



## Going Beyond Hope and Fear, by Meg Wheatley

For me and most of my colleagues, life these days is a roller coaster ride between hope and fear, oscillating wildly between what's possible and what is. Like all roller coasters, this one is both exhilarating and terrifying, often simultaneously. We are fully engaged in being part of the solution, and then we plunge into despair at the enormity of the challenges and the fear that our efforts will fail.

And yet, such a wild ride between hope and fear is unavoidable.Â Fear is the necessary consequence of feeling hopeful again.Â Contrary to our belief that hope and fear are opposites where one trumps the other, they are a single package, bundled together as intimate, eternal partners. Hope never enters a room without fear at its side. If I hope to accomplish something, I'm also afraid I'll fail. You can't have one without the other.

Hope is what propels us into action. We've been taught to dream of a better world as the necessary first step in creating one. We create a clear vision for the future we want, then we set a strategy, make a plan, and get to work. We focus strategically on doing only those things that have a high probability of success.Â As long as we "keep hope alive" and work hard, our endeavors will create the world we want. How could we do our work if we had no hope that we'd succeed?

Motivated by hope, but then confronted by failure, we become depressed and demoralized. Life becomes meaningless; we despair of changing things for the better. At such a time, we learn the price of hope. Rather than inspiring and motivating us, hope has become a burden made heavy by its companion, fear of failing.

So we have to abandon hope, all of us, and learn how to find the place "beyond hope and fear." [...] Willingness to feel insecure is the first step on the journey beyond hope and fear. It leads to the far more challenging state: groundlessness -- knowing that nothing ever remains the same, learning to live with the unrelenting constant of change, realizing that even the good things won't last forever, accepting that change is just the way it is.

--Meg Wheatley, in Shambala Sun  
[<http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/BeyondHopeandFear.pdf>]

