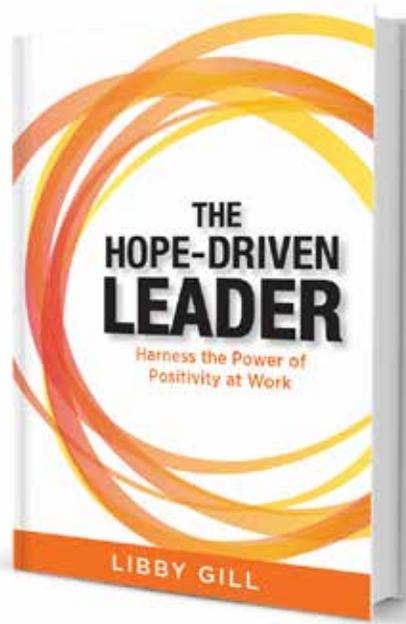


# **THE HOPE-DRIVEN LEADER**

**Harness the Power of  
Positivity at Work**

Excerpt from “The Hope-Driven Leader” Book

**LIBBY GILL**



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## **Welcome. I'm so glad you're here!**

I'm sure you've noticed that the business and self-help shelves are overflowing with success books, but I want to share a totally fresh perspective on the topic of leadership: hope.

Whether you are experiencing change, challenge, or even chaos, I want to help you create a more purposeful and productive workplace by exploring the science of hope theory which comes from the medical and positive psychology communities. By applying these principles – what I see as the interconnection between beliefs and behaviors – you can shift mindsets from siloed to collaborative and productivity levels from sluggish to robust.

The Hope-Driven Leader is not about feel-good theory or dry data. It's an action guide informed by the thousands of people I've coached in both the corporate and entrepreneurial worlds around the globe. You'll learn specific skills based on research and illustrated by personal stories and case studies including how to:

- Enhance your leadership skills and style
- Craft a meaningful and memorable personal brand
- Become an influencer
- Manage global teams
- Navigate high-impact conversations
- Handle challenges specific to women leaders
- Harness hope and positivity as the jet fuel for work and life!

Whether you are a rising star or a seasoned leader in your own business, a corporation, or your community, The Hope-Driven Leader offers you a roadmap for instilling those positive beliefs and behaviors into the core of your being and the culture of your workplace. Let the journey begin!

## **Advance praise for The Hope-Driven Leader**

"To be intentional about creating a culture of hope is a powerful driver of performance and results...This is much more than a feel-good book about hope. It's a 'how-to' book about putting hope to work in our businesses and in our lives." - Joe Calloway, author, *Be The Best At What Matters Most*

"Having HOPE is something we all struggle with at some point in our lives. It's comforting to know that others have fought this same battle and have come out the other side, happier, healthier and yes, more hopeful. This is a book for anyone who dreams big, cares for others as well as themselves and who fearlessly tackles each day as it comes." - Tracey Noonan, CEO & Co-Founder of Wicked Good Cupcakes, Inc.

"Libby Gill has done it again, though we should hardly be surprised. She's an amazing mentor and teacher, as well as a practitioner! In this book, she shows us why the concept of hope is significantly different from what most think it is, and how we can utilize it correctly, strategically, and methodically in order to become the best leader we can be and add exceptional value to the lives of everyone we touch!" - Bob Burg, co-author of *The Go-Giver* and *The Go-Giver Influencer*

"In *The Hope-Driven Leader*, Libby Gill expertly guides readers through actionable steps and exercises to bring hope into their lives and the lives of others. Whether you are a business leader, a community leader, or simply want to foster hope within your own family, *The Hope-Driven Leader* is a must-read." - Louis Efron, *Forbes* and *HuffPost* contributor and author of *Purpose Meets Execution* and *How to Find a Job, Career and Life You Love*

"This is your action guide to smarter leadership, more effective teams, and bigger, better, faster results. Smart, generous, and impactful. Buy a copy for everyone on your team." - David Newman, CSP, author of *Do It! Marketing*

## **Harnessing Hope Jet Fuel for the Journey of Work and Life**

"He who has health has hope. And he who has hope has everything."  
-Arabic Proverb

I got my first big career break when I was hired by a television production and distribution company founded by the legendary TV producer Norman Lear, creator of such hits as All in the Family. Prior to that, I had knocked around Hollywood for almost a decade, working as a studio temp or production assistant or, one too hot summer, as a tap dancing bear at a local amusement park. I was beyond thrilled when I landed a job at Lear's Embassy Communications, a job that included a parking space and healthcare benefits. I had finally arrived.

But the dawn of the morning I was scheduled to start as executive assistant to the VP of public relations and promotion, I got a call from my father in Florida that threw off not only my start date, but also my way of looking at the world. My dad had left a message on my answering machine (remember those?) the night before that was so garbled I couldn't tell what he was saying. It was late when I got the message so I decided I would call him in the morning. He called a second time around 5 am to tell me that my stepmother Fran, with whom I'd spent a big portion of my life, had committed suicide.

There was nothing I could do but call the office and tell my new boss that I'd have to start a week later. I didn't tell him the reason. I didn't tell anyone. I just went home to Florida and helped my dad plan a funeral and clean out Fran's closets. When I got back to work the next week, something had changed. The new job and the new boss were exactly as expected, but something felt terribly wrong. Me.

I'd come back from Florida - where I'd had a less-than-happy childhood punctuated by a revolving door of step-siblings, multiple household relocations, and six high schools over the course of six years - feeling lost and broken. I'd suffered the same tragedies as lots of people, (okay - maybe more than some), but still I couldn't seem to find my equilibrium. So I did the only thing I knew how to do - work.

It was as if Fran's suicide had woken me to the fact that time was precious and I didn't want to waste it on bad decisions, unsatisfying relationships, or work that didn't fulfill me. But I felt so powerless in my little job and my little apartment, I had no idea what or how to change. One particularly lonely night several months after Fran had died, my roommate was away for the weekend and I wandered into the kitchen to look for something that would either numb or comfort me. Neither of us took drugs, so that was out. There wasn't any chocolate in the house, so that wasn't an option. But I found a big bottle of brandy from some long-ago recipe and decided that would have to do the trick.

I downed a glass, then another, then the thought struck me that I had never tried on Fran's mink coat, my sole inheritance which my father had insisted I take home with me after her funeral. I opened my closet, unzipped the garment bag and put on the coat. To my great surprise, the weight of that fur, or maybe the weight of my own pain, brought me to my knees. I stumbled, then crawled into the hallway of my apartment, still wrapped in the mink, the bottle of brandy in my hand. I stayed there crying my eyes out for what might have been the entire weekend, grateful that the couple downstairs were deaf and couldn't hear my sobs.

As I lay on the floor, a thought suddenly popped into my head. I had absolutely no idea what the strange phrase meant at the time, but it stuck with me like a mantra for years. Hope and tools. About the time I started my own business as an executive coach and leadership consultant, I found myself expanding on that mantra, particularly the hope piece, as the one quality no one could afford to be without. The jet fuel for the journey of work and life.

Although I had never intended to pursue public relations as a career, I dug into my new role with a zeal that belied my natural introversion. I worked crazy hours often dealing with crazy people. But I enjoyed the challenge of learning the entertainment business and assisting my boss in securing press coverage for our executives, stars, and TV series. When one of the staff publicists (oddly enough, also named Libby) decided to leave to start her own firm, I surprised myself by marching into my boss's office and asking for her job.

My boss told me that he planned to interview several candidates, but would be happy to include me in the mix. However, he warned me sternly, if he promoted me

to publicist and it didn't work out, my old job would be filled and I'd have to leave the company. Not a problem, I told him with more confidence than I felt.

I got the job, my first promotion in less than a year. After that, the friendly mid-size company I thought I had joined was bought by Columbia Pictures, then Coca-Cola, and eventually became part of Sony Pictures Entertainment. With each reorganization, I raised my hand and asked for more. Volunteer and figure it out later became my modus operandi.

In just five years, I moved up the corporate food chain from assistant to publicist to manager to director. Just a year later, I took over my old boss's role, albeit on a larger scale, as vice president of publicity, advertising and promotion for Sony's Worldwide Television Group. Despite my doubts and insecurities about my value (and they were considerable), I felt, I knew - deep inside - that I had the power to improve my life.

It was years before I understood the real significance of hope. And that the mysterious mantra - hope and tools - that had popped into my head that particularly lonely night, would be instrumental in helping propel me, and eventually the people I helped, past the inevitable obstacles they faced on their way to a better future.

## **WHAT IS HOPE THEORY?**

We've all heard the saying, "Hope is not a strategy." Yet, having motivated and managed people for nearly thirty years, I've observed again and again how ineffective it is to provide people with strategies or resources when they're feeling hopeless. It's like giving a worker a power tool with no electricity. Utterly useless. Instead, by instilling an individual or an organization with a sense of hopefulness, we can guide them to connect the beliefs to the behaviors that will ultimately help them realize their vision.

That's what this book is about: belief driving behavior based on the science of hope theory, which stems from a body of research from the medical and positive psychology communities that tells us that hope - unlike its emotional cousins happiness and optimism - is specific, situational, and future-focused. Before we go any further, let's take a look at the science of hope theory and what it means to you.

The word hope is derived from the Old English word hopian which literally means to "leap forward with expectation." Hope plays such a pivotal part in our lives that scientists have endeavored to define its role and determine how it affects our daily existence. The concept was pioneered by the late Dr. C.R. Snyder, a professor of psychology and, from 1974 to 2001, director of the graduate training program in clinical psychology at the University of Kansas at Lawrence. Encouraged by the noted psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger, who once spoke about hope at a conference of the American Psychiatric Association (only to have his concepts derided by his colleagues), Dr. Snyder became intrigued with the significance of hope and its role in helping us reach our goals.<sup>1</sup>

## **Willpower and Waypower**

Snyder defined hope as based on both "willpower" and "waypower," where one is able not only to create the pathways to realizing a vision, but also to sustain the mental energy and perseverance to travel those pathways effectively. He likened this process to the saying "where's a will, there's a way," citing both elements as critical to success. Today, with the world and workplace focused on ideas and innovation rather than merely output, the most successful people are often the most hopeful. One of the primary reasons is because they see multiple pathways, rather than the way, to arrive at a successful outcome.

Among the advantages of having a high level of hope (not to be confused with optimism which is a generalized outlook on life independent of one's actions and circumstances), Dr. Snyder's research showed that hopeful people are more likely than non-hopeful people to:

- Set a great number of goals
- Have goals which may be more difficult to attain
- Be more successful at reaching their goals
- Have less distress and greater happiness than low-hope people

<sup>1</sup>C.R. Snyder, The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get Here from There (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

## Belief and Expectation

Adding to the pioneering work of Dr. Snyder is Harvard-trained oncologist Dr. Jerome Groopman, one of the world's leading researchers on cancer and AIDS. Author of *How Doctors Think* and *The Anatomy of Hope*, Dr. Groopman believes that hope consists of two key components: belief and expectation. More specifically, belief that change is possible and the expectation that the actions of an individual can result in a better future.

As a clinician, Dr. Groopman learned that when he gave cancer patients too much information regarding their prognosis, he often robbed them of hopefulness, which he and many other scientists believe is instrumental in the healing process. On the other hand, when he gave them too limited information, he ran the risk of creating the false impression that they had little about which to be concerned. It was the challenge of finding that delicate balance between true hope and false hope that propelled Dr. Groopman to advance the research in the field of hope theory. What Groopman's research makes clear is that, unlike wishfulness or positive thinking (without action), hope can have a physiological impact on the brain, releasing powerful chemicals like enkephalins and endorphins that help us endure pain and boost our immune system.<sup>2</sup>

## How Belief Drives Behavior

Although Snyder and Groopman approached hope theory from different perspectives - medicine and psychology - it is clear that both saw it as a combination of feelings and actions. Or as I see it, it is the interconnection between beliefs and behaviors. If you believe that change is possible and that your actions will have a positive influence on outcomes, you're less likely to defend the status quo and more likely to take positive risks, inspiring others with your behavior. Conversely, if you believe the opposite is true, that change is impossible and it makes absolutely no difference what actions you take, you're apt to stay stuck in mediocrity. Or, as Henry Ford famously put it, "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

So why are some people and companies eternally energized with a sense of hopefulness, while others are perpetually stuck in the hope-starved doldrums? How do some leaders manage to inspire an anything-is-possible confidence in their teams,

<sup>2</sup> Jerome Groopman, *The Anatomy of Hope: How People Prevail in the Face of Illness* (New York: Random House, 2004).

while others struggle to keep employees even marginally engaged? How do some people stay so connected to their vision that even serious setbacks like illness, loss of a loved one, or a job layoff don't deter them?

## **ARE YOU SETTLING FOR SECOND BEST?**

As I found my path in the professional world, I was proud that I had discovered an area in which I could excel, yet some nagging voice in the back of my head continued to remind me that PR wasn't what I really wanted to do. I wanted to work as a writer or in a creative role in film or television. Yet, I cancelled interviews and shied away from connections that could have furthered that goal, convincing myself that no one would ever hire me for my skills or talent. Instead, I settled for second best. Not that public relations was a bad career choice. It allowed me to buy a house, care for my family, and come in contact with some truly brilliant people. But if I asked myself (which I rarely did) what I wanted to do with my life, a career in PR wasn't even on the list. I had let fear become my guide.

It took me until my mid-forties to figure out who I was and what I wanted in my personal and professional life. Having survived a tumultuous childhood and a rocky young adulthood, I'd come out the other side and had the battle scars to prove it. Eventually, the old me just didn't fit anymore. In just one year, I left my corporate job, started my own business, published my first book, got divorced, lost thirty pounds and started over. It wasn't an easy year and I don't wish that on you. Rather, my goal with this book is to offer you a roadmap in how hope can fuel the positive beliefs and drive the meaningful behaviors that get you where you want to go.

We often hear the term "settling" regarding romantic relationships. Did you settle for your significant other because you didn't want to be alone? Did you settle because it was simply too frightening to go out and find someone new? Or did you settle because not doing so would mean that you'd have to look at yourself under the microscope and see what you needed to fix about you?

Settling can happen in any part of your life: work, family, health, finances. Not that you can control every event. Bad things really do happen to good people. But if you know there's more you can do, have, or become and you don't strive for it, then, perhaps, you deserve what you get it. Harsh, I know, but that's the reality. Ask yourself if you have ever experienced any of these signals that you're settling.

## **Seven Signals That You're Settling**

1. You have a dream or goal stuck way in the back of your head, but you never seem to take any action toward it. Maybe it's changing careers, starting a business, having a child, or running a marathon. It's like an earworm, also known as stuck song syndrome or musical imagery repetition (and, no, I didn't make up those terms), that catchy melody or unforgettable lyric that you can't get out of your mind long after the music stops playing. You try to ignore it, but it's always in the background, drumming that beat in your head and heart.
2. You're living the someday syndrome, keeping your goal in the later-on-in-life category. Guess what? You don't know how long you have on this earth. Do you really want to wait around to see if you manage to squeeze in something you know in your heart of hearts is truly meaningful to you?
3. You've let the green-eyed monster of envy and jealousy take up permanent residence in your gut. When you see other people succeeding, you find some way to attribute it to their education, money, nepotism or just dumb luck. You tell yourself that they have all the advantages that you don't. Even if some or all of those beliefs are true, so what? By convincing yourself that if only you had all the great stuff those successful people do, you're be successful, too, you're letting yourself off the hook from facing the reality of your situation - whatever it is - and doing the work that will get you where you want to be.
4. You've got a shrink-to-fit personality. You may have big dreams, but you tell yourself they're just not realistic. Instead, it's okay to keep plugging away at this safe, boring, little job. Or to stick with playing small rather than risk ruffling anyone else's feathers -or worse, risk failing at something. You're like those amusement park Whack-a-Moles: if you just stay safely underground, no one can ever smack you back down.
5. You're a substitution junkie. Rather than get your high by fulfilling your dreams, you become obsessed with food, alcohol, television, news, social media or other diversions. Don't get me wrong. I'm a food and wine person of the first order, but I don't kid myself that earthly pleasures (including TV and movies, two more of my favs) are any kind of substitute for purposeful work or meaningful relationships.

6. You're a perpetual blamer of others. If you can't have what you really want, it's somebody else's fault. It's your boss holding you back. Or the government, the job market, your childhood or spouse. You can find a million excuses outside yourself for not getting what you want, but you know that the only one to blame is you.

7. You're hope-starved. Rather than feeding on positive ideas and inspiring people, you let the negatives of the world – and there are plenty of them – become your constant diet. You tell yourself that you don't have what it takes, you don't know how to get ahead, you don't have the right skills or certifications, you're too old, too young, too dumb, too smart, or too whatever. The truth is, you've let your positive vision of the future get buried under other people's negative rubble. It's time to start digging out.

Awareness that you're settling for less than you deserve could be the kick in the rear end you need to start focusing on what you really want. And even if you don't particularly feel like you're settling, let's see how the practice of mentally connecting our present to our future can help us realize our vision.

## **DON'T STOP THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW**

We hear a lot about living in the moment. And while single-minded focus on the present is a great tool for productivity as well as relaxation, it's critical that we also live in the future. In his book, *Personal Intelligence: The Power of Personality and How It Shapes Our Lives* by renowned psychologist John D. Mayer, one of the originators of the concept of emotional intelligence, Mayer theorizes that the more vividly we can imagine our future selves, the more similar we become to the self we imagine.<sup>3</sup>

In studying the differences between people who focus more on the present versus those who focus on the future, former Stanford psychologists Philip G. Zimbardo and John N. Boyd discovered that present-focused people tended to experience more spontaneity and freedom, but were also more prone to high-risk behaviors like substance abuse than their future-focused counterparts. By contrast, people who are more mindful of the future, particularly when that future is realistic and attainable, tend to take greater stewardship over their present lives so they can reach the future they've imagined.

<sup>3</sup>John D. Mayer, *Personal Intelligence: The Power of Personality and How It Shapes Our Lives* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

How closely we are able to align our present selves with our future selves can be a major indicator of the degree of success we experience. In another Stanford experiment, Hal Ersner-Hershfield devised a simple method of measuring this alignment. He gave study participants a diagram with seven pairs of circles marked Present Self and Future Self. The first two circles did not overlap, indicating that there was little or no connection between those two selves, while subsequent pairs overlapped more and more. The final pair of circles overlapped significantly, showing a close connection between selves. The participants were asked to identify which set of circles most closely resembled how they saw themselves in terms of who they were now and who they realistically hoped to become. Not surprisingly, the people who felt most aligned with their future selves tended to make better long-term decisions, whether related to amassing wealth or taking care of their health. Hope, with its emphasis on belief driving behavior, is the critical component that links present to future. As you read through this book, think about the beliefs and behaviors that will help you close the gap between who you are today and who you want to be tomorrow.<sup>4</sup>

## **HOPEFUL HABITS**

At the end of every chapter of *The Hope-Driven Leader*, you'll find a section called Hopeful Habits that includes a top-line summary of the key takeaway from the chapter, a positive concept summed up as a Hopeful Belief for you to ponder, accept or adapt (or reject) as you see fit. Following that, you'll see an accompanying Hopeful Behavior that will translate that idea into action. While it's great to understand these concepts intellectually, it's only by seeing what works for you, and then making those behaviors habitual, that you will begin to experience exponential growth and change. Good luck on your road to hopeful discovery.

<sup>4</sup>John D. Mayer, "How to Plan for Your Future Self," *Scientific American*, March 1, 2014, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-plan-for-your-future-self/>.

## **Key Takeaway #1**

Hope is the jet fuel for the journey of work and life. While we've been taught to believe that "hope is not a strategy," hope must be present before the application of strategies and resources for us to make full use of the tools that lead to positive change.

## **Hopeful Belief #1**

Now that we've seen how critical (and scientifically valid) it is to link your current life with your future goals, let's begin to visualize that future self. We can start by putting a twist on the question we've all been asked as kids. Instead of "What do you want to be when you grow up?" ask yourself, "Who do you want to be when you grow up?"

What positive personality traits do you currently see in yourself that you'd like to develop over time? These might include being adventurous, intellectually curious, health-minded, and/or financially savvy. Now, ask yourself the opposite. What less appealing traits would you like to minimize over time? These could include overspending, bad nutrition or exercise habits, reluctance to go after the promotion or job you want. In other words, begin to imagine the next iteration of you. Be aware of the gap and what you need to do to close it.

## **Hopeful Behavior #1**

Pick one positive trait that you currently see as part of your personality. Now, add an action that would amplify the positive trait. For example, if you said you wanted to develop your intellectual curiosity, you might consider taking a class, attending a seminar, or listening to an audio series that would expand your skills or knowledge.

Next, pick the negative trait you wish to minimize over time. If you determined that your finance savvy is not up to par, pick an action that would begin to build that muscle. Perhaps you'll decide to meet with an investment advisor, overhaul your college or retirement plans, or take a seminar in financial planning. By consciously focusing on your beliefs, both positive and negative, you can begin to attach behaviors to expand and develop your best future self.

## Endorsements

“Are you feeding or starving hope in your organization? That’s the wonderful question that Libby Gill asks and answers in *The Hope-Driven Leader*. Far from being an abstract concept, she lays out a strategic path for developing a hopeful and hard-working culture where employees are inspired to overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and own their future.”

**Stephen M.R. Covey, The New York Times and #1 Wall Street Journal bestselling author of *The Speed of Trust* and co-author of *Smart Trust***

“To be intentional about creating a culture of hope is a powerful driver of performance and results...This is much more than a feel-good book about hope. It’s a ‘how-to’ book about putting hope to work in our businesses and in our lives.”

**Joe Calloway, author, *Be The Best At What Matters Most***

“Having HOPE is something we all struggle with at some point in our lives. It’s comforting to know that others have fought this same battle and have come out the other side, happier, healthier and yes, more hopeful. This is a book for anyone who dreams big, cares for others as well as themselves and who fearlessly tackles each day as it comes.”

**Tracey Noonan, CEO & Co-Founder of Wicked Good Cupcakes, Inc.**

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**Bob Burg, co-author of *The Go-Giver* and *The Go-Giver Influencer***

“In The Hope-Driven Leader, Libby Gill expertly guides readers through actionable steps and exercises to bring hope into their lives and the lives of others. Whether you are a business leader, a community leader, or simply want to foster hope within your own family, The Hope-Driven Leader is a must-read.”

**Louis Efron, Forbes and HuffPost contributor and author of Purpose Meets Execution and How to Find a Job, Career and Life You Love**

“Libby Gill’s The Hope Driven Leader is inspiring but also practical. She sparks the reader to find hope but the book goes beyond just inspiring and shows leaders how to take real action. Using hope to shift mindsets and drive a more productive workplace is a refreshing perspective that many leaders could benefit from reading.”

**Marnie Black, Executive Vice President, Public Relations, AMC & SundanceTV**

“This is your action guide to smarter leadership, more effective teams, and bigger, better, faster results. Smart, generous, and impactful. Buy a copy for everyone on your team.”

**David Newman, CSP, author of Do It! Marketing**

“Libby Gill’s theory of hope is the imagined “yellow brick road” to a personally and professionally fulfilled life....and the guidance to find your path...even if you aren’t Dorothy!”

**Susan Q. Gallin, Broadway Producer of hit plays including Pulitzer Prize-winning Angels in America, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, and The Heidi Chronicles**