



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Wrapping up 2024!

Or not. The year is ending, but what schedule are you on? Know what it is and be okay with the schedule you're on.

Remember...

New Years' resolutions often don't stick because they're not established habits.

About Shane

This is a busy time of year for many. Our house is included in the busyness of the season. My oldest son's birthday is two days before Christmas. Making a special birthday for an 8 year old so close to Christmas is important in our house, but also means we had present opening three days in a row.

How did this go? Well, this year we had our celebrations on Christmas Eve as per our part-German heritage. We did family presents but awaited Santa on Christmas Day as usual.

Boxing Day was not as big a disappointment as we thought it might be! Ha ha!



Hope

Hope is a concept that has been discussed, debated, and relied upon for millennia. It has been used both positively and negatively and can speak to one's motivations and agency. Take for example these two quotes: "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope" - Martin Luther; and, "He that lives on hope will die fasting" - Benjamin Franklin.

Like many psychological concepts, the theory of hope, or hope theory as it's been termed, came as a byproduct of studying a different concept altogether. When Snyder and colleagues were studying how people distance themselves from failures by making excuses, he was noting what it was that people don't want. This created space for the antithetical perspective for what someone does want. Hope became the concept exemplifying the other side of the excuse-making process (Snyder, 1989).

This way of viewing hope is still relevant. It's often the case that we are quite clear on what we don't want. We might, if not



Tips for Dads & Moms

What do we do with a hopeless child? Often, if you could find one, it might be a fleeting experience. Most children, despite their circumstances are naturally quite hopeful.

Of course that is not always the case, nor is it uncommon for kids to go through periods of time where—to them—not much is going their way.

While you may know with experience that “this too shall pass,” that might not be the best tact with your tween or teen. You might be surprised to learn that being curious about your kiddo’s feelings of hopelessness won’t have the prolonging effect you might think. Be curious with compassion. You and your kiddo will be glad you did.



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making excuses, even analyze the pathway to an undesirable outcome with the hope of not taking that pathway a second time.

Instead of moving away from what is undesirable, it would be infinitely more productive to move toward what we hope for. In so doing we would, as a byproduct of taking the pathway of hope, move away from the undesired path. I have often explained the difference as walking forward toward something desired instead of backwards away from something undesired.

Knowing what we don’t want is important. This can serve as a starting point which can offer us the counterpoint (i.e., what we do want/hope for) as our direction.

If a client tells me they don’t want to be “out of shape” I always end up asking them what it is they do want/hope for to determine what direction they want to go: “I want to be in shape and this is how I want to get there...”

It’s similar with couples. I often hear comments like: “We suck at communication.” or “We don’t want to fight all the time.” After I hear the excuses associated with why communication is so bad, and why fighting is the default way of relating, I once again move in the direction of what the couple’s hopes are: “We want to communicate better” or “We want to navigate difficult conversations better.”

Hope gives us a direction we can face and move toward.

So what of hopelessness? If a part of us feels hopeless we engage our curiosity to learn what the hopeless part needs to share with us. “I’m hopeless because if I were to have hope, I would inevitably fail which would be too painful to endure.” When we learn what the hopeless part is concerned about and what it is trying to do by engaging in hopelessness, we come to learn what the hopeless part needs/wants/hopes for. The hopeless part engages in hopelessness to prevent us from experiencing the pain of trying and failing. Protection from the pain of failure is a good intention, but delivering it vis-a-vis hopelessness is not ideal.

What if we could be resilient in the face of possible failure so we could continue to have hope for what we want or need?

Hope is our ally on the journey toward what we want in our lives, but it is not a replacement for the work involved in getting us there.