

Chapter 3: Heroes & Heroines

Heroes and heroines of all types have come to pass on this Earth, following in the footsteps of other seekers. So many have faded into the mists of time it becomes impossible to count them all. What we can surmise is that, in all of these comings and goings, a repository of mythical images has been left behind. And those like me, who are here to explore and record these artifacts, have begun to pick through the pieces, fashion them together and return them to a population hungry for spiritual sustenance.

Not so long ago these mythical guideposts were handed down to new generations through an oral tradition designed to teach the old ways. That system doesn't work anymore because the current media storm has bombarded us with convoluted and contradictory messages about our place in the world. A spiritually hungry population needs something solid to feed on, something with substance that includes all those dynamics of the human condition, something beyond which today's media has to offer. In the theatre of life there is comedy, drama, pathos, conflict and resolution.

We study bards, prophets, philosophers and theologians to try and get a glimpse of their soul, in order to have a glimpse of our own. I'm not sure why we do this anymore. I decided to visit but vowed I would never rest in those realms for fear of confounding myself. Their reflections have been recycled and distorted so many times over the years they have lost much of their original meaning and value. In my opinion, today's Christianity no longer represents Christ's message.

At the beginning of my search I revisited the Christianity of my childhood and found once again that it could not fill my cup. I still hoped that Jesus the man would be relevant for me today. But now I know that He can't. Because religion's interpretation of his message has been so distorted that I feel it has lost its relevance to me and to the world in which I live. I hope His original message surfaces again, as a Christ consciousness through me, through you, through all of us. In my view, the church and its misrepresentation of the historical Jesus has nothing left to teach us. Scripture is consistently being used for some political agenda and

the church is party to this. The disenfranchisement of women, blacks, homosexuals and divorcees continues to prevail. Such groups have been either left behind or simply condemned as sinners. Challenging the traditional church and its interpretations of Christ's teaching has been labeled as heresy. By so doing, they have bound us to the past and thwarted our pursuit of authentic spiritual growth. These were not the teachings of Christ. His original contributions to mythology have yet to be fully retrieved.

We must take responsibility for ourselves now. We cannot solely count on a historical figure to rescue us. If we allowed this we would deny our free will and the opportunity to do it for ourselves. Our time at the helm of our lives has just begun. We have a long journey ahead of us. Jesus, mythical giant that he was, has pointed the way. But we have to make the heroic descent into the unconscious realms of our lives to pursue certain necessary confrontations such as our fears, our hurts and our traumas. Christ had his resurrection. Now we must have ours!

Many questions are posed when we come to a point like this in our story. Where does it all begin? What is the first step? How do I do this? I know, I know. I've asked all of these questions and wondered about what I needed to do. But inevitably, I had to take charge. This is not a new message. Hearing it repeatedly can become tiresome. But taking charge remains a necessity. Initially I was craving solace and hoping for a reprieve from my responsibilities. It eventually came, but not in a form I expected. It never came from without; it came from within. I know you've heard this before too. Our reprieve is not coming from anywhere, but within.

I have used my own life experiences as examples of how self and soul can erupt into your life. I have lived what I am writing about in this course on Mythology in Action. And through my years of therapeutic practice I saw this type of inspiration, with self and soul behind the scenes, surface for many individuals.

When unhealthy defensive strategies are removed from their positions of guarding the personality, then the creative river flows. This can be startling in the beginning. When we're accustomed to protecting ourselves from real or imagined dangers, allowing our inner self be expressed can be quite challenging. Most people would believe that opening oneself up

should be easy. Not so! A well-defended, closed person can be taken aback by this new found creativity. However, knowing that this change is coming about can easily temper this tumultuous creative thrust.

So what does all this mean for you? If you've been feeling that urge to write, paint, build, construct or sing then your Creativity is calling to you. And that Creativity comes to you through your Self, from your Soul. The phrase "to be called" is found regularly in Mythology. Various prophets and writers, such as Hermann Hess, Thomas Merton, Jesus Christ, have used such terms to describe their creative awakening. As mentioned, this process can be intimidating. It is the power of that call that makes it so. If you're feeling something powerful stirring inside, then it is time for you to listen.

Remember this invitation to listen. Listening to ourselves is not so easy when we're accustomed to battling our inner critic. That part of us will keep repeating that "we're not good enough", "we'll never achieve our goals", or "we are not worthy." This is the voice of doom, not of reason. It's the sound of our own discouragement echoing through us. To solve this may require some detective work. Did you do this to yourself? Or, were these negative messages imposed on you by external circumstances, teachers, parents or other authority figures? The truth is many of us did receive a good dose of this negativity which continues to weigh heavily upon us. The voice coming from your self and soul, that voice that resides within, is urging you to try new things, express yourself and take a chance on your self. That voice is calling you now and wants you to listen. How do you feel about that? Frightened.? That's often how it feels at the beginning of an awakening process. It is scary because all your protective personality defenses are being challenged. Your defenses want you to remain hidden while your self wants to become conscious and free.

Your self, your piece of the Divine needs to come through you. It will never happen without your consent. All the energy you've put into defending yourself can now be applied to creativity, to actualizing your piece of the cosmic puzzle. If you don't do it, then that piece, your piece will remain missing from the larger picture. Have you ever tried to finish a jigsaw puzzle with a number of key pieces missing? Frustrating isn't it. I suspect that's how the Creator, seeing us scurry under the coffee table looking for the missing piece. The Creator appreciates it may some time before all parts of the cosmic puzzle are assembled. The

Creator is patient though and will wait as long as necessary.

That Divine part of us never gives up. NEVER! It is always there, encouraging, praising, suggesting, and nudging us along. That part of us invariably believes in our capabilities and celebrates when we begin to express our true nature. The Divine becomes excited when we try something new, when we experiment with a different way of being, when we pick up those note books, crayons, paints, musical instruments and college calendars. It knows the dream, the beautiful blue flame is still alive! The dream, that fantasy we play for ourselves, inside our hearts, when no one is around to discourage or judge us is calling. This dream features us as Heroine or Hero, doing what it is we secretly want to do, expressing that passion that rises in us like a tidal wave. At times, we get so excited we could burst. That's your passion, trying to make its way to your awareness. It wants you to recognize it and activate its switch.

We are all on this journey together, learning from each other, sharing and mirroring back and forth the images of our lives. They all count, most specially, most certainly your own! So take hold now and prepare yourself as we journey further into the hinterlands of our existence, as we explore and examine that phenomenon we call life from the point of view of myth. These are the myths that you and I, all of us, are living, that propel us forward on this quest through time, that drive the engine of our souls in great anticipation of our arrival. Where? Home, self, soul, spiritual consciousness, the very centre of our being.

Getting the juices flowinG

When you reach inside yourself, what might you find? A storehouse of creativity that's what. "Is that so?" you say. "Well, my creativity has gone AWOL, I can't find it anywhere. I'm lost without it. What do I do?" I hear you. It's a hard road to travel, getting to that creative place. There are obstacles along the way - past traumas, feelings of hurt, lost loved ones, grievances, upsets and old grudges brewing in the background. All of these are distractions to the creative process.

When children start out they are immediately creative. They scribble, they write, they color, they take things apart, they sing and dance. They are already there, in that internal world, where the creative mind is at play. And they play; because that's how they create. Their imagination takes them here and there and they don't qualify what pops up for exploring. They don't judge, they just do it. That's the essence of creativity – exploring, playing and creating. That is also the essence of our Inner Child - He/She is our creative self.

Contrast that with "I've got bills to pay! The kids are sick! My boss hates me! There's too much suffering in the World," and so on. When you're worried about 101 things there's no time or inclination to be creative. So lack of creativity is not so much an absence of ability as it is about too many distractions. Solitude is essential to creativity. Just watch a young child at play. They are happily engaged in their own world and loving every minute of it. Sooner or later, they will come out and show you what they've created. You will applaud, and they will go off and do more.

That's what you need – some applause to get you going. You applaud yourself when you bake a cake or build a birdhouse, don't you? Creativity thrives in the dark but requires the spark of light and encouragement to keep it going. As adults, we need to be noticed and appreciated just like children. Here's a tip. Try receiving for a change. Say thank you when you're complimented or appreciated for some gesture, instead of shrugging it off.

So where's your spark right now? Is it on or off? Don't worry, it's there waiting for you, down in that chamber where you used to create. You're going to recover that for yourself now that you've decided you want your Inner Life back. You can retrieve that lost part of you and fan it

back into a full blown flame.

“How do I get there?” you want to know. Good question. “Cleanse yourself!” is the answer. “How do I do that?” You start writing, or journaling actually. This is not creative writing, but writing for the purpose of cleaning out all those distractions. You write about every obstacle that jumps onto your path. You write about the kids, your spouse, the family, your boss, the church, the government, whatever is bothering you. This is journaling for a purpose. And that purpose is cleansing the Soul. A clean slate is the basic creative stance. It says “I’m ready, bring it on, I will create now. Oh yeah, just watch me.”

This cleansing process is ongoing. I've been doing it for over 25 years and I still do it regularly, even daily sometimes. There's always stuff to clean out. It's a very soothing and satisfying process. You get all of those injunctions out of your way and lo and behold, your creativity starts to flow again. A little bit here, a little bit there, and pretty soon you're filling canvasses with images, cupboards with crafts, workshops with structures and pages with stories. You're flowing again.

Think of cleansing as an emotional and spiritual enema. You get those nasty clogs out of the way and then you start creating again, just as you did in childhood. Our spiritual and emotional selves need that kind of cleansing regularly, just as our physical body requires regular maintenance. We need to keep all these systems running smoothly. Creativity is a process, it works best when we get the garbage out of the way, especially old hurts and resentments. Then we can do what we came here for – CREATE. And our Inner Child will love us for it.