

Hope. It's what makes us human.

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Spring has me thinking there is hope after what has been a very, very, long winter. Looking out at the view from my window across a sea of snow, the sun shines so brightly I have to squint and there amongst the windswept dunes of white, I glimpse the tiniest hint of green. Well, not so much green as a dull, earthy greenish-brown, but still it's a patch of colour against the vast white backdrop. That alone is enough to remind me that hope really does, 'spring eternal.'

'Hope springs eternal' is, to my mind, the very essence of what it means to be human. The optimistic saying is defined as continuing to hope that something will happen (for the better) despite all odds indicating it is unlikely. This definition of hope, when viewed against a backdrop of relentless snow, and our current geo-political climate, aptly represents the difficulty of maintaining hope against what seems like insurmountable odds and yet, us humans maintain the unique capacity to do so.

I believe it is hope that defines us, not just in the sense that consciousness separates us from all other creatures on earth, but that in having hope, we don't just have the will to survive, but the absolute conviction that we will. Hope isn't just that either. It's that we will also thrive. Against all odds, the sun rising in spring reminds us that seasons too shall pass, the snow will melt and hope for longer, brighter and better days ahead is renewed.

Hope is what gets us through the tough times and there have been some tough times lately. There may be yet more to come. Tariffs continue to loom and the 'on again-off again' nature of their threat makes them all the more - well - threatening. But hope for a future that sees a resumption of diplomatic relations with, and amongst, world leaders, is what keeps us going.

Hope is faith that humanity (in general) will see the error of their ways and collectively come to their senses before any worldwide consequences arise from these current contentious and concerning times we find ourselves in. Hope is what sustains us as we here in Canada engage in democratic and free elections (even if we don't always agree on the outcomes), choosing governments that we hope and believe will make meaningful change; whether that's locally, provincially or nationally. It's hope that helps encourage and nurture a faith that other countries will do similarly, preventing a dangerous backward slide into autocracy, or worse.

Hope is a group of women, coming together after an unimaginable tragedy, believing that their actions will finally have a direct impact on truck traffic, illegal trucking and on the carnage experienced on our roads. Maintaining a laser-focus on making our community a better, safer place to live, work and play, against what might seem to be insurmountable odds dealing with multiple layers of government, is the very definition of having hope, and the unshakeable conviction they will make a difference.

Hope is someone in New York, staring out their window during the early days of COVID, and deciding to start a facebook page called View from my Window. It was (and remains) an optimistic opportunity to see the world from the various perspectives of its many inhabitants, acknowledging our similarities and how we are all just people trying to make our way in this world. At a time when we couldn't travel, nor even leave our homes, we could travel the world simply by viewing what others saw when they looked out their own kitchen window. What has been really cool to witness over these last several years, is that diehard fans of the page have, in many cases, become friends with folks halfway around the world. Some are now meeting up in person so they can see those same views in real life. Talk about hope when the world was looking pretty bleak indeed!

Hope is so many things. Hope is what gets us through a difficult diagnosis. Hope is a newborn baby and the belief they will inhabit a better world than we do. Hope is Team Canada defeating Team USA when we needed a morale boost more than ever, and hope is what we cling to (even as we hope we don't need to) that Canadians will stand up for our country in the face of apparent threats to our democracy and sovereignty. Hope is the sun shining brightly in spring, watching it illuminate the bare branches of a tree, knowing that soon buds will appear, green grass will grow and birds will sing their happy song. Hope is that Caledon may yet resume the mantle of 'Greenest Town in Ontario,' with the help of democratically elected officials doing all they can to preserve it. Hope. It's what makes us human.