

:: Dana's Weekly Insight :: 02.25.08 – In Case of Emergency



If I only had a dime for every time that exhausted, I had to entertain the power of HOPE. Waiting for its deliverance, resenting the need to have to summon up its promise, struggling to find the strength to trust in it again -- if I had a dime for every time -

I would indeed be rich.

HOPE is the lonely man's companion; the faithful man's best friend and it is, without a doubt, the luxury that no man can afford to do without. We need it when it is all we've got, and although merciful, HOPE refuses to offer a guarantee and it rarely, if ever, provides the easy way out.

HOPE - real HOPE -- will require that you boldly reach for something that you are convinced is just not there, while at the same time it will demand that you ignore the undeniable proof that the game is over, while you endure the indisputable evidence that this time there is no way that you can win.

"Houston we have a problem..."

Those sobering words, and the decisions that followed, would usher in one of the most remarkable and unlikely recoveries in modern day history.

Once upon a time, *Man in Space* was an unthinkable proposition; a brand new phenomenon that captured the imagination of a generation by forcing the boundaries of what we knew could or could not be. The earth was rendered spellbound as large television sets across a captivated nation transmitted the vibrations of a brave new world. Those memories reside in the collective consciousness of a generation but, with the landing of Apollo 11 on the moon, the excitement about the race to the moon was over and the world would turn its attention back to the more mundane.

In April of 1970 when Apollo 13 was preparing to go back to the moon, space travel didn't seem anymore like much of a big deal. The journey of crew members Commander James A. Lovell, Command Module pilot John L. "Jack" Swigert, and Lunar Module pilot Fred W. Haise was to be a pretty routine flight and, for the most part, anti-climatic until that somber declaration from the man in charge:

"Houston, we have a problem".

And with that the world braced itself for the absolute inevitability of a very tragic end.

Apollo 13 routinely launched on April 11, 1970. Two days after the launch, the Apollo spacecraft was crippled by an explosion, caused by a fault in the oxygen tank. The explosion damaged the Service Module, resulting in a loss of oxygen and electrical power forcing the crew to use the Lunar Module as a "lifeboat" in space. The command module systems remained functional, but were deactivated to preserve the vehicle's capability to reenter Earth's atmosphere.

Back on earth the world waited with the full expectation that the astronauts aboard Apollo 13 would run out of air; would suffocate and die as heroes lost in space.

But then, HOPE.

Then HOPE, wrapped up and presented in the non-negotiable orders of mission project manager, Gene Krantz, insisted it was a force to be reckoned with and it persisted ruthlessly -- until.

Imagine.

When failure is a possibility, but definitely not an option then you've got no choice but to conjure up real HOPE. And, it is only under the severe stress of limitation and the unwillingness to abandon HOPE that the lines that define are redefined, ideas are reshaped, connections rewired, and our relationship to the reality of what is possible, shatters.

"Failure is not an option!" was his battle cry as he dared anybody not to believe that he would get those men back home alive. *"Forget the flight plan,"* ordered Kranz. *"From this moment on we are improvising a new mission. How do we get our men home?"*

"Working the problem" and against the most incredible odds, Gene Krantz demanded that the wheel be re-invented. *"I don't want to know what anything is for. The question now is, what can it do?"*

Dealing with all of the scientific, tried and truth considerations, when nothing seemed like it could work, he forced the renegotiation of old ideas, conventional wisdom, typical talent and presumptive skill. Under his direction, his crew set out to figure out, transferring systems from one capsule to the other and adapting each operation to match the emerging demands of this mission of precious life and imminent death.

Krantz never once demonstrated resignation and as a result of his refusal to entertain the thought of giving up, he got those men back down to earth -- ALIVE.

And you?

When there is no obvious solution; when something must be created

that has not yet been conceived; when the mission seems impossible and the odds aren't on your side, will you resist the temptation to just surrender and call it a day?

It's the hardest thing to do when it's the only thing you've got. When absolutely everything around you suggests it can't be done, it won't work out, there is no way, HOPE looms as its own most difficult challenge and the thing on which you must depend.

Trading on HOPE is a courageous proposition and not something that everybody will choose to do. Courage is the currency of HOPE and HOPE is the fuel that will get us through to the other side of "it can not be done".

It takes guts and the willingness to put everything you know, everything you have and everything you are -- on the line for the profound and unique opportunity to invoke the companionship of -

HOPE.

Dana

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