

Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Dear Friends ~ These are some of the passages that have given me hope during this cold winter. ~ Bob



Do not be afraid, little flock. It is my Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

~ Luke 12:32

The game is not over yet. We are still under the loving hand of our Common Father, and the marching orders have not changed: to live and establish ourselves in alignment with the highest benchmarks of what we know human beings are capable of: courage, commitment, compassion, forgiveness, conscience, integrity. To simply keep walking toward these, arm and arm if at all possible, for there the force of individual integrity is vastly magnified. Until then, as we all navigate through this season of winnowing, it will be more important than ever for those of you who can stay with it, to hold fast to sobriety, integrity, impartiality, and mépris (skillful action at exactly the right time). To be able to look sphinx-like into the eyes of this necessary winnowing and not wince or flail. Not to indulge in nostalgia, self-pity, blame, or rumination. To keep walking forward in forgiveness and quiet hope into the future. Our Father is still trying to give us the Kingdom; the timing depends on our readiness to bear it. Let us continue, quietly, with the readying.

~ Cynthia Bourgeault, from the blog post “Do Not Be Afraid,” on *Wisdom Waypoints*



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**History says, Don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.**

~ Seamus Heaney in *THE CURE AT TROY:
A VERSION OF SOPHOCLES' PHILOCTETES*

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. It is an orientation of the spirit and orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. 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, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.

~ Vaclav Havel in *DISTURBING THE PEACE*



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To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an

infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

~ Howard Zinn in *A POWER GOVERNMENTS CANNOT SUPPRESS*

Hope is holding a creative tension between what is, and what could and should be, and each day doing something to narrow the distance between the two.

~ Parker Palmer, from a podcast with Carrie Newcomer, Episode 29, December 31, 2020

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope—

Not the prudent gates of Optimism,

Which are somewhat narrower.

Not the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;

Nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,

Which creak on shrill and angry hinges

(People cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through)

Nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of

“Everything is gonna’ be all right.”

But a different, sometimes lonely place,

The place of truth-telling,

About your own soul first of all and its condition.

The place of resistance and defiance,

The piece of ground from which you see the world

Both as it is and as it could be

As it will be;

The place from which you glimpse not only struggle,

But the joy of the struggle.

And we stand there, beckoning and calling,

Telling people what we are seeing

Asking people what they see.

~ Victoria Stafford, “The Gates of Hope” in

THE IMPOSSIBLE WILL TAKE A LITTLE WHILE:

PERSISTENCE AND HOPE IN TROUBLED TIMES

Sometimes, in this troubled world of ours, we forget that love is all around us. We imagine the worst of other people and withdraw into our own shells. But try this simple test: Stand still in any crowded place and watch the people around you. Within a very short time, you will begin to see love, and you will see it over and over and over. A young mother talking to her child, a couple laughing together as they walk by, an older man holding the door for a stranger — small signs of love are everywhere. The more you look, the more you will see. Love is literally everywhere. We are surrounded by love.

~ Steven Charleston in *LADDER TO THE LIGHT:*

AN INDIGENOUS ELDER’S MEDITATIONS

ON HOPE AND COURAGE

When we truly open our hearts to each other, there is no burden too heavy for us to carry together, there is no pain too deep for us to hold in each other’s arms. And it’s in that place that the alchemy emerges. It’s in the cauldron of sharing our grief with our community, of gazing at it together and not looking away, that the heartbreak turns to hope.

~ Jeremy Lent in *THE ALCHEMY OF HEARTBREAK AND HOPE:*

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR OUR TIMES

Active hope is a practice. Like tai chi or gardening, it is something we do rather than have. It is a process we can apply to any situation, and it involves three key steps. First, we take a clear view of reality; second, we identify what we hope for in terms of the direction we’d like things to move in or the values we’d like to see expressed; and third, we take steps to move ourselves or our situation in that direction.

~ Joanna Macy in *ACTIVE HOPE*

Hope is a muscle, a practice, a choice that actually propels new realities into being. And it’s a muscle we can strengthen. It is not the same as idealism or optimism. This kind of hope has nothing to do with wishful thinking. Hope as I’ve seen it lived is at once fierce and persistently joyful. I’ve come to understand this quality of hope as an essential foundation and power for the generative story, the generative landscape, that is emerging out of all of the rupture this moment in the life of the world has laid bare.

~ Krista Tippett, from her “Practicing Hope” course

