

Soul Circle Small Group Reflection Material for JULY 2020-Theme: HOPE 1

This month, the first group meeting will focus on the Reflection Questions and Quotes. The second meeting will focus on the “For Deeper Reflection Questions”.

Reflection Questions on HOPE

- Hope does not anticipate a particular outcome. Hope advises us to look squarely at the realities that confront us while remaining aware of the possibilities.” Have you experienced hope in his way as opposed to optimism?
- Describe a time when you felt inspired by someone else’s hopeful attitude? How did this help you?
- Some common symbols of hope are a rainbow, stars, light, the sun, a baby, feathers, spring, flowers, and birds, such as a dove, raven, or nightingale. (See quotes and poems later in this packet for examples of this imagery.) What do these symbols have in common? Do you have a symbol that speaks to you of hope?
- “Have you ever had a powerful experience of hope in the middle of a very difficult time? Why did this hope seem to come from? How did this experience influence how you responded to the difficulty in words, thoughts, emotions, actions?
- What gives you hope? Are there things you do or places you like go that give you hope, that instill in you a feeling of hope? What or where are they?

Hopeful Quotes

- “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.” - Desmond Tutu
- “The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope.” - Pierre Teilhard De Chardin
- “Hope is like a road in the country: there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence.” - Lin Yutang
- “Hope is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul / And sings the tune without the words / And never stops at all.” - Emily Dickinson
- “Hope is the deep orientation of the human soul that can be held at the darkest times.” - Vaclav Havel

FOR DEEPER REFLECTION

1. **Take on a “can’t.”** - To begin, take a few days to a week to think of the things in your life that you’ve placed a big fat “CAN’T” beside. Some examples: "I will never see eye to eye with my sister." Or "I couldn't possibly leave this job to start my own business" or "I will never really make a difference, so why bother?" As you do this, try to find one “can’t” that a small piece of you second-guesses. In other words, as you go through the list, listen carefully for a faint inner voice that says, “Why not?” or “Are you sure?” Then commit yourself to taking this “can’t” on. Make a promise to yourself that you will do what it takes, for as long as it takes, to prove it wrong.
2. **Find Hope in the Midst of What Is** -A profound spiritual discipline is learning to accept what is without denial or despair. If you find yourself in a difficult, sad or very challenging situation, ask yourself, if you are only feeling despair and hopelessness in the situation, or are you too quickly looking on the bright side, thinking all will just be okay, without acknowledging the reality? How might you look at the situation more clearly and then ask yourself, “How can I approach this with hope?” Knowing all may not work out as you’d expect, are there ways you can find strength, connection, or wisdom in the situation. Can you find possibility for good things and change even if it is not the outcome you want?

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OTHER RESOURCES on the theme of HOPE for you to explore as you want, if you want to do so.

Hopeful Bookshelf Consider ordering books from Black owned stores such as this one: DTR 360 Books
<https://www.dtr360books.com/books/>

- *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* by Nelson Mandela
- *The Horse Whisperer* by Nicholas Evans
- *Almost Everything : Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott
- *How to Survive a Plague* by David Franc

Hopeful Film Festival

- [“Interstellar”](#) - Interstellar will change the way you think about the world around you, while bringing you closer to your family and making you more in tune with who you're meant to be.
- [“The Pursuit Of Happyness”](#) - When you're at the bottom, the only way to go is up. This true story will bring tears to your eyes and hope into your heart.
- [“Moonlight”](#) - By the end of Moonlight's unforgettable three acts, we've witnessed nothing less than the birth and salvation of a human soul.
- [“My Life as a Zucchini \(Ma vie de courgette\)”](#) - A stop-motion animated feature more substantial than the title suggests, about orphans dreaming of a better life is often poignant, even wrenching at times, but navigates tricky emotional terrain with astonishing grace. An ode to human resilience.

Hopeful Videos

- [Overcoming hopelessness TED Talk by Nick Vujicic](#) - A limbless man shares his choice to choose hope
- [Roots and Wings](#) - A Sikh 14 year old directs a video about keeping the Sikh faith and hope in the face of prejudice. Be sure to catch the end, that shows lightheartedness is valuable to keeping up hope.
- [The Story of Pandora - the origin of hope in Greek Mythology](#)

Playful Songs

Spotify playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4V3LWpm4C7NTow8LP7ZhVg?si=MIIU1dOgRVmSQItLDI9IRA>

Other Hopeful Things Online

- [President Obama essay “I Still Believe in a Politics of Hope”](#)
- [J.R.R. Tolkien essay on the Discipline of Hope](#)