

“A PRISONER OF HOPE” — —Desmond Tutu

One does not have to be a Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama or Senator John McCain who was imprisoned in North Viet Nam for 5 and half years. One does not have to be Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who when asked in March of 2010, “After all you’ve seen and endured, are you really as optimistic as your book, MADE FOR GOODNESS, says you are ? He replied, “I’m not optimistic, no. I’m quite different. I’m hopeful. I AM A PRISONER OF HOPE. Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite all of the darkness.”

Earlier in 2003 in his essay, “God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time”, Mandela said: “There is no such thing as a totally hopeless case. Our God is an expert at dealing with chaos, with brokenness, with all the worst that we can imagine.”

And people, our people, are being put to the test. We have been charged with saving our planet in the face of climate abuse and destruction. And so we marched yesterday with our brothers and sisters all over the world in the People’s Climate March. WE WILL NOT BE IGNORED!

Many people joined the Lakota Sioux Indians to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline....a place where climate change and racism collided, a place that was cold, where the struggle was daunting. And a place where The Army Corps of Engineers were turned back. WE WILL NOT BE DETERED!

The Women’s march in Washington, joined by “sister” marches all over the world, joined by men and children and people in wheel chairs....many who had never actively taken a stance...did so. WE WILL NOT TURN BACK!

WE people of privilege, those of us who by virtue of our birth location, having taken no tests, with no language barriers, always assuming “of course, we belong here.....after all, we’re citizens of the United States.” We can no longer sit back, dismayed and angry about real threats of deportation and broken families within our Latino and Muslim communities. We can no longer ignore people without homes, living in their cars, crowded into garages. So we attend meetings and speak up and

stand with our brothers and sisters in the Springs and beyond. WE WILL NOT BE IGNORED! WE WILL NOT TURN BACK!

I'm sure many of you have seen a quote that I read again on an SUV bumper sticker at the corner of Napa and 5th. streets: "What would you attempt to do if you knew you COULD NOT FAIL?" This question opens up all possibility, full range, to the the concept of HOPE. There would be no rational barriers, no proven behavioral data, no perceived truths or distorted realities to deter us. Having exhausted ALL else, sometimes the only thing left is Hope.

Barbara Kingsolver, American novelist, poet and classical pianist. Oh yes, and a Pulitzer Prize winner.... received an honorary Doctorate from Duke University in 2008 and was asked to give the commencement speech . I was especially taken with the courage of her simple thoughts, the risk in making no heady academic charges...

Here is a portion of what she said: "The very least you can do in your life is to figure out WHAT YOU HOPE FOR. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it...under its roof. (She continues) What I want is so simple I almost can't say it: ELEMENTARY KINDNESS. Enough to eat, enough to go around. The possibility that kids might one day grow up to be neither the destroyers nor the destroyed. That's about it. Right now, I'm living in that hope, running down its hallway and touching the walls on both sides".

Ultimately, HOPE is an extremely personal, practiced ACTIVITY. My rational mind had become so disengaged, that I continued far too long to live and participate in an abusive relationship. Almost 4 years ago, leaving everything behind and uncertain where I might land....HOPE moved me to action, to arrive here in this place right now. Wendell Berry in THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS, gave words to my hope: "For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free".

I have come to listen closely for words of hope from my adult children. Frankly, I haven't heard many mentions. But late last year, my son called and he was so excited Instead of 48 he sounded like he was 6. Jay is a psychotherapist, and he plays cello. Here is how he began, "Guess what,

mama (I'm thinking maybe an additional French Bulldog),he continues: "I may have a chance to meet Yoyo Ma....a small, private meeting." I HOPE IT HAPPENS! Of course, Jay knew that I would be hoping too. This is the result!

(Photo of smiling YoYO with his arms around ecstatic Jay)