

Adult Hope




To have “hope” means that you have a goal but something is blocking you from achieving it. Rather than giving up, hope means that you will think of strategies to work around the goal, select the best ones, and you act on them.

Hope is not wishful thinking or a dream that may or not come true. If you can create multiple strategies to work around a barrier and you are motivated to pursue them, the chances of reaching your goal increases. But you do need to do both to attain your goal. You can have many strategies, but if you are not motivated to act on them you are wishful thinking. On the other hand, you can be really motivated but if you only have one strategy (and it doesn’t work), this can lead to a feeling of hopelessness and wanting to give up.

As the introductory video demonstrates, working around an obstacle is rarely easy and sometimes painful to experience. But you must promise yourself that you will not give up. Granted, you may need to revise your goal if the obstacle is big enough. In other words, you may wish to reconsider your “Plan A” and pursue a more attainable “Plan B”.

If your indicator is in the moderate concern or at risk range, this typically means that you have limited yourself on the number of strategies you formulate, or you have difficulty being motivated to act on the strategies, or both. Elevating your hope level is important because having high hope predicts a number of social, personal, and vocational outcomes.

You can improve your levels of hope through simple yet effective strategies outlined below. More information on the concept of hope and how you can improve your levels can be found by accessing 

RESOURCES

Links:



Books:

<p>Hope Rising: How the Science of HOPE Can Change Your Life</p> <p>-Casey Gwinn and Chan Hellman (2018)</p>	<p>Making Hope Happen: Create the Future You Want for Yourself and Others</p> <p>-Shane J. Lopez (2014)</p>
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Exercises to Increase Hope

GOAL CHECK EXERCISE

- 1 Using the attached Rating My Goals worksheet, think of the most important domains in your life. Within each domain, list at least two long-term goals (within the next 1-2 years). These goals do not have to be major achievements, but they do need to be personally meaningful. Further, they have to be reasonable ("becoming a billionaire" may not be a reasonable long-term goal, but "paying off two major credit card debts" could be).
- 2 Rate your current progress towards these long-term goals on a 1-10 scale, with 10 meaning that you are very satisfied with your progress and 1 meaning that there has been no movement.
- 3 At the top of the Overcoming Roadblocks worksheet, list any long-term goal that you rated a '6' or lower. In the second column, list all possible barriers that are interfering with your goal pursuit.
- 4 At the bottom of the worksheet, think of shorter-term (i.e., 3-6 month) subgoals that can move you forward towards your long-term goal. Each subgoal should be measurable, reasonable, and attainable in a shorter-time frame. For example, if your long-term is "losing 25 pounds" and you currently rate this goal a '6' or lower, a shorter-term subgoal could be "to lose 2 pounds in the next month".
- 5 list any possible barriers that may hinder you from attaining this subgoal. For example, one possible barrier could be "my work schedule" or "I am a stress eater and my job is really stressful at the moment".
- 6 For each possible barrier, list as many possible strategies to overcome them. Do not limit yourself to one or two strategies; any strategy should of course be reasonable can be realistically pursued, but it is important that you list all possible strategies-even those that you have not considered to this point. Do not judge their value while you list them. Simply write them down as they come to you.
- 7 From the strategies that you have generated, select what you believe are the best options; ones that you will stick with for at least 6 weeks. Place these strategies in the appropriate column.
- 8 In the final column, list the steps that you will take to measure your progress.



Exercises to Increase Hope

Revisit these goals and their progress every 3 months to (a) remove goals that are nearing completion, (b) re-rate goals that were progressing slowly, and/or (b) add new domain goals.

“WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE” EXERCISE

The difference between having high hope and low hope often depends on how you balance negative and positive thoughts. Those with high hope acknowledge their negative thoughts, but they do not let these thoughts control their outlook. Conversely, those with low hope often focus on negative thoughts and thus are off-balance.

One way to create balance is to first be aware of these negative thoughts and then testing whether these thoughts are true. Using the “Weighing the Evidence” worksheet.

- 1 Using the Weighing the Evidence worksheet, try to catch yourself whenever you make an extreme statement. Extreme statements are those that usually contain the words “never”, “always”, “every”, “no one”, as well as any that contain “should have”, “could have”, or “would have”. Also catch yourself when you overgeneralize (e.g., “because this happened, this will always happen”), jump to conclusions (e.g., “because this happened, this next thing is going to happen”), mind read (e.g., “he doesn’t like me. I just know it”), blow something out of proportion (e.g., “I made a mistake. I’m going to lose my job”), and labelling (e.g., “I am a loser”).
- 2 Any time you catch yourself making an extreme statement to yourself or others, list that statement at the top sheet. Be honest with yourself; don’t water down the statement you made or told yourself.
- 3 List all of the evidence (that is, hard facts, not yours or anyone’s opinion) that would support your statement. You will likely find it hard to come up with more than a couple of facts (and even these may be debatable). Remember, if it is not a fact, do not list it.
- 4 After listing the evidence for, list all evidence against the statement. In other words, refute what you just told yourself, using facts. Provide at least two facts against your statement for every fact that supports your statement.
- 5 Once you have done this, work to create a more balanced thought. Your original statement may have some merit, but you likely can reframe it in a way that is more reasonable and less distressful.



Rating My Goals

Directions: Within each area below, list at least 2 goals that you are working towards over the next 2-3 years. For example, under “work” you may list “to get a promoted to a new position”. But it can be any goal. For each goal, rate how well you think you are doing at this point, based on the following scale:

- 10 – I am really doing well. No complaints at all and I am sure to achieve it.
- 5 – I’m doing ok, but not as far as I’d like to be. I am not sure I’ll achieve it.
- 1 – I’m not doing ok at all, there has been no progress made. I’m pretty sure I will fail.

WORK

Goal 1: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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FRIENDSHIPS

Goal 1: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Rating My Goals

FAMILY

Goal 1: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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SCHOOL

Goal 1: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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OTHER

Goal 1: _____

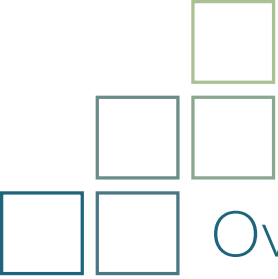
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Goal 2: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Goal 3: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----



Overcoming Roadblocks

Directions: Now that you have listed your goals, select those that you rated as a '6' or lower. For each goal, list some of the possible roadblocks that you think are keeping you from reaching it (or at least reaching a '7'). After all possible roadblocks are listed, provide as many strategies as you can that could address them.

SPECIFIC GOAL	POSSIBLE ROADBLOCK
<i>e.g., To lose 25 pounds in the next year</i>	<i>Shift changes disrupt my exercise routine I am a stress eater, and my job is stressful now</i>



Overcoming Roadblocks

Now that you have listed these strategies, what are some possible smaller, realistic goals that you can shoot for in the next 1-6 months?

IN THE NEXT 1-6 MONTHS I WILL... (LIST THE SUBGOAL)	...EVEN THOUGH I MAY FACE... (LIST ALL POSSIBLE OBSTACLES)I WILL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES... (LIST ALL POSSIBLE STRATEGIES)	...FROM WHICH I WILL SELECT ... (LIST STRATEGIES YOU WILL USE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT 6 WEEKS)	I WILL MONITOR MY PROGRESS BY....
<i>Lose 2 pounds next month</i>	<i>Ongoing shift changes; upcoming holidays, etc.</i>	<i>Go without my favorite snack; reduce my favorite soda by 2 cans/ day; increase my water intake; walk 8 flights of steps per day, etc.</i>	<i>Reduce my soda intake; walk 8 flights of steps per day</i>	<i>Weighing myself at the same time each day; entering everything I eat and drink on my food app (no cheating!), etc.</i>



“Weighing the Evidence” Worksheet

What negative thought am I telling myself right now:

I'll never get promoted at my job

a) List all evidence (i.e., facts, not feelings or beliefs) that what I am telling myself is true:

I've been at my job for 18 months with no promotion

I have more education than the person ahead of me

My colleague in another department told me that it's almost impossible to get promoted there

b) List any evidence that what I am telling myself is not exactly true:

My supervisor told me that the standard time frame for major promotions is 5 years

I may have more education, but the person ahead of me has been here for 4 years and has more supervisory experience than I do

My colleague's department has a reputation for slow promotions; my department doesn't have that reputation

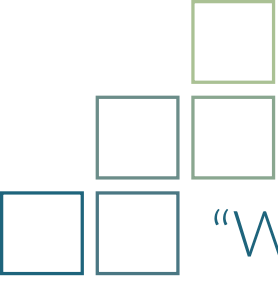
My supervisor has sent me on two professional supervisor development trainings in the past year

Given the information provided in b), how can I restate what I am telling myself to make it a more balanced thought?

It's not that I will "never" get promoted; it's just not my time yet. I have to be patient and prepare (through additional trainings and other opportunities) for the day when I will get promoted

The person ahead of me is very capable and has earned the opportunity to be promoted too.

It's normal to be frustrated, but I can use this time to my advantage. I can learn all I can about the organization so I am fully prepared when my time comes.



“Weighing the Evidence” Worksheet

What negative thought am I telling myself right now:

a) List all evidence (i.e., facts, not feelings or beliefs) that what I am telling myself is true:

b) List any evidence that what I am telling myself is not exactly true:

Given the information provided in b), how can I restate what I am telling myself to make it a more balanced thought?
