sound arbitrary and so what. But only if you think that hope is something we can't influence within ourselves and others.

When we understand what hope is and how it functions in our psychology and in our lives, we can actually change that set point and therefore change our relationship to the challenges we face in our lives, which is really at the heart of his work.

And what a lot of people don't know about Dr. Rick Snyder is that many of us believe that the reason he was so committed to this work was because he was someone who experienced chronic pain himself. He had severe abdominal issues for the last 15 years of his life. And he

didn't talk about it in relationship to his work, but we knew. Those of us who worked closely with him, we knew that he had health challenges.

And so it made a lot of sense why he wanted to explore this work and why he [00:21:00] needed, wanted, and it was so important for him to understand hope and how to, how to reach for it. And the way that it could actually change his everyday experience of life.

So, mad respect to Dr. Snyder and the work that he did and how he laid the foundation for our understanding of hope. And I want to talk about his work, his theory of hope, in just a moment. But the first thing I want to do is draw a really clear distinction between Positive Psychology and something that is more bypassing, like magical thinking.

And this is something that I, has been profound for me recently. There's reasons I'll go into in another episode around why I'm re-examining the work that I did really early on in my academic career and my professional life. It's like a reclaiming of something. The very foundation of my interest in the way we move through life, how we think about things, [00:22:00] and really the science behind it versus pseudoscientific explanations around manifestation and all of these things that told me to turn away from my intelligence and my strategic thinking towards something more disembodied and hopeful, when hope is something that can be really tangible.

So Positive Psychology versus magical thinking. Let's just take a minute with that.

Positive Psychology is evidence-based. So very much like Dr. Snyder's work, it focuses on proven scientifically-proven techniques that help us to cultivate a sense of happiness, wellbeing, resiliency, strength. It's qualitative research that is quantifiable. It's goal oriented, in the sense that there's a specific action and outcome in mind, which is to help us develop positive habits and behaviors that help us to achieve really specific goals. And [00:23:00] it's realistic in that it encourages us to think positively, while acknowledging the realities that exist around us and being responsive to them. It's a sense of responsibility to what is real and what is present in our lives and how to do that more constructively.

Whereas magical thinking is more unrealistic. It is about believing in thoughts or rituals that cause desirable outcomes without any logical explanation whatsoever. It very often means ignoring evidence that's right in front of us, disregarding facts or rational reasoning in favor of wishful thinking. So it can be very ungrounded and, in turn, ungrounding from reality.

And like I said, Positive Psychology is about these desirable outcomes. Magical thinking can lead to harmful outcomes, because we're neglecting the facts in front of us. We're not taking necessary actions that need to be taken, [00:24:00] because we're not in a goal-oriented headspace. We're more in sort of manifestation headspace of like, the solution's going to come falling through the sky. It's more superstitious, and less scientific.

So an example of Positive Psychology when it comes to the practice of gratitude, right? We can have a regular practice around gratitude that can help enhance feelings of wellbeing and perspective. That's Positive Psychology. Magical thinking would be what I used to do. I actually have it here. I still have my manifestation journal. Part of it was constructive, like, I would write things that I'm grateful for it and then I would envision a certain outcome and I

would expect it to happen as I envisioned it, or something really close. So there was this sense of like, I have control over the external world.

Positive Psychology is about, I have confidence in my capacity to respond to the external world, versus magical thinking's like I have the ability and the capacity to change what's [00:25:00] happening in the external world.

Now, of course, we can influence what's happening in our everyday lives. But you get what I'm saying, like in the sense of to control the uncontrollable, what is inevitably not under my control. There's a sense of casting a spell that's going to lead to a certain outcome versus learning how to become someone who can respond to whatever outcome that we might experience. And to do our best to set goals and achieve the outcomes we want, but not to expect it to just happen for us. Not to expect that a mindset change is enough to create the outcome that we want, but that we have to actually take action in order to make it happen. So there's a sense of being an active participant and doing something to resolve whatever the situation is that we face.

Which really leads to Dr. Snyder's *theory of hope* and the three facets that continue to shape research that's done around hope. And how it is applied in [00:26:00] therapeutic settings and organizational settings. And hopefully, you know, we can apply it to these larger systemic challenges that we're facing, like on an individual level and then in our collective coalitions.

So in order for us to experience hope, the first leg of the three-legged stool is that we have to develop the capacity to think in goal-oriented ways. So again, it's not about just wishful thinking and hoping something will be. The ability to be able to visualize it is something, it is something. But to really understand, it's really about setting goals that are attainable for ourselves, right.

So setting goals.

Second facet is finding pathways. This is really important. I really credit the work that I did with Dr. Rick Snyder early on in my life. You know, Chris and I kind of have an ongoing joke around my tenacity and my perseverance. If there's something that I want to happen, I'm like dogged when it comes to [00:27:00] this second piece. Finding pathways. I'm going to try this. Okay, that didn't work. I'm going to do it this way. Okay, nope. I'm going to Google it. I'm going to, like. I will fixate on finding as many paths to my objective as I possibly can, because eventually one of those doors is going to open. That is one aspect of hopefulness.

And that might seem disconnected, but the research shows that in order to really connect to hope, we have to not only be able to set a goal, but we have to be able to act and actualize pathways to that goal. I have to be able to see it, believe in it, and move in the direction of that goal.

Which is really the third piece, which is having agency.

So it's one thing to be able to set a goal. It's another thing to really see the possibilities and how we might achieve it. And the third piece is the fire in our belly that pushes us to carry on

and to persevere and to push towards what we want. That sense of [00:28:00] agency, that sense of, I got this. Even when I don't got this, I trust in my ability to try and to move this thing forward even if it's just an inch.

All of that is hope. That is hope, according to the research. That sense of clearly-directed agency.

So if we look at it in terms of navigating pain and discomfort, what's the goal?

Relief. Right?

What are the pathways?

It could be pain management. Could be connection to support. Could be the ability to surrender. Could be the capacity to envision a way out [00:29:00] of the pain, even if just for a moment. To take actions to heal at the heart and the source of the pain. Could be that we don't know a way out, but we believe in the possibility that it exists.

Pathways.

And then agency.

I feel a sense of self-efficacy. I feel that I do have the ability to make a difference here.

If the pain is my own, what can I do in relationship to all those pathways I just mentioned to find relief? Which is that goal.

If it's in a larger systemic sense, if we look at this election. If my goal is to get Kamala Harris elected and keep Donald Trump out of The White House, what are the pathways to doing that? What are the things that I can do to help that end?

[00:30:00] And the truth of the matter is, is that most of us have a set point around our sense of hopefulness. We can influence that set point. But some folks feel a sense of defeat. I don't see any pathways. Other folks feel like, ah, there's a possibility and I'm going to do 1, 2, 3 things. There's other people, you see these activists who are working doggedly, who are machines when it comes to agency and they are just cranking out all kinds of things that are designed to explore pathways to that end goal.

So hope is a verb.

And again, it doesn't mean, like when I offered those examples of the pathways out of pain, it doesn't mean that we're always working on the external thing. Sometimes the work we're doing is more internal. And this is the balance that I'm coming to as I've been out canvassing, I think four, yeah, four different occasions. And, you know, I'm trying to have [00:31:00] conversations with people and I'm doing things locally that I can. Um, Maria Skinner from Massachusetts sent me some little post-it notes with messages to put in bathroom stalls. And I

know friends who are, um, I just spoke with a friend earlier today, we were texting, who has sent out 300 letters. I have another friend who has done like 1000 postcards. And people who are doing phone banks. And people who are having conversations with people in their communities. These pathways are important.

And as this window is closing for me, I think this will drop, there'll be about five or six days until the election when this drops, I also need to explore the internal pathways to hope.

I've been listening to, um, podcasts sort of picking apart all of this political stuff for, for months now. And I'm doing that to stay informed and also because it helps me when I'm having conversations to, you know, have a lot of information and facts to pull from. And just to hear how [00:32:00] other people are articulating things. I've been doing that for months.

And today I was like, you know what? I just need a distraction. And so I started listening to something that was a lot lighter, completely disconnected from the election. And my sense of relief from the anxiety was found in the disconnection from the noise.

Some days the only way I can deal with the anxiety is to go head on towards the goal of trying to get Kamala elected.

So it's not one or the other. It's both and.

Our relationship to anxiety is unique to each of us. But I guess what I'm here to say is that hope and agency are doorways, maybe not out of anxiety, but they are ways to relieve that discomfort. [00:33:00] To connect to a sense of possibility and actualize that possibility in some way, shape, or form.

I guess I just want to say that when I start to lose hope this reconnection to hope not as some transcendent force that I'm going to plug into. That for me, and I know this is not going to be true for all of us. Some people want to lean into a faith-based experience of hope, and I got no judgment for you. That doesn't work so well for me. What works for me is hope as a way to evidence possibility. To bring the vision to life.

So if I'm looking at Dr. Snyder's theory of hope, it's about setting goals, breaking those goals into small chunks, [00:34:00] and celebrating small wins when it comes to those goals.

So last weekend I went canvassing and the couple of weekends before I had some pretty positive experiences. I mean, there's always a few people who certainly don't want to speak with me. But I had a couple of, uh, good days in terms of folks being responsive. Last week, however, was a bit of a dud. A lot of doors went unanswered and one particular interaction I walked away from welling up with tears. Not because I took personally what they were expressing, but because the simple act of me expressing that I was in support of Kamala Harris was enough to solicit this look of disgust and contempt.

And so I walked away from that day, just feeling kind of defeated. Like what is this even doing? I lost a sense of hope that day.

And I got home and the organizer that leads the area that I'm [00:35:00] in, he sent out an email. And he shared with us the stats on how many doors we had reached in each of the towns in our area, in the county, and then statewide. And I was floored. I couldn't believe that this tiny thing that I was doing, I think that day I went to 45 houses. And again had like two positive experiences.

But I thought, okay. Statewide, we did 30,000 doors. So of that 30,000, even if it's just a small sliver, that's a big win. And when I connected to that, I felt hope returning to me. I felt like, okay, we have a goal. We haven't reached it yet. It's feeling scary still. It feels somewhat out of reach some days. If I look at the polls, it's like a [00:36:00] rollercoaster ride in that regard.

But we are achieving our goal in the sense that we're doing what we set out to do and that is something worth celebrating. And I felt a renewed sense of agency. I felt the hopefulness. I felt the fire come back in my belly.

And then I thought, what are some other ways? If I'm feeling a little bit of a dead-end around the canvassing, what are some other ways that I can make a difference here? So I'm talking to you. I'm posting on social media. I am pivoting and shifting my approach so that where I feel an opening, that's where I move forward.

And the other piece that I really want to underscore here. I was texting with Tracy Stamper, who most of you all know, because she's been on the podcast quite a lot. We were texting around all the feels around all these things. And she texted me that she was waiting in line to vote in Missouri. And the line she was waiting in she had been waiting in for an [00:37:00] hour and a half. And when she texted me, she was sharing that she was feeling really anxious. And we talked about it later and she shared that the vibe in the line was just, there was just a lot of tension. And, you know, this is like a really intense, polarizing time as, especially those of you here in the U.S. know. The tension was sort of adding to her anxiety, that emotional atmosphere.

And then she decided to turn and start connecting with I believe it was three women in the line and Tracy and her husband connecting with these three women. And they ended up having this wonderful conversation. And it was in sharing their anxiety that it was relieved.

And so I just want to underscore how the restoration of hope very often comes through connection. I think in fact, those are sort of, for me, the two pathways that are the most concretely consistent. [00:38:00] Is taking action, small constructive actions. And reaching out for connection with people who understand the anxiety that I'm experiencing, and we can share about our experiences in real time.

Tracy did it in line with strangers, sort of transformed the experience for her. And we can do it with each other. I do it with my friends all the time. We share political stuff and other stuff that's going on in our lives that make us anxious, we share about it. Perimenopausal stuff. Anything. Connection is one of the quickest ways to reconnect with hope.

It's not as if we come up with any plans that feel secure and definite when we connect, but the connection itself is a balm. The connection itself is a balm. And it connects us to a sense of

hope because we know we're not alone anymore. We don't have to hold it alone. We don't have to carry it alone. Regardless of what [00:39:00] happens.

And in that way it circles us back to, when we're talking about hope and how it can help with pain tolerance. If the goal is relief versus a specific outcome, which is all the goal can be sometimes, connection is key. Connection is key.

And what is it that Martin Luther King, Jr said? Like "the moral arc of history is long and it bends in the direction of justice." I don't think I got that exactly right. But there's this sense of understanding that there's a lot of steps along the way that are less than ideal in terms of how you want it to play out. We have to not get so attached to our morality that we lose sight of the strategy and the long game in terms of achieving what it is that we want to happen. And that we have to stay really curious. We have to stay out of this space of contempt. And continue to lean into what I would call hope, the verb [00:40:00] type of hope where we actually see how the fruits of our efforts can play out over time. And we celebrate the small wins. And we learn from the losses. And we continue to reorient ourselves. And that's how we stay connected to a sense of hope is staying out of self-righteousness, staying out of adherence to some ideological certainty. And that we continue to carry on with the difficult work, even when things aren't going exactly as well as we would like them to.

Which kind of leads me to this final question, which is what is the opposite of hope?

Maybe despair.

When I looked for quotes on hope, the one that really stood out to me, especially in light of what's going on right now and the very disturbing rally that the MAGA Republicans did at Madison Square Garden, is this quote from Anne [00:41:00] Frank on hope.

She wrote.

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet, I keep them. Because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

So why do we believe what we believe? Why do we hope for what we hope for?

I think in some ways, because we know how to evidence that. Sometimes it's a dissociative pie in the sky fantasy, and sometimes we fucking need that.

But other times, I think, it's because we can point to examples of that. You know, Anne Frank was in an impossible situation. And yet, some part of her mind and in her heart, she could connect to that good that she [00:42:00] believed was at the heart of all people. She had evidence of it. Even though there was so much glaring evidence contrary to it.

So sometimes hope is about where we shine that light of perspective.

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Sometimes it's about doing the next right thing even when it feels like the goal that we want is far out of reach.

And sometimes it's surrendering and just reaching for our loved ones and anything that brings us a sense of relief, pleasure, and that deep and abiding sense of joy.

I, too, believe that most people are really good at heart. And also, I don't let that blind me to the fact that some of those same people can do great harm.

And to me hope is found in [00:43:00] focusing on the former. Doing what I can to inoculate myself and protect others from the latter. Continuing to eye the possibilities and potentials that lie before us. And to understand that there are many pathways to it.

Because I think, when it comes to like this election, for example. I was just saying to Chris last night, I'm going to fall to my knees in tears regardless of how this plays out. Like, the quality of those tears is going to be dramatically different depending on whether Kamala Harris wins or Trump wins the election. That's going to happen either way.

But I can promise you this. No matter how it plays out, whether they're tears of joy, relief, and pride in our nation. Or they're [00:44:00] tears of despair, terror, and disappointment. I'm going to feel what I feel. And then I'm going to get up. And I'm going to keep keepin' on. Keep moving in the direction of what I see is possible.

And I'm going to reconnect to hope in all the ways I've just described. I'm gonna not lose sight of the goal. I'm going to keep that fire in my belly. And I'm going to take as many paths as I need to in order to get us there in my small way. And I hope that you'll do the same.

And I hope that we don't have to take time to grieve, and that we can just get right to work. But if we do need to do that, I will find hope and solace and our ability to lean into each other.

The hope is there, no matter [00:45:00] what. That's what I know for sure.

Thank you all for listening. Sending you lots of love, support, and encouragement to do whatever you need to do to bring yourself a sense of relief.

And, uh, I'll see you back here next time.

Bye.