

Hope is one thing that keeps us moving

by Mark Pavilons

I've recently addressed the deep issues relating to life, mortality and immortality. What's left? Hope.

? Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. ? Desmond Tutu

Martin Luther once said that everything that is done in the world is done by hope.

Sometimes we have to call upon rather unscientific methods to deal with modern life.

We rely on our instinct; follow our hearts; muster up our faith, and always have hope. For many, hope is all they have.

When I look in the mirror at my new hair growth, re-budding after last fall's chemo, I sometimes feel cheated. I'm constantly giving the monkey on my back the side-eye.

But then I think of men, women and children in developing countries, huddled under leaky roofs. I think of children begging on the streets for food.

For many, faith and hope are what keep them going, giving them strength to carry on from one day to the next.

Hope can be as powerful as green tea, mushrooms, vitamins or antibiotics.

Hope comes from many sources. It can come from within, typically summoned during times of need or emotional turmoil. If we look for it, we usually find it, but we may have to dust it off and plump it up a bit.

Hope comes from our loved ones.

I don't know what will become of me, or how long I have on this world. I do know I don't have time for conflict, anger or trivialities.

But I do have time for hope.

We have this framed print in our bathroom that I look at weekly. It says: ?? Hope is fear that has said its prayers. ?

Are fear and hope intertwined?

Some say they are two faces of the same emotion. Psychologists Averill, Catlin, & Chon noted fear and hope are both felt where meaningful consequences require action, but where we don't have total control. Thus, there always an element of speculation.

When we are terrified, we're afraid, which can be all consuming. I can attest to that. But when we turn to hope, we change our perspective and lean into the situation with some positivity.

Aristotle said hope is a waking dream. I often look forward to going to sleep at night, for it's there that I escape. It's in those nocturnal dreams and images that I don't have cancer, and I'm on an important mission, or enjoying a sea voyage with friends. I thrive in the land of reverie.

They say there's nothing as strong as hope and it often springs eternal. ?

If we harness it, it's always by our side, and becomes our constant companion. For me, it sometimes gets a little tiring. I don't mind holding hope's hand, even giving it a hug from time to time. But often it seems futile, hollow and impractical.

Still others say a positive outlook can do wonders for the mind and body. Negativity is the enemy and one that can be defeated by a brightness, an alacrity to leap forward.

No one knows what the next day holds. No one knows which of us will be around to celebrate another birthday, anniversary or holiday.

For those of us living with cancer, all we know is what we're told by our oncologists, our health-care providers. But we're reluctant to ask for the whole truth, for them to spell it out like it is.

I have avoided reading about my metastatic prostate cancer because I know the outlook isn't the greatest. I don't want to know the statistics and the bleak direction. It's not avoidance or a matter of sticking my head in the sand, but I'd rather not smear a bleak streak of black paint on an otherwise colourful canvas.

I know enough to realize my fate is somewhat sealed. Sure, there are some medications and treatments to prolong my life, but I'm faced with the inevitable. And that's hard to shake, knowing the months and years that remain are limited. Sure, I hope for more, much more. But I'm practical, even though I've entertained herbal remedies, meditation, tuning fork sessions, Reiki, and Pulsed Electromagnetic Frequency (PEMF) via my Vibe device.

All in vain? Or exercises that contain a tiny bit of hope?

My latest PSA and bloodwork results were pretty encouraging. But I will never shake it completely. Keeping it at bay is all we can do. Is it enough? It has to be. That's all I got.

I fully accept that I'm not walking away from this one and I won't be one of those "cancer survivors." I will never say I am cancer-free, but I envy those who can.

Every day begins with an act of courage and hope, not just for me, but for everyone.

Some have said that hope is renewable, even if you run out of it one day, you get to start again in the morning.

Lately, every time I get up in the middle of the night for a bathroom break "I'm tossed into the real world" remind myself that I have cancer. I don't know why.

My wife and oldest daughter believe I'm somewhat defeatist, and sometimes I sabotage myself.

Perhaps.

But I'm also a realist and in my line of work I deal mainly in facts.

Some people mix hope with other ingredients available to them "faith, drive, positivity and a host of natural healing techniques.

I'm not really a skeptic. I'm also neither an optimist nor a pessimist. I think you can carry hope around in your pocket. It's like the feeling that your life and work have meaning.

And when those come to end, then what?

Stephen King said hope is perhaps the "best of things." And good things, he attests, never die.

Martin Luther King Jr. not only had a dream, but he encouraged people never to lose hope "that vitality that keeps us moving and helps us go on in spite of it all.

"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow."
"rison Swett Marden