

Applied Positive Psychology

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Week 3

Lecture 9: Hope: Concepts and interventions

Welcome to Module 3 of the course on Applied Positive Psychology. This module is about optimism and hope. We will be discussing these two concepts. This is lecture number two of this module and ninth overall. So today we'll be talking about the concept of hope and will also discuss what interventions are available for enhancing hope. Before we talk about today's lecture, let me give you a brief recap of the last lecture.

The last lecture was also part of this module. There, we talked about the concept of optimism. We discussed what optimism is, how it is important, and what kind of benefits it can bring to our lives. We also discussed different types of optimism, more specifically, dispositional optimism and learned optimism. We discussed both types of optimism in detail and the various factors associated with them, such as dispositional optimism and its roots. We also talked about learned optimism and how explanatory style influences it. We also discussed unrealistic optimism and how, sometimes, pessimism can also be a good thing. At the end, we talked about research-based tools that we can use to enhance optimism.

So, in today's lecture, we will be talking about another concept- hope. We will discuss what hope is and how it is different from optimism. We will also talk about Charles Snyder's hope theory in detail and discuss when we experience hope in our mental state, how it predicts different aspects, outcomes, and variables. Lastly, we will discuss some of the research-based tools to enhance hope. So, let us start today's lecture.

Hope is very important in human life because it helps us to do things; we set goals and reach them. It is one of the most important motivators in our lives. A gist of the importance of hope, summarized in the statement by Martin Luther: Everything that is done in this world is done by hope. So if people don't have hope for doing something, they will never do anything. People do what they want to do because they are hopeful that something is going to come out of it. Human actions are mostly directed by hope; therefore, hope is a very important and fundamental aspect of human life.

What is hope? How do we define hope in the field of psychology? One of the prominent researchers in this field of hope is Rick Snyder. He is an expert on hope and has done a lot of research on it. He described hope as the ability to conceptualize meaningful goals, identify pathways to achieve them despite challenges, and stay motivated to follow those paths.

His definition includes these three important things: that when we can identify meaningful goals, we can decide what paths to take to reach those goals and stay motivated. So, these three constructs give a sense of hope. This is how it is technically defined in terms of operationalizing in the research-based definition that is generally used in the field of psychology. We will elaborate further on this definition.

So, hope is goal-directed thinking. Whenever we talk about hope, there is something to achieve; there is a goal, and we are either hopeful to achieve it or not. So, hope is always in the context of certain goals that we discuss. Hope is goal-directed thinking in which the person uses pathway thinking and perceived capacity to find routes to desired goals; basically, that is the pathway thinking and agency thinking. Essentially, it is about the requisite motivation to use those routes.

When we talk about hope, we are talking about goals and pathways to achieve those goals. Agency thinking means the kind of motivation we have used to pursue those goals. This is something that summarizes the major aspects of hope. Hope includes all these things. In simpler terms, we can say we are hopeful when we know what we want. This is one important aspect of hope. We all know what goal I want to achieve. I can think of

various ways to reach it when I have different pathways to achieve that goal, and see it as the beginning of the journey, and persisting along the way. I also know what kind of journey it is and how to persist in that journey in terms of motivation. All these three things make us hopeful. Hopeful thinking consists of the belief that one can find pathways to desired goals and the belief that one can master motivation.

So, hopeful thinking typically includes knowing the pathways and the motivation to reach those pathways. Hope is not merely wishful thinking. When you talk about hope, it is not saying I am hopeful about something. The real hope comes when hope is associated with necessary actions and thought processes. So, it is not just merely wishful thinking; instead, hope is a cognitive process that enables people to set goals, create plans, and stay motivated to reach those desired outcomes even in the face of obstacles.

Hope is not just about thinking that I will achieve something, and that wishful thinking is not considered in a hopeful sense. We are only hopeful when we have a cognitive process to set goals, create plans, and stay motivated even when obstacles happen. Obstacles come in front of achieving those goals. Now the important question arises. In the last lecture, we talked about optimism and how the two are different. Many times, we get confused, and people synonymously use them, but hope and optimism are different concepts. Let us see what the differences are between these two terms.

When you talk about hope and optimism, they are both related to future expectations about something, and you have certain expectations that could be positive. Both are the same in that sense, but they differ in their focus and mechanism. So, hope is about having a vision for the future, identifying clear goals, and actively working toward achieving them. Hope is more active in terms of setting goals, identifying pathways, and actively pursuing those goals. Optimism, on the other hand, is a broad belief that things will work out positively in the future, regardless of whether you act or not. So, you are optimistic when you feel that things will turn out positively in the future, whether you work towards it or not. Optimism is just a mental state in which you think that things will be positive in the future. So optimists generally expect good outcomes, but they may not necessarily

have a concrete plan or be actively working towards the goal. That is the main difference between hope and optimism. Optimists have a general tendency or belief that things will be positive in the future, but they may not necessarily have a concrete plan or work towards that goal. That may not always be associated with optimism. Optimism is more of a mental state than an expectation. Optimism emphasizes positive expectations rather than actively creating pathways to them. That is where hope differs. Hope is when you have a positive expectation and when you set a goal and actively work towards it by finding pathways, achieving those pathways, and walking through these pathways, and so on. That is how optimism differs from hope.

Now, let us look at hope and understand this concept in much more detail by using Charles Snyder's hope theory. Charles Snyder provided an elaborate breakdown of the processes involved in hope. Let us look at the important concepts that he talked about. Charles Snyder's hope theory is a well-regarded psychological model that views hope as a powerful goal-oriented motivational state rather than just a passive, positive feeling. Where optimism is mostly a positive feeling and expectation, hope is a very active, goal-oriented motivational state.

I am hopeful- that means I can do things, achieve things, create pathways, and so on. It's a very active, motivating state about some future goals. Charles Snyder breaks hope into three important components, which we have also mentioned in the definition. One is goals; when you talk about hope, there must be some goal. Always in the context of goals, we talk about "I am hopeful about something," so there is a goal. Then there is something called agency thinking, which is mostly related to your motivation to reach those goals, i.e., to what extent you are able and motivated to reach those goals, and what kind of agency aspects do you have in terms of reaching those goals that determine your hope. Third is pathway thinking, which is about the different pathways that you have in your planning to reach those goals. So, let us break down each of these things in a little bit more detail because these are the three important major core ideas associated with the concept of hope. So, together, these components create a robust framework for understanding how individuals can set, pursue, and achieve their goals, even in the face of obstacles. All these components interact with and influence each other. To reach a

goal, you need agency. Agency is the sense of your motivation level to reach those goals. To reach goals, we also need pathways to achieve them. And pathways can sometimes also influence your goals. An agency can also influence your goals. So these are all bidirectional relationships that influence each other. An agency can also influence your pathways, and pathways can influence your agency. All these things are very intricately interconnected with each other in terms of influencing one another. We'll understand this more in detail when we talk about these three concepts. So, these three components are always working when we are considering the concept of hope.

So let us start with the first component, which is goals. So, we cannot talk about hope without a goal. Hope arises only when there is something to achieve in the future, or there is some event or goal. So, the goal is one of the most important concepts that is always talked about in the context of hope theory, which says that much of human behavior is driven by goals that act as mental targets guiding actions. So, human behaviour is always guided by certain goals to achieve, and so on. Some goals are short-term goals, some goals are long-term goals, but we are always driven by goals. Whatever we do, most of these actions are associated with fulfilling or achieving certain targets or goals.

So, goals are basically certain targets that we set and try to achieve. Now, all these goals can be verbally expressed or visually imagined and may vary in terms of time frame, specificity, value, and importance. Sometimes we very clearly and verbally say, "This is what I want to achieve," or sometimes it is just a mental image that I pursue. Goals may differ in terms of time frame. Some goals are short-term; some goals may be long-term. Goals can also differ in terms of specificity. Some goals are very specific that I want to achieve. This target is within this month, so it is very specific. Sometimes goals are very vague, and you don't know when you will be able to achieve them. It could be a vague target that you are not very clear about. Goals also differ in terms of values and importance; some goals may be highly valuable to you, while others may not be that important, maybe something in the periphery of your mind, and so on.

So, goals can have all these qualities, and depending on that, they will influence human behavior. Initially, Snyder suggested that only consciously valued goals should guide

behavior, but later research indicates that non-conscious goals can also play a role. Snyder initially says that only when we are very consciously thinking about some goals does it guide our behavior. But research also said that sometimes non-conscious goals, or goals that are not very clear or conscious in our minds, can also guide our behavior. For example, some people may very unconsciously like someone, and they may not be very conscious of it. Then what happens is they will try to behave in a certain way to impress that person, even though, consciously, they may not intend to. There is some goal to impress a person, but it may not be very conscious; rather, it reflects unconscious tendencies. They can direct their behavior in terms of doing something to impress that person, and so on. So, goals can be conscious and unconscious, but mostly, when goals are very conscious, you have very clear-cut plans. But unconscious goals can also guide our behavior.

Snyder also distinguished between approach goals and avoidance goals. Some goals have a set target, and we want to achieve them. These are approach goals. You move toward those goals step by step. Some goals are avoidance goals. When you want to avoid something, it is also a goal. This is something that I don't want to go near, or if you want to prevent something from happening in your life, let's say, certain diseases. So that will be avoidance goals. You have a goal to prevent, let's say, cancer or diabetes. So you are not approaching that goal. You are preventing yourself from reaching certain targets. So, goals can be approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented.

Regarding goals, research suggests that hope is strongest when people perceive a moderate chance of achieving those goals. Hope becomes much stronger in terms of being highly influential when people think there is a moderate chance of achieving these goals. If you know the goal is too easy, then obviously you don't have to be hopeful because you can achieve it. When the goal is too difficult, you probably will not be hopeful, as you might think, "I cannot achieve that." But when the goal is moderate, hope mostly comes into the picture, so you are hopeful that you can achieve that. So, hope becomes strongest, or this whole concept of hope becomes relevant, when there is a moderate chance of achieving that goal. This is one important concept that is discussed in the context of hope goals.

Next, agency thinking is another important aspect of the whole context of hope. Agency thinking is the motivational aspect of hope. Hope is not just about thinking to achieve something or only thinking something positive is going to happen; you must be motivated to achieve that. So that is called agency thinking, which reflects the individual's determination and self-belief in their ability to achieve their goals. You have high agency thinking when you believe that you can achieve the goal.

You will be highly motivated to achieve them because you believe you can achieve them. If you think you cannot achieve something, your agency thinking will be very limited, and you will not be hopeful. When you think you have the ability, your motivation will increase, and with the increase in motivation, your hope also increases. So, hope with high agency thinking believes that they have the capacity to influence outcomes, take actions, and continue their efforts when faced with adversity. When you have high agency thinking, your hope also increases as you think that you can influence outcomes, you can achieve the outcomes, you can take actions, and you can put in effort even in the face of difficulties and challenges, and so on.

This sense of willpower provides the energy to pursue goals even when the progress is slow and challenging. So, this agency thinking gives you energy and motivation to pursue your goals, and that makes you hopeful. For example, a student with high agency thinking might tell themselves, "I can do this, I will find a way," or "I will keep trying until I succeed." These are the statements that are related to high agency thinking. That means the person is confident that he or she will be able to achieve the goals and find ways to achieve those goals. So, that is an example of high agency thinking, and it is related to high hope. The more agency thinking you have, the more hopeful you will become.

The third component is pathways thinking, which is also a very important ingredient for hope. Pathway thinking is the cognitive process of developing multiple strategies or routes to reach desired goals. Only thinking about or getting motivated for a goal is not enough. You should have clear pathways to reach them. That is also very important. You

may be highly motivated, you may have set goals, and so on, but you don't know how to achieve them. Then your hope cannot be sustained. You must have very clear strategies and routes to reach those desired goals. It represents our ability to think creatively and flexibly about how to overcome barriers and find alternative routes. You should have plans for multiple routes, so if you proceed to path A and face obstacles, you also have path B, because path A did not work. Alternative or different pathways to reach those goals: the more pathways you have, the more hopeful you will become, even in the face of difficulties. When one pathway closes, you can have another pathway. This component involves planning, problem-solving, and adaptability. People with strong pathway thinking don't give up when they encounter challenges or roadblocks; instead, they brainstorm alternative ways to achieve their goals. Pathway thinking gives you more hope simply because when you cannot achieve a goal through certain pathways, you will find another pathway. So, it will make you more hopeful. That is why it is an important component of hope. For example, if the same student in the earlier case fails a test, strong pathway thinking will help them consider different approaches, such as studying more effectively, seeking tutoring, or asking for help from teachers, and so on. These are different pathways by which you can achieve success. Better marks in an exam allow students to realize that if one pathway is not working, they can consider other pathways. The more pathways you have, the more hopeful you will become in terms of achieving those goals.

Snyder emphasizes that hope requires both agency, that is, motivation, as well as different pathways or routes to achieve those goals. Together, they create a dynamic feedback loop. Pathways give individuals the confidence to believe that their goals are achievable. When you have clear-cut pathways, they give you confidence that you can achieve your goals. The agency provides the motivation and persistence needed to pursue those pathways. To go and walk those pathways, you need motivation. The agency provides that motivation. In other words, people feel hopeful when they believe they can find ways to reach their goals and are motivated to pursue them. This is how these three components of hope interact with one another.

While pathway and agency look like distinct aspects of hope, they interact very closely; changes in one impact the other. Pathways, agency thinking, and goals are all connected to each other. If one changes, the other will also be influenced. There is a constant interaction going on between these three things, particularly pathways and agency. For example, when someone identifies pathways that they believe will lead to a meaningful goal. Their agency and motivation to pursue that goal tend to increase naturally.

When you have very clear-cut pathways, you can see them clearly. It will also increase your motivation because you know where to go and how to go. If pathways are increasing, pathway thinking increases, or if you have clear-cut pathway thinking, it will also lead to higher motivation or agency thinking. Additionally, people are more likely to feel enthusiastic about a goal when they have concrete plans to achieve it. Similarly, if someone feels highly motivated about a goal, they are more likely to invest time and energy to create effective pathways.

On the other hand, when you are highly motivated, there is high agency thinking; then this motivation will also help you find pathways. When you are not motivated, you will not seek pathways to achieve them. High motivation will also help you find different pathways. They will facilitate agency thinking, and agency thinking will facilitate pathway thinking.

So, this is how both are interacting with one another. However, the reverse can also happen. Things can also go in the opposite direction. If one increases, the other increases. If one decreases, the other will also decrease. If someone starts working toward a goal but struggles to develop pathways, their motivation will also go down. If they cannot find proper, clear-cut pathways to achieve the goals, after some time, their motivation will also go down. Likewise, if they initially generate several pathways but cannot summon enough motivation, they may start to doubt the feasibility of the pathways and may lose hope. So even if they find pathways, if they cannot clearly walk in them, and some of them are not feasible, then it will decrease hope and agency thinking. This downward spiral can be the root of hopelessness. When there is a block in your pathways and a

block in your motivation, that will also lead to hopelessness.

Now, let us see the model that was given by Snyder. This is somewhat explained in terms of different components in the different phases and how hope works in the real-life context. This is called the feedback and feedforward function in hope theory. So, this model has three important phases. One is learning history. What is your background in terms of whether you are hopeful or not? What is your learning experience? Phase one is the pre-event before the event happens; whatever goal you want to achieve before you start working towards that, what happens at that phase? And the third one is the event sequence. Once you start working towards the goal, how things unfold and how hope works out basically in all these phases? So there are three components to this model.

Learning history will influence your hope. Pre-event in terms of the nature of goals, and so on. What kind of goals are you pursuing that will also influence your hope. And what happens when you start working toward a goal. How does hope manifest, and what are the dynamics associated with all these things. Let us break down this model. So this model shows that, as we move from left to right, there are three phases. One is an individual's learning history, then comes the pre-event phase, and the last one is the event sequence phase. The first important thing in the context of hope, or whether you become hopeful or not, is that the factor influencing this is one's learning history. What kind of things have you learned in the context of hopefulness? An individual's learning history plays a very important role in forming a foundation for agency and pathway thinking. It begins in childhood. So, whether you become hopeful or not, hope can also be influenced by your history, particularly by whatever you have learned from childhood.

How do you view pathways in your thinking? How do you view agency thinking? All these things, motivations, and the flexibility in terms of creating pathways it is not just based on the context you are working in. Your thought processes are also influenced by your learning history. So, pathway thinking, the ability to connect events, starts when infants make associations between co-occurring events. Children learn to work, find different pathways to achieve small goals, and whatever they think during that period. Even at around age one, the children recognize themselves as separate from others, which

includes their agency and thinking. When they feel they are a separate individual, children start in terms of initiating actions and do things on their own. That's where agency thinking starts and influences events and so on. Pathway and agency thinking develop iteratively and are linked to emotional responses based on pure goal experiences. Whatever experiences you had in terms of achieving goals or failing to achieve goals will influence you emotionally and affect your thought processes in terms of pathway thinking and agency thinking. They can influence your emotional reactions based on whatever past experiences you have. Those with a positive history of achieving goals, for example, people who have been successful in achieving goals earlier, will feel more confident in working towards a new goal because they have had positive emotional experiences in the past. On the other hand, people who have had more failures in achieving goals will be less confident and less hopeful in achieving or working towards new goals. They will be less hopeful compared to people who have a history of success and achievement. So this is where, in this model, it shows that initially, in the learning history phase, your pathway thinking and your agency thinking are all developed during your childhood experiences.

Past history of successes and failures in achieving goals will be influenced by your learning history as well, and all of these will influence emotions. In a sense, when you have more successes in achieving goals, you will feel more positive, as it will generate more positive emotions and confidence. On the other hand, more history of failures and so on will make you less confident and so on. This is the thing that mostly comes in the learning history phase. So, learning history will influence your emotions, your agency thinking, and pathway thinking in the present context as well, along with whatever you have learned earlier. This is the first phase in terms of looking at hope.

Second, the pre-event phase means the time just before you start working towards a goal. In the pre-event phase of goal pursuit, individuals assess the outcome value of a goal to determine if it is important enough to proceed. In the pre-event phase, people generally decide whether this goal is even worth pursuing. Is it important to me? If some goal is important, then motivation and hopefulness will obviously be much more relevant in this context. If a goal doesn't have much outcome value, then the motivation and other things will be much less. Hope may not be of much importance in this context. If so, when

something is very relevant, then they enter the event sequence. When goals are important, only then do we act on them. In the pre-event phase, basically, this whole evaluation of things happens. This evaluation of the goal in terms of its importance is analyzed.

So once the goal is perceived as important, the person enters the actual event sequences. This interaction allows for ongoing assessment, helping the individual decide if their efforts are still worthwhile. If the goal's value is later appraised as insufficient, they may choose to discontinue the pursuit. Sometimes you start working, but then you feel that it isn't worth it. Then people will discontinue, and so on. All these things can happen while deciding or assessing the value of a goal and so on. So, this ongoing evaluation is essential. A true value may only become clear after initiation. Sometimes you understand the value of a goal only when you start working toward it. This whole evaluation can also go in the actual event sequence phase. If you see in the model, in the pre-event phase, the outcome value is judged. And this outcome value will influence pathway thinking and agency thinking. To what extent you are motivated and to what extent you will seek pathways will depend on the importance of the goal. The more important it is, the more motivation, more pathway thinking, and more agency thinking will occur. The last phase is the event sequence phase. Here, when we start working on the actual goal, an individual's goal-specific pathways and agency interact continuously, influencing the likelihood of success. So, they are in the event phase. The pathway thinking and agency thinking continuously interact while pursuing the goal; gather motivation, see pathways to reach them, and sometimes pathway thinking will influence your agency thinking, and agency thinking will also influence your pathway. So, there is a constant interaction going on in the actual event sequence phase, and then slowly one achieves the goals ultimately, so this process creates a feedback loop. The appraisal of success or failure, along with the positive and negative emotions, impacts future perceptions of one's ability to create pathways and sustain agency in similar domains. Sometimes, while pursuing goals, it will also influence your emotions. Repeated setbacks can diminish hope in the domain, such as academic obstacles or stressors, which may hinder goal achievement and also trigger emotions that affect pathways and agency.

Emotion can also come into the picture; if there is a setback, it will influence your agency's thinking, and it will also influence your motivation and so on. There is a constant ongoing interaction that happens between agency thinking, pathway thinking, and the emotional impact of all these things. While stressors initially elicit negative emotions, high-hope individuals are more likely to feel positive emotions as well, seeing obstacles as challenges. Sometimes, obstacles can create negative emotions temporarily, but highly hopeful people, with high agency thinking or high pathway thinking, will overcome that negative emotion and feel positive emotions, viewing it as a challenge, and so on. So in the goal pursuit, emotions expected from unexpected events, whether positive or negative, can significantly impact motivation.

While pursuing goals, many things will influence emotions and hopefulness, including obstacles and certain surprises. For example, a surprise like reconnecting with a friend or learning of their hardship can alter the individual's motivation, either enhancing or diminishing it, or it may shift focus to new goals such as helping the friend. You are pursuing a goal, so hearing a friend's story or their story of hardship can motivate you to achieve your goals; it will enhance your agency thinking. Or if you see that someone else also pursued the same path and they failed repeatedly, it may also diminish your motivation, and so on. So, all these factors will come into the picture. These emotions are swiftly integrated into ongoing goal pursuit, influencing motivation and pathways to achieve those goals. So, emotion will also interact all the time. This illustrates how emotions from unrelated events are often assimilated into the current goals pursued, shaping their outcome. Sometimes this emotion can come from totally unrelated events and can also influence. Your present mood will also influence your perceived goals, and so on. In summary, the hope model consists of both feedforward and feedback mechanisms that influence a person's success in any given perceived goal. This sequence of influence is shaped both by the dispositional characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the specific situation. All these complex factors can come into play in real life when we pursue goals, and whether we become hopeful or not. This was the model that talks about the different aspects of hope and how different aspects in a context can influence it.

Now, let us address the question: what does hope predict when someone becomes hopeful? What are the things we can predict about those people? The hope scale score has been shown to predict positive outcomes across different areas like academics, sports, health, adjustment, and therapy. This is very important because hope is not a passive thing. When you are hopeful, it means you have a strategy and motivation to achieve those things. This can have a very clear and significant impact on the real-life outcomes in various domains of life, such as academics, sports, health, adjustment, therapy, and so on. Everywhere, hope will determine a lot of things. In academics, students with higher hope scale scores at college entry tend to have better GPAs, or grades, and are more likely to stay in school. Hope was a very strong determinant in terms of college performance, pursuing a course, persisting in the course, staying in school, and so on.

Research suggests that while other factors like self-efficacy and engagement relate to academic success, hope uniquely predicts it even when academic history is controlled. Even other factors can influence academic success, such as your confidence, your engagement with the course, and so on. Even if you control all this, hope still uniquely predicts outcomes. Hope has a very important contribution to academic success, staying the course, and so on. Hope is also linked to traits like grit, with high hope correlating with better academic results, irrespective of socioeconomic status or gender.

Hope is also connected to other factors that are important for achieving goals, like grit. Grit is a concept that is related to pursuing a long-term goal and maintaining motivation. Many people can achieve short-term goals, but long-term goals require a lot of motivation and sustained effort. Hope is connected to that kind of pursuit of long-term goals, which is basically conceptualized in terms of grit. Among different racial and ethnic groups, hope combined with ethnic identity predicts academic success, with those high in ethnic identity often being high in hope. There are many other contexts, such as ethnic groups, where hope has been found to predict success, particularly in the academic context.

In sports as well, the hope scale score predicted better performance among athletes

beyond their natural ability rating. Obviously, in sports, performance depends on your ability. But if you keep ability away or control the effects of ability, then there can be an additional impact of hope in terms of enhancing performance. As hope influences decision-making related to potential outcomes, distinct from just optimism, only you are thinking that something good is going to happen. So that's more like a passive state where things may not actually be positively happening if you are not working towards it. But hope is more of actively pursuing, and there is active involvement in it. This highlights hope's unique role in achieving goals, even in challenging situations where optimism may be limited. In that context, hope is more important in terms of achieving goals, where it is better than optimism because there is active involvement. So, it can predict goal achievement in a much better way than constructs like optimism. Higher hope scale scores are associated with a range of other positive adjustment outcomes. In the context of performance, we have seen that it predicts performance outcomes positively in the context of adjustment outcomes, including greater happiness, life satisfaction, positive emotions, persistence, self-worth, adaptability, and better social relationships. All this has also been positively connected with hope; hope also appears to be a core element in driving positive changes within psychological treatment, even in online counseling settings. In the therapy context, hope plays a very important role. If a client is hopeful, then the impact of counseling and therapies is much more likely to be higher because hope creates the motivation to cooperate with the suggestions and instructions. So that will have a positive impact.

Research by other people, like Feldman and colleagues, also shows that the agency component of hope is particularly effective in predicting goal attainment in college students, with agency often showing stronger predictive power than pathways and overall hope. Some research suggests that agency thinking is more important than pathways thinking in certain specific contexts, such as academic achievement in college.

Hope has also been linked to physical health. We talked about some of the dimensions of mental health and well-being in the context of physical health. Some research shows hope in helping individuals cope with stress, chronic pain, and illnesses such as breast cancer. Additionally, hope supports the well-being of older adults by providing a future-oriented

outlook and improved resilience in the face of limited time. Hope has many positive impacts on them. It improves resilience, especially when facing limited time, near death, and so on. Hope plays a very important role in their well-being. A lot of this research shows a positive impact of hope, and it has a much clearer impact on outcomes and some of the health dimensions, simply because hope is a very active concept. You are not just thinking about something; you are working towards it.

Now, at the end, let us talk about some of the research-based tools for hope. Since hope is important, can we do something in terms of actually enhancing it in our daily lives? Are there any such intervention strategies? Let us look at some possible interventions. One way of doing it is something called hope profiling. We can do hope profiling for ourselves, and that will also give us more clarity and make us more hopeful in our real-life context. One is something called a storytelling exercise, which is part of hope profiling. In a storytelling exercise, you write about a few narratives about some of the goals that you have worked towards in the past and present. It could be some past goals, or it could be some of the present goals that you are working on. You can write about them, maybe five narratives or fewer. In each story based on each goal, discuss how you establish your goals. So this is what you have to write in the goal storytelling exercise: how did you set those goals? Why did you set these goals, or how did you set those goals? What are the paths you took to pursue it? How did you pursue the pathways and sources of motivation, and how did you motivate yourself to achieve those goals? You can draw from various areas of your life for this narrative. So, it could be just to look at or make it clear what the goals are that you have set or maybe you are setting in the present context. Why did you establish those goals? How do you establish them? What are the factors influencing the setting of those goals? What are the pathways you have set for achieving those goals? And in terms of moving towards those pathways, how did you motivate yourself? That will be the part of the storytelling narrative that you want to write about, a few goals, maybe in the recent past or in the present. Now, while doing this exercise, you can also work in terms of specifically listing out different components of hope.

You can create three columns on a paper, and based on the narratives that you have written, one column is for goals, another column is for pathways, and another column is for obstacles. So, the things you mentioned column-wise under the goals column- list goals related to one of your strengths; whatever goals you have worked on, or important goals in your life. In the pathways column, you can identify at least three pathways that you can take. Or you have taken to achieve them, or even for the future, you can think about three pathways and then write about at least one obstacle that can arise while pursuing that goal.

So basically, you are clearing all the components of hope and clearly writing about them. For example, your goal could be weight loss, maybe 10 kg. Now, what are the pathways you can take? At least write three pathways by which you can achieve this, for example, general things could be like controlling diets, exercise, lifestyle management, which may include things like controlling your stress, sleep patterns, and so on—all these things. So, this may be, for example, three pathways you can take for your weight loss journey. What could the obstacles be here? Let's say that at least one major obstacle could be maintaining motivation. This could be the biggest obstacle in terms of following these pathways. So, this one can list out future goals and learn from past goals.

So this is part one about listing goals from the narratives. And in part two, one can also reflect more on the motivational aspect because that is more important in terms of how it can influence goal achievement. Consider how you will maintain your motivation to achieve your goals. Write about them. How can we maintain that motivation? Who can support you in this endeavor? What additional resources can you use to help you succeed? What are the other important resources you can utilize to help you succeed? What other kinds of support can you get? So, you reflect on these motivational aspects in terms of achieving goals. Mostly, it can be done for some of the goals that you are setting for yourself. It will clarify what the obstacles are, what pathways I can take, how to maintain motivation, and more. If things are clear in your mind, you are more likely to achieve them and become more hopeful about them. This is one such exercise that one can do.

Another exercise that is also very similar and connected is called *mapping your pathways*. As we already mentioned, the key component of hope focuses more on creating pathways because the clearer the pathways we have about achieving goals, the more hopeful we become in achieving them. This exercise is related to clearing and mapping different pathways to achieve different goals. Pathways refer to plans or strategies you develop to achieve your goals. You can construct a pathway for nearly any goal in your life using a method called pathway mapping.

So how do we do that? One way to create your pathway map is to start with a clean sheet of paper. Draw a vertical timeline from the bottom to the top of the page. Level the bottom of the timeline with a word now and then top it with a goal you want to achieve in the coming months. Let's say, after one month, what is your position in the present moment? Now what are you? That is something very important.

Basically, on a clean sheet, you can just write it like this: at the bottom of the page, you can write "now," draw a vertical line, and at the top, write the goal that you want to achieve. So, in between, you can write about different steps that you can take to achieve that goal, obstacles, and so on. That is the basic idea behind pathway mapping. Once you write now, what is your position, and what is your goal? Think about the steps you need to take to reach your goal and write them along the timeline in chronological order: first step, what I need to do; second step, what I need to do; third step, what I need to do, chronologically, one by one, not randomly. If you wish, you can include approximate dates next to each step to generate guidelines to assist your planning. You can do this exercise by clearly planning one step: first step, second step, third step, and whatever will lead to the achievement of the goals at the top. Then, next to each step, you can note at least one potential obstacle that may hinder achieving that goal. Also, write about what the strategy is to overcome this obstacle. So, if this obstacle comes, what should I do? You can also list that in each step. Use a pencil for this exercise so you can easily erase and rearrange steps as needed.

Another important thing is to be flexible in the pathways, as sometimes one pathway may not work. Remember, these pathways are not fixed in real life. Things always change.

They can be revised as you encounter new challenges, uncover new interests, learn more about yourself, and so on. You should also have an alternative design. Your pathways map doesn't have to follow a traditional timeline format. Feel free to creatively design it in many ways, whatever resonates with you.

One example is given here: You have to draw a vertical line on a page. You have to write the goal in the vertical top line. At the bottom, you have to write "now" at the present moment. Let's say the goal is, using the same example, weight loss. Let's say your goal is to lose 10 kg in one month. Now, what is your present status? Your weight is, let's say, 180 pounds. This is your present status, so you can write about all these things: what is your present status, what is your present weight, and why have you gained weight? You can write about them, and then you can have steps. Okay, so step one, you can write- Set a realistic meal plan. One week from now, that is your target. You have to create a realistic meal plan. Now, what is the obstacle here? There is difficulty in planning and preparing healthy food. This can be an obstacle because it isn't easy to maintain a healthy meal every day. Strategy is how you can overcome this obstacle. Dedicate one day each week to preparing meals and use simple recipes to ease the process. So, like this: step one, one week's time, a realistic meal plan, an obstacle, and how to overcome that.

In step two, you can write again what you need to do, like start a regular exercise routine two weeks from now. That is your target. Obstacles: low energy and low motivation to work out. Strategy: How can you overcome this? Start with short, enjoyable workouts like walking and dancing, and gradually increase the duration and intensity.

You can have step 3, let's say, take food and exercise. One month from now, you can have an obstacle, such as forgetting to log meals and workouts. Use mobile apps (strategies) or a journal to make tracking convenient and set reminders to help maintain consistency. Let's say, step 4: incorporating strength training two months from now. Obstacles include intimidation at the gym or uncertainty about exercise; you may not feel comfortable going to the gym, and so on. A strategy is to attend a beginner's class or follow online tutorials to learn proper techniques and build confidence.

This is how one can write a pathway mapping: start with the present position, step one, step two, step three, and then outline how to reach the goals. For each step, identify the obstacles and how to overcome them, so you can clearly map a pathway in terms of creating a pathway and becoming more hopeful in terms of achieving goals.

Similarly, one can take other steps, like evaluating progress and adjusting plans, three months from now. Reach a goal weight of 160 pounds. So, the present status was 180 pounds, and the target was set for four months from now. The obstacle was maintaining weight loss after reaching the goal. After reaching the goal, you also have to be motivated to maintain that strategy and establish a sustainable maintenance plan, including regular exercise, mindful eating habits, and so on.

So, like this, one can create an elaborate plan according to the needs and lifestyles in the situations of one's life. This is how we can plan and implement some interventions more strategically and clearly, with steps in terms of reaching goals and becoming more hopeful in life, regarding whatever we are doing. These are some of the possible strategies and interventions we can use in our daily lives. With this, I will stop here. Thank you.