

## The Hopeless

... are human beings.

It is pretty easy to read the news and the catastrophes, particularly those induced by man's actions against other men and get sick to your stomach. Throw in the fires, floods, heat and famine and you get more than sick, you feel a sense of hopelessness.

Then there is the life around you. Because of my gift of a neurological disorder I have many routine visits to several different medical centers. Had a slew of them lately. Also had to help a couple of friends by taking one to a cancer center and the other to a surgery center. You see a lot of people in various forms of dishevelment while sitting in those waiting rooms. You know some of them are dying. But these people that are sick, for the most part, are pleasant and seem to have an abundance of...

Hope.

They have, as my Dad said, that 'will to survive'. He mentions this in his interview when talking about his imprisonment at Camp O'Donnell, in the Philippines soon after the Bataan Death March. Even in an entirely hopeless situation where day after day groups or details of the 'healthy' were burying four hundred American soldiers a day and a thousand Philippine soldiers, those dying from starvation or a host of tropical diseases while also under the threat of being killed at any moment by an angry enemy for weeks on end, he comments on that '**will to survive**'.

In the chapter on Camp O'Donnell in his interview transcribed into the book *Faithful: Because of Love a True Story of the Survival of the Defenders of Bataan* he says, "The will of men to survive under the most horrifying conditions is something else. Any animal would have rolled over, put its legs up and the air and died in a day or two. But not us, not us human beings. We have that will to survive, at least a lot of us."

They had **hope** they were going to make it. And forty percent of them did out of his unit.

So what do we do when we know someone who is truly hopeless? I have a bit of experience in loving someone who went through two decades or more of pure hopelessness due to a chemical imbalance in their brain and neurological system. But they have **that will to survive**. All I could do was to be there to listen. Along the way I also learned that giving them advice was not very important. It was not that they did not want it. It is because they were inundated with it from friends around them, who had not walked in their shoes, and then got frustrated with the patient because they 'did not listen' to all this advice culminating with these friends 'disappearing' over time. I found intervening with their doctors and caregivers to be a lot more effective, giving these people trying to help a more complete picture.

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When someone is very sick, or recently suffered a great loss that I know well, I have come to believe that asking the question, “How are you?” or “How are you doing?” to be dumb. You know how they are feeling. I’ve converted from asking questions like this to simply giving an expression of love, like a hug, and then I listen.

Oh, we of the ‘first’ world often find ourselves in the position of wanting to help those who are going through devastating conditions that lead to hopelessness. Yes, some of us can send money, but what can we do who don’t have the resources to absolve our consciousness by sending cash.

We can acknowledge that those who suffer from a lack of hope amongst many other things by recognizing that these are people, **human beings**, just like us, creating in His Image and Likeness.

All of us have the most powerful weapon at our disposal to help those in need of hope. We just have to use it and do it. We can pray. Ceaselessly.

We can pray for hope for those in need. We can pray they regain faith and most of all we can pray that somebody loves them even if physically we can’t.

And in this world, that is increasingly filled with people losing hope, we can pray all human beings realize His Love is constant, comforting us, know that it is real, more than any other Love...

... is His.

He gives it freely and endlessly.

This I know for sure.

So I pray and pray, then pray some more, that any human being who suffers and feels hope slipping away, knows, realizes His Love and therefor regains hope.

Faith, Hope, and Love. And the greatest of these is Love.

Pray that we love each other.

Always.

The hopeless around us, even those half a world away, these humans like us, will be grateful.

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