

POWERHOUSE

COACHING

Australian American Chamber of Commerce, SF Newsletter September 2014 “How To Increase or Recover Your Hope”

Hello,

Today I'd like to talk to you about Hope!

First of all, how important do you think Hope is in your life, the lives of your loved ones, the people in your organization?

What are the chances of any of us taking significant steps forward without Hope?

Slim.

I know that in my life, Hope is a critical ingredient to my happiness, wellbeing, and results. Hope comes and goes, and sometimes it needs to be rebuilt step by step, especially after a crisis such as a financial loss, divorce, or transition. Without Hope we do not dream big, take risks, or persist over time. However with Hope our positivity and motivation increase, we recover more quickly from setbacks, and we keep on keeping on. Life is better with Hope; we all know it, right?

Most people think Hope is just an emotion. However, Hope has been proven by Professor C. R. Snyder, (the father of Hope Theory), to be a mental construct that can be created and maintained, using the correct formula, and you're in luck because today I'm going to show you how!

There are three straightforward steps:

Step 1) Hope requires having a clearly defined and achievable goal.

If a goal is too big, we become overwhelmed or do not truly believe we can achieve it. Or, even if we believe it can be achieved, if the attainment of our goal requires the engagement of others (i.e. in every organization, team, or family), and those people don't all believe the goal is achievable then our efforts will be stymied. This is a problem for many entrepreneurial ventures and startups; making sure that the goal feels realistic for everyone involved, not just the founders. Bigger is not always better. It's a case of 'right-sizing' our goals for the time period we are addressing and the level of development of the people that will help us reach them. It's great to have big goals, so long as the focus for this year, this month, this week feels possible for everyone, so break big goals into achievable 'milestones'.

POWERHOUSE

COACHING

By contrast, if a goal is too small we, and others, lose motivation. Why bother if the goal is too small? We have to feel like reaching it will be worth the effort.

Building Hope requires that “Goldilocks” approach to setting goals as “not too big, not too small, but just right”.

Step 2: Hope requires “Pathways Thinking”.

“Pathways Thinking” is using a ‘many roads to Rome’ approach. Having only one way to reach a goal will decrease Hope, however having many ways to reach that same goal has been proven to increase Hope dramatically. The important thing is to clearly develop specific strategies and options, Plan B’s and even Plan C’s, however to work only on Plan A until it proves ineffective (which it may never do). Keep your other options on file and know when you will use them, one at a time, if required. Trying to drive more than one strategy at once never turns out well and severely taxes our ‘executive function’, which I wrote about in the July and August newsletters.

Step 3: Hope requires “Agency Thinking” to initiate and sustain motivation.

“Agency Thinking” may be defined as the belief that you are capable of executing the means to attain desired goals. It’s essentially self-belief or what psychologists call ‘self-efficacy’. Your “Agency Thinking” may be increased by looking back on times you have completed what you set out to do, or had particular successes, and the same can be done by your organization. This is why it’s critical that we learn to trust ourselves and take our own commitments seriously. For example, I know that this article is due today. It will get there on time. This positively impacts my ‘agency thinking’.

To what degree do you trust yourself to get done what you need to do? The higher that trust is, the more you elevate your ‘Agency Thinking’ – and the stronger your Hope becomes.

Some of us have high “Trait Hope”, which is an overall personality measure of hopefulness towards life, but have a lower “State Hope” in regard to a particular goal, or vice versa to a degree. How do you think your general Trait Hope measures up, as well as your State Hope in regard to a particular goal...?

To summarize, to increase your Hope, which is critical to any venture, 1) clarify and commit to an achievable goal, 2) determine multiple strategies for reaching that one goal (applying only one at time and keeping the others on file in case they’re required) and, 3) develop your ability to believe in yourself through taking consistent action in relation to that goal, and also more broadly in life. There’s no substitute for self-belief. Finally.....

POWERHOUSE

COACHING

If you would like to measure your own levels of Hope you can go online and find the following tests:

“Adult Trait Hope Scale” – to measure your overall Hope in life

“Adult State Hope Scale” – to measure your Hope in relation to a particular goal

If you can't find these tests, just let me know and I can forward you a copy.

Wishing you a great month,

Kate



Katherine Hosie is an Australian coach permanently based in San Francisco. She was President of the International Coach Federation Australasia 2012, holds a Master of Science degree in Coaching Psychology, a Bachelor of Adult Education and Human Resource Development, and has eleven years and 10,000+ hours of full-time experience coaching executives and private clients. Her passion is partnering with individual, teams and organizations in streamlining their focus and efforts. You can find her on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/katherinehosie> or email her at katherine@powerhouse-coaching.com