

# Finding Hope that Heals

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*By*

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NATIONAL  
BREAST  
CANCER  
FOUNDATION, INC.®

# Finding Hope that Heals



## MESSAGE FROM NBCF

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NBCF understands the challenges of life after a breast cancer diagnosis. To help you find hope that heals, NBCF teamed up with award-winning author Wendy S. Harpham, M.D.



Dr. Harpham opened her medical practice with lots of hope, telling patients she'd care for them until she was 80 years old. Only 7 years into her career, she developed lymphoma. When ongoing illness forced her to retire, she didn't give up hope of helping others. Through her writing and speaking, she became a leader in survivorship: educating, comforting and inspiring patients and their caregivers.

In addition to her lymphoma, Dr. Harpham's personal life has been touched by breast cancer. A sister. A niece. Many friends. Some survived. Others didn't. Through it all, she's continued writing about how to overcome the challenges of survivorship.

NBCF is excited to offer you this e-book filled with insights and tips. May you and your loved ones find hope that helps you through and beyond breast cancer. For more about Dr. Harpham's work, visit [wendyharpham.com](http://wendyharpham.com).

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*This e-book is not intended as a substitute for competent medical or supportive care. It serves to supplement information provided by your healthcare team.*

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## Praise for *Finding Hope that Heals*

"Our hope changes as our circumstances change, and sometimes it is difficult to remain hopeful. This ebook explains the importance of building a supply of healing hope so you can draw on it as needed. Dr. Harpham provides suggestions and exercises to help you find, practice and maintain hope despite bad news and setbacks. This is a valuable resource for anyone facing a crisis."

– **Elizabeth J Clark, PhD**

author *Choose Hope: (Always Choose Hope)*

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"As a long-term, two-time breast cancer survivor, I know I can always turn to Wendy's many earlier writings for uplifting hope. This inaugural eBook widens her possible audience, offering the newest, easiest access to the hope that all survivors need."

– **Harriet Gross**

*The CopyRighter*

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"In *Finding Hope That Heals*, Dr. Harpham frames hope in words that are clear and full of compassion born of her own cancer experiences. She provides guidelines, exercises, and resources for breast cancer survivors to rekindle hope when all seems lost while avoiding the pitfalls of false or unrealistic expectations. Healing hope feels much more attainable to me after reading this e-book. It's an invaluable resource for anyone who has ever heard the words 'You have breast cancer.'"

– **Pat Battaglia**

Associate Program Director, Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester

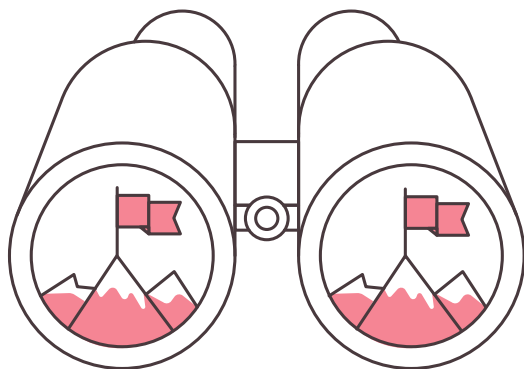
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## Introduction



Since my cancer diagnosis, I've wanted and needed hope. Not just any hope, but healing hope.

Wait! Isn't all hope healing while dealing with cancer? No. Hope can help or harm, depending on what you're hoping for... depending on which hopes are driving your actions. As if that weren't challenging enough, at times you may want to feel hopeful, but you just don't. Maybe you don't feel hope of getting off pain medications, adjusting to lymphedema, enjoying intimacy again, staying in remission, or surviving to see your children grow up. At least, you are not feeling hope today.

Meanwhile, from billboards to best friends, you're bombarded with the same message—"Have hope!"—as if you could turn it on like a light switch. It's not that simple.

NBCF invited me to write this e-book to help you find healing hope—namely hope that helps you get good care and live as fully as possible. The first part of this e-book is question-and-answer. Each section concludes with questions for you. The second half of this e-book offers "hope-work" exercises mixed with practical information and inspiration. It helps to read the chapters in order. That way, you'll get the most out of the insights and tips on finding hope that heals—and avoiding hope that may harm.

Hope-work is hard work. The reward is finding hope that helps you live your best life today, tomorrow, and every day. Let's begin.

With hope,

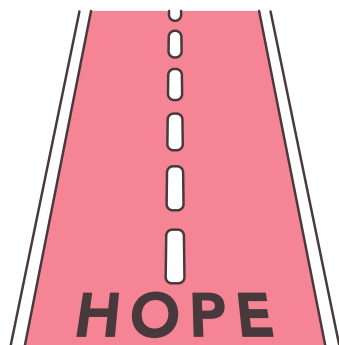
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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*"Even in the worst of times, we can strive  
to make life the best it can be."*

– WSH

# 1 | How Do You Begin?



We all use that word —hope— every day. It's a simple word. But it's a complicated idea. And it's personal. Many factors affect whether you feel hope easily or only after a lot of effort, and whether your hope is strong or fragile.

Hope doesn't show up on blood tests or MRIs. Your doctors can't prescribe pills or perform surgery to boost your hope. The good news (and the reason for this e-book) is this: Whatever your situation and current state of hopefulness, you can take steps to find hope that helps.

**How hopeful do you feel?**

**What makes it easier or harder for you to feel hope?**

**What are you doing to find hope?**

## 2 | How Does Hope Help You Heal?

There are two main ways hope helps you through and beyond breast cancer.

### HOPE HELPS YOU ACT

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In many situations, you can do things to increase the chance of the best outcome. Hope provides the motivation needed to do the right thing, especially if it takes courage and persistence.

To illustrate, let's say you develop a worrisome symptom. You know the right thing to do, namely call your doctor. But a little part of you —okay, a big part— wants to keep the symptom secret for now. **Maybe you...**

- Are afraid of getting bad news.
- Don't want to upset your loved ones.
- Can't miss any more work.
- Don't want to undergo tests for what turns out to be a false alarm.
- Feel "doctored out" and want to avoid any more poking and prodding.



To overcome obstacles to proper action, you need hope. You might be wondering which hope can help you call your doctor when you'd rather not. **Maybe it's hope to...**

- Catch problems early, when many are most treatable.
- Avoid regret that you waited too long.
- Do what your loved ones want you to do.
- Be a role model for your children, friends or family.
- Do the "right" thing.

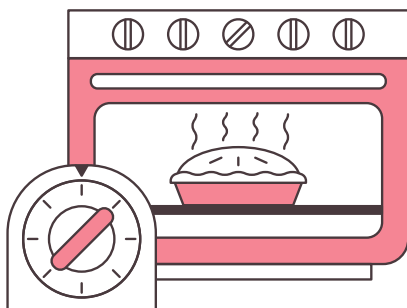
**What keeps you from doing what you know to be the right thing?**

**What do you hope for when struggling to do the right thing?**

**Who can help you do the right thing?**

### HOPE HELPS YOU WAIT

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During and after treatment for breast cancer, you spend a lot of time when there's nothing (or nothing more) you can do to improve the outcome. You wait for doctor visits...wait for test results...wait to see if you'll feel better. While waiting, hope is like honey added to a bitter mix. The pleasant sensation helps offset some of the fear, sadness, anger and sense of vulnerability.

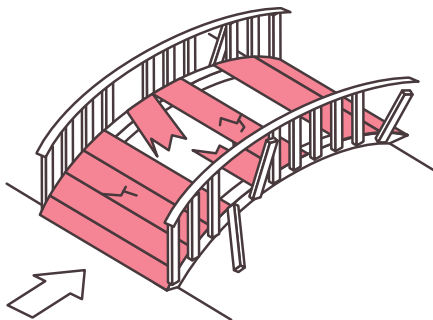
To illustrate hopeful waiting, let's say you just started a new pain medicine. *Hope for relief* can help you find the patience and grit needed to wait for the medicine to kick in. *Hope to speed your relief* can distract you from the pain by turning your attention to learning pain-management skills. *Hope to grow strong through adversity* gives purpose to your pain, which may make the pain more tolerable.

**What do you hope for while waiting?**

**How do you calm yourself while waiting?**

**Who can help you through the waiting?**

### 3 | How Can Hope Harm You?



#### **HOPE CAN CAUSE HARM IF IT INTERFERES WITH GETTING GOOD CARE.**

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Let's go back to the situation of developing a worrisome symptom. Of course, you want it to be nothing serious. So you hope it's nothing serious. Here's the problem: If that hope leads you to not report the symptom, it harms you by keeping you from needed medical attention.

Other hopes that can cause harm by keeping you from good medical care for breast cancer include **hope to...**

- Keep your hair if that's the reason you decline effective therapy for your cancer.
- Go on a planned trip if delaying treatment risks a poorer outcome.
- Continue your usual duties if that causes setbacks.
- Avoid pain medications if that hampers a speedy recovery.
- Never complain\* if telling your doctors "I'm fine" keeps your doctors from knowing about your discomforts and distress. (\*Note: Talking with your doctors about problems is "reporting" —not complaining. Check out the [Pocket Guide to Talking about Side Effects of Cancer Treatment](#), a free online tip sheet.)

### **HOPE CAN CAUSE HARM IF IT INCREASES YOUR DISTRESS.**

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Let's say you are about to begin a course of treatment. Of course, you want to be brave. So, you hope to be brave. If that hope leads you to keep fears to yourself, it harms you because you'll waste precious energy hiding and fighting your fears instead of getting support and learning healthy ways to manage fears.

Other hopes that can cause harm by increasing stress include **hope to...**

- Go through treatment seamlessly if common setbacks make you angry, insecure about your care, or hopeless.
- Continue all your responsibilities if fatigue-related mistakes cause added problems, strain relationships or erode your self-confidence.

- Protect loved ones from stress if downplaying difficulties deprives you of needed help and deprives your loved ones of opportunities to help.
- Shield your children from the crisis if that deprives them of the information, guidance, and support they need to cope with the changes in healthy ways.
- Be cured if you keep searching for doctors who promise to cure you when the best treatments available today can manage—but not cure—your type of cancer.

**Which hopes might keep you from making your best decisions?**

**Which hopes might keep you from taking the best actions?**

**Which hopes might be increasing your stress?**

## 4 | Can Hope Cure Your Cancer?

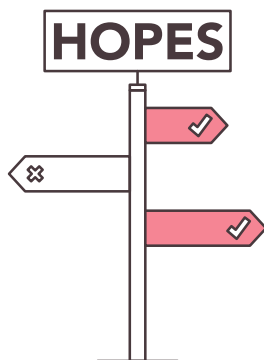
Hope —by itself— does not cure cancer. If it did, every breast cancer patient would be cured. Still, it plays a vital role in healing. As explained above, it can help motivate you to take proper action that increases your chance of the best outcome. It can help you wait when there's nothing more you can do, which improves your quality of life during the time of uncertainty.

**How do you feel when people tell you “hope cures cancer”?**

**What do you believe about hope's ability  
to cure disease by itself?**

**Who can help you if you're not sure what you believe?**

## 5 | Which Hopes are Healing?



It depends. Everyone is different. Which specific hopes are healing for you are unique to you. And hopes that help you today may stop helping (and maybe even harm) as your circumstances change —and as you change. **In general, it helps to...**

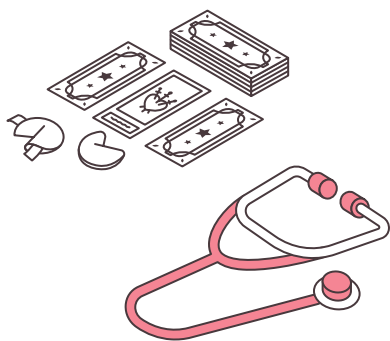
- Invest in realistic hopes.
- Focus on short-term hopes.
- Prioritize hopes that motivate you to action.

**What are your top three short-term hopes?**

**What are your top three long-term hopes?**

**Which hopes do you think and talk about the most?**

## 6 | Why Invest in Realistic Hope?



Realistic hope motivates you to action that may really help because it's based on accurate information. For example, let's say you suffer from cancer-related fatigue. Based on scientific evidence, your doctors recommend daily walks. Your realistic hope of improvement can be like a firm hand pushing you out the door to take a stroll when you'd rather not. It helps you do the right thing to improve your stamina.

In contrast, false hope can lead you astray because it's based on false—inaccurate—information. Imagine patients who believe that over-the-counter supplements make chemotherapy more effective. Scientific studies show that some supplements make certain chemotherapies less effective. While using supplements, the patients feel hope. Sadly, that's false hope—a real feeling based on false information. While boosting their confidence in the short run, the action prompted by false hope might be jeopardizing their recovery. (Reminder: Tell your doctors all the medications you take, including homemade and over-the-counter remedies.)

Imagine another example: A newly diagnosed Mom believes she can preserve the happy childhood of her 9-year-old twins by keeping her breast cancer a secret. Her

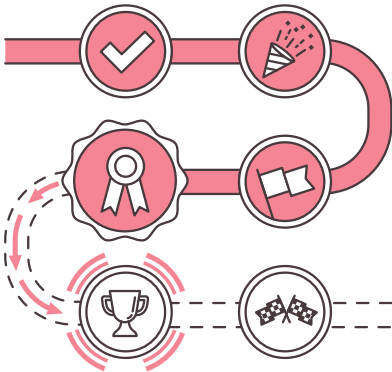
approach is reinforced by an elderly neighbor who insists the kids are too young to be told the truth. Sadly, that love-filled approach backfires. The twins, like all children, observe everything and know something is going on. While eavesdropping on a conversation, the twins find out what: Mom has breast cancer. Now they're angry and scared. For a long time, they struggle with anxiety whenever their mother tells them news about her breast cancer, wondering if she's telling the truth.

Which of your hopes are realistic?

Which hopes might be false hopes?

Who can help you determine if a hope is realistic?

## 7 | Why Focus on Short-Term Hope?



For starters, when doing something challenging, it's usually easier to get motivated if doing it only for a short time. **For example, let's say...**

- Fear of side effects makes you worried about getting through many months of therapy. It's easier to find hope of just getting through the current round.

- Intimacy disappeared from your love life. It’s easier to find hope of just resuming gentle snuggles with your partner, for now.
- Poor appetite is a struggle. It’s easier to focus on hope of just finding foods you can tolerate today (consulting with a dietician, if necessary).

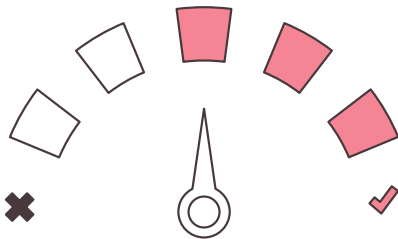
In addition, it feels good when a hope is fulfilled. By nurturing a bunch of short-term hopes, you will likely benefit more often from the energizing emotion of success. On the flip side, when a short-term hope is not fulfilled, the disappointment will likely be less painful than had you been hoping for a long time. And the disappointment will likely be less distressing than had it been the only thing you were hoping for. Hope begets hope.

How do you feel when a short-term hope is fulfilled?

How do you feel when a short-term hope does not come true?

Who can help you find new short-term hopes?

## 8 | How Do You Know Whether Your Hope is Healing or Harmful?





To determine whether your hope is healing, ask yourself if what you are hoping for **is helping you...**

- Take proper action when there's something you can do.
- Wait when there's no more you can do.
- Manage the uncertainty.
- Increase your general hopefulness.
- Find some happiness today.

As an example, whenever you undergo scans, what do you hope for? "Good news," right? That's logical and realistic. Your friends and family may be urging you to "Hope for good news," too. Or they may be telling you, "I'm hoping for good news." Unfortunately, fixating on "good news" doesn't help every patient. If anything, it makes some people more anxious. Why?

Hope is a balance of inspiration and anxiety. You're uplifted by the real possibility of good news. Imagining the relief you'll feel decreases your sense of vulnerability, which also helps. At the same time, though, you are frightened by the possibility you might not get good news. The fact that the results are determined by your cancer (and not by your hope) increases your sense of vulnerability.

You might be spending a lot of energy trying to not think about the possibility of getting upsetting news—or trying to convince yourself you'll get good news. If so, that's emotionally exhausting. If the results are not good after you've spent days or weeks focused on "good news," you'll likely feel unprepared and may even feel somewhat responsible, thinking, "Maybe I didn't hope right."

If hoping for good news doesn't help while undergoing scans, what else can you hope for? Try hoping for accurate news. That's a healing hope because accurate news is the news that helps you most (even if it hurts when you learn it.)

During your evaluation, hope for accurate news **may help you by...**

- Motivating you to hold perfectly still in the scanner while uncomfortable.
- Stirring patience because you want doctors to take their time scrutinizing the tests.
- Preparing you to hear any news.

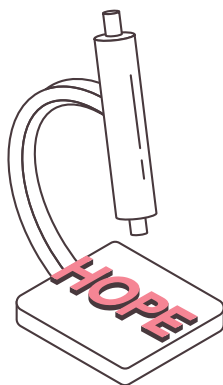
After your evaluation, if you get upsetting news, you're less likely to blame yourself, even if only subconsciously. Importantly, because you hoped for accurate news, you're likely to see the results as useful news. That positive spin may lessen the shock, speed your adjustment, and help you move forward with hope. Of course, if you get good news you can celebrate! In a nutshell: Hope for accurate news helps you act and helps you wait.

**Which of your hopes might not be healing?**

**What are you doing to check  
whether your hope is healing or harmful?**

**Who can help you determine whether a hope is healing?**

## 9 | What if People Disapprove of What You are Hoping For?



You have a right to choose what you hope for. That said, we encourage you to listen to others' concerns with an open mind and then re-examine your hopes. It can't hurt. It may help in a big way if you find different hopes that are more healing for now. **Tested hope is strong hope.**

One way to handle disapproval is to involve an expert who can verify that your hopes are based on sound information. You can reach out to doctors, nurses, counselors, or other professionals (such as physical therapists or dieticians) who know you and your health situation.

**How do you feel when others challenge your hope?**

**How willing are you to examine a hope  
you feel strongly about?**

**Who can help you verify that your hope is  
based on sound information?**

## 10 | What if You're Having Trouble Finding Hope?



Hopelessness is a symptom that needs attention, just like bleeding or fever. You experience hope when your brain cells fire in a certain way. In other words, it's a physical phenomenon, even though blood tests and scans don't show levels of helpfulness or hopelessness.

Anything interfering with brain chemistry might affect the ability to feel hope. That may help explain why, all other things being equal, it may be harder to experience hope if you're in pain, sleep deprived, chronically stressed, grieving, or taking certain medications. Many other things can affect your brain, too, such as upsetting memories, knowledge of unfavorable statistics, and others' negativity.

Hopelessness does NOT mean you are weak or not trying hard enough. It's nothing to feel ashamed of, either. If you're having trouble finding hope, tell your healthcare team (or allow a loved one to tell your healthcare team) **so you can...**

- Find out if there are any fixable medical issues affecting your brain chemistry.

- Connect with professionals, such as counselors trained to address hope.
- Learn about self-help resources that may help you find hope.

You can expect your hopes to wax and wane over time. If you ever feel hopeless, though, tell someone right away. That's the first step to taking a path to hope that heals.

**When have you felt hopeless?**

**Which fixable problems might be hindering your ability to experience hope?**

**Whom would you tell if you ever felt hopeless?**

## 11 | What Now?

Congratulations! You just finished a crash course on hope. Moving forward, whenever you're thinking or talking about hope, **you now know that...**

- There is always something good to hope for.
- Hope helps you act when you can help improve the outcome.
- Hope helps you wait when there's nothing more you can do.
- Many obstacles can hinder hope, only some of which you can control.
- Professionals and resources can help you find hope that heals.

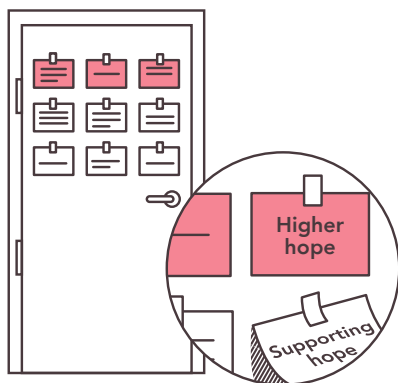
Best of all is the idea that hope is linked to happiness. Your efforts to find healing hope help set the stage for finding some happiness during and after cancer treatment.

Ideas can take you only so far. Now let's get down to the practical business at hand: Finding hope that heals. To help you get started, the rest of this e-book includes a few hope-work exercises, a resource list, and a poem.

Be forewarned: Even with all the knowledge in the world, the pursuit of healing hope requires trial-and-error. And practice. At times, you may need assistance from family, friends, or professionals. Finding hope will always be a work-in-progress as your circumstances change—and as you grow. That's okay, because you're paving a path of healing through and beyond breast cancer.

# Hope-work Exercises *and* Resources

## Your Hope Board



### GOAL

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Making it easier to prioritize your hopes and choose the best hopes for now

### ACTIVITY

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Get at least 5 “sticky notes” or index cards (Note: you can’t have too many). Write one hope on each card. Tape your hope cards to a poster board, back of a door, or wall. Put your high-priority hopes toward the top, medium-priority hopes in the middle, and lower-priority hopes on the bottom. Now, use the cards to help you figure out...

- Which hopes do you want to focus on, for now? (They don't have to be top-priority hopes.)
- Can you add any new hopes to support your high-priority hopes?
- Which hopes do you need to move lower, for now, to help achieve higher hopes?



## HINTS

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- Review your Hope Board at least once a week.
- Expect hope cards to move up and down over time.
- Update as needed. If a hope might impede a higher-priority hope, move it down, for now. If a hope becomes impossible to come true, throw away that card. Fill its space with another hope card or two.
- Expect to feel sad while letting go of certain hopes. (Note: Grief is temporary, even when the loss is permanent.)
- Find new hopes that motivate you to actions supporting your current hopes.

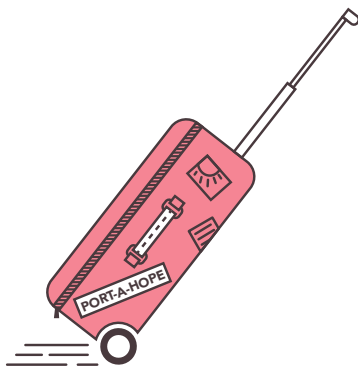
## EXAMPLE

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From the time of Ms. Smith's breast cancer diagnosis, her top priority was to survive. After chemo put her into remission, a high priority for her was to avoid more chemotherapy. To support both those hopes, she focused on other hopes: to exercise regularly, avoid alcohol, eat a healthy diet, sleep well and report symptoms early. Every week, looking at the "avoid chemotherapy" card motivated her to work on her other hopes, which, in turn, helped her feel hopeful.

Years later, she developed a second breast cancer. To support her top-priority hope, she added a new card right under "Surviving" that said "Make Wise Treatment Decisions." When her oncologist recommended chemotherapy, she saw that her hope to avoid chemotherapy might get in the way of making the best treatment decision. She moved the card with "avoid chemotherapy" to the bottom of her board. Months later, when her new breast cancer was in remission, she moved that card back toward the top of her board.

## Your Hope Haven



### GOAL

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Finding a safe space that helps you feel hopeful

### ACTIVITY

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Find a private spot you can transform into a hope haven. Fill that space with sights, sounds and even aromas that calm you when you need to wait and that inspire you when you need to act. Consider music that lifts your spirits. Slather on luscious lotions. Look at inspirational sayings, poems, stories, and prayers, as well as photographs and mementos that remind you of...

- People who love you.
- People who give you strength.
- Times you've been strong.
- Times you've triumphed over adversity.
- Goals you've set.

## HINTS

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- The space must be readily accessible. An option is making a portable Hope-Haven box.
- Update your Hope Haven regularly. Keep items that help. Discard items that no longer work. Add new items that inspire you.

## EXAMPLE

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During a rough patch in my illness, I painted the drab walls of my study bright rose and the doors grape purple—two colors that energize me. I decorated the walls, bookshelves and windowsills with inspirational sayings, such as “Celebrate Today!” Adorable mouse trinkets reminded me of the research that saved my life. I hung a mobile with pictures of loved ones above my desk. I positioned a plastic prism in front of my window to cast a rainbow that moves across the room as the sun moves from east to west. I created a playlist of mostly inspiring, joyful, and calming songs. My playlist includes one sad song that I listen to after a loss to help me grieve and move on with hope.

My Hope Haven continues to be a work-in-progress as I add new photographs of survivors who overcame tough odds and of loved ones whose memories I honor by embracing life with gusto.

# Your Hope Journal



## GOAL

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Making it easier to find and nourish the best hopes for today

## ACTIVITY

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Start a journal devoted to your experiences of hope. Write as little or as much as you feel like. Try to write at least one sentence every day.

## HINTS

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Write about something you...

- Learned about hope.
- Saw, read, or experienced that increased (or decreased) your hope.
- Want to feel hopeful about, but don't feel hopeful about now.
- Want to tell someone about your hope, but feel you can't right now.
- Wish for, knowing it can't come true. (This may help you find something realistic to hope for.)

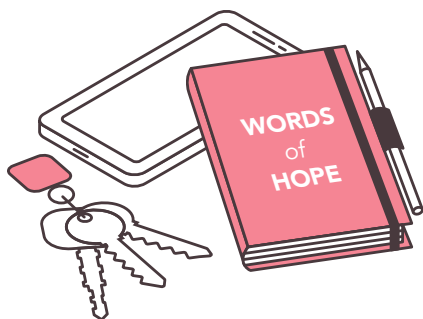
## EXAMPLES OF ENTRIES

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"Today I...

- "Learned it's okay to feel pessimistic while adjusting to a new diagnosis, even if the prognosis is excellent —as long as I don't get stuck in hopelessness."
- "Read about promising new research on my disease and then saw a double-rainbow."
- "Met someone who has been living an active, joyful life with metastatic cancer for 12 years."
- "Can't talk with my family about my end-of-life hopes, even though I want to."
- "Wish they had a one-time pill to fix my cancer. They don't, so I'm hoping this chemotherapy works."

## Your Hopeful Aphorisms and Affirmations



### GOAL

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Creating a personal collection of aphorisms and affirmations

### ACTIVITY

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Buy a small notebook you can keep in your pocket or purse. Every time you hear or read a short saying that inspires you, jot it down. Add illustrations, if you enjoy doodling. Expand your collection by searching online for “aphorisms” and “affirmations.”

### HINTS

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Aphorisms are short statements of truth. At times, a meaningful aphorism can do more to inspire than all the discussion in the world. They are especially useful when you need hope in a hurry. *Healing Hope—Through and Beyond Cancer* offers 50 aphorisms for cancer survivors.

In contrast, affirmations are positive phrases that often describe how you want to be or something you want to believe. Repeating an affirmation to yourself over and over may help you become the way you want to be or believe what you want to believe. Either way, they help you find hope.

## EXAMPLES

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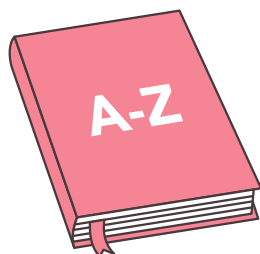
### **A starter kit of aphorisms (statements of truth):**

- If there is hope, you have reason to have hope.
- There is always something good to hope for.
- There is no “right” hope; only a “best” hope for you, for now.
- Nobody can take away your hope.
- You have a right to feel hopeful and to choose what you hope for.

### **A starter kit of affirmations (positive phrases for self-talk):**

- Breast cancer does not define me.
- I am stronger than breast cancer.
- I am whole and perfect the way I am, for now.
- I believe in a better tomorrow, even when I cannot see how.
- Life is good, even when painful.

# Your Hope Dictionary



## GOAL

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Understanding what makes hope special

## ACTIVITY

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If you hear a word that comes up often whenever talking about hope, look it up in a dictionary. What makes that word unique—different than similar words? How does understanding that word help you think about hope? You might discover a clearer meaning that helps you know what you are hoping for now...and what you want to hope for.

Create a handy list of important words involved in helping you find healing hope. Keep it on your computer, your cell phone, or the back pages of your “Words of Hope” book (see prior Hope-work exercise).

## HINTS

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- You can *expect* one outcome and hope for another.
- Which *hopes* are healing for you change over time.
- Not all *realistic hopes* are healing.
- *False hopes* feel good even if leading you astray.
- *Wishes* that comfort you are healing only if they don't drive your decisions and actions.



**EXAMPLES**

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**Hope:** A feeling linked to a belief the desired outcome can happen.

*"This treatment has a 70% cure rate. I hope it works for me."*

**Hope is...**

- Realistic if beliefs are based on sound information.
- False if beliefs are based on inaccurate — false— information.
- Healing if it helps you act or helps you wait.

**Expectation:** A thought about a likely outcome.

*"My chemotherapy causes hair loss, so I expect to lose my hair."*

**Expectation is...**

- Realistic if based on sound information.
- Unrealistic if based on inaccurate information.
- Healing if it helps you prepare for what's likely coming.

**Wish:** The feeling about an outcome you want to happen, but know is (near) impossible.

*"I wish my doctor had a magic wand to cure me."*

**Wishing may help you...**

- Feel better during rough moments.
- Recognize false hope and let it go.
- Talk about and prioritize your realistic hope.

## Your Resources on Hope

Healing Hope —Through and Beyond Cancer (Wendy S. Harpham, MD) A gift book of 50 illustrated aphorisms.

You Have a Right to Be Hopeful (Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, MSW) A booklet on the many ways hope can be present in a survivor's life.

Happiness in a Storm —Facing Illness and Embracing Life as a Healthy Survivor (Wendy S. Harpham, MD) A book of practical philosophy about getting good care and living as fully as possible, whatever the medical challenge.

## Hope

Hope is *an image of goals*  
planted firmly in your mind.  
When looking at life before you,  
hope lines the paths you find.

Hope is *a well of courage*  
nestled deep within your heart.  
When faltering in fear and doubt,  
hope pushes you to start.

Hope is *an urge to keep going*,  
for limbs too tired and weak.  
When apathy stills all desire,  
hope sparks the fuel you seek.

Hope is *a promise of patience*  
as you wait for distress to wane.  
When all you can do is nothing,  
hope pulls you through the pain.

Hope is *a spirit that lifts you*,  
should heaviness pull at your soul.  
When torn apart by losses,  
hope mends to keep you whole.

Wendy S. Harpham, M.D.