

Hope

Snyder, Irving & Anderson (1991, as cited in Snyder, 2000, p.8) define hope as *“a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)”*.

Hope theory can be subdivided into four categories:

1. **Goals** that are valuable and uncertain are described by Snyder (1994, as cited in Snyder, 2000, p.9) as the anchors of hope theory as they provide direction and an endpoint for hopeful thinking.
2. **Pathway thoughts** refer to the routes we take to achieve our desired goals and the individual's perceived ability to produce these routes (Snyder, 2000).
3. **Agency thoughts** refer to the motivation we have to undertake the routes towards our goals.
4. **Barriers** block the attainment of our goals and in the event of a barrier we can either give up or we can use our pathway thoughts to create new routes.

Goal attainment has been found to be associated with **positive emotions** (Snyder et al, 1996), whereas goal blockages are related to negative emotions (Diener, 1984); however this is not always the case.

High hope individuals do not react in the same way to barriers as low hope individuals, instead they view barriers as challenges to overcome and use their pathway thoughts to plan an alternative route to their goals (Snyder, 1994 as cited in Snyder, 2000 p. 10). High hope has been found to correlate with a number of beneficial constructs including, academic achievement (Snyder et al, 2002) and lower levels of depression (Snyder et al, 1997). Meanwhile low hope is associated with negative outcomes including a reduction in well-being (Diener, 1984).

Measurement Tools to Measure Hope

Researchers have developed **measurement tools** that assess levels of hope as well as agency and pathway thoughts. But what are the purposes of such assessments? Snyder, (1995) has suggested several uses, including predicting outcomes among a sample and providing extra support for those who are low in hope, (e.g. in an educational setting where hope has been identified as predicting achievement).

Retrieved from <http://positivepsychology.org.uk/hope-theory-snyder-adult-scale/>

After listening and thinking about the actual definitions of these words, let's personalize this. What is hope to you? Please close your eyes and think about the future.

What image comes to mind first?

How long did it take for you to see something?

For most, it only takes a few seconds to imagine something that we want to happen in our lives. From the time we wake, we are working towards our goals whether they are long term or short term. Our motivation is critical to achieving our goals. Hope is our overall personal thought as to whether we can meet our goals.

Do you have the willpower/energy to keep moving towards your goals?

Are you able to construct pathways/routes to achieve your goals?

Worksheet 3.4 The Adult Trait Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991)

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please circle the number next to each item that best describes YOU.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Definitely False	Mostly False	Somewhat False	Slightly False	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Definitely True

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 2. I energetically pursue my goals
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 3. I feel tired most of the time
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 4. There are lots of ways around any problem
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 5. I am easily downed in an argument
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that
are most important to me
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 7. I worry about my health
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can
find a way to solve the problem
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9. My past experiences have prepared me for my future
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10. I've been pretty successful in life
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 11. I usually find myself worrying about something
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 12. I meet the goals that I set for myself

Scoring information

Pathways subscale score: Add items 1, 4, 6, and 8. Scores on this subscale can range from 4 to 32, with higher scores indicating higher levels of pathways thinking.

Agency subscale score: Add items 2, 9, 10, and 12. Scores on this subscale can range from 4 to 32, with higher scores indicating higher levels of agency thinking.

Total hope score: Add the pathways and Agency subscales together. Scores can range from 8 to 64, with higher scores representing higher hope levels.

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