

“Hope is Power”  
Dianne M. Daniels; UUCN, December 8, 2024

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**Sermon: “Hope is Power” by Dianne M. Daniels**  
**Remember to SLOW DOWN**

One of the most impactful feelings you’ll ever experience is hope. Hope occurs when we center our expectations on something that has not yet manifested in reality. A hope is like a wish - an intention for something to happen. And there’s power in your wishes!

Consider these points to increase your personal power with the strength of hope:

1. **Hope plants a seed.** Whenever you yearn for something, want it to become reality, want it to be realized and manifested in your life, having hope implies that it could occur. Hope can germinate into a whole new existence. Your life’s journey can be enhanced simply by having hope.
2. **In order to feel hopeful, honesty is required.** We’ve all experienced times when we were fooling ourselves about something, such as a relationship or work situation. But to have hope, we’re forced to be honest about what we’ve done to create the challenge.
  - Only if you tell yourself the truth about a trying situation can you proceed ahead and experience hope.

3. **Hope produces a “can do” spirit.** For example, if you want your relationship to be better, you can draw upon the hope within you. That desire to want a deepened, more connected partnership is rooted in a hope that you can put the relationship back on track.

- The next step is then to ask yourself, “What can I do to make the relationship grow?” Hope cultivates a personal sense of responsibility and ownership. Only then do you have the power to convince yourself that you can truly effect a change in your own life.

4. **Hope often leads you to the answer.** When you’re clueless about resolving a difficult issue, you “resort” to hoping the problem will be solved somehow. Your thoughts begin to examine all the ins and outs of figuring out the challenge. Before you know it, you’ve hit on something that might help the situation.

5. **Hope cultivates your imagination.** Creativity and imagination are necessary when you’re hoping for something to grow or change in a positive way. You stretch yourself by considering resolutions you hadn’t considered before.

6. **Hope enhances and strengthens your commitment to resolving the issue.** When you’ve thought enough about a troublesome challenge, you’re likely committed to overcoming that challenge.

- Personal commitment sets you up to sharpen your focus and find a way to create the result you desire.

7. **Hope springs from within you.** Your life's purest form of strength and power emerges solely from within you. Only your individual thoughts and desires are needed. Hope is free and available whenever you wish to tap into it. Our former First Lady,

Michelle Obama, says, “Hope is not a mindset but a muscle that can be built through daily exercise and well-earned rest.”

**8. Hope allows you to accept and forgive others.** The path you seek can often be paved by your complete acceptance of others and your ability to forgive them, or when forgiveness seems too hard, the ability to ignore them.

We’ll all be exposed to those who annoy or bewilder us. And unfortunately, we’ll be hurt by the actions and words of others at some point or another. However, having hope encourages us to move past these positions of powerlessness and discover the true strength of our character.

Possessing hope enables you to perform challenging acts and believe the unbelievable. The good life you deserve can be attained by striving to have hope. Let go of your self-doubt and negativity. Discover your power by embracing all the riches hope can deliver.

## **Finding Hope in Your Life**

How can you cultivate hope when things look bleak? In many ways, being happy is about having hope for the future.

Feeling like there is no hope is one of the most challenging emotions. After all, why would someone even try when he or she believes there is no hope and, correspondingly, no possibility for things to improve?

Finding hope when there's none to be found can be tricky, but it is possible.

***It's important to remember that no matter how hopeless things appear, there's always the opportunity for them to improve.*** Even if it doesn't seem like they will at the time, they **can** and often do change.

We all have challenges at times and moments when there doesn't appear to be a way out. Yet everyone who doesn't give up seems to emerge from their struggles okay.

**When you're feeling down, try these strategies to help bring back hope:**

1. **Consider all the miraculous things you've done in your life.** You've probably learned how to walk, talk, and even drive. Perhaps you've graduated from high school or college.

- Let's think for a minute about learning how to talk. It doesn't seem miraculous; nearly everyone knows how to do it. But consider how difficult it is.
- Babies start out making unintelligible sounds. They can say a few things in a couple of years, though not very well. They can say a fair amount in a few more years - though they may still struggle with pronunciation. This is all after years of daily effort.
- ***So regardless of what you're facing, remember your earlier miracles and know you can work through them.*** For humans, the seemingly impossible is, in fact, possible.

2. **Absorb optimism.** Surely, you've come across people who persistently see the bright side of things. They're the ones who could stand in the middle of the worst thunderstorm the world has ever seen and say, "I think it's starting to clear up."

- ***Seek out these people and spend time with them.*** Their optimism will soon start to rub off on you. Talk to them about your challenges; they may have a perspective that can really push you in the right direction.

3. **Think of activities that might inspire you.** Use every tool at your disposal.

- Faith can be a source of inspiration.
- Simple joys, like watching children play on the playground, might bring you the spark of inspiration you seek. Notice how easily they smile and hear the happiness in their shrieks and shouts!
- Try reading books that chronicle the triumphs of others.

4. **Spend time with and lend a hand to help those less fortunate.** Volunteering to help the homeless or visiting with hospice patients can show you that things aren't as challenging as initially thought.

- ***Sometimes, when you observe firsthand how difficult things can be, you develop a different perspective about your own situation.***

5. **Also, spend some time with miraculous things.** For many, nature's bounty is awe-inspiring, from flowers and waterfalls to butterflies and spider webs. When you see what's possible, you realize you're capable of remarkable things, too.

6. **Be courageous.** Often, cultivating hope requires courage to take that first step forward. ***Give yourself the chance to find your way through your challenges.***

If you want to find hope in your life, you always can! Although your search for hope might take some work, keep going. ***Keep working through it***, and you'll discover many reasons to be hopeful.

Another excellent option is to seek the help of a trained professional. Regardless of your challenges, there are always ways to overcome them.

What oxygen is to our lungs, hope is to the meaning of life. Broadcast journalist and show host Diane Sawyer says, “Whenever you are Blue or Lonely, or stricken by some humiliating things you did, or that happened to you, the cure and the hope is in caring about other people.”

We’re approaching the time when we celebrate Advent, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa—AdveChrismaHanuKwanzaa, if you will. What better time to emphasize and promote Hope?