Hope: Courage, Creativity, Faith

Introduction

What connects these virtues? Having hope when life is difficult requires faith that something better is possible, and that fuels courage to persevere and work toward it. Imagining a better future and new approaches requires creativity.

Shared readings of quotes, poems, songs, etc., with time for comments

Courage

You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage
to lose sight of the shore. -- Andre Gide

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. -- Mark Twain

A ship in port is safe; but that is not what ships are built for.
-Grace Hopper, computer scientist and US Navy Rear Admiral

Cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, “Is it politic?” Vanity asks the question, “Is it popular?” But, conscience asks the question, “Is it right?” And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but one must take it because one’s conscience tells one that it is right. -- Martin Luther King, Jr.,

We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. -- E. M. Forster

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. -- Viktor E. Frankl

Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced. -- James Baldwin

And one of the things I talk about all the time when I’m working with leaders, from CEOs to special forces troops, I always ask the same question — most recently, NFL teams — “Give me an example of courage that you’ve seen in your life or that you, yourself, have engaged in, any act of bravery, that was not completely defined by vulnerability.” No one has, to this day — even special forces; when Navy Seals can't tell you, then no one can tell you — because the problem
is, there is no courage without vulnerability. But we’re all taught to be brave, and then we’re all warned, growing up, to not be vulnerable. And so that’s the rub. And so when you have bravery without vulnerability, that’s when you get what we’re looking at today: all bluster, all posturing, no real courage. -- Brené Brown

Creativity
When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. -- Viktor E. Frankl

Life is your art. An open, aware heart is your camera. A oneness with your world is your film. -- Ansel Adams

Never be so focused on what you're looking for that you overlook the thing you actually find. -- Ann Patchett

It is never too late to become what you might have been. -- George Eliot

Whatever it is that you produce, a baby, a book, a theory, it is a piece of the magic of creation. You are producing something that you do not fully understand. --- Freeman Dyson

Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it, we go nowhere. -- Carl Sagan

“Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.”
— Shel Silverstein

Faith and Hope
Feed your faith and your fears will starve to death.
Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof. -- Khalil Gibran

Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation. -- D. Elton Trueblood

Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase. -- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sometimes beautiful things come into our lives out of nowhere. We can’t always understand them, but we have to trust in them. I know you want to question everything, but sometimes it pays to just have a little faith. -- Lauren Kate
Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. – Vaclav Havel

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good. – Vaclav Havel

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. – Desmond Tutu

Walk fearlessly into the house of mourning. For grief is just love squaring up to its oldest enemy, and after all these mortal human years love is up to the challenge. -- Kate Braestrup

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. – Joseph Addison

Poems

In Blackwater Woods by Mary Oliver

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

gainst your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

For a New Beginning by John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life’s desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

Shared experiences

*Time to share reactions, thoughts, understandings, experiences, etc. related to these virtues.*

Some seeds:
There are reasons enough for despair; what gives you hope and/or faith?
Do you agree that “the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice”?
When have you taken a risk? Did hope, faith, creativity, and/or courage play a role?
When have you observed admirable courage in someone else?

More group discussion

Why are these virtues important?
Why are they hard to live into?
Where can we improve in our own lives?