



SNYDERS HOPE THEORY

This article looks at Snyder's Hope Theory, and how it can help you achieve your goals. It also explores strategies that you can use to take a positive approach when times get tough. Hope is our belief that we can change the future for the better, or reach a desired goal. It is what keeps us moving forward when the going gets tough, and it helps us to "get back on the horse" when we fall off.

Hope Theory argues that there are three main things that make up hopeful thinking:

Goals – Approaching life in a goal-oriented way.

Pathways – Finding different ways to achieve your goals.

Agency – Believing that you can instigate change and achieve these goals.

Snyder characterized hopeful thinkers as people who are able to establish clear goals, imagine multiple workable pathways toward those goals, and persevere, even when obstacles get in their way.

You can use Hope Theory to help your people make best use of opportunities, put their talents to good use, and become more fulfilled in life by setting and vigorously pursuing meaningful goals.

In the sections that follow, we'll look at each of the three elements of Hope Theory in detail, and we'll explore strategies that you can use to help people achieve their goals.

Step 1: Encouraging Goal-Oriented Thinking

Goals, and goal-oriented thinking, are the foundations of Hope Theory. Goals can be long-term or short-term. They can be statements, such as "I want a promotion," or they can be mental images such as picturing yourself hitting the perfect volley, or hitting that high note in your choir solo. Think about your own goals. Are they attainable, yet challenging? Use the SMART technique to set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

[Check out our blog "Build your success: Goal-setting"](#)

Step 2: Finding Pathways to Achievement

"Pathways thinking" refers to your belief that you can find a workable route to your goals. The more creative and determined you are about finding paths, the more hopeful you are likely to be. If something beyond your control gets in your way, you find another route!

Look at a goal you'd like to work on first. What would it take to turn this vision into reality? Make a list of the steps you need to take to make it happen.

Step 3: Instigating Change

"Agency" is your persistent belief that the pathways you've identified will eventually lead to your desired goal, if you keep moving steadily along them.

Agency thinking is especially important when the path you're on becomes blocked. It gives you the flexibility and willingness to move to a different, more successful pathway. Take time to develop good habits that will allow you to keep moving forward. For example, you might need to get up earlier to have time to study for a distance-learning course, or you could stop watching television to make extra time for fitness. Give your most important goals the time that they need by blocking out a regular slot in your schedule for them.