

The Burden of Hope and Transformation (in Transpersonal Work)

A talk given by Viv Fogel at the Psychosynthesis and Education Trust in March 2005

I want to offer you some of my thoughts and experiences on the subject of hope and hopelessness. I'll be drawing from various sources - philosophy, poetry, myth, science, metaphysics, film, but most valuable of all - from my own clients. I liked what the writer and psychoanalyst Adam Phillips said in an interview recently. He said "I don't have theories, I have sentences." Like him I hope my words will not just inform but will evoke and catalyse.

I'll just start with the story of Pandora's Box which Ruth Mcauley's referred to in her talk here last year. There are several versions of the myth - but basically Zeus (or Jupiter) made the first woman - and that was Pandora. She was made in heaven, and every god contributed a gift to perfect her. Venus gave her beauty, Mercury persuasion, Apollo music and so on. She was then presented to a mortal - Epimetheus, who gladly accepted her, and she went to live in his house. One version of the story is that she came with her box of marriage gifts - but curiosity got the better of her and she opened the box - and all the ills and sorrows of the world escaped - plagues, envy, spite and revenge. Zeus had maliciously crammed the box with these evil spirits to afflict the world, but in an impulse of compassion he had included one other - and thus what remained was Hope. Hope's mission was to heal the ills inflicted upon mortals by the gods. The ancient greek poet Hesiod (born in 850 BC) wrote in his poem about Pandora:

*"Hope sole remain'd within, nor took her flight,
Beneath the vessel's verge conceal'd from light."*

As practitioners and clinicians, particularly within a transpersonal framework, we often find ourselves working with people who are trying to understand who they are, the essence of their very nature. They wonder about human nature, the pain, abuse and tragedies that have to be suffered, and how they have been marked by them. Some wonder if healing their wounds is humanly possible - or if the closest they'll come to it is to just manage and be able to endure their wounded life - so we need to

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find our way and relationship with that. And for some of us this process is also about our own healing, and may be, like our clients, ongoing.

Others struggle to make sense of the world, it's cruelties and randomness, and we need to find our own way with that. A line from Hermann Hesse spoke strongly to me when I was going through my own teenage hell and which I wrote down at the time was:

"It is not whether there is meaning or not, but that we find meaning in the meaninglessness."

The inclusion of soul in our work means that we are also privileged to encounter the very best of human nature - and we are often witness to such beauty or courage, or there's an unexpected moment of grace, or a gentle opening of the heart, or we can be touched by the presence of such compassion and wisdom. We are privileged to hear the soul's yearnings and aspirations, the dreams and search for meaning and purpose. As psychosynthesis practitioners we have some wonderfully effective tools and exercises to access potential and wisdom: such as the famous 'egg' diagram topped with a star-burst of superconscious energy, beaming down its 'wonderful' realm of transpersonal qualities. And if our training and personal therapy has 'worked' we long to share this with our clients: we know, we've been there, it's worked for us, somewhere we feel that we are meant to hold and embody this for our clients, and there's often an implied expectation to offer a vision of hope and transformation.

Valerie Sinason in a talk she gave at the Tavistock recently reminded us poignantly when she said: "We are being paid by people who have been paying for it all their lives." That's quite a thought isn't it! We are being paid by people who have always been paying for it. So, what exactly are they paying us for?

Is it so that we can provide them with answers, a way out, reassurance, hope that is false, or is it that they are paying us to bear with them? to have patience and time with them - to be the patient or patients - with them. (The term patient as you may know, comes from the word to endure or bear.) Are they indeed paying us to feel and

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suffer alongside? To accompany them on their journey where others, friends or family, cannot bear.

I would like to suggest that the state of hopelessness is an integral part of human nature, and so I would like us to look at how we perceive hopelessness, in the people we work with, and in ourselves. How do we respond to it? Do we judge it, for instance, do we see it as a flaw to be overcome, a weakness to by-pass, a sign of failure - our failure? or can we be with it and really learn to listen to it? I would like to look at some of the conditions that give rise to hopelessness as well as those that provide hope. So, before I move on I'd just like to ask you if you're willing to do a small receptive reflection.

Exercise 1: OK. Just for a moment, I'd like you to go inside and ask yourself this: what does being in a state without hope mean for you? Allow yourself to connect with this, if possible, from your own personal, not professional, experience. Maybe there was a time you experienced hopelessness - either within yourself, or within a situation that you were part of. See if you can reconnect with the conditions or climate of that time. How long did this hopelessness last? days, weeks, months? was it a prevalent backdrop to your life at a particular time? what were the thoughts or feelings evoked at the time? Was there any action that you took or any way in which you communicated, shared or expressed the hopelessness? How did it pass? Looking back - was there anything significant, a learning or an insight, that emerged from this hopelessness? So, just come out and make a few notes for yourself.

We are living in a rapidly changing world where technological advances and accessibility has created speed and cut down on much preparation and graft. TV shows are programmed for ever decreasing attention spans, and many people are looking to re-invent themselves, with fast-forward results. You have only to see the array in book-stores of best-seller formulaic self-help books, or see the myriad of self-development courses advertised - that promise, like diets, dramatic life-changes in a matter of weeks. Life-coaching steps neatly into focus here - with its realisable targets, it's strategies, forward planning and goal-setting: (I do not wish to offend any

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coaches here - we all know that coaching offers valuable and effective tools and life-
skills!) The latest wonder therapy EMDR seems to be by-passing years of talk-
therapy or analysis and propels clients onto a fast-track with amazing results in the
rapid movements of an eye. Neuro-science has stepped onto the psychotherapy
podium to dazzle us with brain-scans and certainty, and genetic science may have
discovered a link between a particular strain of degenerative gene and that
irreversible flaw - incurable depression. This is work in progress, but if - or rather
when - geneticists come up with the evidence - I wonder where it will place The
Talking Cure and us as psychotherapists. We cannot know - unless we are experts
and practitioners in these fields ourselves.

There's a line in one of the Four Quartets, East Coker, by T.S.Eliot that goes:

'And what you do not know is the only thing you know.'

And it is this - our uncertainty and our not-knowing - that we can offer. That and a
place - safe from the tyranny of certainty, where boredom or futility can be spoken,
where emptiness can be faced - and where hopelessness is allowed. All this with an
'other' - perhaps for some for the very first time. The journey may be the individual's
search for self, or - and increasingly - post 9/11, the War in Iraq, and the recent
tsunami - the search is for meaning, to make sense of, and find some kind of
purpose in this post-modern world.

A film I saw recently that courageously illustrates this is the profoundly disturbing film
by Swedish director **Lukas Moodysson: A Hole in My Heart** is a comment on the
moral vacuum of the 21st century and shows the void in the soul, the hole in the
heart, of western civilisation. The story is about a sleazeball of a father, Rikard, who
makes amateur porn videos in his soul-less, suburban flat, which he shares with his
sullen, insular Goth son. The son, Eric retreats into his room, his Industrial music,
his headphones, his fantasies of revenge and redemption. The small-time porn stars
are Geko and Tess, and you get a depressing sense of just how empty and
meaningless their lives are. Tess since the age of twelve has dreamt of being a porn
star, and has always wanted to be admired and loved, she even has an expensive

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surgery reconstructed 'perfect' vagina - and all she wants is for every orifice to be filled, to be stuffed - presumably so that she won't feel her every emptiness. She also washes herself constantly - as if to sanitise or purify herself. However, we are shown how Tess also provides food and goodies for the men, and tries maternally to connect with the withdrawn son. The simple and macho Geko, meanwhile, escapes into his imagination: he visualises a sunny meadow and long grasses where he leaps and plays like an innocent child. At some point during the videoing he even escapes into sleep 'whilst on the job'.

The film degenerates into a frenzy of almost Sadeian debauchery and you realise Moodysohn's rage at the excesses of what we will go to, the waste and all the 'stuff' - in our quest to feel alive, to find meaning.

Moodysohn once said he would only commit to making films that brought hope - and many would think this film devoid of that. But there are small tender moments of connection between the characters that are surprising. Geko and the father play childish games together yet they talk, man to man, about how best to father the alienated son.

And in his room Eric, with his malformed hand, who has no mother, dreams of an alien world where life forms emerge from the red bowels of the earth. His fantasy rebirth. And somewhere in this strange new landscape he imagines a rare and precious tree where hope grows like fruit.

So in this film we are shown elements of stuckness, elements of hopelessness and destructiveness, the latter almost being the desperate impulse to destroy what disgusts. Yet - for each of the characters, these desperate or passive no-hopers, - some slight movement or shift occurs. It arises from their imaginal world, the creative imagination, from their dreams, or from connection with an other.

The process of degeneration, or atrophy is in itself a movement and is not static. Whenever I have facilitated art-therapy processes, where an individual or a group have allowed themselves to go into the unknown, and where the painting has atrophied, or become a sludge of chaos and mess, something - some impulse or movement has occurred that has shifted or transformed the whole picture. Not

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necessarily made it beautiful or even something you'd want to live with on the wall, but non the less this unplanned, unforeseen shift happens that somehow makes the picture 'work'. This unconscious impulse Jung observed and called the 'transcendant function'. Rather like when you see a tiny delicate flower push itself through concrete. Or it could be a weed - and like my organic gardener friend I prefer to call weeds 'natural inhabitants'.

I have been working as a therapist for a long time - over 20 years - and the way I work and think now has hopefully moved on - from when I started out as a keen and green, hopeful thirty-something. Obviously, my thinking and world-view has developed and matured and it continues to deepen and evolve. This is what the biologists, historians and philosophers call 'progress'. **Progress is movement, not fixity, and where there is movement there is life. It is when things cease to move or grow - that they stagnate and eventually die.**

When you show clients evidence of how they've moved on, when they can see the shifts, no matter how slight, this gives them a sense of progress.

So when there is **no movement**, or no freedom of movement, when there is stuckness, or paralysis, or powerlessness, or no voice, or no vision, you could say that you are in a state of no-hope. Clients will often describe it thus. There's not much movement or life-energy. Sometimes it's experienced as no-thing - an absence of, an emptiness, a vacuum, isolation, an inertness, a passivity.

This no-hope inertness is not the same as that anti-life force, or energy within, which is experienced as actively de-structive. Clients describe this energy as evil, the devil, demon, witch, monster, parasite, bogey-man, the 'it' within, that wants to kill, incarcerate, bury or entomb them. It can also be perceived as the hostile force or threat out there - the cruel world, the hostile governments, the persecutory authority figures. This de-structive energy is already a notch on from passive hopelessness, as its life/death dynamic dares us to take it on - or perish, or confronts us with how we give up. **Donald Kalshed** describes this trauma-based inner dynamic in its many forms in his excellent and important book **The Inner World of Trauma**.

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I remember one of my very first clients - let's call her Carol - a talented artist in her mid thirties, (same age as I was then), childless, without a partner, afflicted with re-occurring genital herpes and hopelessness. Where once she had painted with colour now everything she produced was black and without hope. She shuffled hunched under a cloud of charcoal- dust and no amount of transpersonal light could reach her. I remember desperately trying to rummage through my toolbox of techniques, and steer her towards her higher wisdom, guidance, up mountains, into temples, - she could only crawl back into the cesspit. Light was hostile to her, exposing, the rays of the sun burnt. I had an image of trying to hold a lantern above her - but it missed her completely - went right over her head! In her drawings she was small and curled up, foetus-like, eyes closed, fearful of the harsh lights. She really didn't need me to pull her out with my metaphorical forceps.

This process went on for months and I despaired - why couldn't she see how beautiful it was out there in the warmth of the healing sun? didn't she know what she was missing? (I didn't say this of course, inexperienced as I was, but I definitely thought it!)

Carol needed to retreat to the dark depths of her Plutonian well, she didn't want me to haul her out. She needed me to be patient with her. She didn't need me to love her, or necessarily understand her - she just wanted me to see, I mean really see and acknowledge her total, utter despair, and to just be with her whilst she suffered and endured.

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There's a poem by the mystic and poet **David Whyte** that describes this process.

It's called

The Well of Grief. Some of you may know it.

*Those who will not slip
beneath the still surface
of the well of grief,
turning down to the black water
to the place we cannot breathe
will never know the source
from which we drink:
the secret water,
cold and clear,
nor find in the darkness
glimmering
the small round coins
thrown by those
who wished
for something else.*

The well of grief, the Plutonian descent, the retreat into darkness, the depths, the duvet! - that restorative darkness where we can be and come back to our essential selves. Things come together in the dark. It gives us respite from harsh lights. It's where we can reconnect with our dreams. Carol's path at that stage was the path through darkness and suffering - the **via negativa** - the dark night of the soul. **Mathew Fox**, the founder of Creation Spirituality, describes **four mystical paths**, **the via negativa**, - **the via positiva** - a path of awe, wonder, joy and praise; **the via creativa** - the path where we honour our images, pay attention and give birth to them; **the via transformativa** - the path of compassion, of realisation of our interdependence, and of healing.

As Fox says: "In the darkness unity, not differentiation, is what is experienced. We need the darkness to re-experience the unity."

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Darkness, depression, hopelessness - where is there a legitimate place for these today, in our results-driven society with its targets and its pitches, it's high-rise punters on the Apollonian highway? During the Renaissance, melancholia was revered, honoured as enriching and soulful. Some gardens even had small bowers built, with a seat for one, where you could retreat to brood or reflect, to sit and 'be with' your melancholy. The garden bower was a place for stillness and receptivity: a place to be silent and to listen to the 'whisperings of the soul'.

'I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you

Which shall be the darkness of God.'

T.S.Eliot

I want to bring in an important philosopher here **Ernst Bloch**, (1885-1977). Bloch was one of the famous Frankfurt School of philosophers, where other philosophers - like Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin and Adorno, came to teach and debate. He wrote a tome called **The Principle of Hope** - Das Prinzip der Hoffnung. I haven't read it I hasten to add, but I have read, with interest, a synopsis and various critiques. I also spoke with a German friend and colleague of mine who was around in Frankfurt in the late 60's and 70's and attended Bloch and his wife Karola's lectures. Although Bloch is a Marxist, he takes human needs, desires and psychology very seriously. **In a material, consumerist world, Bloch parts way with mainstream Marxist ideology as he realises the essential value of fairy-tales and myths, popular cultures, the arts, theatre, music, literature, the place for political and social utopias, for philosophy and religions. He acknowledges the importance of imagination and hope in and for society, - "these visions and dreams of a better life" that subvert and question the structure and organization of life under capitalism, these yearnings for community and images for a better world.**

Traumatised clients who live with very little hope, at odds with the outside world, will often create their own inner world or utopias, which may accompany them throughout their life. In their own way, they are creating something they can bear to live with, and this in itself is a creative, powerful act. These worlds are peopled with all kinds of characters, and creatures, with stories of their own, and the client is at some deep level nourished, sustained and even challenged by them. And there is

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always the teller who comes to therapy, and reports that they rarely need to visit this other world these days, but they know it's there - just in case. There are also the artists, playwrights, writers and performers who do risk exposing and releasing their imagined worlds into the real world, and who can be well received, and thus, the material world becomes enriched with soul.

So the imaginal world re-creates herself - or is created - and **creative imagination** and **visualisation** play a vital part in healing processes and in the forming of hope. Imagery, and that includes dreaming, night - or day-dreaming - heals - and as William James said - has its own 'motor element' - it moves spontaneously and gives us what we need, at the time we need it. We don't even need to guide it we just need to let imagination guide us.

Another client, a refugee who had suffered political torture, described his state of ongoing depression and hopelessness as a dark, stagnant pond: it had all sorts of things people had thrown into it rotting at the bottom - but it had no movement or life. One night he returned to it in his imagination and he thought he saw the silver reflections of the moon on the water. Then he realised that the flashes of silver were actually small fish darting about, living in the water. The fishes - though small and fleeting, became for him the symbols of hope and inspiration, of life, that he needed.

Nelson Mandela imprisoned on Robben Island for 27 years had a small garden that he grew and nurturing the seeds, tending the flowers and vegetables, seeing them grow, they too became symbols of hope.

Anne Frank, her young teenage years forced into hiding from the Nazis wrote: "I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains."

Another aspect of the state of no-hope is **no vision, no future**. To see no future or progress, no betterment, where any **future action is futile**. Futile, future - the root comes from the Latin verb to be, or grow or become. If we cannot see - or imagine - what we - or the world - could become, what we may be, then there is no hope. To go back to Moodysohn's film: the passive son withdraws into his strange inner world, where fantasies of future action - and the strange fruit of hope grows. The macho porn-star floats like an innocent free child in his imagined - or remembered corn-field. The father discusses a way of future action, misguided as it may be, to

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take with his son. For the first time in her life the young woman sees a way of contact with a man, the son, that is not sexual, where she is not objectified, and where there is compassion. It is her *via transformativa* - her way of transformation.

Viktor Frankl - in his book **Will to Meaning** - describes how **his vision of future** kept him going in the concentration camp. When he was at his lowest ebb, when he sensed that his wife and family had perished, whilst he was ill with typhus and barely surviving the extreme conditions of Auschwitz, Frankl had a vision of his future self standing in a great lecture hall, talking to a large audience about his experiences. This in itself was enough to give him the will to survive. The thought of making sense of what he experienced and learnt in Auschwitz and putting it into a book spurred him on. He wrote on bits of paper, hiding them, and even though it was an extremely dangerous thing to do and conceal, his future willed him.

No hope is where there is no **meaning** - again Viktor Frankl's research showed that people need a why, a reason to live or die for. In various studies of prisoners or slaves, there are those that hold onto a vision of their freedom, and a better future life, and those that saw no future and no point, there was no family, purpose or meaning, and they had given up hope.

The will to existential meaning is an important part of living with hope. As **Nietzsche** says - '**He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.**' In this world where there are still people - some of them extremely young, who are enslaved, and without freedom, or autonomy, it is hard to hold hope.

People who are enslaved are without **choice** and therefore without power, and where there is no power or freedom to choose - there can be no hope. If someone is incarcerated - whether literally - or within themselves - it feels like there is no choosing. And yet, even in intolerable situations - like in the camps, the human spirit or psyche finds a way to choose or move forward. **Roberto Assagioli** spoke of how his mind was busy creating and formulating his ideas when he was imprisoned by the Fascists. His body was in prison, but his mind and spirit were free.

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In **Primo Levi's** book **If This is A Man**: Levi describes how in the utter despair of yet another ice snow winter in Auschwitz, with the certainty of 7 out of 10 more deaths, that there was at least the choice of ending it all by touching the electric wire-fence. And he also wrote: **“even now, we would go if we were logical, were it not for this last senseless crazy residue of unavoidable hope”**.

When there is **no connection**, when there is **isolation or separation** - that too can give rise to hopelessness. Sharing and connecting with others, communicating - commune - creating community - is important for many of us in this increasingly virtual and insular world. And paradoxically, for many, cyberspace has actually opened up communication and allowed for virtual community and creative connections.

Primo Levi spoke of his connection in Auschwitz to another camp-mate, Alberto, and how the two of them made a pact to look after each other, to help support each other, and to share their food, and any perks. They wanted to see if working together, as two, strengthened them rather than as one, - and it did, it helped them survive.

As well as connection to others, there is that precious connection to self. People find hope when they are given the space and freedom to listen and connect to them selves, to hear their emergent inner voice, to trust and speak their truth, to follow their heart and soul. When they are not silenced or cut off from. When they can express - in whatever form or shape - what they need to share. All expressive arts, creativity, the via creativa, play a vital and restorative part here - and I could speak for longer on this - but that is another paper!

And of course, there is connection to the source, the sacred, or whatever it is that is meaningful.

I don't know if any of you saw the film **Touching the Void** - which is the true story of **Joe Simpson**, a young climber who broke his leg on a climb up a mountain in the Peruvian Andes. After a few torturous days, his climbing partner and friend Simon was forced to make the difficult yet professional choice to cut the rope and let Joe fall, so that at least one of them might survive. In his book, Joe Simpson describes

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his solitary, painful journey with his broken leg, over uncertain ledges, facing glacial crevasses, not knowing if floors of snow were solid or whether they would give way to the void and descent and death. This is a man who had no particular spiritual beliefs, and had no faith in religion. At the moment of his giving up, when there is nowhere else to go, he sees a beam of sunlight, he spoke of it as “a pillar of gold light” shining through the enclosed snow ceilinged vault he was trapped in, and from that moment he makes a choice: whatever it would take, he would crawl towards that beam of light. In seconds his whole outlook had changed - he had a plan, and a vision, he would drag himself out of his grave. He had a vision of future action, and without knowing it - a connection to source, and he now had hope.

Gradually, over time, there is a subtle shift, something moves - like a flash of silver, a tiny fish in a dark pond.

A few years ago I worked with someone who came very close to making me give up. She very nearly succeeded - and of course she was showing me how it was for her. I did not give up - I had the excellent support of my supervisor - but at times I felt such total defeat and pointlessness that I did wonder about the limits of what psychotherapy can provide. I felt stuck with her in the hopelessness of it all. This woman is extremely intelligent and self-aware. She knew all the tricks, techniques, shoulds and oughts, she had had years of psychotherapy and trainings, but she was firmly, miserably attached to her irreversible wounding and nothing, and certainly no therapy, or therapist, ultimately could or would change that. She would never allow herself to open up, or enter into the unknown. If she opened up to me, she feared a perpetuation of her abuse, and I could use it against her, or take something from her which would give me power over her. She certainly could not allow herself to become dependent on me or the therapy. This woman described her life as a continuum of pain and despair, along which very rarely there were bright and fleeting moments, but - and here she would fix me with her defying gaze - they didn't add up to much, and they couldn't be built upon to match up to the overwhelming negativity. Added to her own personal trauma of abuse, this woman's misery also plugged into her acute awareness of all the atrocities in the world, it was an existential pain and despair. There was her family's own Holocaust background - where it was futile to do anything, so what was the point, you would perish anyway, and there was the

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futility that she felt in her social work, at all the horrific abuses that continue, particularly towards children. Added to this was her despair at the suffering of the planet itself, and the ecological disaster she saw humanity hurtling towards.

In her world, there was only pain and suffering and nothing, she would repeat, nothing changes.

She convinced me that she was right - and I believed her. This is what I wrote at the time: I need to think about this. - I sit with her in it, week after week, month after month, and there are occasional small shifts, and she knows that she is not entirely alone, yet she continues to tell me - nothing changes - she will always return to the wound. How do we sit with this - the disaffected, - but we do. That's all I can do - sit with and endure and let her know I see, and have compassion. The suffering with, the accompaniment, - and sometimes I just want to howl alongside her in our despair. She has been in that misery for a lifetime and is intensely attached to it, afraid to let it go - she tells me that the whole of her very being is linked to her wound.

Now - though she would not allow me in, the only thing that made sense for her, that she listened to - though of course would not work with me on them, were her dreams. These were the only things she could trust. And in spite of her ego defences, despite the resistance and way her personality blocked and knocked me, her soul, via her dreams, was letting me in. It started to show what I was becoming for her. From the initial terrorist or stalker, I became a mountaineer on a dangerous path ahead of her, helping to show her the way and reaching out a hand to steady her. Later - to her surprise - she had a dream where she was in my kitchen, with my family, sitting at my table, and I was a mixture of a favourite teacher whom she had felt really seen by, and a big-breasted earth-mother, dishing out food, and she felt warm, welcomed and nourished. I am glad to say that her wise unconscious didn't let up and eventually got the message through to the rest of her, and from then on it was slow, painful and rewarding progress.

This woman is an intelligent realist, she is not a naive optimist - but neither will she be stuck as an eternal victim.

After an attachment to no-hope, a lifetime's commitment to 'nothing changes', some small impulse or movement occurred.

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After hopelessness comes hope, but not naive, false or illusory hope, but the hope that is borne from suffering.

This is where those lines from Eliot speak to us:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope

For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without

love

For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith

But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:

So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

Thus hope waits at the bottom of Pandora's casket, beneath the sufferings, ills and grief of the world.

And from the waiting, a tiny movement. Hope comes out of stuckness, from not-moving, or like a faint pulse in a muscle that has been paralysed; hope needs a vision, a way of seeing progress, continuity and future, but it knows how to wait and endure in the still dark; for hope to thrive it needs dreams and imagination, commune and expression, but it can come from having no voice or power; hope needs connection - with others, with self and with source; and from us hope needs patience and the recognition that 'this too will pass'.

'Only through time time is conquered.' - T.S.Eliot again

We move towards what we want because of what we lack, boredom often precedes creativity, action is often triggered by frustration, movement happens because of friction. We see light because there is darkness and hope rises like a phoenix from the ashes of despair.

Thank you.

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## Addendum

**Ex 2:** OK. So now I'd like you to go back inside - and connect this time with what it is that gets to you, about your most hopeless client or clients. What trips you, bugs you, hurts you, touches you most about being with a client who seems to have given up, who seems to have no hope. What are your expectations, your hidden agendas for them - even if you obviously don't speak them? What are your thoughts and feelings? Is there some unease about the job that you are doing with them? what expectations do you have of yourself as a practitioner? Are there any shoulds or doubts tugging at you?

Again, when you're ready, come out and make a few notes. Turn to the person next to you and share.

In Dante's Divine Comedy "Abandon hope all who enter here" is written above the entrance to hell.

*Hope is the thing  
with feathers  
that perches in the soul  
and sings the tune  
without the words,  
and never stops at all....*

Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886)

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