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Limantour Beach, Point Reyes, CA

Grounded Hope and Your Story

I've been thinking about Grounded Hope, having a realistic understanding of ourselves and/or our situation and cultivating hope in our ability to shape what happens next. We are grounded in the reality that it has been almost two years since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the WHO, and we all are grieving the loss of something and/or someone as a result. We are witnessing a rise in hate crimes such as those directed at HBCU's and AAPI communities, as well as polarizing rhetoric which fuels division and paralyzes our ability to move forward with positive change. Despite this reality, we have the power to choose the story we tell based on these facts – and the future story we choose to hope for.

Grounded Hope can be difficult to accomplish, especially amidst the challenges that we have faced these past few years, but doing so is highly beneficial. In [“The unexpected health benefits of hope”](#), the author emphasizes the importance of hope stating “hope is a special kind of perception: it's a perception of something that doesn't yet exist. It's a perception of what is *possible*”. Rather than perceiving a situation from a negative mindset, we approach it from a place of hope in order to envision a positive future for ourselves. In fact, studies have shown that having a hopeful mindset has positive health benefits.



Every day I ask myself “what is the story I want to focus on based on what just happened?” I thought about it while traveling in my van “Hope” through central Montana where I managed to rip the van's awning off its hinges. Later that day,

a nice couple drove up to the rest spot and assisted with the awning's removal so I could continue my journey. We enjoyed a nice meal as the sun went down, exchanged contact information and committed to staying in touch. I don't reflect on that day and dwell on the loss of my awning, Instead, I recall the kindness that two strangers afforded me and the memories that we made.

I thought about what story I was going to tell myself when a client recently became upset over particular wording and said "we talked about this, don't apologize, just don't let it happen again." I could have focused on his diminishing behavior and how bad it felt, or I can focus on how it inspired me to think about how to improve my process to ensure clean documents go in front of clients. The story we choose to focus on is always our choice.



We are wired to focus on the negative, a phenomenon which psychologists refer to as negativity bias. There is a physiological tendency to be pessimistic, especially amidst the effects of COVID and the problem of racism in this country. But healthcare workers, activists and organizers continue to speak up against disinformation and hate while highlighting the importance of education, equity and beneficial legislation.

Grounded Hope pulls our focus away from negativity bias and toward what has been gained and what is still possible within these realities. Each of us has the power to perceive our lives in a way that benefits not only ourselves, but those around us. We must pull ourselves away from the vortex of negativity bias and toward these questions:

- What did I learn?
- What is my story, and how will I choose to tell it?
- How can I tell my story from a place of hope rather than ruminating on what went wrong?
- What is something good that has come from my situation?
- What is still possible in the future, and how will I get there?

To hear more about my journey and my mission of hope through story, listen to my guest appearance on The Talent Development Hot Seat [here](#)

To learn more about a terrific organization working to promote common ground through conversations, check out [StoryCorps](#)



The Presidio, San Francisco, CA



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