

Journeys of Self-Discovery

Literature is full of stories of the hero embarking on a journey into lands and worlds previously unknown, uncharted and unconquered. Some of those heroes set out believing they are unconquerable, and experience trials and tribulations that take them to the brink of their will and capability, such as Homer's Odysseus, some of their infallibility being knocked off them. Others set off on an adventure, ignorant of the world, following something within themselves, a calling, that they don't understand. Parsifal, who had been protected from learning his kingly heritage by his mother, eventually had his true nature emerge and he had no choice but to follow where it took him.



Extending self to achieve great heights of achievement

Author

[Stephen Harrison](#) BSc (Hons), PMP, FPMINZ

Abstract

The 'hero's journey' is archetypal in nature and invariably requires the hero to show leadership, courage, and to necessarily engage with his own inner world. Our lives reflect this same calling to self, and the more fully we respond, the greater our capacity and power to respond to life's challenges.

Keywords

Courage, leadership, personal change, relationship with self

First Published

23 September 2013

Copyright

© [Harrison International Ltd](#), 2013. This document may be transmitted & reproduced in its entirety.

Whatever the initial motive, the hero had to learn who they truly were, dig deep within themselves and manifest themselves as they never knew was possible. Some of their qualities were noble and inspiring. But heroes have flaws that almost certainly interfere with the clarity of purpose and ethics and morality of what they achieve. A necessary part of the hero's journey is as much about conquering their inner world as it is about confronting significant external challenges. In the stories they eventually overcome all and manifest a new capacity from within themselves that enabled them to succeed, and which is often what they are then known for.

The hero is an archetypal energy we can all relate to and can draw on for power and inspiration as we engage in our own life and confront the challenges that are in our way. The question to hold as you meet your challenges is 'What new role development do I call on from within myself to succeed here?' So often life feels cyclic. "I have been here before". It may be familiar but it is different and it will require something new to succeed, though

it may be based on familiar qualities of yourself. Life is not a circle, rather it is a helix (shaped like a spring), and when we encounter something again, we are a little further forward. We either need to truly learn the lesson we did not master previously, or expand our role repertoire to achieve something more significant. And, as with the journey of the hero, you will be required to dig deep and draw on courage and resilience to conquer, particularly in the internal part of your quest.

One example of such a helix in my life relates to staying in my power in relationship with others. As a result of a teenage experience I spent some year's shut-down against and avoiding any form of conflict. I would not engage with someone who wished to confront me, rightly or wrongly, about who I was and how I was behaving. My belief system was such that I presumed I was likely at fault. Not a particularly useful approach when attempting to lead. I then found myself in leadership positions, and I was either going to perish without any capacity to create a difference, and fail as

a leader, or find a new way of being. Direct and open confrontation was one learning. Another was staying engaged in the conversation, remaining present. Yet another was to truly listen to the other party, parking my need to respond immediately, improving my capacity to comprehend the other person's perspective. This has been true throughout my working career, and in my personal relationships. No two occasions has been the same, but the recognition of being somewhere familiar has been high, and also that I have more on offer and available from within myself. Now, I am often called in to help team's work through conflict and strengthen their capability to work effectively together.

What are your developing lessons in life? Your themes? What has strengthened your capacity as you have brought more of yourself into a situation? Have you taken your own heroes journey and become better acquainted with yourself, both your strengths and your weaknesses? Do you love yourself and accept who you are, even your uncomfortable or ugly bits?

For more information related to themes in this article, refer to: Harrison, S. G. (2012). [*Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose.*](#) Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

Coaching can support you create the best outcome when working with areas covered by this article.

Follow these links for coaching information:

- [Coaching Overview](#)
- [Individual \(Leadership/Executive\) Coaching](#)
- [Team Coaching](#)
- [Group Coaching](#)
- [Why Sponsor Coaching?](#)
- [Offer: Free Individual Coaching Session](#)
- [Stephen's Profile](#)