

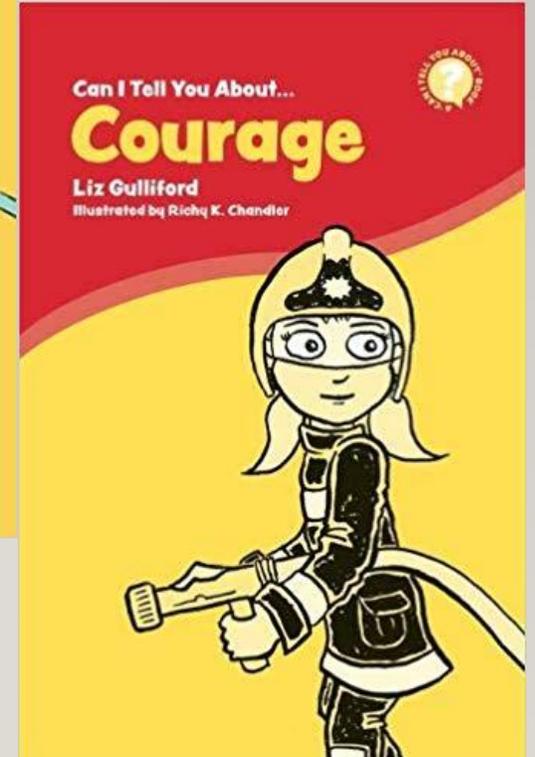
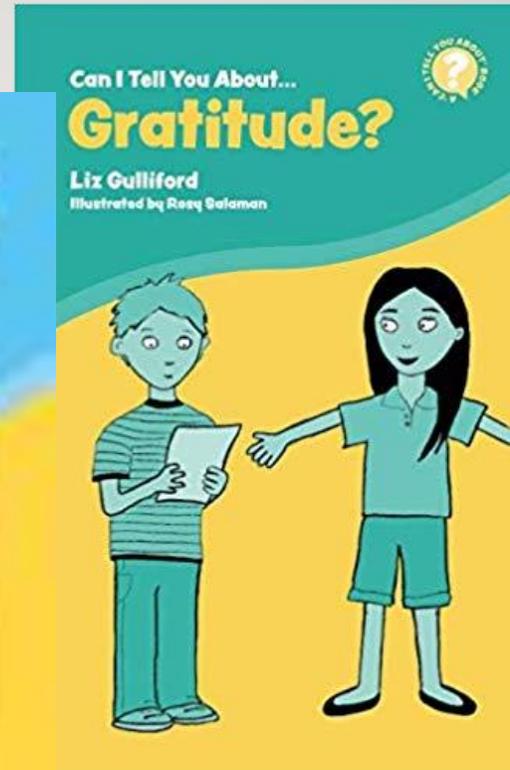
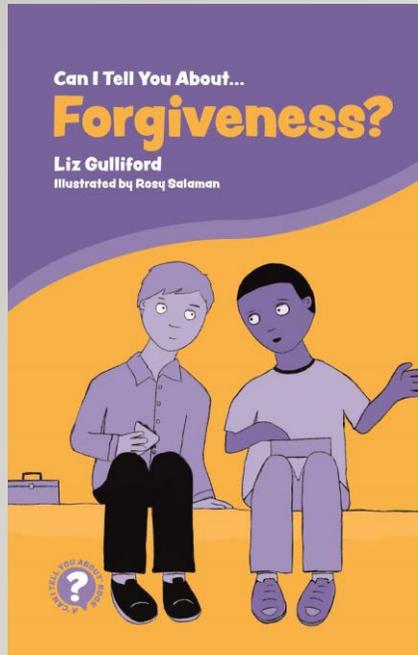
HOPE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXAMINATION

DR LIZ GULLIFORD, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON, UK

MY INTERDISCIPLINARY BACKGROUND

- First degree Theology (Trinity College, Oxford) Psychology of Religion
- MPhil, PhD (Queens' College, Cambridge) working for Psychology and Religion Research Group. BSc Psychology and PhD while working as Research Associate
- PhD Critical examination of Positive Psychology and its understanding of forgiveness, gratitude courage and hope
- Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues (School of Education, Birmingham University). Conducted interdisciplinary work examining gratitude from philosophical, psychological and educational perspectives.

CAN I TELL YOU ABOUT...?



Meet Matt, who wants to learn what hope means. Matt likes to “think positive”: if he believes in himself, he’s sure he can achieve whatever he wants.

No need to revise for the big test, or practise his guitar, as long as he hopes for the best! But when his disappointing results come back, Matt starts to think maybe there’s more to hope than just wishful thinking.

Is it always good to hope, or are there times when hoping is misguided? What sort of things can we – or should we – hope for, and what does hoping demand of us? What could we do to make our hopes more likely to come to fruition?

The ideal conversation starter for children aged 7+, this illustrated guide will open discussion as to what hope means, the different types of hope, and how it can affect our lives.

Age 7+

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Liz Gulliford is currently Senior Lecturer in Positive Psychology at the University of Northampton. She undertook

SESSION OUTLINE

The ground of optimism and hope and types of *confidence*

Hoping-that, *hoping-in*: **Hope** can be *interpersonal*

Hope and optimism in positive psychology

What we can learn from examinations of hope in clinical psychology and psychoanalysis

Imagination and hope

Drawing the threads together

SOME QUESTIONS

- What is the **ground** of hope/optimism?
- What is the nature of the **confidence** upon which hope and optimism rest?
- How do we picture the **future** in which hope and optimism operate: open/closed; continuous/discontinuous with the present?
- What is the role of the **imagination** in hope/optimism?
- Is hopefulness/optimism a quality of **individuals**? Is it a **virtue**? What kind of virtue might it be?

RULES OF HOPE (AVERILL, CATLIN & CHON, 1990)

Prudential rule –
hope should be
realistic (but where
do we draw the line?)

Moralistic rule – hope
circumscribed by
what is morally
acceptable

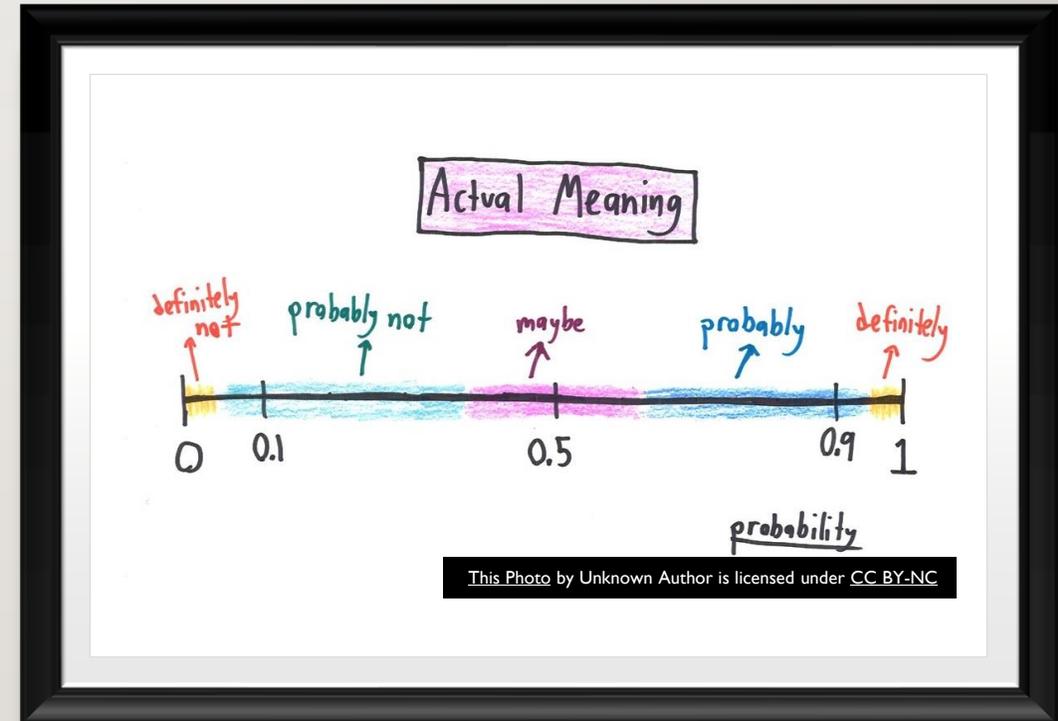
Priority rule – hope is
weighty, surpassing
wants and desires*

Action rule – people
should be willing to
act to achieve their
hopes

* If event hoped for is
sufficiently important,
priority rule outranks
1&2

PROBABILITY AND POSSIBILITY

- Hope involves possibility
- When a clinician gives an *optimistic* (not a 'hopeful') prognosis it is assumed she is using some sort of *evidence* to support her opinion
- Hope is appropriate even when the chances of fulfilment are extremely unlikely but optimism is not 'warranted' in such cases
- A different 'species' of confidence undergirds hope and optimism
- Head and Heart? (see Gulliford, 2013)



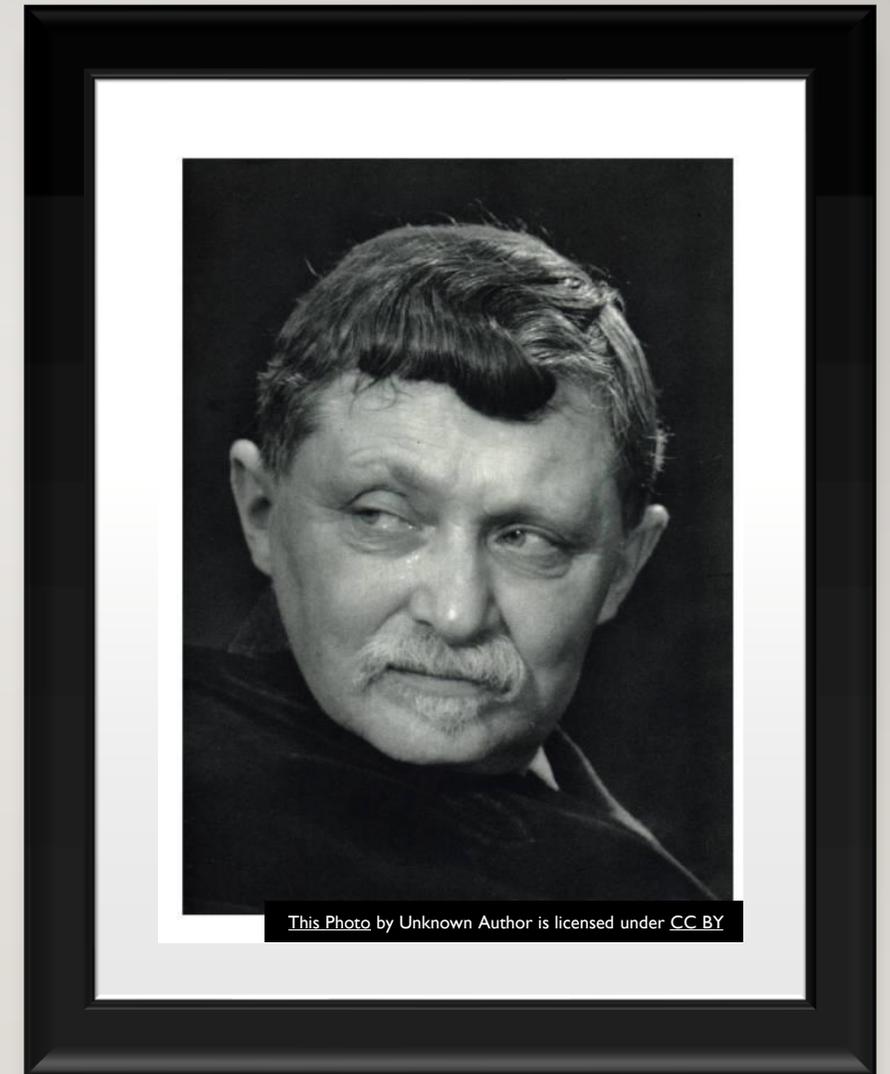
THE GROUND OF OPTIMISM- MARCEL'S VIEW

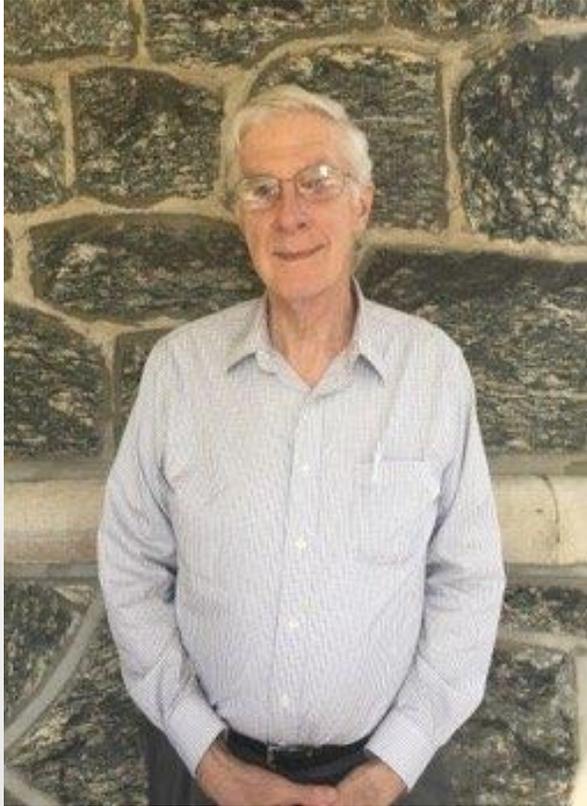
Optimistic predictions rest on the assumption that that the future will be similar to the present - predictions are possible only where the contours of the future are *predictable*.

But hoping may involve a future radically *discontinuous* with the present

Probability is objectively calculable and the grounds for optimism are 'external' to the self

'...an involved sort of hope that is not based on confidence in *reasons for hoping that are external to the self* but which involves the self and is instead a *participatory kind of hope-in*.'
(Marcel, 1962, my italics)





HOPING-THAT AND HOPING-IN MARCEL AND GODFREY

- Hoping that/hoping in

Hoping that specifies the **content** of hope

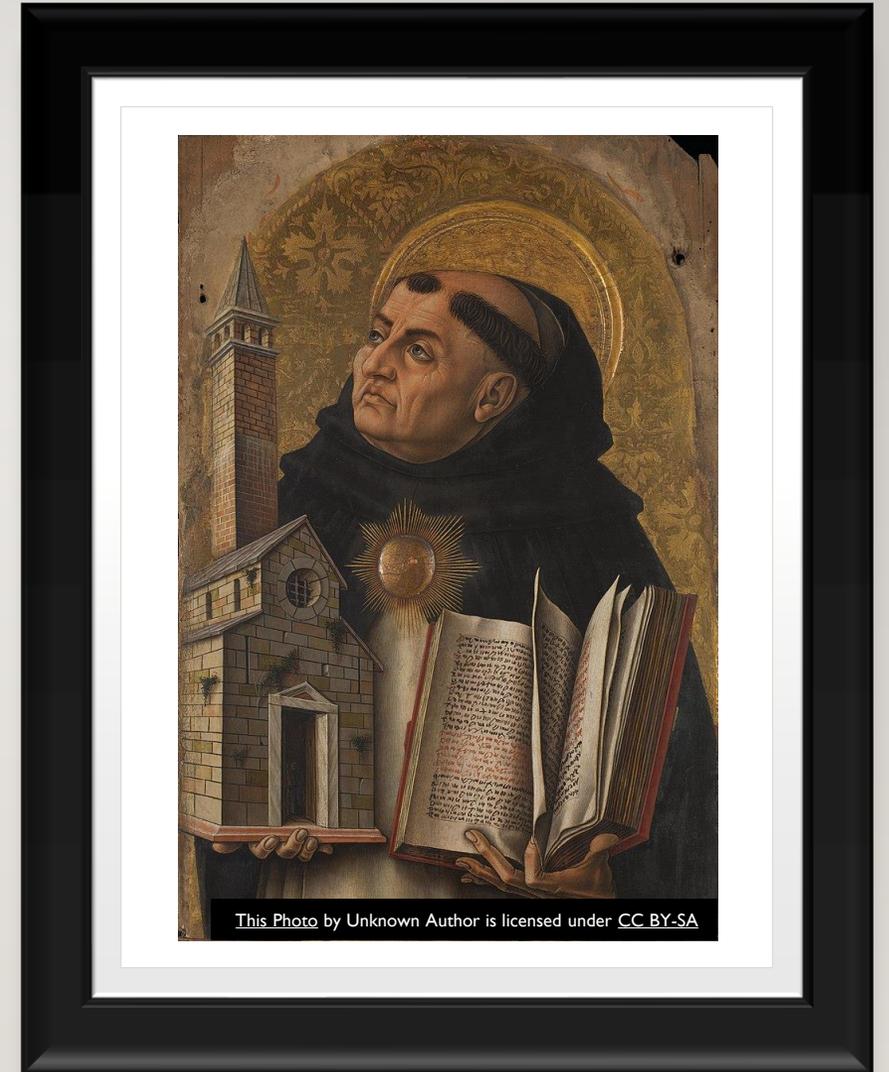
Hoping in suggests something of the **dynamics of sustaining hope**

- ‘Intersubjective’ v. ‘will-nature models’ of hope (Godfrey, 1987)

Will-nature model: trust founded on belief that other agencies or instrumentalities are accessible to realise one’s own hopes, whereas the intersubjective model conceives of trust as a relationship of union, not of utilizing.

THOMAS AQUINAS AND HOPE-IN

- The temptation to abandon hope may not be as overwhelming when we are able to hope in another's assistance
- Naturally, he regards God as the ultimate agent of this assistance, but he recognises that we may hope in other agents – fellow human beings, our friends



Incipit secundus liber secunde partis beati
Thome de Aquino ordinis predicatorum.

- We hope rightly when we hope in God or neighbour, even if we do not obtain the particular object we hope for (STII-II, Q. 17, A. 1)

- It is unlawful to hope in any man, or any creature, as though it were the first cause of movement towards happiness. It is, however lawful to hope in a man or a creature as being the secondary or instrumental agent through whom one is helped to obtain any goods that are ordained to happiness. It is in this way that we turn to the saints, and that we ask men also for certain things (STII-II, Q. 17, A. 1)

- This interpersonal view of hope can be contrasted with a predominantly **intrapersonal** view of hope in psychology

recte opas et vitia opposita a rectitudine re-
cedunt. Sic ergo tota materia moralis ad confidentiam
virtutum reducitur. Omnes virtutes sunt veliter redu-
cende ad septem quas tres sunt theologice et quatuor
primo e agendi. Alie vero quatuor sunt cardinales
quas philosophice vocant. Virtutum autem intellectua-
lium una quod est prudentia que inter cardinales vir-
tutes continetur et numeratur. Ars vero non pertinet
ad morale sed circa verba verborum. Alie vero tres
sunt intellectuales et scilicet scientia ipsius sancti
confidentiam connotant. Alie vero virtutes
ad virtutes
cardinales ut ex his videtur. Unde in confidentia
tunc alicuius virtutis cardinalis confidentiam etiam
omnes virtutes ad eam quicquid pertinet et vitia
opposita et sic nihil morale est premissum.

Quarta virtutes
igitur theologice sunt confidentiam
de fide et de spe et de caritate. Cir-
ca fide vero quadruplex confidentia occurrit.
Prima quidem de ipsa fide. Secunda de com-
muni intellectu et scilicet sibi committentibus. Tertia de

Q. 17

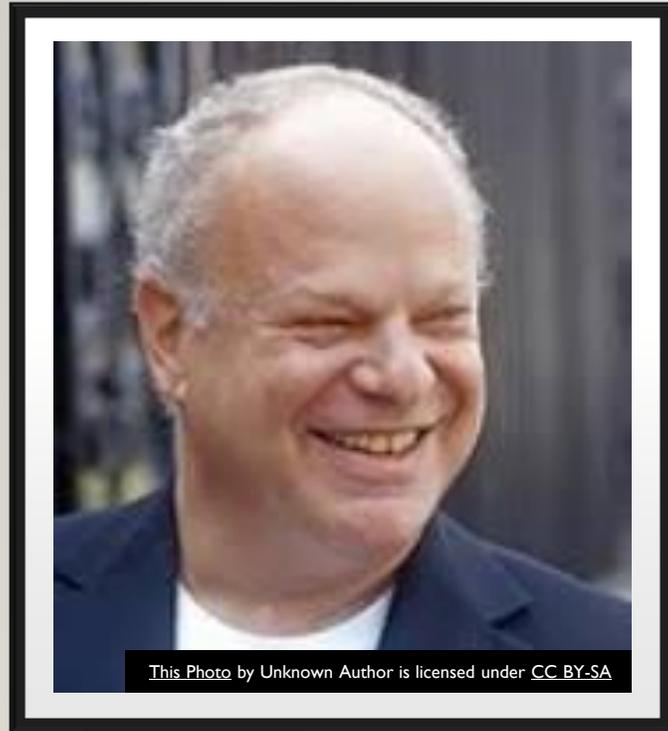


HOPE AND OPTIMISM IN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

- Hope and optimism key constructs in positive psychology:
- ‘Learned Optimism’ (Seligman, 1990); ‘Hope’ (Snyder), ‘Dispositional optimism’ (Carver & Scheier)
- Optimism/hope: Trait that can be measured and inculcated
- Recent positive psychology majors on hopeful or optimistic *dispositions* while earlier psychanalytic approaches focused on hope more broadly, examining the nature and grounds of hope itself

What is the ground of this kind of optimism?

LEARNED OPTIMISM (SELIGMAN, 1990; 2006)



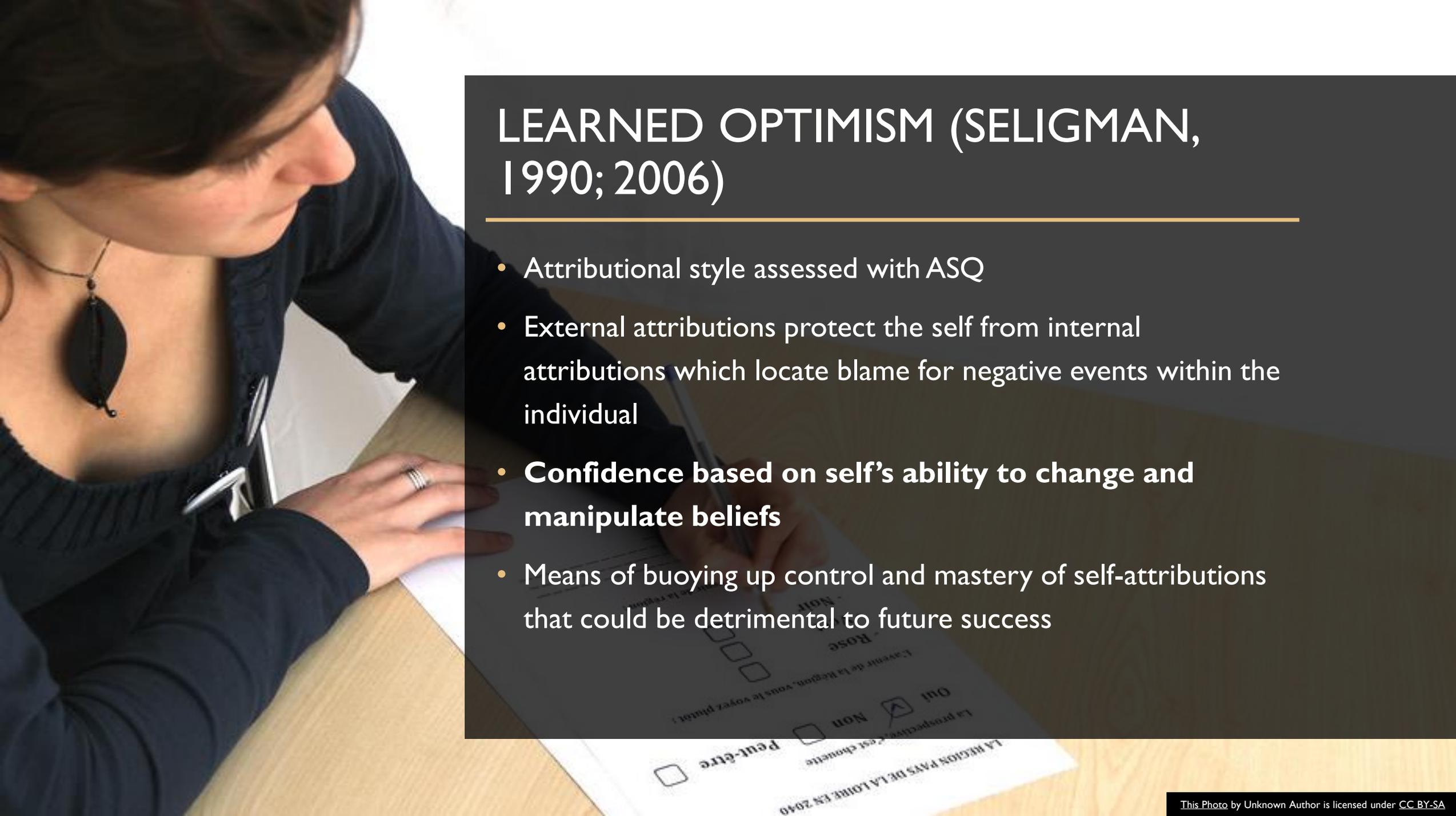
- Salutary benefits of ‘optimistic explanatory style’ can be learned
- Protective pattern of self-attributions to foster an individual’s wellbeing
- Characteristic pattern of attributions associated with optimism can be emulated so that optimism can be ‘learned’

EXPLANATORY STYLES

Attribution	Pessimistic Explanatory Style for Failure	Optimistic Explanatory Style for Failure
Locus (self/other)	Internal	External
Permanence	Permanent	Impermanent
Pervasiveness	Global	Specific

ATTRIBUTIONAL PROFILES: FAILING EXAM

Example: Failing an exam	Pessimistic Explanatory Style	Optimistic Explanatory Style
Locus	Internal (I am a failure)	External (the examiner set hard questions)
Permanence	Permanent (I always will be)	Impermanent (It won't always be like this)
Pervasiveness	Pervasiveness (Everything I do ends in failure)	Specific (I am successful in other domains of my life)

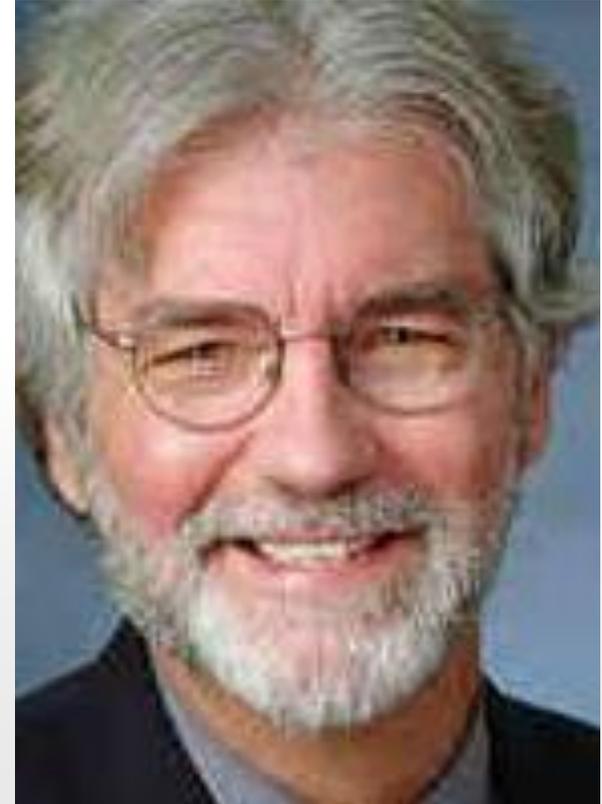


LEARNED OPTIMISM (SELIGMAN, 1990; 2006)

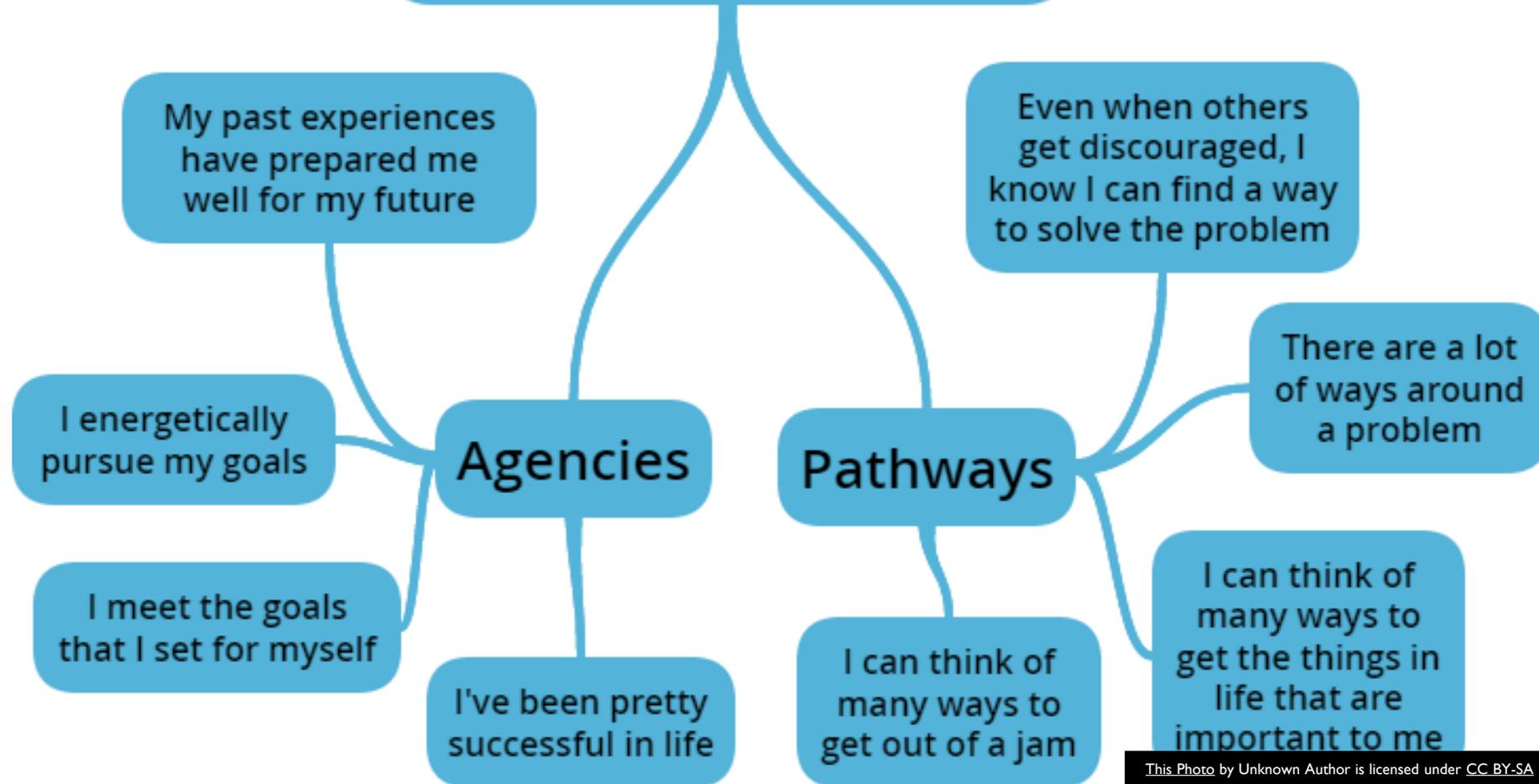
- Attributional style assessed with ASQ
- External attributions protect the self from internal attributions which locate blame for negative events within the individual
- **Confidence based on self's ability to change and manipulate beliefs**
- Means of buoying up control and mastery of self-attributions that could be detrimental to future success

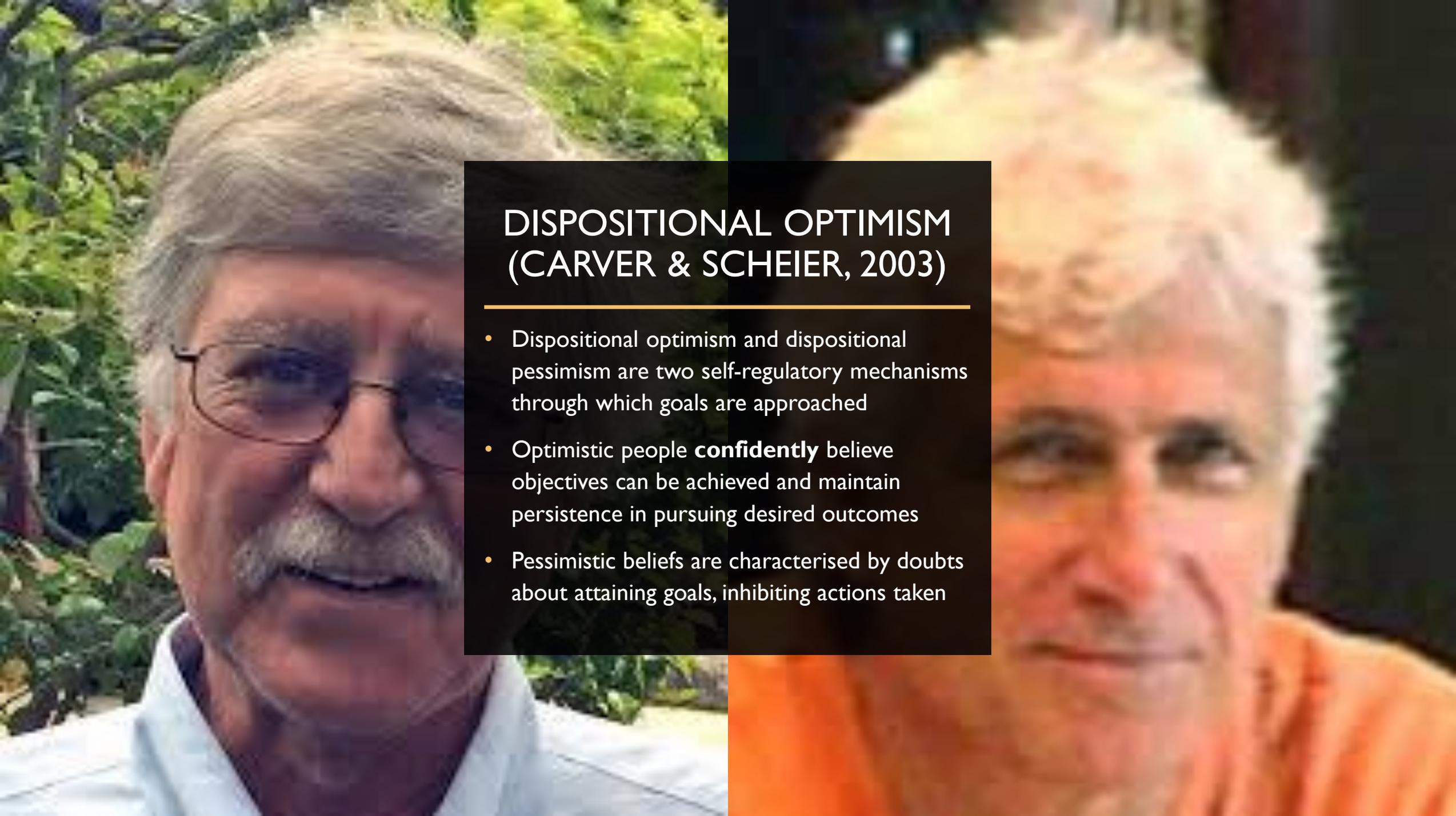
HOPE THEORY (SNYDER, 1994; 1997)

- According to the late Charles Snyder, 'hope' consists of two factors: 'agency thinking' and 'pathways thinking'
- Agency thinking: **belief in one's ability** to reach goals
- Pathways thinking: **problem-solving** to reach desired outcomes
- Model: composite of self-efficacy and problem-solving skills?



Hope

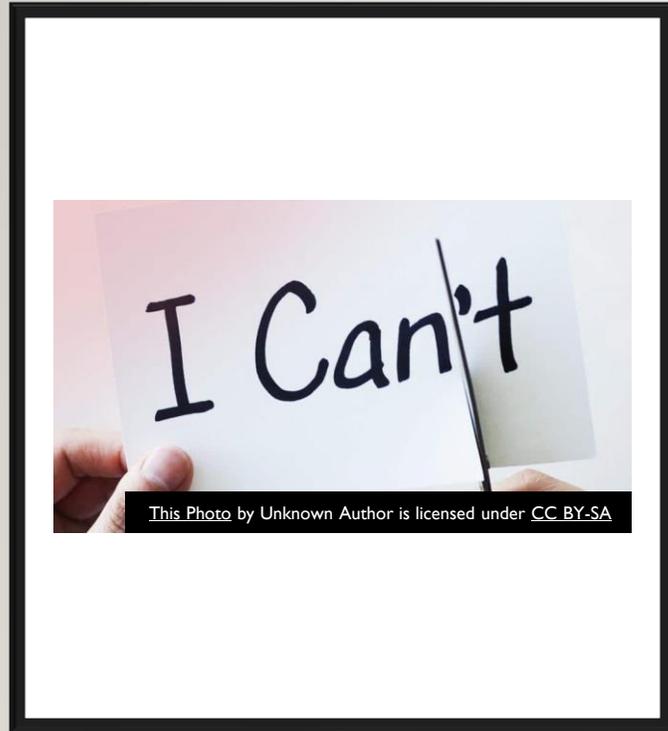




DISPOSITIONAL OPTIMISM (CARVER & SCHEIER, 2003)

- Dispositional optimism and dispositional pessimism are two self-regulatory mechanisms through which goals are approached
- Optimistic people **confidently** believe objectives can be achieved and maintain persistence in pursuing desired outcomes
- Pessimistic beliefs are characterised by doubts about attaining goals, inhibiting actions taken

DISPOSITIONAL OPTIMISM



- The **confidence** that undergirds dispositional optimism can be grounded in luck, divine blessing, other people
- Carver & Scheier distance dispositional optimism from constructs that cast hope or optimism in terms of personal agency or self-efficacy:

‘People who are optimistic can be optimistic because they are **hard-working**, because they are **blessed**, because they are **lucky**, because they have **friends in the right places**, or any combination of these or other factors that produce good outcomes.’ (C&S, 2003, p. 77)

HOPE AND OPTIMISM AS ‘HEDONIC RESOURCES’

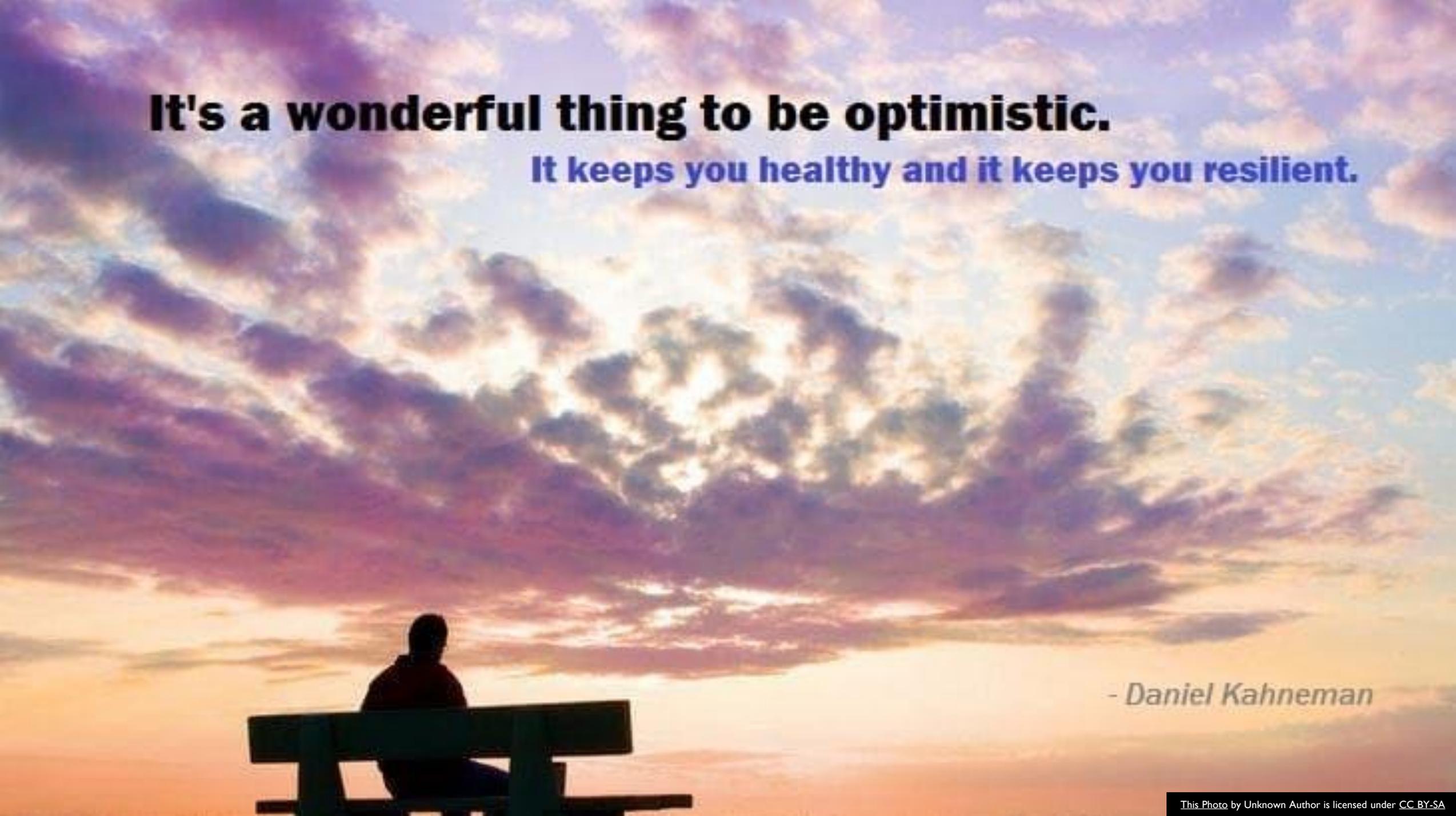
Largely cognitive, potentially modifiable personal traits that ground hope/optimism in

- Beliefs about personal agency
- Problem-solving skills

Which have instrumental benefit in enabling an individual's

- Pursuit of desired goals
- Happiness and wellbeing



A person is silhouetted while sitting on a park bench, looking out at a vast, dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds that are illuminated from below, creating a mix of warm orange, yellow, and purple tones. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

It's a wonderful thing to be optimistic.

It keeps you healthy and it keeps you resilient.

- Daniel Kahneman



Choose to be
optimistic, it
feels better. ~
Dalai Lama XIV

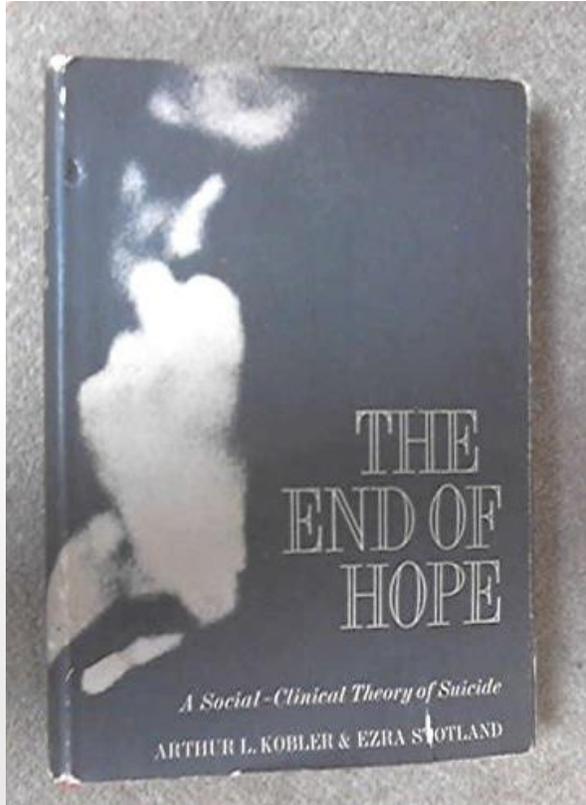
www.theoptimistblog.com





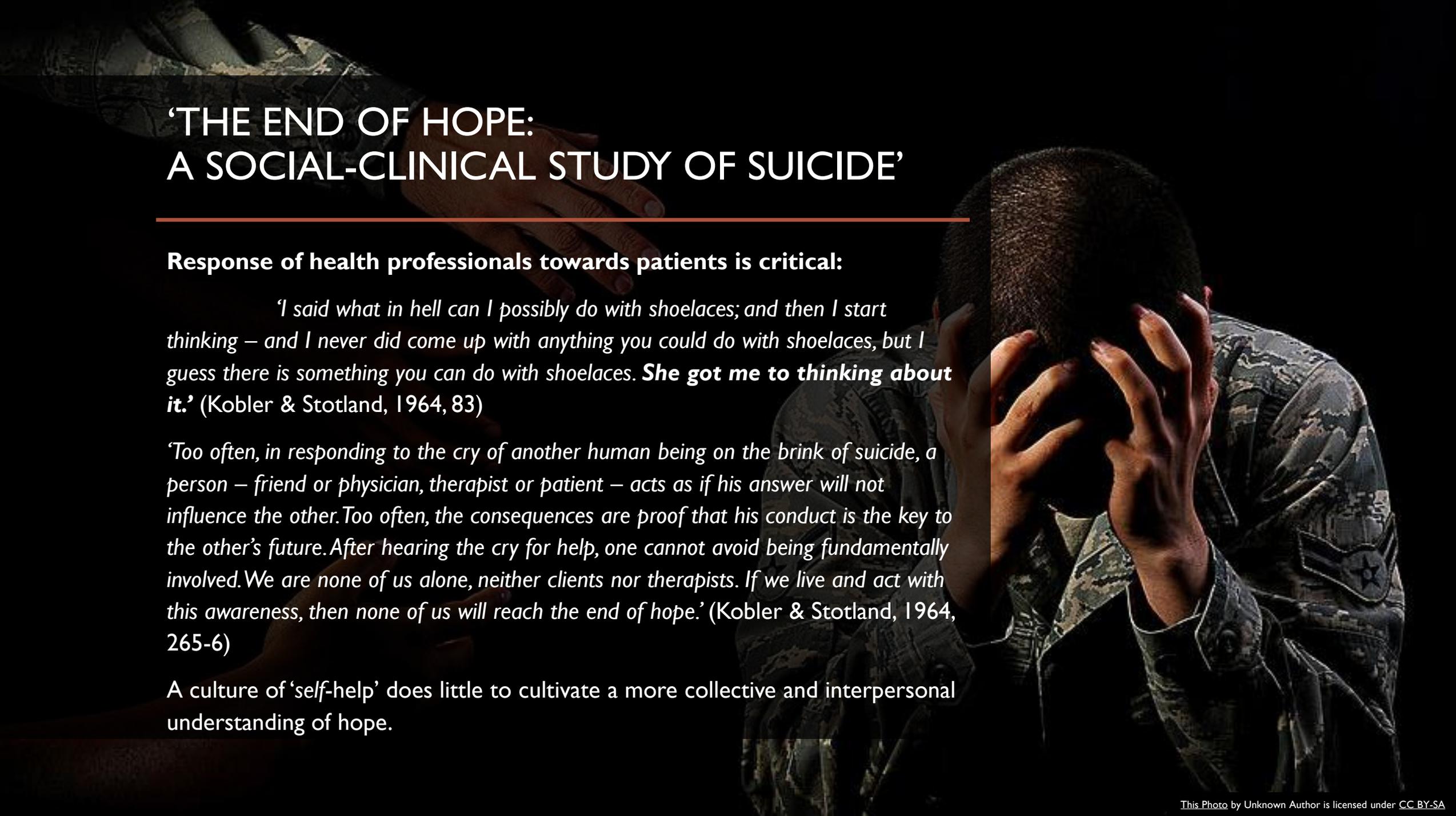
LET'S TURN BACK THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL CLOCK...

'THE END OF HOPE' KOBLER & STOTLAND (1964)



- Psychoanalytic, 'field theoretical'* approach
- Hope is greatly affected by significant others in their environment
- Studied a suicide epidemic in an US psychiatric hospital
- Whether important people in the troubled individual's world **imagined** the worst, *if they themselves had lost hope* in recovery, was (literally) vital in determining whether suicide occurred

*a psychological theory which examines patterns of interaction between the individual and his or her environment



'THE END OF HOPE: A SOCIAL-CLINICAL STUDY OF SUICIDE'

Response of health professionals towards patients is critical:

*'I said what in hell can I possibly do with shoelaces; and then I start thinking – and I never did come up with anything you could do with shoelaces, but I guess there is something you can do with shoelaces. **She got me to thinking about it.**' (Kobler & Stotland, 1964, 83)*

'Too often, in responding to the cry of another human being on the brink of suicide, a person – friend or physician, therapist or patient – acts as if his answer will not influence the other. Too often, the consequences are proof that his conduct is the key to the other's future. After hearing the cry for help, one cannot avoid being fundamentally involved. We are none of us alone, neither clients nor therapists. If we live and act with this awareness, then none of us will reach the end of hope.' (Kobler & Stotland, 1964, 265-6)

A culture of 'self-help' does little to cultivate a more collective and interpersonal understanding of hope.

HOPE AND AGENCY

Most psychological theories of 'hope'/'optimism' envisage them as a modifiable properties of *individuals* (Gulliford, *in press, Acta Philosophica*)

But hope is *not* simply an 'internal resource' or individual trait. It is sustained in communion with others

There are other agencies *imaginatively involved* in our hoping in friendship

'...hope it a relative idea. It is always relative to the idea of help. It seeks help. It depends. It looks to the outside world.' (William Lynch, 1974, p. 31)

IMAGES OF HOPE

LYNCH (1974)

- Psychoanalyst and priest
- ‘Hope-in’ therapist – confidence as **trust**
- Hope and **imagination** – ‘the ability to wish is the momentum to hope’
- Imagination can be ‘fantastic’ or creatively flexible (c.f. S.T. Coleridge)
- **‘Putting on the imagination of (a trusted) other’**



LYNCH, 1974, 23-4



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‘Hope not only imagines; it imagines with. We are so habituated to conceiving of the imagination as a private act of the human spirit that we now find it impossible to conceive of a common act of imagining with. But **what happens in despair is that the private imagination, of which we are so enamoured, reaches the point of the end of inward resource and must put on the imagination of another if it is to find a way out.** Whereas, a more public act of the imagination comes far closer, I think, to describing the saving process that goes on in the modern psychotherapies; **two imaginations, that of the patient and the doctor, work together to discover and enlarge the possibilities of a situation.**’

DEPENDENT & AUTONOMOUS ASPECTS OF HOPE

- Hope from its inception in the symbiosis of mother and child, involves the ability to depend on and receive from another.
- Hope, as hope-in is the most elementary kind of hope (Erik Erikson's 'basic trust')
- We learn hope-that (the will-nature model), the agentic kind of hope later in our development
- Learned Optimism and Hope theory epitomise the agentic, autonomous aspects of hope where we act on the world to bring about what we hope for



IS HOPE A VIRTUE?

Hope as a virtue of self-management/regulation

Hope as a virtue of humanity/transcendence?

SUMMARY

Positive psychology has tended to envisage hope/optimism *intrapersonally*

Grounds hope and optimism in individual agency, will, planning, goal-setting, problem-solving

Where goals are specific and where it is possible to exercise a high degree of and control over events it may be possible to translate the waiting of hope into action by making plans and strategies – the autonomous aspect of hope

However, there is more to hope than an individual exercise in cognitive reappraisal. It is beneficial to take control of one's own thinking, mindful that we may not be helping ourselves if we fail to see how habitual patterns of thought can unseat us...

But we may not be able to bring about all that we hope for through our own efforts

SUMMARY

Intrapersonal hope also requires a degree of **imagination**, to envisage the future

Crucially **hope exists *between* agents** too; it can be kindled by significant others

Hoping-in is a key aspect of hope in psychoanalytic psychologies; the therapist is the proximate ground of *hope-in* (for many, the ultimate ground is God)

Imagination enlivens our individual and collective hopes

EMILY DICKINSON

The gleam of an heroic Act
Such strange illumination
The Possible's slow fuse is lit
By the Imagination.

