Dynamics of Hope
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The Book of Ruth

Gotta Love That Ruth!
Hebrew Lesson

- Naomi
  na‘em, pleasant
- Ruth
  re‘ut, friendship/loyalty

When despair is the experience, you can’t see hope,

even if it is standing right next to you.

Ruth and Boaz have a kid: Obed

- Obed is the father of Jesse
- Jesse is the father of King David
- King David is the ancestor of the Messiah
From despair, hope grows.

• Hope is the only alternative to despair.

Hope changes, shifts in all directions.

There is no such thing as a hopeless situation.

Only a situation in which people have lost track of what they can hope for.
Hope doesn't have to be for physical recovery, cure, or resolution. Hope can be establishing goals, thoughts, anything to lead to something better.

Our job is to expand the horizons of hope.

Where is God?
What is God's job description?

God provides:
- Strength
- Courage
- Wisdom
- Support
- Encouragement
- Hope

God is not the local ATM
We are supposed to do what God wants, not try to make God do what we want.

God ≠ Magic

Prayer is reflexive:
It is supposed to move us to achieve the goals we want God to do for us by magic.

The natural order of the world
Disease and disaster happen
People are supposed to help God complete creation.

We don’t have to like the reality of being human. But once we begin to accept our own humanity with some humility, we can then deal with hope, within the natural order of the world.

**Definition of Hope**

- An expectation that somehow, something good will happen.
- Some belief that we have some control or influence.
Dr. Jerome Groopman

The Anatomy of Hope

Hope comes in five qualities:

- Hope is clear-eyed
- False hope/true hope
- Everyone has the right to hope
- Step by step
- Hope is undying
Hope is clear-eyed:

His goals were simple: to get through each day finding something good, some reason to live, some basis for feeling the blessings that remain in his life.

Hope comes in five qualities:

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False hope/true hope:

We do people a great disservice when we say that it’s not natural for a parent to lose a child. Reality is, it is not an unnatural process. As we grow, as we go through life, we find that people die. By nature, some of the people we love the most are the people that we find within ourselves. People can find comfort among other people. People find that the natural order of the world has been particularly brutal.
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His denial was all he had left, and he was clinging to denial as hard as he could. Sometimes denial is a good coping mechanism.

Everyone has the right to hope:

Hope comes in five qualities:

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Step by step:
Accomplishing one thing at a time, recognizing that each step is an act of faith and hope.

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Dr. Elizabeth Kubler Ross: Five stages of bereavement or of dying
• Denial
• Anger
• Bargaining
• Depression
• Acceptance
Rabbi Goldstein’s 6th stage:

gratitude, thankfulness

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Hope is undying:

Hope continues, changes, moves, and has so little to do with predicted outcomes. Hope doesn’t die. It’s passed along to people who survive us.
The world was created so we could be free thinkers and doers. But God is not going to do our jobs for us, or bail us out when we screw up, or step in when illnesses or tragedies develop that we weren’t expecting.

Hope never dies, never goes away, is passed along.

Hope and prayer are realistic, accepting the natural order of the world.
What can you hope for?
What’s real and what’s appropriate:
less pain and suffering,
increased strength,
appetite,
courage,
increased ability to share, talk and connect with the world,
peace and comfort,
less to worry about,
a release from tension fear or anger.

• Comfort in the world to come
• That loved ones find daily reminders of their relationships and the good times they shared
• Greater awareness of God’s love and support

God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.
Pandora’s Box was filled with human blessings.

They all escaped, except one.

Hope.

May we all find ways to pass hope along, share it, and help ourselves and others move from darkness to light, from despair to hope.

Sources:
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