

## HOPE

Hope is the belief that good things will happen despite the circumstances and events in one's life.

Hope is free. By being hopeful you increase your chances of getting the results you want.

Growing up in Nigeria, I was heavily influenced by "Yoruba" cultural beliefs about fate and destiny. Every individual was believed to be destined to accomplish certain things or achieve certain things in life, and whether this happened or not was largely determined by the choices we made (things we controlled) and fate (things we didn't).

In Yoruba culture, storytelling and analogies are useful for gaining perspective and making good choices, especially in difficult situations. They see challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. When things do not turn out as planned, I have a choice to perceive the outcome either as a work in progress or a total failure. How I perceive things is just as critical or sometimes more significant than what is really happening.

As with any journey, nothing in life is ever easy or hard. It all depends on how we perceive it from our perspective. The experiences that initially appear unpleasant have taught me more than those I initially perceived as pleasant. Despite not recommending unpleasant experiences as the main source of learning (I personally prefer mentorship), it is important to take advantage of whatever life throws our way and find ways to succeed.

How I choose to see things (my perception) is a remarkable tool that can work for me or against me. To do things differently I will have to be willing to change how I define things in my mind. I'm always influenced by how I see things and how I define things in my mind.

Being functional involves adjusting my perception as I am presented with new information that challenges my previous knowledge and indicates the need for change. I become dysfunctional when I ignore or deny this information.

Every experience in life is an opportunity to learn, and I recognize that I am the one who defines what is good or bad. Although I admit there are some lessons I would have preferred to skip, I try to discover the lesson in every experience.

Since complex situations are made up of multiple simple blocks, my approach to complex challenges is to simplify them while maintaining a keen sense of their complexity.

I have always maintained that the most important relationship is the one that I have with myself, so I take time to take care of myself to be able to care for others, since what I refuse to give to myself cannot be given to others.

Control is a state of mind that keeps me functioning. It is important to distinguish between what I want and what I must do, realizing that when there is a conflict between these two, what I have to do is more important. I find myself frustrated when I try to control events beyond my control. To counteract this, I focus my attention on things I can control (even if it's just my breathing) and then build up from there.

There are times when things don't go according to plan, but I can decide how I view the outcome, either as a work in progress or a complete failure. What I perceive is equally, if not more important, than what happens, since that determines my response and my actions. As I discover the lesson in every experience, I give myself the gift of hope. I gain the courage to take risks and try new things, and I am better equipped to handle disappointment. I also learn to appreciate the beauty of failure and how it can be a powerful teacher. I gain the strength to try again and never give up.

Hope is a state of mind, like my sense of control. Being hopeful does not guarantee the results I want, but it makes them more likely to happen. Keep in mind that hope is free. Hope is a habit formed over time through repetition and reinforcement. Although getting the results I want is a strong motivator, I should learn to remain hopeful even when it seems unlikely that the results will come.

An analogy would be wishing to win the lottery but not purchasing a ticket. Although the odds of winning are quite slim, there is always a chance, but without a lottery ticket, the odds become zero. Being hopeful in life is like buying a lottery ticket; there is no guarantee that you will win, but at least you are one step closer.

Having hope is not the same as wishing or fantasizing, but it is an active process that involves convincing yourself repeatedly that what I want is possible. It is important to be aware of how things are while imagining how I would like them

to be. It is not about forcing myself to succeed; it is about imagining myself succeeding, which is a form of self-programming.

To be hopeful I must:

1) Allow myself to believe in the possibility of what I hope for and to imagine it, so that I can visualize it in my mind. When I use my imagination, I am aware of the present reality based on probabilities while experiencing an alternate reality based on possibilities. By visualizing my goals, I can come up with creative solutions to achieve them. I can use my imagination to plan and create better success strategies.

2) I state my expectation (say it out loud) in accordance with my choice. As part of my daily routine, I say it 10 times (makes a unit) and 10 times (makes a set). I say it out loud so that my unconscious mind and brain can hear it. The most important thing is to say it convincingly without necessarily thinking about what I am saying, but simply repeating it so that my brain can hear and understand what I mean. "Self-programming" is what I call it. This allows me to connect deeper to what I am expressing and internalize it. Saying it out loud also helps me focus and remember it better.

3) I repeat the above process often to reinforce the results I want. I become what I do most often, so I remember that being hopeful can be ingrained through repetition. I become what I most repeat, and this determines my direction. As a result, I always make sure that my thoughts, words, and actions are heading in the direction I wish to go in.

When I learned how to define things properly, I was able to succeed more easily. Instead of obstacles, I saw challenges, instead of failure, I found ways to succeed. I found it very beneficial to challenge myself to see things differently during some of my most difficult experiences in a way that allowed me to focus my energy on the direction I wanted to go.

My response to a situation is largely determined by how I define it, so I strive to define things in a way that will take me in the direction that I want to go. To me, trying not to fail is very different from trying to succeed, so rather than seeing obstacles or problems, I see challenges, and rather than seeing failure, I see ways to succeed. The importance of this step is equal to the importance of learning

how to walk before I run. My inner dialogue involves talking out loud to myself and encouraging myself to see the good in every situation.

Allow yourself to believe in the certainty of where you want to be even if everything around you suggests otherwise. When you are trying to control events that you have no control over, you may experience frustration. Focusing on things you can control (even breathing) can help you regain a sense of control.

When I encourage someone to be hopeful, I am asking them to be cautiously optimistic and not to refuse to acknowledge the reality of the situation they are in, especially if it is bleak, but to simply entertain the notion or possibility of a more favourable outcome despite everything. Overly optimistic and enthusiastic people have always irritated me. (Rightly or wrongly) I concluded they were overcompensating.

Putting things in balance intuitively makes sense to me, sometimes things are great and sometimes they are terrible, but the goal is to find that sweet spot where everything is just right and try to keep things moving around it regularly.

I refer to it as being centred and I think different people have different ways of describing it. However, they seem to recognize it when they find it.

The choice to be hopeful is one I make every day, but it is sometimes difficult. The key is to accept and accommodate my vulnerability, accept things the way they are, but to imagine a more desirable outcome and to work towards it.

Storytelling has always been a way of introducing the idea of hope. Most children are introduced to this either through fairy tales with stories that start with “once upon a time” and end with “they all lived happily ever after” and although well meaning, this over enthusiastic and unrealistic approach often poorly prepares us for the disappointments that lay ahead. As we encounter more and more “once upon a time” and less and less “live happily ever after” we develop the habit of being less and less hopeful and some of us lose this gift all together.

Our ancestors were hopeful beings who passed on their culture to us. We rely on hope to give meaning to our existence, to reinforce purpose, and to provide a sense that we deserve to exist and that our existence is worth contributing to. We feel despair when we lack hope, a natural consequence of not being able

to fill the void and reinforce our purpose. In the absence of hope, our perception of reality is often unfavorable.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed both fortunate and unfortunate outcomes. Although the individual often had a role in the outcome, it wasn't always determined by this role, i.e. just because you try hard does not mean that you will succeed (although it does increase your chances of succeeding) and I have also seen people who don't try at all and succeed despite their shortcomings.

It seems to me that when most people are very ill, they often feel so vulnerable that the notion that something or someone cares for them is very appealing to them - the notion that our existence matters and is of value seems to be one of the most important aspects of being human.

When people buy into this concept of "value," they seem to attach importance and relevance to the existence of others and thrive, their perception of wellbeing is enhanced, and their experience of living is very positive. In the absence of this concept, a person does not do as well and the journey to find oneself may be more difficult. The importance of this concept should not be underestimated, as people need it to feel connected and valued. It also serves as a way for people to build relationships with others and to develop a sense of self-worth. Ultimately, value is essential for a meaningful life.

### **Points to remember:**

Hope is not the same as wishing or fantasizing but is an active process of persuading yourself repeatedly that what you want is possible.

To be hopeful you must:

- 1) Allow yourself to believe in the possibility of what you hope for.
- 2) Verbalize your expectations consistent with the direction of the results you want. A form of "self-programming".
- 3) Repeat the above process often to reinforce the results.