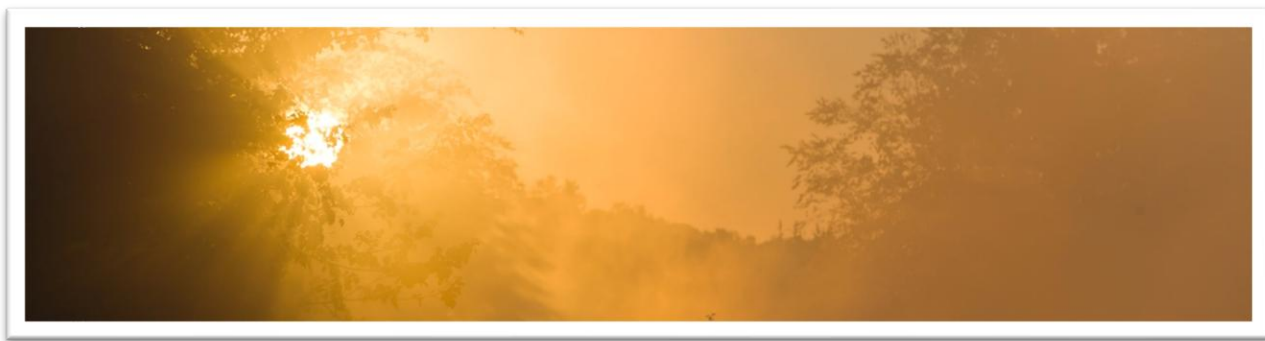




A Path to Hope by Nancy Hodgkins

I saw a man today by the side of the road, shivering in below-freezing weather as cars drove by; not seeing him or not wanting to.

He held a sign with a quiet, desperate scrawl that pleaded "Homeless, hungry, please help."

"That could be me." Whispered a terrified and defeated voice inside, stripped by the realities of losing my daughter, almost losing my mind and my life, my dog, my work, my home, and, probably most importantly, hope and a sense of purpose.

As I contemplated my intense, unexpected, relentless suffering, these wise words came back to me.

"Home is not a dwelling, it is about what you create."

Finding a path to hope, I've discovered, is a gift and a process.

I've learned that it is about life's journey through joy and despair,

Beginnings and endings.

And new beginnings.

It is about walking the road with friends who don't just "wish you happiness,"

Because, as Anne Morrow Lindbergh states, "I don't expect to be happy all the time. It's gotten beyond that somehow."

Finding a path to hope is about not being unhappy all the time

And finding hope again.

She writes, "Wish me courage and strength and a sense of humor. I will need them all."