

Spring

With Hope

“

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



Spring is seen as a time of renewal. Another life cycle begins anew - the days lengthen, the air gets warmer, colours bloom, and everything seems a little brighter as the world around us wakes up from its winter slumber. But after a rough 2020, this spring feels a little different.

When we would usually be stepping out into the sun, busying ourselves with plans, throwing out the old to make way for the new, the world still feels a little dark, a little frozen. Many of us are still in lockdown, and the rest are wary to venture far, or make any big moves. In Australia, we've seen fires, a pandemic and now a recession with the worst fall on record - what else will this year bring? In all the uncertainty, it's hard to see the light streaming in.

The beauty of uncertainty is that it can be both challenging and rewarding. It can create anxiety and inaction, but it can also offer new opportunities previously unimagined. Today will be tomorrow's memory and we will make it through if we spring forward with hope.

Leading with Hope

Hope is not blind optimism. Hope is a sustaining force that instils in us the power to cope even in "hopeless" circumstances. It motivates us to take another step forward in the belief that tomorrow can be better than today; that we can *make* it so, as long as we have thoughts in our heads, courage in our hearts, time on the clock and people who can help us along the way.

As leaders in times of crisis, it's important that we lead with hope. Hopeful leaders are constantly and relentlessly in pursuit of what ought to be. Hope diminishes stress, anxiety and even correlates with lower perceptions of pain.

Not only does hope keep us in a dynamic state of mind, but team members who have hopeful leaders are proven to be more enthusiastic, have a greater sense of well-being are more engaged and up to 14% more productive.

"When you think the future will be better than the present, you start working harder today." - Shane Lopez

Tips for Practicing Hope

So how exactly do we practice leading with hope?

Put optimism to good use – dream and plan for a better future. Use hope as the wellspring for your vision.

Find the light of opportunity – our best learnings occur from overcoming obstacles, but we must first allow ourselves time to process where we are at now. Sit with your thoughts and feelings. Ask yourself: what are we learning here that we can take forward?

Invite others in – encourage others to share in visioning and bring their own energy and ideas to the future. Together, build pathways and options. Hope grows when shared.

Step forward – energy, positivity and vision are not enough without the solid base of action. Be the leader who steps into the darkness and lights the way, so that others may find their feet.

Re-goal – goals are essential to raising hope, but if goalposts shift, don't be afraid to review and reframe. For a goal to generate hope at this time, it's about envisioning a future that we can all share, and even if it's a stretch, it's close enough that we can believe it's possible.

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