



Hope, Kindness, and Perseverance

HOPE

As we considered the theme for our annual youth non-profit youth Freedom4U Fundraiser, the theme of Hope emerged. It's also a theme being spread out into our culture. Why do you think this is happening?

Likely, it is because there is a lack of hope now. In fact, during the last year, the societal reaction to COVID has caused an increase in hopelessness, despair, and even suicides. This has been especially true for teens and young adults in which the isolation and distance from friends and family has been extremely harmful.

Thus, it appears that hope is a remedy for depression and feeling lonely. Therefore, we need to seek how we can get more hope into our lives and into the hearts of those we care about.

I suggest spending some time answering these questions for yourself and then helping your kids find the answers for their own lives.

- What gives you the most hope in your life?
- What people give you hope?
- What is it specifically about these people that give you hope?
- What activity causes you to feel hopeful?
- What about this activity gives you more hope?
- How can you add these experiences, people, and activities back into your everyday life?

Pre-COVID, where did you get hope from?

Can you get hope from that again, now?

KINDNESS

Another change that has happened (and hopefully won't disappear) as we are allowed more freedom in social interaction; we have become kinder to one another.

Obviously, I am not referring to the media output of discord and the political divide going on. Instead, on the ground, in our everyday lives, there has been an increased awareness of others' needs. This kindness has been like a fresh wind blowing our way. There seems to be more respect, friendliness, and care for one another. These traits which are common in smaller communities are now happening in big cities in our Southern California region. It's been heartwarming to connect with each other in simpler ways such as, saying hi, how are you, thank you, hope you're doing okay, or good bye, among other expressions. We are also helping each other more. Food distributions have increased tenfold across the country, as have donations to support families with food insecurities.

In our non-profit organizations Freedom4U and Hearts Respond; the community has stepped up to help with food drives and donations to LA Harbor area families in need. The teens and parents that have participated have been excited to be able to give of their time and finances. Their heart to serve has been awesome!

PERSEVERANCE

Appropriately, perseverance is the name of the Mars Rover that launched into space last year. Perseverance is a positive outcome which has been developed within us during these recent times.

Internal strength is only developed through challenging times. Usually, we aren't aware that perseverance is being forged within us as we go through life struggles or trauma. In the past year, it's been invaluable for our kids to acquire this character trait. Perseverance is a necessary strength our kids will need within themselves in order to successfully cope with their adult lives.

Let's allow hope, kindness, and perseverance continue to be developed in us and through us in the coming days.

Dr. Greg Allen is a Licensed Therapist practicing in Palos Verdes Estates. (drgregallen.com). He is also the founder and director of Freedom4U, a non-profit that seeks to guide youth towards their life purpose and thereby reduce risky lifestyles. (freedomcommunity.com) He has helped start a new non-profit organization Hearts Respond, which aims to support families in the LA Harbor area (heartsrespond.com).