

Podcast series

Leadership in Focus

Episode 16 - Reflections on hope, leadership and equity

Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. This episode explores the concept of cultivating hope in leadership connecting leaders with the power behind the genuine belief they can make the difference we seek in public education.

[SLI Leadership in Focus Podcast Series](#)

Speakers

Jenny Gore: Laureate Professor at The University of Newcastle

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Discussion points

For individuals

- Jenny discusses three types of hope. Can you identify examples of where you have seen these three types of hope in your own and/or other's leadership?
- In the podcast, hope is described as dynamic, something that can change, and as something leaders can instil and inspire in others to bring about the future we seek for our students. In this way, hope is deeply connected to our sense of efficacy and our commitment to action as leaders.
- If hope is future oriented but present centred, what actions can you take in your leadership in the present to realise your hopes for the future?
- Jenny discusses her personal connection with hope in her own leadership. She talks about the importance of celebrating the 'small wins' to help others see the difference they are making, thus building their sense of efficacy. How do you personally nurture hope in your own leadership practice? How could you strengthen the role of hope in your leadership?
- Consider the following quotes about hope. Which ones resonate most with you and why? In what ways do you think you can enact hope in your everyday leadership?

"Hope is contagious. Your actions will inspire others (Goodall, J. 2022, p. xvi)."

"A person either is or isn't an optimist. It's a disposition or a philosophy of life. As an optimist, you can just have the feeling, 'Oh, it'll be alright'...Hope, on the other hand, is a stubborn determination to do all you can to make it work. And hope is something we can cultivate (Goodall, J. 2022, p. 27)."

"Without hope there is no way we can even start to think about education (Freire, P. 2007, p. 87)."

"When we don't act on our goals, they remain wishes – without substance or force on the real world. When we do act, we face unpredictability and chance, no matter how well we plan. That is why hope requires courage. When we hope, we are committing to a leap of faith (Lopez, S.J. 2014, p. 79)."

"Hope is an embrace of the unknown and unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists. Optimists think it will all be fine without our involvement; pessimists take the opposite position; both excuse themselves from acting. It's the belief that what we do matters (Solnit, 2016)."

For teams

- a. In this podcast episode, Joanne discusses the difference between hope and optimism. “Hope is expressed as much more than just optimism. Optimistic people have a disposition that ‘things will work out’. But hope is much more than wishful thinking. Hope can be cultivated. It requires grit, courage and perseverance.” Discuss some of the ways that leaders cultivate hope.
- b. Jenny discusses how leaders enact hope by having a clear path to realising their vision for a better future. Consider your collective hopes for the school, students and community you serve. Discuss the ways it connects to your vision. Is there a clear path towards achieving that vision?
- c. Jenny discusses the hope cycle and how our stubborn belief in an equitable education system, the confident pursuit of our goals towards this vision and the ambitious hope that we can achieve this vision, leads us to act deliberately and purposefully as leaders. Discuss the ways you and your team build hope through the approaches your take to building an inclusive and equitable school community.

- d. Consider the following quotes about hope. Which ones resonate most with you and why? Share with your colleagues the ways you can enact hope in your everyday leadership?

“Hope is often misunderstood. People tend to think that it is simply passive wishful thinking. I hope something is going to happen but I’m not going to do anything about it. This is indeed the opposite of real hope, which requires action and engagement (Goodall, J. 2022, p. xv).”

“Hope does not deny all the difficulty and all the danger that exists, but it is not stopped by them. There is a lot of darkness, but our actions create the light...it is important to take action and realize that we can make a difference, and this will encourage others to take action, and then we realize we are not alone, and our cumulative actions truly make an even greater difference (Goodall, J. 2022, p. 28-29).”

“Hope is created moment by moment through deliberate choices. It happens when we use our thoughts and feelings to temper our aversion to loss and actively pursue what is possible. When we choose hope, we define what matters to us most (Lopez, S.J. 2014, p. 24).”

“One of the most important determinants of hope in one’s life is seeing one’s agency, one’s ability to be effective (Abrams, D. 2022, p. 118).”... “Yes, this is why I am so passionate about working with youth in all walks of life. So often they just need a chance, just need some attention, someone who listens and encourages and cares. If they have that support and begin to see that they can truly make a difference, then the impact they can make is enormous (Goodall, J., 2022, p. 118).”

“It’s important to say what hope is not: it is not the belief that everything was, is, or will be fine. The evidence is all around us of tremendous suffering and tremendous destruction. The hope I’m interested in is about broad perspectives with specific possibilities, ones that invite or demand that we act. (Solnit, 2016)

For your reference

1. [‘The William Walker Oration 2022: Inspiring hope through evidence-based pedagogy’](#) by Laureate Professor Jenny Gore
2. [Core Leadership Principle: Commitment to Action](#)
3. PLL Program: [Immersion 2: Leading for Collective Efficacy with Dr Jenni Donohoo](#)

References

- Freire, P. (2021). *Pedagogy of hope. Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury
- Freire, P. (2007). *Daring to dream*. Paradigm.
- Goodall, J. & Abrams, D. (2022). *The book of hope. A survival guide for trying times*. Penguin Books.
- Gore, J. (2023). The William Walker Oration 2022: Inspiring hope through evidence-based pedagogy. *ACEL Monograph Series*. The Australian Council for Educational Leaders.
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- Solnit, R., & Eby, T. (2016). *Hope in the Dark*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.