



## *How do you write about hope during a global pandemic?*

How do you write about hope when the world seems divided by politics and beliefs? And never mind just writing about it, how do you *have* hope when the world seems fraught with conflict, sadness and one disaster after another. I started writing about lofty ideals, positive images and inspiring quotes about hope and then I realized, I was only kidding myself. There is no pat answer about what hope is, or what it means during these difficult times. It doesn't come in a cereal box (people over a certain age will know what I'm talking about), and it is not found in one defined place, like... "over there in the corner, there's hope, I see it peeking out from behind the laundry basket."

Hope is described as *an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large.* Okay, let's think about that. An optimistic state of mind. How do we remain optimistic when the headlines around us are doom and gloom? I read something recently about not seeing the world through printed headlines but rather, seeing the world through the people and things that surround us. If I

think about that, my narrative...my headline if you will, becomes "Woman is blessed to have dinner with all her family" or "Woman is amazed by the resiliency she sees in the people she works with." Instead of my day starting out with feelings of anger and frustration at the growing number of Covid cases or U.S. politics (insert eye rolling emoji here), my day starts with beauty and awe as I see the sun reflecting on the stunning fall colours. "Woman is overwhelmed by the breathtaking miracle of autumn." When we look at our own personal headlines in that way, the current state of our existence becomes manageable, almost bite-sized...enjoyable even. My day now becomes a series of little moments, filled with beauty and gratitude. And, as those moments of beauty and gratitude increase, so does my hope.

If I look at hope within the context of Family Transition Place (FTP) being in existence for 35 years, I am overwhelmingly filled with images and *expectations of positive outcomes.* I am very proud to have been with FTP for 33 years, and during those years, I have seen shining examples of hope on a daily basis. Seeing the courage that it takes for a woman to decide to access the shelter—for the third time—fills me with hope because she now realizes that she is worthy of a safe roof over her head and being treated with respect. Witnessing children laugh and play in the shelter backyard, when once they were timid and afraid, fills me with hope. Congratulating a woman for finding safe housing leaves me inspired by her determination, and feeling hopeful for her future.

If several times a day I think, "Woman is in awe of the human spirit" how can I not be filled with hope...and peace? Oh and "Woman feels the loving, wet nose of a dog on her cheek." ♥

*Submitted by FTP's Manager of Residential and Outreach Services, Lyn Allen.*