

Hope

Belief in a Better Future. Ability to Act Today.

 90-minute session



Audience

Wellbeing leads, senior managers,
team leaders



Purpose

Understand how hope actually works
See how it shows up in work
Make it usable as a practical lever



Outcome

By the end:

- clear model of hope (not vague optimism)
- ability to spot it in behaviour
- simple ways to rebuild it in teams



Hope is not soft. It's a system we can build.

Hope at Work

Sub-title

90-minute session

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Speaker Notes

This session is about one thing: how people keep moving when work is hard

- Hope isn't positioned here as:
 - motivation
 - positivity
 - mindset
- It's treated as a **working system**
- **The aim is to:**
 - **explain the system clearly**
 - **show how it breaks**
 - **show how to rebuild it**
- **This is grounded in:**
 - **cognitive science (Snyder: goals, pathways, agency)**
 - **workplace data (Gallup: current vs future thinking)**

Keep the expectation simple: You should leave with something you can actually use next week

- **Not theory**
- **Not inspiration**
- **Something practical you can apply immediately**

Some problems don't
feel difficult.

They feel **insurmountable**.



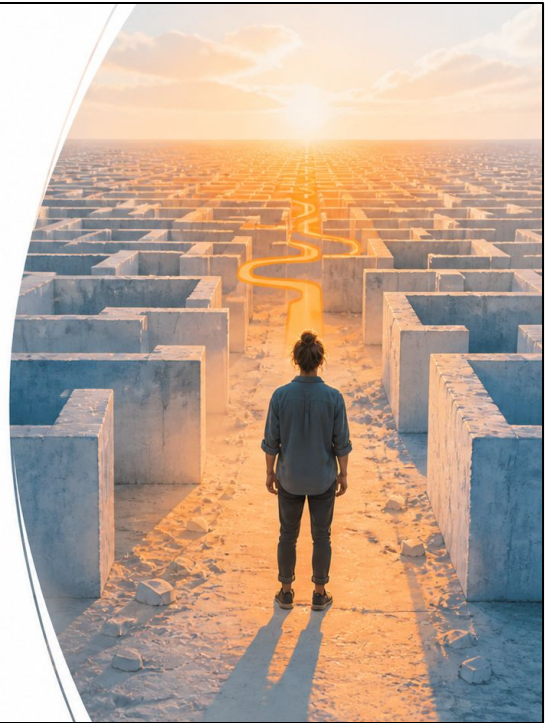
Stuck



Endless

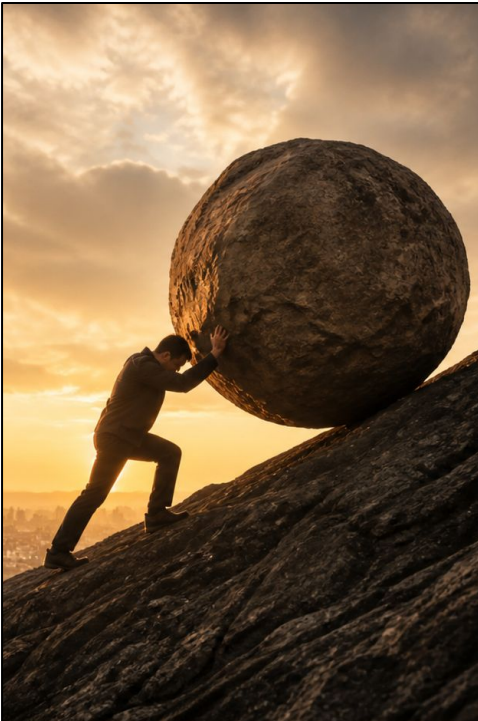


Unsolvable



Speaker Notes

- Open with **recognition, not explanation**
- This is the moment people feel:
 - not overloaded
 - not just stressed
 - but *stuck*
- Shift early:
 - this is not a workload issue
 - this is a **thinking state**
- Set up what's coming:
 - something changes in how people **see the future**
 - and that's what drives everything else



It's not the problem. It's what happens to thinking.



Options narrow

We stop seeing possibilities and focus on obstacles.



Action slows

Hesitation grows and small steps turn into delays.



Effort drops

Motivation drains and even important things get deferred.

This isn't just stress – this is a **different state**.

Speaker Notes

- Start here: this isn't about the size of the problem.
- Two people can face the same situation — one moves, one stalls.
- What changes is **thinking under pressure**.

When problems start to feel heavy or “too much”, three things happen:

1. Options narrow

- People stop seeing alternatives
- Focus shifts to obstacles, not routes

2. Action slows

Hesitation creeps in
Small decisions get delayed

3. Effort drops

Motivation drains
Important things get pushed out

Stress: A psychological and physiological response to pressure, demand, uncertainty, or perceived challenge at work.

It becomes harmful when:

- the pressure is too high,
- lasts too long,
- or the person feels unable to cope, recover, or influence the situation.

Hope = goal-directed thinking.



Goals
(direction)



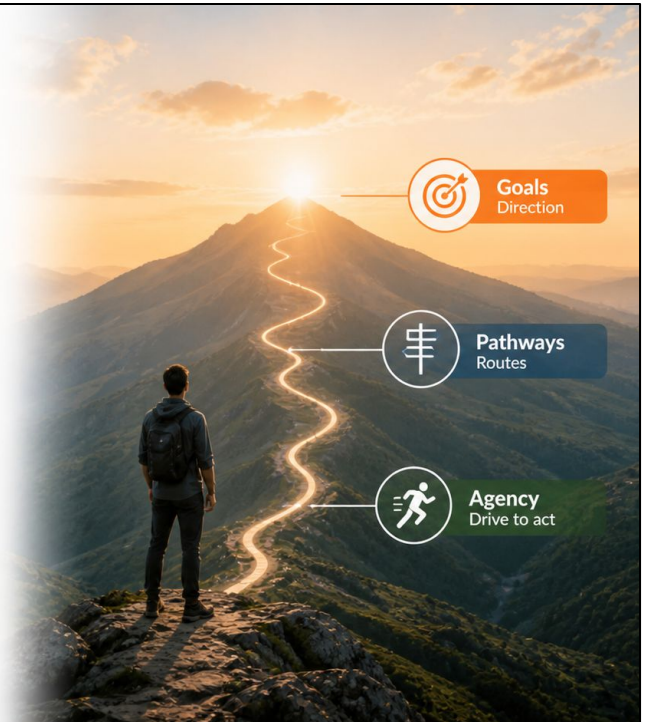
Pathways
(routes)



Agency
(drive to act)



This is Snyder.
Not emotion → **thinking system.**



Speaker Notes — “The System Behind It (Science)”

- This is the shift point in the deck.
- Up to now: what it feels like.
- From here: **what’s actually driving it.**

- Hope is not a mood.
- It’s a **thinking system.**

From the science:

- Hope sits in how we think about:
 - goals
 - routes
 - action

That’s Snyder’s model.

Break it down simply

Goals (direction)

- What am I trying to move?
- If this is unclear → drift

Pathways (routes)

- How can I get there?
- If this collapses → stuck

Agency (drive to act)

- Will I actually do anything?
- If this drops → nothing happens

- These three are always working together.
- You don't lose "hope" randomly.

You lose:

- direction
- or options
- or belief in action

- From your material:

Hope is:

belief the future can be better
and that you can influence it

- Important distinction:

This is not:

- optimism
- positive thinking

This is:

- **goal-directed behaviour system**

Key line to land

If one of these breaks, movement stops

If all three weaken, problems feel insurmountable

- This is why two people face the same problem:
 - one moves
 - one stalls

Different system state — not different capability



Why We Have This System

Humans operate in uncertain environments



We face:



uncertainty



delayed outcomes



constant obstacles



So the brain developed a system to:

→ **keep us moving anyway**



Without it, we stop too early.

It's a survival mechanism.

Speaker Notes

- This answers a simple question: *why does hope even exist?*
 - Humans don't operate in clean, predictable systems
 - we don't get instant results
 - we don't get guaranteed outcomes
 - things go wrong all the time
 - Without a mechanism to:
 - project forward
 - and keep acting
- we would stop as soon as things got difficult
- That mechanism is what we're calling **hope**
 - It allows us to:
 - tolerate uncertainty
 - continue without immediate reward
 - push through obstacles
 - From your material:
 - hope is a **fundamental human trait tied to survival**

Key line to land

This isn't about feeling better

This is about not stopping

- Set up next slide:
→ what happens when this system breaks

Snyder's Hope Theory defines hope not as an emotion, but as a cognitive, goal-directed process comprising goals, pathways (planning), and agency (motivation)

When It Breaks



Loss of hope



Doubt



Inaction



Hesitation

We pause and overthink instead of moving.



Fewer options

Our thinking narrows and we stop seeing alternatives.



Early disengagement

We give up sooner and walk away.

“ Doubt makes you **immobile**.”



Hesitation

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Fewer options

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Early disengagement

We give up sooner and walk away.

When It Breaks (Speaker Notes)

- This is the critical moment in the system.
- Up to now, hope is working in the background.
- Here — it **breaks**.

The sequence is simple, but important:

Loss of hope → doubt → inaction

Start with loss of hope

- This is not dramatic
- It's subtle
- The shift is:
 - “this could work”
→ becomes
 - “this probably won't”

Then doubt takes over

- From your script:
- Lack of hope leads to doubt
- And doubt isn't neutral
It clouds judgement and limits action
- In other words:
 - you stop trusting your thinking
 - you stop committing to action

Then comes inaction

- This is what people actually see at work
- Not “low hope”
- But:
 - hesitation
 - reduced options
 - stepping back

Break down the behaviours

Hesitation

- delays increase
- small steps don't happen

Fewer options

- thinking narrows
- people stop exploring

Early disengagement

- people walk away sooner
- effort drops earlier than it should

Key line to land

Doubt doesn't just feel bad

It stops movement

“Doubt makes you immobile”

Note: Quote from author Yann Martel in his novel *Life of Pi* – 'To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation.'

Important distinction

- This is not:
 - capability
 - intelligence
 - effort
- This is:
 - a breakdown in the system that drives action

Bridge to next slide

- So the real question becomes:
why does this system break in the first place?

Why Hope Drops (this is the missing piece)

Hope drops when:



Direction is unclear

You don't know where you're going.



Pathways disappear

You can't see a way forward.



Agency is low

You don't believe you can make a difference.



This explains real-life moments (like mornings).

When the system can't see a viable future, it shuts down.



Why Hope Drops (Speaker Notes)

- This is the missing link in the whole model.
- Not just *what hope is* — but **why it disappears in real life**.

Anchor it in the system

- Hope isn't random
- It drops when the system can't do its job
When it can't build a believable future

Break it into the three components

This is straight out of Snyder — but translated into behaviour.

Direction is unclear (Goals)

- No clear target
- Or the goal doesn't feel real
- Result:
 - thinking drifts
 - effort has no anchor

Pathways disappear (Routes)

- You can't see how to get there
- Or every option looks blocked
- Result:

- “there’s no point trying”
- problem feels bigger than it is

Agency is low (Drive to act)

- Belief drops
- Confidence drops
- Result:
 - you stop initiating
 - you wait instead of act

Tie it together

- When these three break:
The system can’t construct a viable path forward
- And when that happens:
it shuts down

Make it real (your script)

- This explains everyday moments
- Not just big life events
- Example pattern (without storytelling):
 - wake up
 - no clear goal
 - no obvious next step
 - low energy

→ hope drops

Ground it in your material

- Hope is tied to motivation, goals, and action
- When those collapse, so does hope
- And critically:
Lack of hope → doubt → disengagement

Key line to land

People don’t lose hope randomly
The system loses something it needs

Bridge to next slide

- So the focus shifts:
not “how do we motivate people”
but
which part of the system has broken?

What This Looks Like at Work



You don't see
"low hope"

You see:



Delay

Things take longer than they should.



Overthinking

Analysis loops replace forward movement.



Safe choices

Comfort feels safer than progress.



Repeated problems

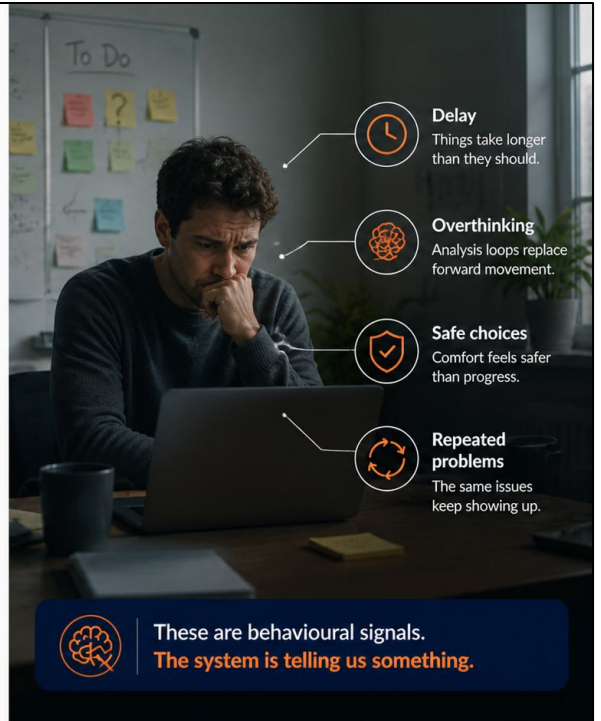
The same issues keep showing up.



Behavioural signals.



This is observable.



Delay

Things take longer than they should.



Overthinking

Analysis loops replace forward movement.



Safe choices

Comfort feels safer than progress.



Repeated problems

The same issues keep showing up.



These are behavioural signals.

The system is telling us something.

What This Looks Like at Work (Speaker Notes)

- This is where the model becomes visible.
- You don't walk into a team and see "low hope" written anywhere.

You see behaviour

- This is critical:
Hope is invisible
Behaviour is not

Walk through each one

Delay

- Things take longer than they should
- Decisions drag
- Actions get pushed

Overthinking

- People stay in analysis
- Conversations loop
- No movement

Safe choices

- Low-risk options dominate
- Innovation drops

- People protect rather than progress

Repeated problems

- Same issues keep showing up
- No real movement forward
- Teams circle the same ground

Tie back to your material

- Lack of hope → doubt
- Doubt → disengagement
- That disengagement shows up exactly like this:
 - slower action
 - reduced thinking
 - less commitment

Key point to land

These are not performance problems

These are system signals

Important distinction

- Most organisations respond with:
 - pressure
 - targets
 - accountability
- But:
The system is already telling you what's wrong

Blunt version

- Delay = no agency
- Overthinking = no pathways
- Safe choices = low confidence
- Repeated problems = no progress

Close this slide with

If you can see these behaviours

You are already seeing the breakdown

Bridge to next slide

- So the question becomes:
how do we rebuild the system in practice?



The Scale of the Problem (Stats)



~70%

struggling or suffering
Global survey (Gallup, 2020)



Low engagement

(~10% UK)

Actively engaged at work (Gallup)



Rising stress + anxiety

Historic increases across populations
(Gallup, U.S. Census, Case & Deaton)



Not edge cases.

System-level issue.

The Scale of the Problem (Speaker Notes)

- Up to now, this might feel like:
 - an individual issue
 - or a team-level dynamic
- It's not.

This is widespread

- From your material:
- Around **7 in 10 people are struggling or suffering**
- That's not a small group
- That's the majority

At work specifically

- UK engagement sits around **~10% engaged**
- Which means:
 - most people are not fully involved
 - not fully committed
 - not fully moving

Add to that

- Rising:
 - stress
 - anxiety

- pressure

Put it together

- Large numbers of people:
 - not engaged
 - struggling
 - under pressure

Key point to land

This is not an edge case

This is the system

Why this matters

- If this were isolated:
 - you'd fix individuals
- But at this scale:
you have to look at how work is structured
and how people experience it

Tie back to hope

- If hope is:
 - belief in a better future
 - ability to act
- Then these numbers suggest:
that system is not functioning well at scale

Blunt version

- Most people are not moving at full capacity
- Not because they can't
- But because the system isn't supporting it

Bridge to next slide

- So the gap becomes clear:
we measure performance
but we don't measure what drives it

The Measurement Gap

We track:



output



performance

We don't track:



→ belief in the future

Gallup:



Now vs Future (0-10)

Q1: Where are you now?

Q2: Where will you be in 5 years?



This is the missing metric.

Hope becomes measurable.



Speaker Notes – The Measurement Gap

Keep this tight and grounded—this is a pivot slide.

What we typically measure in organisations is very clear.

- Output.
Performance.
Delivery metrics.

All visible. All tangible. All easy to track.

But there's a blind spot.

We don't measure whether people actually believe things will get better.

That sounds soft, but it's not. It's central.

- Because once that belief drops, everything else follows:
effort drops
initiative drops
persistence drops

And what you see instead is what we covered earlier: delay, overthinking, safe choices.

This is where the Gallup piece becomes useful—not as “the answer,” but as a way to make this concrete.

1. They ask two simple questions:
Where are you now?
Where will you be in the future?

That gap between those two numbers is effectively a measure of hope.
Not feelings. Not engagement scores.
Belief in the future.

And that's the shift.

If you can measure it, you can manage it.

Right now, most organisations are managing outcomes...
without tracking the system that produces those outcomes.

This is that system.

Hope becomes measurable.



What Actually Works (Weekly Behaviours)

Fix the system weekly:



1. Set direction (Goals)

→ "What are we moving this week?"



2. Force options (Pathways)

→ "What are 2-3 ways forward?"



3. Trigger action (Agency)

→ "What's the next step in 48 hours?"



4. Make progress visible

→ "What actually moved?"

Speaker notes

- This is not a mindset shift — it's a **weekly operating rhythm**

1. Set direction

- Teams drift when goals are vague
- This forces clarity and focus
- Keep it short: *one or two things that matter*

2. Force options

- Biggest failure mode = single-path thinking
- Always generate alternatives
- Even weak options reopen thinking

3. Trigger action

- This is where most teams fail
- Plans don't matter — **next step does**
- 48-hour window forces immediacy

4. Make progress visible

- Progress = fuel for hope
- If people can't see movement → hope drops again
- Track small movement, not just outcomes

What this is really doing (keep this in your head)

Each behaviour maps directly to the system:

- Goals → direction
- Pathways → options
- Agency → action
- Progress → reinforcement

Blunt version (you could even say this out loud)

- No direction → drift
- No options → stuck
- No action → nothing changes
- No progress → hope collapses

Why this works

It doesn't try to "increase hope"

It:

- **rebuilds the conditions that create it**