



Finding and Inspiring Hope



 **SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE**
PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

Those who feel there is no way out of life's challenges will often find themselves feeling hopeless. Some of those challenges can be one overwhelming event and make a person feel buried in the stress and burden of the challenge. Other times, there are multiple challenges that keep coming at you one after another. In either case the challenges can make you feel like you can't beat the overwhelming odds.

Finding hope when you feel trapped can be difficult, but it is not impossible.

First, you have to be able to **connect to hope**. With every problem and challenge faced, people naturally seek ways to cope with the situation. Healthy coping allows you to develop hope that there is more than the problems you are facing in life. There are two different types of hope that you can connect to.

Current hope is the ability to look at past challenges and understand the process you used to overcome or withstand them. This reflection is not focused on the problem, but focused on the methods you used to conquer the situation. Reaching back to the memories where you managed a difficult situation instead of the situation managing you will help you realize just how much power you have over the hopeless feelings that might invade your happiness.

Future hope is the promise you have for your future. These are the things you look forward to that will serve as your driving force when faced with challenges. While we look at overall large goals or promises, setting milestone goals will help you feel accomplished and recharge your feelings of accomplishment and hope when times get tough. Each milestone goal serves as a reminder of your overall promise to yourself and others in addition to help formulate a plan and keep you on track.

Milestone goals within a greater promise then serves as a "return point" or helps feed current hope. Collectively connecting to hope through current and future hope will help you realize that there is a way to overcome and you will make it through whatever challenges life sends your way.

Once you are able to connect to hope you will have the ability to **spread hope** in the world around you. Spreading hope is generalized and allows people to see the light within you even if you do not directly interact with them. You can spread hope in a number of different ways like sharing your story of overcoming difficult situations, or taking time to volunteer for organizations that support the less fortunate.

The final way can inspire hope in your life is to **give hope** by becoming focused on helping others find their way out of difficult situations. Giving hope to others is the ability to invest in the lives of others instead of the generalized concept of spreading hope giving hope is intentional towards an individual or individuals. This can be taking opportunities to mentor others, or work with organizations that have direct individual impact.

Regardless of the hope phase you are in, challenge yourself to see beyond life's difficulties and take time to see the many blessings and opportunities that are coming into your life right now, and into the future.

Questions? Contact us at 363ISR.W.ART.363ISR.W@us.af.mil or at 757-764-9316