

### Reading Response 3

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During this response, I am going to be taking you through a journey, a personal journey. Are you ready?

“To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable”. After listening to Rebecca Solnit Podcast *Falling together* and reading an excerpt of her book, *Hope in the Dark*, it really has opened my eyes to so many things that I have been ignoring and things I never even thought of. From both titles, one can conclude that it’s all about finding hope, hoping, and never giving up on hope, even if we go through rough moments. The author really inspired me due to the use of words she used and the examples she used. On every page I was highlighting encouraging and powerful quotes about hope, about taking action, and about the power we have to change the world.

This is an extraordinary time full of vital, transformative movements that could not be foreseen. We are living through times of extraordinary change; we never know what to expect especially due to the events have been happening these few months. It might be too cliché to describe life now as a roller coaster but it’s the perfect description to what it really is. Sometimes some things we go through are beautiful, irrational, annoying, thrilling, problematic and astonishing all at the same time. And the fact that we can never predict what is going to happen in the future it’s a mystery, and according to Rebecca “uncertainty, of coming to terms with the fact that we don’t know what will happen and that there’s maybe room for us to intervene, and that we have to let go of the certainty people seem to love more than hope and know that we

don't know what's going to happen". We go through these ups and downs sometimes more ups sometimes and sometimes more downs. When we feel life is throwing us down, we must remind ourselves that just remember things can change nothing stays the same forever.

To begin with, I was able to relate to Rebecca's work due to one of the biggest events that have had a huge impact on us, the Lebanese Revolution, whether directly or indirectly. Hundreds of thousands of people have come out on the streets of Lebanon to protest and have been united under the national flag breaking the sectarian divide in the country. This was the first time in the history of Lebanon where all people united to make change, a country that spent 15 years tearing itself into pieces, is trying, finally, to put itself back together again, Sunni and Christian, Shia, and Druze. All of them, for their country, a free and fair Lebanon. Lebanon's revolution is unlikely to be successful in its first try. This must be seen as a multistep endeavor, which may take decades. Sometimes it only takes one person to create a movement, sometimes a few passionate people change the world and sometimes they start a mass movement and millions do. One thing that all these transformations have in common is hope. "To hope is to gamble. It's to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it's the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk". I feel like one should look at it in a positive way, although this had so many negative impacts on us, but when all people came together, they actually did a change, even if the change wasn't a drastic one, but something changed.

At some point I really felt like it was too much to handle and it became too hectic for me, and I consider myself young to worry about such things, and I honestly don't even know how people with more responsibilities felt. As you may already know, I am an international student and I don't live with my family, when things started to heat up, I was really stressed that I

wouldn't see my family anymore and that things are only going to get worse. I felt terrible, I felt homesick and I just wanted it all to end, it was like I was living in a dream. People began talking about another war and only god knows how scared I felt that I was living alone. It really got to the point where I didn't want to leave my house. But after a while when all people united, and all of them means all of them, I started feeling more comfortable and things started to settle down more with time. Till today we have no idea where all this is taking us, but in "uncertainty lies the power to influence the future" and now is not the time to despair, but to act. Our problems are things we should deal with in order to survive or to improve the world, and facing them is better than turning away from them since "to face them can be an act of hope, but only if you remember that they're not all that there is."

When Rebecca spoke about the 1989 earthquake, I found it inspirational how she found it so interesting that people seemed to kind of love what was going on. "I think of that as this funny way the earthquake shakes you awake. And then that's the big spiritual question: How do you stay awake? How do you stay in that deeper consciousness of that present-mindedness, that sense of non-separation and compassion and engagement — and courage, which is also a big part of it, and generosity?" She tends to engage the reader with these sorts of questions that actually made me think through and remove the negativity in my mindset.

Another event that crossed my mind while looking into the work of the author is the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We still don't know what to predict and we are uncertain about what's going to happen next. It can be terrifying, no doubt, but in this state, I feel like the only thing that can hold us together is hope. I know to hope is tough, it's tougher to be uncertain than certain and It's tougher to take chances than to be safe. And as Rebecca mentions "hope is often seen as weakness, because it's vulnerable, but it takes strength to enter into that

vulnerability of being open to the possibilities”. And what I really find interesting is what gives people that strength? Living with this virus really has caused so many problems to me emotionally and physically as I started hallucinating that I might have it, I started feeling stuff I have never felt before and I became so unsure and unconfident about myself. I got so paranoid that I knew I can handle the virus but I started getting thoughts on carrying it to someone that won't be able to handle it and that's when I didn't want to leave my house anymore which has really put me down on so many levels. But then I thought to myself that I can't think of it this way, and especially after looking at the work of the artist I realized that I should look at the positive side of it. I have traveled to Jordan, my home country, and I am getting self-time with myself and with my family. I am trying to relax and be optimistic about it. Conversations won't be canceled, relationships won't be canceled, love will not be canceled, songs will not be canceled, reading will not be cancelled, self-care will not be canceled and most certainly hope will not be canceled. As the author mentions “hope is not like a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. I say this because hope is an ax you break down doors with in an emergency; because hope should shove you out the door, because it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures and the grinding down of the poor and marginal.”

If I was asked to make a film/video assignment about these times we are living through, I would most definitely get engaged with people on a personal level. I would ask people to tell me their thoughts and what's going through their minds. I would want to interview people, but not informatively rather personally. I would want the footage to be very personal that the viewer would feel with the people that are being interviewed. It doesn't necessarily have to be sad or negative, but it can just be a collection of footage about different people, different nationalities,

different personalities and different generations. I think it would really be interesting to find out how people are still holding on, how they still find hope even in the darkest times and how people tend to fight to never give up.

Life is unpredictable, hard and quite dishonorable at times. Things go out of hand and beyond of our control many times. Hope helps us keep the fight on and improves the chances of making our life better. I know it's very hard keeping up with the inner faith during the most critical times, but those who never leave hope, actually make it till the end. And if anything's going to save the planet, it's love. But mostly we don't even acknowledge that it exists. There are loops and dips, but it makes you stronger. Therefore, when something bad is happening and we just want to get out we must remind ourselves that it won't stay bad forever because we are on the amazing ride called life. And I believe life is like a roller coaster. So, buckle up your seat belts and hold on tight, let's go!