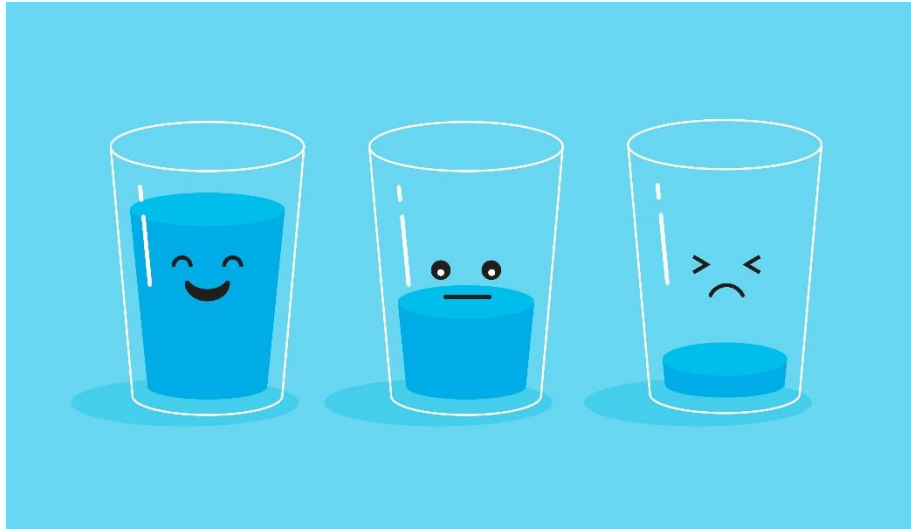


TARGET HOPE

Cup half empty or cup half full?



This simple litmus test can serve as a general indicator of your hope baseline. The hopeful stoically reply that the cup is half full. The hope deficient focus on the empty. Whatever your starting point, hope alone is not enough. Whether your mental needle leans to the positive or to the negative, the key to a brighter future is taking steps to actively fill your cup.

Rick Snyder, founder of research on the science of hope and pioneer of the positive psychology movement, puts it this way, “Hope is the sum of the mental willpower and waypower that you have for your goals.” In other words, hope takes effort.

Snyder’s protégé and renown leading hope researcher, Shane Lopez, fully agrees. In his inspiring book, *Making Hope Happen*, Lopez tells us that hope has three components. First, you have to know that your future can be better than your present and - key point - have a clear GOAL that you’re pursuing.

Next, agency. You must believe that you can achieve your goal. If you don’t expect success, you’ll be dead in the water.

Lopez wraps up the big three factors of hope with pathways. This is the conviction that there are multiple ways to achieve your goal. If one pathway is blocked, you pursue another option and keep moving forward to your heart’s desire.

So, hope revolves around a goal that: 1) will make the future better than the present 2) you can accomplish and, 3) can be arrived at in a multitude of ways.

Happy people have goals. Humans are teleological. The root of teleological is the Greek word *telos*, meaning target. Each of us is purpose driven. “Therefore, you feel happy and in control of your life only when you have a clear goal that you are working toward

each day.” (Brian Tracy, *No excuses*) “Without a target to shoot at, our lives are literally aimless.” (Tom Morris, *The Art of Achievement*)

Healthy people live with purpose and direction.

In his groundbreaking work, *Cancer as a Turning Point*, psychologist Lawrence Le Shan summarizes his 35 years of working with cancer patients. “In a large majority of the people I saw (certainly not all), there had been previous to the first noted signs of cancer, a loss of hope in ever achieving a way of life that would give real and deep satisfaction..., the kind of life that makes us look forward zestfully to each day and to the future.”

Your health and happiness are built upon a foundation of hope. Half empty or half full is relatively insignificant. Hope is a learnable skill. You generate it by selecting a goal and confidently crossing off your options, until your goal is achieved. The more times you work the protocol, the more natural hope becomes.

“If you observe a really happy man, you will find him building a boat, writing a symphony, educating his son, growing double dahlias in his garden, or looking for dinosaur eggs in the Gobi Desert.” (W. Bérán Wolfe).

What’s your project?

If life is bringing you down, look up. Identify a personally meaningful goal. Take aim and release your arrow of action at the target.

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