

# Watt's Happening? #276

by Don Pettit

for Peace Energy Renewable Energy Cooperative

www.peaceenergy.ca ph 250-782-3882



## FINDING HOPE *in tough times*



*Hope breeds action, and action conquers despair.*

**T**hese are tough, crazy times. Great! ANOTHER WAR! Our neighbours to the south have gone into an insane tailspin, as backward as can possibly be imagined. Climate change is definitely kicking in, it isn't good, and it's not going to get better any time soon. Need I go on?

Many of us are aware of the problems, we're concerned and worried, but feel that the problems are just too huge and me, well, I'm just too small to make a difference (and busy getting the kids to school and paying the bills!) It's just all too much. It's hopeless.

The result? A fatalistic cynicism, a growing sense of doom, despair and anxiety.

It's hope that we need, but where do we find it, and what IS hope anyway?

### HOPE DEFINED

The Oxford English dictionary makes it sound pretty simple: "hope: noun – a feeling of expectation and desire for something to happen."

In reality, it's a bit more complicated than that – there are types of hope. Let's start with the worst kind of hope: toxic hope.

Toxic hope, or toxic positivity, is a mindless type of hope. I hear it all the time.

"Oh, there have always been wars. Don't worry, everything will turn out just fine. Just wait, you'll see!"

"The climate may be changing, but there's no way we could be causing it. The climate is always changing. The earth can take care of itself. We don't have to do anything. It will all work out!"

---

That's lazy hope, idle hope, do nothing hope, leave it up to everybody else hope. Stupid hope. Toxic hope.

### **CRITICAL HOPE**

It is, however, possible to "hope well" by practicing "critical hope." With critical hope we recognize the problems as huge and extremely difficult to solve, we recognize that all our efforts may be in vain, but we go ahead and work to solve them anyway. This is "applied hope" or action-based hope. I also call it "smart hope."

Smart hope recognizes that of course I am small and darn near powerless, but that I am not alone. Our global civilization is responding to it's problems, evolving and adapting, and many, many, many very smart people are also practicing smart hope, coming together, taking action and changing things for the better.

Smart hope says that I can be part of something large and important, something more important than myself and my own small wants and needs, something of historic and global importance.

Alone, I am powerless, but together we really CAN change the world.

That's smart, and that's what's actually happening.

### **WHERE HOPE DIES**

Avoid conventional news media. "The news" is one hundred percent negative, perhaps by design, certainly by tradition. Knowing about all the really bad stuff that happens every day may serve a purpose, preparing us for the worst, warning us, but beyond that it is entirely toxic because it so completely ignores anything positive.

*We are  
in the middle  
of the story,  
not the end.*

Doom scrolling on your phone is sure death to hope. Remember that the algorithm that keeps an eye on your media behavior feeds you more of what you view, creating a feed-back-loop that gives you more and more bad news.

I see the result in the cynicism of some of my friends: "Immense powers control everything and there is absolutely nothing we can possibly do about it. The future is locked in, all to their benefit and my loss. It's hopeless!"

The fact is, the world must be overall positive, cooperative, and non-violent, or we would have destroyed ourselves long, long ago. Personally, I limit my news intake to no more than one half hour per day.

### **WHERE HOPE LIVES**

We are in a time of immense, radical transformation. Radical transformation takes time, and it's not comfortable or easy.

We are in the middle of the story, not the end. The future has not been decided. It is not pre-determined. No one can control all of the variables, but we can shift some of them through hopeful, personal and group action, and we can build our hope by witnessing the actions of others who are working so hard for positive change.

In fact, some say this is the most wonderful time to be alive imaginable. Everything we do is important! Great transformation breeds crisis, but also historic opportunity for change and improvement.

Hope tells us that it's always at the end that the beginning happens. New beginnings are on their way.

---