



# ACTIVATE YOUR 'H.E.R.O.'

Practices to Help You Thrive in  
Troubled Times

# Hi! I'm Virginia Hurdon



I am a certified health coach and a retired palliative care physician.

I'm also a wife, a mother of two, and someone recovering from chronic and major depression. As a health coach, a doctor, and a patient, I know how important lifestyle and mindset are to optimal mental health.

The concepts of HERO and psychological capital have helped me frame ways to not only cope with the pandemic and all its effects, but thrive as well.

I hope you find it as rich a resource as I have.



*Many of us these days are suffering with an ancient Greek emotion- acedia- a humbling combination of uncertainty, exhaustion, fear and boredom. Health care professionals can often add anger and grief to that list. We are now in subsequent waves of the pandemic, with less support and more work than most imagined. Burnout and mental health crises are rising. How do you maintain some equanimity and consider the future with a positive gaze?*

*The concept of psychological capital (or PsyCap) offers a synergistic set of resources that can keep you positive, responsive and effective in difficult times. Its components go by the acronym HERO- hope, (self) efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Let's take a closer look at how you can strengthen your own HERO and help others do the same.*

*There are a lot of ideas here; I invite you to start with one or two that really resonate for you.*



A motivational image featuring a sunset background with a bright sun. Two hands are visible, one on the left and one on the right, holding the word "HOPE" in large, bold, dark letters. The sun is positioned behind the letter "O", creating a glowing effect.

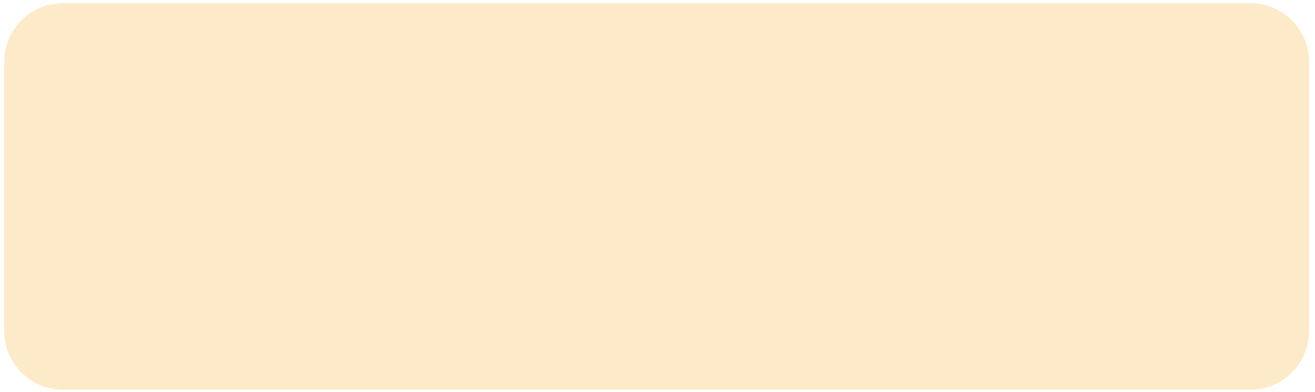
# HOPE

'Once you choose hope,  
anything's possible.'  
~ Christopher Reeve

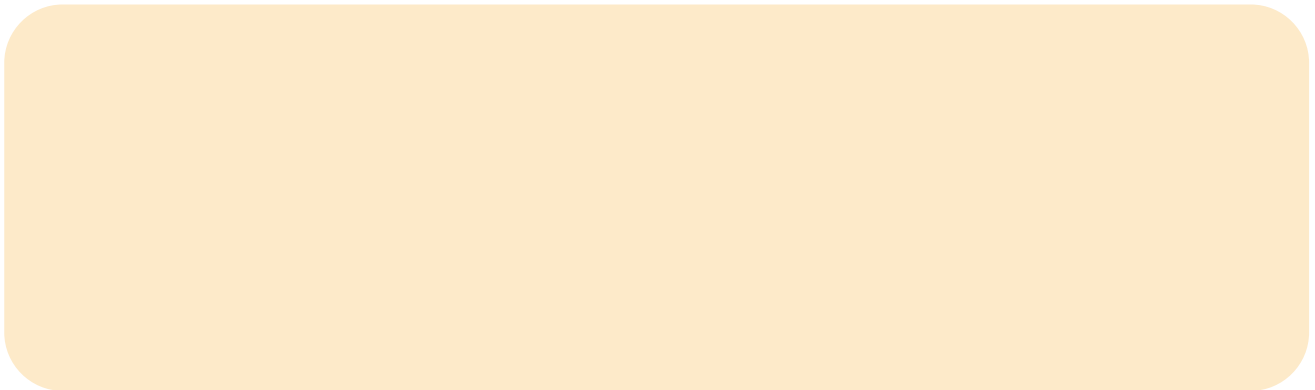


**Hope is: a personality trait, and also a trainable cognitive process which involves 'willpower' (goal-directed determination) and 'waypower' (planning of ways to meet goals).**

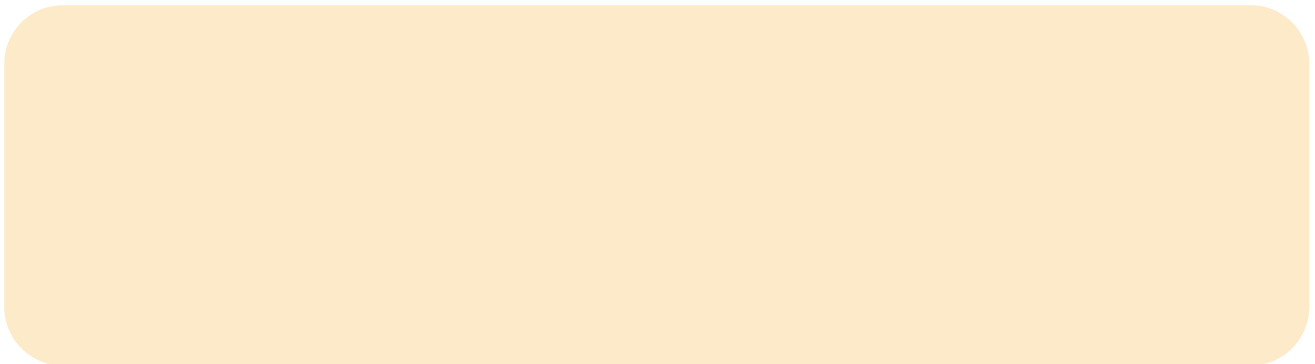
What are three things that give you hope?



What makes you hopeful about them?



What could happen if you focused on making your hopes more likely to come to fruition?



# Develop hope generating goals


Try setting a short term goal that is:

- What you want, rather than what you're trying to avoid
- SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.
- Grounded: think of 3 pathways to reach each goal.

Visualize yourself reaching that goal using those 3 pathways.

Celebrate all wins, no matter how small!

An example: My goal is to get to bed on time tonight. (Rather than I hope I'm not too late getting to bed). I will go to bed at 10 pm tonight (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound). I can: stop work at 6 pm tonight to get home on time; let my partner know what time I am going to bed; stop using electronics 2 hrs before bed (3 pathways to reach my goal). I play out a movie in my head of using all of the above pathways (visualize). I take a few moments to savour my success when I roll into bed at 10 pm. (celebrate).

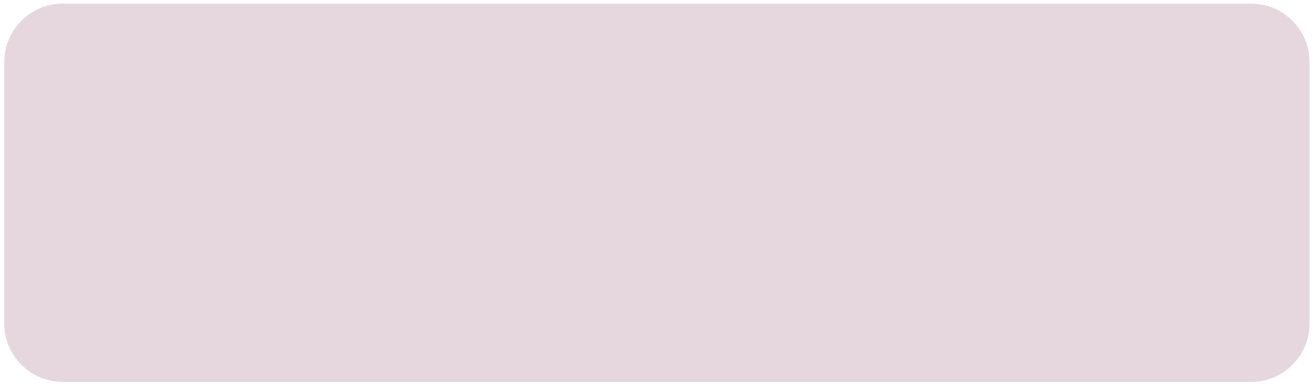
The background image is a landscape photograph. In the foreground, there are rolling hills with a textured, grassy surface, bathed in a warm, golden light. In the mid-ground, there are more hills and valleys. In the background, a prominent mountain peak rises, its top partially obscured by a soft, white cloud. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing white text.

'Believe you can and you're  
halfway there.'  
~ Theodore Roosevelt

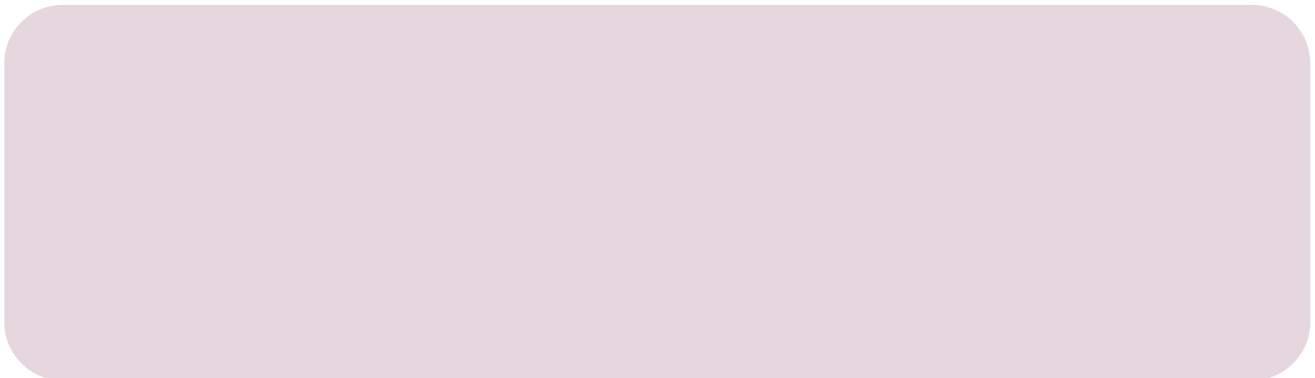


**Self-efficacy is: your belief in your ability to achieve an effect.**

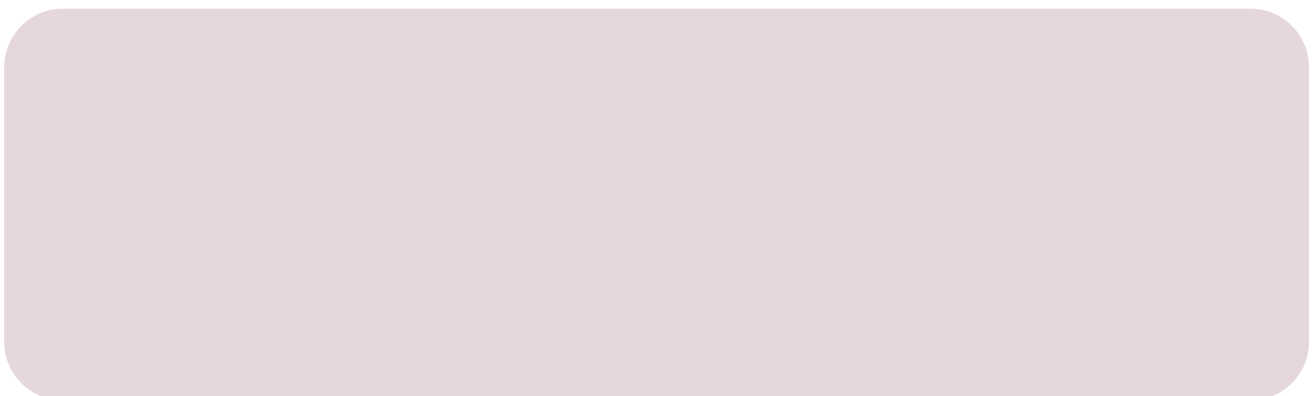
What are you really good at?



What values and strengths underlie those skills?




Recall a recent negative experience. What was a positive learning, outcome or effect of it?



## More ways to develop your self-efficacy

- Reflect on a previous success you've had in a difficult situation. Become aware of and appreciate the strengths and values you used in that circumstance. Plan how to use those qualities to meet your current needs.
- Observe someone similar to you overcoming barriers and achieving success. The more similar the person or the situation, the more effective this is. Take notice of how you feel in your body when you're thinking your way through this.
- Set yourself up for success! Gather all the resources you need (people, places, things) in order to succeed.
- Practice reframing. Reframing is simply looking at a negative experience from a more positive perspective, for example noticing how your flowers are getting a good drink from the downpour that cancelled your picnic.
- Set goals that are an activating stretch rather than an overwhelming challenge.





Do not judge me by my success,  
judge me by how many times I fell  
down and got back up again.'  
~ Nelson Mandela



**Resilience is: the ability to come back from adversity and even grow stronger from it.**

It has become a controversial topic, especially in the context of burnout.  
However, personal resilience is an essential component of a thriving mindset.

What are you already resilient about in your life?



What can you let go of control over?



Where can you extend compassion to yourself?



## More ways to develop your resilience

- Face reality- accepting things as they really are strengthens your ability to endure hardship. Some people refer to this as 'suffering well'.
- Find meaning- Intention, effort, and perseverance in the face of obstacles is meaningful. Reconnect to the sense of meaning and purpose in your work.
- Improvise- Instead of searching for that perfect combination of resources, do what you can with what you have available.
- Connect! We are fundamentally social beings; connect and share. Help others to overcome their barriers and yours will seem more manageable.



'Live life as if everything is rigged in  
your favour.'

~ Rumi

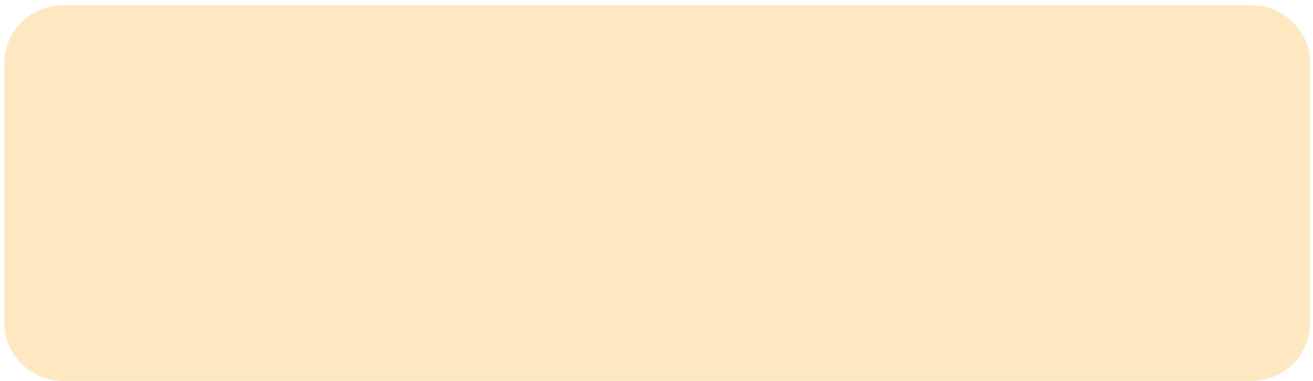


**Optimism is: an attribution of positive life events to personal and permanent causes, and negative events to external and temporary causes. Optimists believe good things will happen to them in the future, no matter what.**

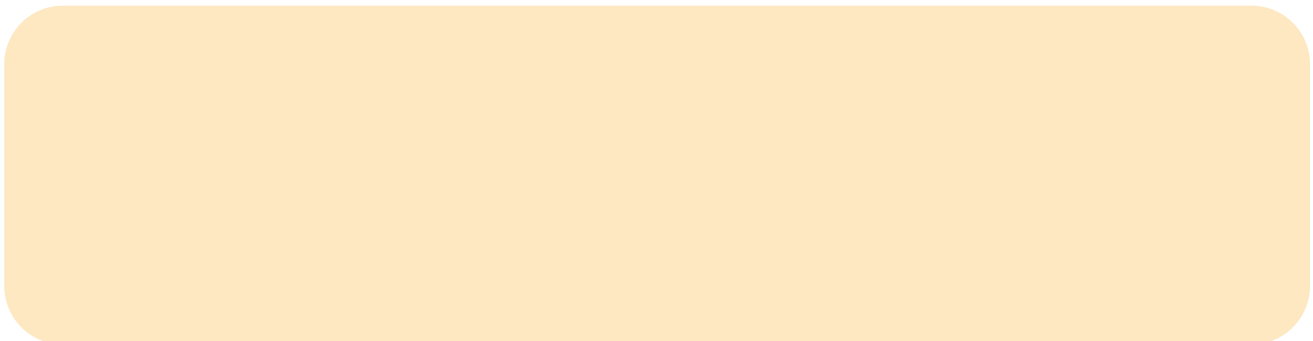
What's one area where your optimism shines through?



How can you expand your sense of gratitude?



What would change if you viewed the future as a source of opportunity?



## More ways to bolster your optimism

- Practice actively seeking the good in negative events.
- Make gratitude a daily practice, and share it with a loved one.
- Internalize positive events, and take credit for your part in them.
- Use mindfulness in daily life- take a moment to be immersed in the present moment, observing yourself kindly and non-judgmentally.
- Set attainable rather than unrealistic goals.

Some wise words from J.R.R. Tolkien (in The Fellowship of the Ring):

'The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater.'

How has the pandemic affected you?

Are you coping reasonably well?

Or are you struggling to put one foot in front of the other?

Imagine a future where:

- your energy is plentiful
- you are positive, confident and optimistic
- your health feels under your control
- you are living your best life

It's entirely possible to make lasting changes that lead to a more stress-proof and resilient mind and body. That's even more critical now given the marathon we find ourselves in.

If you're thinking you want to move forward, but aren't sure how to begin, let me be your skilled guide. Book a discovery call with me today.

Schedule your free discovery call