

## BEACON Chapter 1 - Lesson 3 - Harnessing Hope transcript

[00:00:03] Hello and welcome back. Here we are at Chapter one, lesson three, which is called Harnessing Hope. And what you'll learn in this little lesson is about what hope is and the particular definition that we use in positive psychology for hope. Why it matters so much and how we're going to get you to utilise it in BEACON at the outset to begin to think about where you want to be in the weeks and months ahead and how are we going to use that as a guideline for the journey that we are going on.

[00:00:37] So let's dive in. Share my screen with you.

[00:00:42] And get to our slides.

[00:00:51] You don't want to see that.

[00:00:58] Just make myself a little bit bigger. So here we are. We're talking about harnessing hope and here I like to think about hope being the opportunity or the state of seeing the light in spite of being surrounded by darkness. And so in some of my earlier work, I worked a lot in my early career in child protection and then with really vulnerable communities, managing a neighbourhood renewal programme in Victoria here in 21 disadvantaged communities around the state.

[00:01:40] And so in my work with vulnerable, impoverished families and communities and then later in teaching and leading people who worked with those families and communities. One of the things we would speak about is the resources that we all need to do well in life and that it is the absence of those resources that leads to us experiencing vulnerability. And for those of us who were struggling, we might recognise when our emotional resources and capacity to cope have become reduced. And it doesn't matter where we are on an economic continuum of poverty to wealth. If we lose that resource of our resilience, optimism, and I would argue hope, then we can become vulnerable. And so I used to talk to those supporting vulnerable families and say one of the lowest hanging fruit for us to provide is hope. It's not easy for us to provide financial resources, emotional resources to contribute to people's physical health or their education. But if we can begin to have people thinking about what they're hoping for. It's incredibly powerful and it's free. I'm not saying that it's easy, but it is an incredibly powerful tool and it's something I want to share with you today.

[00:03:05] And our particular way of thinking about it in positive psychology. And the fact that it's elusive sometimes that for people who have been in struggle, sometimes they've become more helpless than hopeful. But in fact, we're all mammals, right?

[00:03:26] Humans are mammals. And that helplessness is a mammals response to prolonged struggle, little prolonged bad events.

[00:03:36] And so hope, in fact, is the antidote to helplessness.

[00:03:42] Now, it's important for us to realise that we've been struggling for a long time and we are in helplessness. Sometimes it takes a while to find hope again. So as we head into this and we ask you to do a Hope Ladder and we ask you to think about your hopes for the future, if you're struggling a little or a lot with that, you're not alone. And it's not unusual. And we'll keep coming back to it.

[00:04:05] And my experience is that it does come eventually.

[00:04:10] And, you know, we have people who have experienced grief for example, they saw in the darkness that they can't even see a splinter of light that shows the way forward. And so we keep coming back to it and as they feel stronger in other areas of their life that can come back to beginning to think about what they would most like the future to look like. So in positive psychology and certainly in our BEACON series, the way that we describe hope is very specific. It's not a fluffy notion of something out there. It has two components.

[00:04:47] The first is that we believe that the future will be better than our life is today. And the second part is that we believe we have some power to make it so.

[00:05:02] So really important that we understand those two pieces. One is that we have a belief that the future will be better than today. And the second part that we think we've got some capabilities to make that happen. And so there's a gap actually between these two in terms of people's response. So when we ask people, 80 percent say they think that they want and believe the future can be different.

[00:05:31] But only 50 percent of people think they have the power to make it so. And I believe part of our responsibility and part of the gift that we have through BEACON is to help you make, help make YOU feel like you can make your hopes for future come to fruition. So we are going to ask you to complete what we call a Hope Ladder.

[00:05:56] And this is an image that you see here that comes from the Hope Ladder. And you will do that when you come into your online workshop. And we're going to ask you to think about where are you now on a continuum from really struggling to really thriving and then to think about where you would like to be a year from now if everything went as well as it could. And so here we are really getting you to think about taking away all the what ifs and the you know, we want to be realistic. But we also want to think about if everything went as well as it possibly could and you were able to attend to this BEACON programme and apply the learnings and start to see yourself in terms of your mood and energy and your motivation. Lift. What would you like life to look like and what difference would that make for you and for others around you? Sometimes we feel so poorly that we we don't feel comfortable making these changes or naming them for ourselves, but we might be prepared to do that for others that we really care about. For some people who are parents, they don't love themselves enough and feel worthy enough to do these things for themselves, but they really want the best for their children. And so maybe a starting place is to say, what is the parent that I'm most hoping to be? What is the life I'm most hoping to create for my children? What is the example on hoping to set for others and the role model I'm hoping to be. The legacy that I want to leave. And so we want people to be thinking about the notion of what would be my best possible future self. And we've asked people to articulate some of those things providing insights for people to write about that, to draw about that and to begin to have a vision of that. And so it's a bit like this comes from Shane Lopez, who was one of the key researchers in the space of hope. And he said it's a bit like creating a memory of the frickin future. And so that's a very strange concept.

[00:08:09] But what we know is that positive visions of our future pull us forward.

[00:08:17] And it's almost as if if we can see ourself in the future and we can see what it looks like and feels like and sounds like and where we are or who's around us and get that very visual so that we can pull it up in times when we feel like giving up, the times that feel

dark, the times that feel like we haven't got what it takes if we can pull up that memory that we have for the future. It has almost like invisible strings that pull us towards it. And if we can stick in there with perseverance and grit, with doses of grace as well and be kind to us, then the research shows that that's a very powerful approach to take. And that's why we're asking you at the outset of BEACON to take some time to think about your hopes for yourself. And each time that we come together in our workshops, when we ask you to determine something that you'll practise for the week, we will be asking you to think about whether the action you're choosing will help you to move towards the hopes that you have for yourself. So we'll use that hope as a guideline and a check point and to be checking in with to see if we're still heading in the right direction. And of course, this is a living document and a living process. And you can always come back to it and add to it and change to it as you move along the journey.

[00:09:46] This is very important because if we don't take a chance to think about what we're hoping for in the future, what's the point of us doing anything today? So every action that we take is preceded by a question.

[00:10:00] And, you know, when I'm going to be asking you to practise things across the way. For example, you might ask yourself for the sake of what. Why do I bother to do that? And if you don't have hope for the future, you don't know where you're going. Why would you bother to engage in this process and to put effort in time and apply your thinking to this?

[00:10:21] And so how we see the future determines how we behave today.

[00:10:26] And if we see the future in the same as it is now, if we see that we do not have any control over it and that it's going to be just up to chance and to fate, then we don't really put in the effort and hold ourselves accountable in the way that's required to make changes in our life. So it is important that we take some time to. And free ourselves up enough to a imagine, a better future for ourselves and our loved ones. And to know that that's a really important ingredient in terms of moving towards thriving and that we can then use that in times that we feel like giving up. And is a determinant of our behaviour today. So it's my heartfelt hope for all of you that you can take some time and over. It might come to you immediately or it might take a longer time to articulate what your best possible future self is. And I absolutely look forward to supporting you to bring that to fruition and to watching you shine your very best, brightest for yourself and others. Look forward to seeing you next time.