

Why pathologies of hope

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Pathologies of Hope Most medical professionals define the word pathology as the root cause of illness. It can describe either the nature, origin, or course of an illness in relation to the current form of the disease. In the case of Barbara Ehrenreich, she used the word to define a state of mind that is being pushed by life coaches and other psychiatric professionals in the treatment of their patients. Perhaps owing to the original definition of the word, Ms. Ehrenreich chose to use the word to define the case of “hope” as a study of a state of mind.

This is a conclusion that she arrived at because of her bout with cancer that left her more angry and combative rather than hopeful. This is a thesis that she effectively presented when she claimed that:

I hate hope. It was hammered into me constantly a few years ago when I was being treated for breast cancer: Think positively! Don't lose hope! Wear your pink ribbon with pride! A couple of years later, I was alarmed to discover that the facility where I received my follow-up care was called the Hope Center. Hope? What about a cure? At antiwar and labor rallies over the years, I have dutifully joined Jesse Jackson in chanting "Keep hope alive!" -- all the while crossing my fingers and thinking, "Fuck hope. Keep us alive."... (Ehrenreich, Barbara, “Pathologies of Hope”)

As far as Ms. Ehrenreich is concerned, positivism will not get you anywhere unless you actually push yourself to take action. Whether you are in a positive or negative state of mind does not have any effect on the outcome. After all, the only goal one has in life is to achieve and succeed. In her case, she found that negativity, anger and the desire to beat the odds worked better than any positive reinforcement she ever got from the medical

community, other cancer survivors, or her family.

Works Cited

Ehrenreich, Barbara. “ Pathologies of Hope”. Harpers Magazine. 1 Feb. 2007.
Web. 30 Jun. 2013.