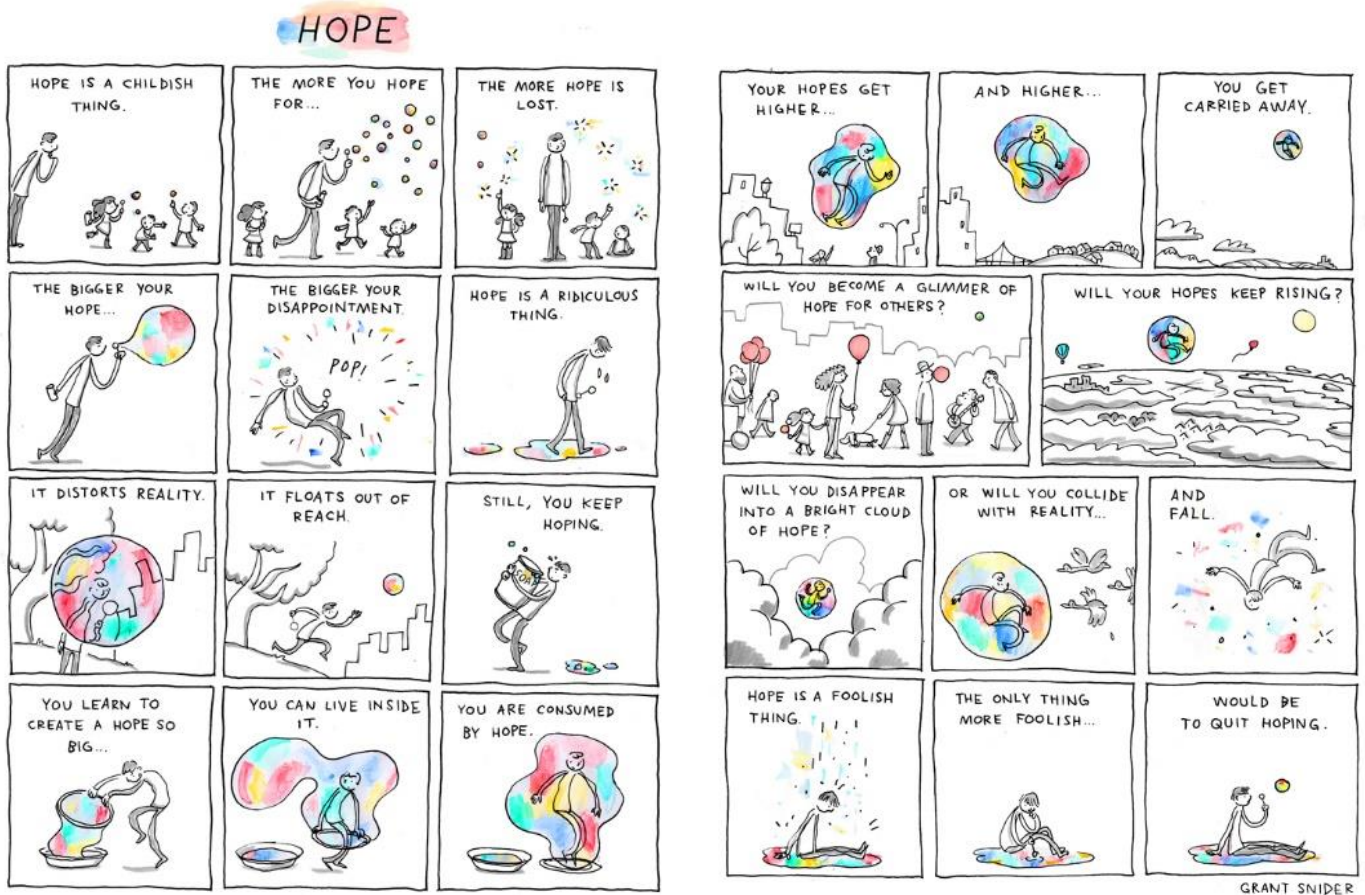


2018: The Year of Hope, Bringing a Sense of Purpose

Consider the cartoon...



Ideas for reflection:

“The bigger your hope, the bigger your disappointment...”

“Will you become a glimmer of hope for others?”

“The only thing more foolish would be to quit hoping.”

In what ways does the cartoon reflect the lives of our students, clients, staff and families?

How does being a glimmer of hope for others generate a sense of purpose for ourselves?

(excerpts from 'A letter from Manus Island', by Behrouz Boochani in *The Saturday Paper*, 9 Dec 2017)

"The government believed October 31 would be the date its vision would become a reality and its plan would be put into practice. When this date arrived, 600 refugees refused to transfer to the new camps. Instead the situation transformed into a humanitarian crisis that lasted 22 days.

"During that three-week period, special people in Australia united with many people on Manus and made attempts to deliver food inside the camp... The local Manusians also organised a protest in Lorengau to support us. The protesters, both in Australia and in Papua New Guinea, are not the majority, but they are representative of the conscience of their societies.

"The refugees were able to reimagine themselves in the face of the detention regime... The detention regime wanted to manufacture a particular kind of refugee with a particular kind of response. However, the refugees were able to regain their identity, regain their rights, regain their dignity. In fact, what has occurred is essentially a new form of identification, which asserts that we are human beings.

"The refugees have established that they desire to exist only as free individuals. They desire only an honourable existence. The refugees have been able to refashion the image of themselves as the 'Other'.

"Our resistance is a new manifesto for humanity and love. In any case, our resistance and the three weeks of hardship we endured produced a new perspective and method that was remarkably transformative, even for us incarcerated within Manus prison. We learnt that humans have no sanctuary except within other human beings. Humans have no felicitous way to live their lives other than to trust in other humans, and the hearts of other humans, and the warmth within the hearts of other humans.

"I think that we were able to communicate our humanitarian message to Australian society and beyond. This sentiment is what all people, whether in Australia or elsewhere, need more than anything else these days. Feelings of friendship. Feelings of compassion. Feelings of companionship. Feelings of justice. And feelings of love.

This reflection offers an amazing perspective on how, even while living in detention, hope is found through solidarity. What can we draw from this for our communities?

Inside (John Falzon)

My prison was not far from the beautiful ravine.
I loved the feel of there. At night
My soul, a magpie, flew me down.

My stories listened to me there.

I learned to live by little bits and pieces
And the mornings were not threatening.

The sky was in my hut.

My throat was crimson.

Mate, the fragment
Never
Ever
Says goodbye.

