

*Cultivating*  
HOPE



*Weekly Readings to Open Your Heart and Mind*

KAREN CASEY

CULTIVATING  
HOPE



WEEKLY READINGS TO OPEN  
YOUR HEART AND MIND

*Karen Casey*

HAZELDEN

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## *Dedication*

I want to dedicate this book to all the men and women who have inspired me to be hopeful, sometimes in the face of very difficult circumstances. Without the hope I have been blessed with, I would not be able to pass it on to others. That's the beauty of hope. To keep it, we must be willing to give it away to those who are looking to us. In this way, the circle is made whole.



*“Hope arouses, as nothing else can arouse,  
a passion for the possible.”*

WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN JR.



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I want to acknowledge my friends who shared their own stories of hope with me so that I could pass those stories on to you. And I want to acknowledge my many friends at Hazelden as well. My work as a writer began at Hazelden nearly thirty years ago, and I am so grateful for the continuing opportunity

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Last, but certainly not least, I want to acknowledge my family for their continuing love and support. And even though my parents have passed on, I feel the flutter of their wings on many occasions and I know they hover, passing on the peace of their love to me as I continue to navigate through this world.



## *Introduction*

Why write a book on hope? I've given this question careful consideration, and the more I ruminated about the topic, the more compelled I was to write about it. Perhaps that's because my life is now a testament to hope. When I wandered into the rooms of Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous nearly thirty-five years ago, I was bereft of hope—and I didn't even know it. I was simply numb and confused, and I wanted someone to save me, preferably another relationship partner.

I had always tied my dreams and what hope I had to having a significant other, one who would adore me, comfort me, and never reject me. But I had failed to capture that person, except for short spells. Surprisingly, my first marriage lasted twelve years, probably because my husband was as insecure as I was. Every relationship that followed was much shorter-lived. I simply didn't understand that relationships were partnerships. I wanted to hold someone hostage, forever. As one rejection followed on the heels of another, I became more desperate, and the solace I sought from alcohol and drugs took center stage in my life.

When I walked into my first Twelve Step meeting in 1974, I had no idea what was in store for me or what my future held. I went at the suggestion of a counselor. I stayed because I sensed that the men and women in the room felt as I had always hoped

to feel. They laughed easily and hugged often. They listened to one another intently. They seemed to truly care. And they talked about hope and its availability to any one of us who really wanted to make different choices. I can remember wondering what they really meant when they talked in those terms. All I really wanted out of life was for *others* to change, which I felt would ensure my security. Hearing that it was *me* who had to change was not easy to accept or understand. But I stuck around anyway.

Since that time so many years ago, I have discovered, and bathed in, the awesome power of hope. Along with the ever-necessary willingness, hope is the trigger that can change every perspective one holds dear. And the hope that each of us passes on just may be the trigger that can help heal all members of the human community in time—not just ourselves, not just those close to us, but people we will never meet or know were touched by our lives.

What is it about the vision of hope that gives it all of this power? I'm not a believer in absolutes, but I think hope opens our minds to possibilities that have always existed but that we have not entertained because of fear. When hope opens the door to these possibilities, we have to decide if we want to change or live as we have always lived. Giving up the known for the unknown is not a decision made lightly. Fortunately, we have the example of others to help us see the prudence in following our hearts and making the change that will lead us to a better experience now and tomorrow.

I am grateful to be surrounded by people in recovery who have been led by this vision of hope and who have made this

choice to change, again and again. While not everyone reading this book will be in a Twelve Step program where change is a necessary constant, everyone has been touched at some point in their lives by people who have followed their hearts and made changes that grew out of a feeling of hope for something different. I think it's incumbent on those of us who have been led by our experiences with hope to serve as examples to others that change is possible for them, too.

In fact, I'd go one step further and say I believe that everyone sharing in the message of this book has somehow been selected to show others that there is another way to think and live. Perhaps it sounds a bit grandiose, but I think we, as believers in hope, can take the reins and usher in real change, change that just might be felt across the earth if we allow ourselves to cherish hope, rather than hopelessness, about our lives and the world as we perceive it.

One of the most important concepts I have been introduced to over the last three decades—and it's a concept that's consistent with many spiritual paths—is that all members of the human community are interconnected. Even modern science supports this reality. We are not separate entities. We are not even separate from the “stuff” of our environment. Our egos push us to think we are separate, and in the process, they push us to compete, to argue, to create wars big and small. But we are One. With all that exists, we are One. And by embracing hope, we have an opportunity to align our thinking with this idea. When we have done so, when we see ourselves as joined with our fellow travelers everywhere, we discover a peace that indeed *surpasses all understanding*. Most of us have to



## INTRODUCTION

first develop hope that this is even a possibility, however. And it is *my* hope that this book can be helpful in doing just that.

I write about love and how its expression heals the one who offers it as well as the one who receives it. I write about anger and how understanding the true nature of anger is key to changing our outlook. Realizing that holding judgments against anyone also holds us hostage is illustrated throughout the book. Comprehending that everything we experience can be the pathway to a more hopeful and peaceful life allows us to celebrate rather than dread whatever comes our way. The stories introducing each month's reflections show how the lives of twelve people have been dramatically changed through the power of hope. These individuals faced many obstacles in life, but they refused to give up on hope and drew on the hope that others nurtured for them, lending credence to my belief that hope is possible for us all.

This book is an invitation to embrace a radical but, I believe, necessary idea: *our experiences are all necessary and have been invited by us at an earlier time and place*. We are always where we need to be, sharing space and time with others who are part of our destiny. People who are able to understand and then apply these principles can ultimately realize an inner peace that's so complete that others are changed by their very presence.

This process of seeing anew isn't something that happens overnight, and it may require painstaking effort at times. We didn't get where we are now all at once. We won't get to where we want to be without patience, commitment, and a little willingness. If you take one principle and its accompanying essay and focus on it for a week, letting it inform your habits and your

thoughts for that time, you may find that you have begun to move from your old way of seeing, *and being*, to a way that is far more helpful to yourself and others. We don't change our old ideas easily—nor should we. We need to make informed choices about our behavioral and attitudinal changes. Too often, in our past, we let the ideas of others decide for us willy-nilly what we would believe. I am not offering these ideas for you to adopt unless they fit for you. But I do invite you to find out whether or not you feel better about your potential, about your journey, about your fellow travelers after practicing the suggestions and reading the stories of success contained in this book.

The time is ripe for change. The world seems to be in turmoil, and I think it's because many of us are in turmoil, too, that our inner world is manifested in the outer world we share. But I also think cultivating hope will lead to inner peace that can anchor us in a mind-set that says, "I can see a better day ahead, for me and for those I love." If every one of us reading these essays and stories of hope actually believed this and gave it a try, we could positively affect any number of the people who travel our path with us every day. Our interconnectedness makes this indisputable. And everyone we affect with our new vision of hope will be encouraged to see differently, too. If we want a different life, a different set of experiences, a different, more hopeful world, we must be agents of change. There is no better time than now. Won't you join me in this effort?

### *How to Use This Book*

How you use this book is ultimately up to you, but here are a few suggestions: The book is divided into twelve themes,

## INTRODUCTION

one for each month. Each month begins with a story of hope followed by an essay, or reflection, for each week. Additional reflections are included on page 181 for those months that have an extra week in a given year. I have chosen these stories because of how moved I was by them. Gathering stories from others has always been one of the joys of my recovery. It's my hope that they speak to you as they spoke to me. Knowing that others have overcome unfathomable odds allows us the privilege of holding on to the belief that we can do the same and then pass on our stories of success in turn.

The essays for each week can be read once at the beginning of the week or daily, if that's helpful. It's always been my experience that reading an essay one time seldom implants it firmly in my mind, so I do recommend repeated readings. I have also made a few suggestions to consider for the month, which are in keeping with the theme. You might make notes for yourself or journal about your progress at the end of each day or week. If you have another approach that works better for you, please use it. Let us do whatever allows us to move forward with hope and enter each day, each week, lovingly and with help on the tip of our tongues. We can truly make a difference in the lives of everyone we encounter, whether we've known them for years or have only just met them for the first time.

You'll note, too, that the essays' themes are repeated a number of times. That's quite intentional. Spiritual perspectives, particularly if unfamiliar to us, bear repeating many times to be fully heard, fully absorbed, fully applied. And this book is intended to change us so that we might serve as examples to others who might also desire to make changes

in their lives. A friend suggested to me many years ago to approach new spiritual beliefs like mantras, repeating them gently to myself until they feel comfortable, like soft slippers. I found my friend's advice to be extremely valuable, not only because it allowed me the time I needed to incorporate new direction but also because it was kind and loving and forgiving of my many missteps on this new path I was traveling. If the repetition of a particular theme or idea troubles you in any way, simply move on to the next essay or repeat an earlier one. This book should never frustrate you. It's written to offer you solace, direction, and hope. Nothing more but certainly nothing less.

Additionally, there are very few really new ideas, regardless of how many books make a claim to the contrary. I don't want you to think I am suggesting that these ideas and themes are original. They aren't. My knowledge and wisdom have come from many sources, my Higher Power being the primary one, and it's my firm belief that what has come to any one of us is to be given away if we want to keep it for ourselves. We are all part of a healing circle. No one of us is separate from it. Your work, like mine, is to pass on to others that which you have been moved by, changed by, healed by. It's clear that we are here, in this time and place, intentionally. I am delighted to be part of your journey.

Please know that my prayers are with you as you travel this path. It takes all of us to make this a world that each of us can truly thrive in. May you find peace.





# January

## HOPE

*Make yourself necessary to someone.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



*How Much More Can One Person Take?*

*With Hope in Your Heart, a Lot!*

Terry wasn't the first person in her family to have a problem with alcohol, but she was the first one to be officially diagnosed as alcoholic. However, this didn't occur until after she had left a state facility for the mentally ill. Her family had had her committed because they didn't know how to deal with her incessant acting out, and they wanted to get her off the streets. It never occurred to them to have her assessed for alcoholism or drug addiction; doing so wasn't common at the time. The facility didn't recognize her addiction, either. They saw her as mentally ill, period. The facility wasn't a refuge, though, as she was abused and raped during her stay, an incident that enraged her for years. No one believed what had happened, even her family, but at that time and in that place, many things were often overlooked.

Many of Terry's problems with her family stemmed from

her accusation that her father was an alcoholic. Hers was a large Catholic family with lots of drinking and many alcoholics, but naming the problem was against unspoken family rules. Her dad reacted, of course, and so did all the other drinkers in the family. No one wanted to be singled out, so everyone came to his defense, lest they be named next. No one was. Terry was soon institutionalized, and life went on.

When Terry was eventually released, she returned to her former ways, and her drinking and drug use escalated. Some of her siblings joined her now on her escapades. This lifestyle couldn't last long, however, because she couldn't hold down a job. She bunked with friends here and there, but she soon wore out the welcome mat. She abused not only drugs but also her friends, and they turned away from her; she was just too much to handle.

Having no place to go, she wandered into a home that housed runaway kids. There she met the person who became instrumental in her salvation from a dead-end life. He was a gentle man who understood addiction and who listened to her. He didn't think she was crazy, but he did think her problems were more complicated than just addiction. She trusted him, and together they began exploring what help she really needed. The first thing her new friend did was contact her parents, letting them know she was safe. Initially, she resisted, but he promised he wouldn't let them commit her again and that he would help them understand what her struggles were. And here is where recovery eventually began, not just for Terry, but for others in the family, too.

Terry's mother was relieved. Her dad was skeptical; he

had his own addiction to protect, after all. But into treatment Terry went. That, coupled with the proper diagnosis of a treatable mental condition, gave Terry a new start on life. The outpatient treatment program she attended had the reputation of being hard core, and that was just what she needed. The program not only helped her become sober but also gave her the foundation that has supported her sobriety for more than thirty-five years. Unfortunately, she hasn't been free of other conditions, ones that might have pulled a less hopeful person off course.

Her first serious condition was the diagnosis of manic depression, or bipolar disorder. Though it's commonly diagnosed and treated today, back then many didn't understand the disease or its treatment. And the recovery community didn't support the use of any kind of drug, for any reason, even one as legitimate as what Terry needed to function in the world. Fortunately, she had a counselor who helped her understand how crucial her medication was. Terry continues to take this medication and lives a life free of mania and depression.

She was advised to go off her medication during her two pregnancies, and she experienced psychotic episodes both times. These experiences were harrowing, but she came through them with the help of understanding doctors, a family who finally accepted her condition, and a husband who was trained to administer to these circumstances. Since that time, she has been episode free and comfortably sober.

Were her story to end here, it would still exemplify the power of hope. But there was and is so much more to Terry's story. About ten years ago, she was diagnosed with cancer of



the pelvic bone. She had experienced pain in her hip for more than a year but had assumed that it was a strained muscle from exercising too much. Doctors and physical therapists treated her symptoms but didn't look for an underlying problem. When the cancer was finally diagnosed, major surgery was immediately ordered to remove part of her pelvic bone. The operation took a team of doctors most of a day, and she was put in a body cast that she would need to wear for the next twelve months. Twelve months totally incapacitated!

With two young children and a marriage straining under enormous pressures, she lived one day at a time, moment by painful moment. The chaos that had hounded her mind before she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder returned, not because of the disorder this time, but from the circumstances of a life totally beyond her control.

Terry owes her survival of this ordeal first to the tools of her recovery program and next to the people who came to help with her daily needs. They cared for her children, assisted with her personal needs, and relieved her of the feeling that survival was all on her shoulders—shoulders literally locked into a body cast. Even though her husband was still in her life, he was having difficulty coping with the many changes to his marriage and family. Few of us are taught strategies for dealing with the kinds of enormous complexities that Terry and her family faced. Her family of origin helped as much as possible, but they, too, were ill equipped to deal with these conditions.

In a book on hope, I'd like to say Terry had plenty of it throughout her convalescence, but that wasn't always the case. There were many hopeless days and even weeks. That she main-

tained her sanity throughout the constant chaos and sadness over this turn of events means that someone was holding out hope for her while she struggled to muster any herself. That's one of the key messages here: one person having hope keeps the flame ignited and inspires others to nurture hope in their own hearts. Many people were drawn into the circle of hope for Terry. Recovery meetings were carried to her home as readily as were meals for her children. She was never abandoned to her fears about her condition and her future.

Doctors couldn't guarantee that when the cast came off she'd be able to walk, at least not without crutches. Her worst fears were realized, in fact. She has not been able to walk unaided and never will be able to. Since getting the cast removed, Terry has moved many times, trying to find a home that accommodates her needs. Quietly and resiliently, her family has moved as well, and Terry continues to handle a seemingly impossible position with grace, even with wit.

But the story doesn't end here. Two years ago, with the return of intense pain, doctors performed surgery again. They believed Terry might be a candidate for a new prosthesis. For a while, it looked like they were right, and she proudly walked, a tiny bit, using just one cane. But the experiment didn't prove to be effective for very long. Terry is now back to the wheelchair and occasionally the crutches.

Stress fractures are taking their toll on her body but not her mind. Miraculously, she looks at her life with gratitude every day. And this gratitude strengthens her. Terry's story demonstrates that any situation is survivable if we are willing to allow for the gift of hope being offered by others. Tragedies

may live in the chaos of our minds, but we don't have to be ruled by them. We can, instead, take charge and live fully in spite of our challenges. Terry now has a car equipped with a lift, and she is out and about, at meetings, at lunch with friends, at the grocery store. It is a privilege to watch Terry and to be able to pass on what she teaches us. She is a living example of what we can do if we gather the hope of others and couple it with a belief in a Power greater than ourselves.



*January Suggestions for Cultivating Hope*

1. Find or buy a small notebook or journal that you can keep with you, in a pocket or purse or backpack. During this month, list examples of ways other people demonstrated hope in their lives that you were privileged to observe. Write as much or as little as you like; a line or two describing each example is usually sufficient.
2. Make a note of the times you offered the hand of hope to someone else. Describe how giving to others in this way lifted your own spirits.
3. If someone reaches out to you when you are feeling afraid or troubled in any way, make a note of it at the end of the day (or even right after the help was offered). Help is constantly available if we avail ourselves of it.
4. At the end of each week, review what you have written and ask your Higher Power to help you become even more observant.

*One Can Be Hopeful or Judgmental, but  
Not in the Same Moment.*

Negative judgment is a topic I'll turn to numerous times in this book because of how much harm it inflicts in our lives. It hurts the one sitting in judgment, the one being judged, even those merely perceiving its occurrence. And yet we all judge; no one is immune. In our families of origin, many of us felt the sting of judgment on a regular basis when we were small, often unfairly—so the die was cast. We learned to recognize and then to mimic this behavior. As a consequence, hope was often in short supply.

Wherever two or more are gathered, the opportunity for passing judgment may rear its ugly head. Holding back our judgment—letting those in our homes, at work, even strangers live free of our judgment—takes both vigilance and willingness. My own experience is a testament to this.

Lest I be misunderstood, not all judgment is bad; there are no absolutes. For example, a judgment has been rendered when we decide to help another person. We make the “judgment” to see another person's needs as worthy of our concern. And offering suggestions to others based on our personal experiences, and then letting go of what they do with the suggestions, is judgment of another kind. Judgment in these instances is not harmful.

So how does hope relate to judgment? As already stated, we can't hold judgment and hope in our minds simultaneously. One has to be relinquished. Unfortunately, it is often hope

that we give up, perhaps because of its unfamiliarity. However, one moment at a time, we can make the commitment to release the negative and nurture hope instead. It begins with a decision, perhaps to do something as simple as asking a friend to be hopeful *for* us. (Two minds are always better than one.) The idea of making the decision to be hopeful may seem ludicrous, but we have to begin somewhere.

It has been helpful for me to reflect on the past and note where my journey took a turn for the better in spite of me. I believe that Someone was in charge, and it wasn't me—perhaps acting through someone else who was holding out hope for me. I am convinced that there is and always has been a *Presence* who was keeping me safe. And I have hope that this Presence will never leave my side.

Hope is elusive, only because it isn't treasured enough. It can become as strong in our lives as any other characteristic. Start by seeing hope as a muscle that needs to be exercised. Then practice strengthening it in small ways. For instance, muster some hope that you can finish a small task that you have been putting off and ask a friend to offer you some of her hope as well. Hope can help us to accomplish any feat. Beginning small and experiencing success will be the impetus we need to see how it will help us achieve our dreams.

*Hope isn't mysterious. We simply haven't taken  
advantage of it. Today we can.*



*Being Hopeful Opens the Door to Real Possibility.*

Feeling hopeless about a situation in your life makes all forward movement seem impossible. It's not an accident that we have people around us who can share our sorrows and express hope for us when our own is depleted. Our lives are quite intentional. You've probably heard it said that nothing happens by accident. When we're down, another person appears who can show us the rainbow that's hidden from our view. She didn't appear by chance. She had an assignment. You fulfill that "assignment" on occasion, too, for others.

I like believing in angels, both ones wearing skin and ones "from the other side." The nudging we get from them when it's time to give up a worn-out idea just can't be ignored. We might not let the idea go willingly, but our "messenger" persists until we acknowledge the nudge. Instead of fighting it, we can see it as the inspiration to welcome new opportunities into our lives. We aren't passing through this experience haphazardly. We have guides, and we have assignments. We have others who need our presence to show them the way, too.

Knowing that we are never alone in our struggles is reason for hope. Nothing will ever be beyond our capabilities because so much help surrounds us. Much of it we can't see, and we often ignore the signs that are always there. But the people who wander into our gatherings, large or small, have always been invited. What an awesome awareness. We don't always appreciate the "wanderers." That's okay. They don't need our appreciation to do their work.

It reminds me of an “angel” who came to my rescue nearly thirty-five years ago. Her name was Pat. I had flirted with the idea of suicide hundreds of times since childhood, but I was never closer to taking action than I was this time. I had even laid out what I needed on the kitchen table. And then a stranger knocked at the door, interrupting my plans. It was an insistent knock. Reluctantly, I opened the door, and as Pat entered, my life changed. The details of this experience aren’t what’s important for now (and I’ll share them later); what is crucial is that I didn’t know her. Even though we had apparently made an appointment to talk, proof that she shared with me from her calendar, I had no knowledge of having met her before.

After a short time together, Pat left, and my world had shifted. She was the symbol of hope that had died in my life. What she shared with me about the hopeless state I was in had a ring of truth to it. I knew from the story she shared that God was waiting for me to finish the work I had been called to do. Pat was my bridge to the other side of the dark abyss. I have thought about her many times over the years, but I never saw her again. All that I have done since that fateful day is owing to her rescue. She saved my life by igniting hope in me where a void had been. Ever since, I have considered it part of my work to try to pass on hope to others.

*Passing on hope may be little more than offering  
the hand of friendship to a stranger. Sometimes, it’s  
merely taking the time to pray with a friend, or alone on  
her behalf. Holding hope in our hearts for those who are  
lacking it is the easiest way we can make a difference.*



*Hope Is the Pathway to Getting  
What You Want Out of Life.*

I didn't know what I wanted out of life. Primarily, I just wanted someone to notice me, to love me, to promise to never leave me. I wanted someone to make me the center of his life just as I had made him the center of mine. I look back on those years with embarrassment, and yet I simply didn't know who else to be. My role models struggled with the same issues.

And then I was introduced to recovery and the idea that I could make other choices for how to be and how to view my relationships. I was astounded to realize there were myriad ways to perceive situations that attracted my involvement, ways that didn't put me *or the other person* at the center of the experience. I was also astounded to realize I didn't need to live my life around anyone else's choices anymore—only my own.

I saw many people at many Twelve Step meetings who described how hope had encouraged them to make better choices, improving every aspect of their lives. I knew that if they could do it, so could I. I kept listening and changing. And hope, first theirs and then finally my own, became my inspiration.

I never expected to do what I have ended up doing with my life. But that tiny word, *hope*, opened my mind and then the doors to the journey I continue to make and cherish. This isn't something that only happens for a few of us, let me assure you. Hope is a gift to all of us. If we struggle to



find hope during difficult times, others are available to help us. We now know that hope can be taught. Emphasizing our strengths, letting them take the lead in our decisions for self-care, will create in us the potential—the hope—we need to make the changes that can help us get what we really want out of life.

When used as a therapeutic method, this is called Hope Therapy. But it doesn't need a clinical label to be valid and important—it's something we all can learn to do in our everyday lives. We all have strengths. Even when our ability to see them is clouded by our defects, they still exist. It may be necessary to ask others to help us see them at times. If so, see that as intentional, because it's a gift to ask others for that kind of help. We travel together because we are supposed to be helping each other. It's a give-and-take that benefits us all.

I have discovered that one of my strengths is "hearing" the message behind the message that someone is sharing. I believe God has made this a possibility for the work I have been called to do. You have been called to do your own special work. If you don't think you are presently doing it, seek to know your strengths. If you can't recognize your strengths right now, ask your fellow travelers what they see.

*Getting what you want out of life and getting what God wants you to have might run on opposite tracks for a time. But when you have hope and a willingness to be your better self, the two "wants" will come together. Your life's real work depends on it.*



*When People Are Unkind, It's Usually  
Because They're Afraid.*

This might well be one of the most accessible principles we can use when faced with people who are difficult—work colleagues or phone solicitors or shoppers pushing their way through the grocery store, for instance. Some days, difficult people seem to be everywhere. And yet, there are some people who insist that no one is really difficult. This was true for my aunt, who died last year at age ninety-nine; it was her philosophy that people who appeared hard to deal with were simply having a bad day. She considered encounters with them an opportunity to say something extra nice. She said doing this made her feel good. I am confident her comments eased their struggles, too.

I've never met anyone who was more peaceful than Aunt Helen. She had a radiance about her that caught your attention, and people, young and old, loved being with her. She lived a joyful life even though she had lost her husband early in life and had to raise six children alone. She told me she never felt the need to remarry because she was filled to the brim with love for her husband, Leo. She never felt sorry for herself and never looked at others in anger or with envy.

Her way of seeing the world makes sense, I think. She lived her life in a way that, both directly and indirectly, passed on hope to others whether they were in crisis or just in need of comforting words. How often do we fail to notice the many people around us who are struggling? How frequently do we turn away when a smile might make all the difference to someone

feeling sad or afraid? Probably often. If we consider that people who aren't connecting with us might be afraid, this makes for potentially very different and kinder encounters. Reconsidering what kind of response we might make to someone crossing our path could be the turning point in both of our lives.

I was exposed to what anger can do to a person in my family of origin. All the time I was growing up, I had no idea that fear was likely at the root of it. Had I understood how insidious fear could be and how it could infect every dynamic of a family, I would have been far more forgiving of my father's rage. Fortunately, before his death, I learned from a woman far wiser than me about the depth and the meaning of the struggle that had controlled his life. My compassion for my father fostered my willingness to have greater compassion for others, too. From every circumstance, we can glean important information that will make the rest of our journey smoother.

Anger can be interpreted as a catalyst for kindness, which in turn paves the way for a more hopeful journey. This idea might seem like a stretch at first, but it has changed my life in significant ways. Hope can seem to be in short supply in our world. Making a space for it anywhere is worth the effort.

*Our encounters with others need never be dreaded  
or judged. They simply are, and accepting them  
and the lessons they bear make us the hopeful guides  
the world is waiting for. Hope can be created from  
nothing more than willingness. Being kind is one  
element of the change the world needs.*



*Best-selling author Karen Casey offers a yearlong program to guide us in opening ourselves to the awesome power of hope.*

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**KAREN CASEY, Ph.D.**, is the author of many books devoted to the enhancement of one's personal and spiritual journey. Her first book, *Each Day a New Beginning: Daily Meditations for Women*, has sold more than three million copies.

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