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Why Hope?

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Why Hope?

Why not have hope, no matter how difficult or challenging the circumstances? We can reasonably and logically count up enough “bad news” on a daily basis to decide that there is no cause for hope. But reason and logic are not the primary sources for our decisions, especially regarding an attitude that affects all of our relationships and our own sense of worth.

If we look for “proof” of little cause for hope either in the world in general, or in our specific present situation, we will find it. Choosing to confirm a decision for despair (the opposite of hope) is not far different from a pre-determination to find fault in another person. If that is what we are looking for, we will see what we expect: that the person is flawed, or that hope is futile.

Opting for hope must be an honest decision; hope cannot be faked. We humans do not have the capacity to see in the dark, but we can use our knowledge to either seek out a source of light, or to do the best we can for the present moment even while we do not have light. We always have options for choosing life, even when we come to the end of our days. But hope is not limited to the major issue of life after life, but is rather a day-by-day choice to orient ourselves towards life, based not only on what we think, but on what we sense in our hearts.

Hope is a radical holistic point of reference, based on our decision to look at evidence available to us both externally, and internally, with particular attention to our values and to the inspirations of the moment. The opinions of others do not serve as the main criteria for choosing whether to move forward or to claim the status of helpless victim. Opinions, judgments, and statements by others might be intended to help us, but can also be motivated by selfishness, anger, fear, and other non-rational and unacknowledged movements within those who speak, write, or direct images towards us. Integrity and well-being can neither be given us nor taken away, for they are our responsibility. Hope is for those who choose it.

Those of us who make the choice for hope have learned to distinguish between inspiration and desperation. When we are aware of these influences, which are as significant for decision-making as all other evidence we might take into account, we can see the opposite directions to which they tend. One sign says “Proceed,” and the other, “Dead End.” We experience inspiration as the voice of a friendly guide, desperation as the voice of a pushy tyrant. Reflection upon all that we

observe and experience, not reaction to real or imagined pain or suffering, makes hope not only possible, but realistic.

Attending to signs that are readily available enables us to choose hope even in "hopeless" situations.