

Carol S. Pearson

Author of *Persephone Rising* and *Awakening the Heroes Within*

THE HERO WITHIN

SIX ARCHETYPES WE LIVE BY

ORPHAN • INNOCENT • MAGICIAN
WANDERER • WARRIOR • ALTRUIST



Dedication

For Amalie Frank

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Preface

A computer expert once complained to me that many people, after buying their first PC, call the hot-line number outraged because their computer won't work. What they mean is that they do not know how to work it. He noted that when we buy a car, we do not expect it to drive itself. We have to learn to use it—and then get a license to drive.

All of us have tremendous richness within us—potential that, when tapped, can help us find greater success and fulfillment in our lives. However, few people today learn how to access their own inner potential. *The Hero Within* is a primary text for the emerging field of inner resource development (IRD)—a field devoted to giving the keys to the kingdom back to ordinary people so they can live extraordinary lives.

Most of us know that when we buy a computer, we at least should read the instruction manual, if not take a course. However, when it comes to our psyches, we often simply expect that they will run themselves. It is tacitly assumed in our culture that we need to look within ourselves only when something goes wrong. Then we call in an expert (psychiatrist, psychologist, minister, guru, etc.) to identify what is sick, inadequate, or sinful about us that is causing the problem—just as we would look for a defective part in a machine, so it can be replaced.

The success of self-help books in our time reflects a constructive desire on people's parts to take responsibility for their own mental health and spiritual development. However, most such books also focus on teaching us what is wrong with ourselves and then telling us how we can get better. Just as with a computer, we may not need to be fixed; we simply may need to learn to understand what we have going for us and how to use it in the current stage of our journey.

The Hero Within can be thought of as an operating manual for the psyche, or as a map or guidebook for the journey. It describes six inner guides, or archetypes, that help us on our way. With their assistance, we can traverse the predictable dilemmas of the maturation process—a process that continues throughout our lives. When we learn how to access this inner support, we

also become less fearful about the future. It becomes clear that we have within us everything we need to handle whatever challenges we encounter on the path.

Moreover, life has become too complex to cede ownership of knowledge about our inner resources to psychologists and other experts. Success in today's workplace requires all of us to develop emotional and spiritual intelligence. Archetypes—the fundamental structures of the psyche—can help us decode our own inner workings, as well as the inner lives of other people, groups, and social systems, so that we can rise to the challenge of contemporary life.

Work on archetypes was pioneered by the Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung, who also formulated theories about psychological type, the individuation process, transference, projection, and synchronicity. Jung described archetypes as deep and abiding patterns in the human psyche that remain powerful and present over time. These may exist, to use Jung's terminology, in the "collective unconscious," or "objective psyche"; they may even be encoded into the makeup of the human brain. Jung discovered these archetypes in patients' dreams as well as in art, literature, and sacred myths. He developed treatment strategies such as dream analysis, active imagination exercises, and awareness of the archetypal dimension of waking life to heal his patients, sometimes from very serious emotional or mental illness. But whereas Jung's work was motivated by a desire to heal dysfunction, *The Hero Within* employs Jungian ideas and approaches to help well people learn to thrive.

In much of the world today, ordinary people face choices beyond those available to all but the most privileged in the past. For most of human history, specified sex roles, set career patterns, and predictable behaviors determined by one's class or ethnic group defined how people lived and even what they thought. Sex roles are now much more blurred, and ethnicity no longer limits who and what we can be. The pace of economic and social change will cause many of us to pursue several careers in one short life-time. Moreover, we have the freedom to choose to live out very different lifestyles. All of this requires more of us. We need to be more flexible, to be able to keep more balls in the air, and to make an infinite number of choices—small and large—about who we are and how we want to live.

The modern world is so complex that we all must understand our own psyches and their potential. Unfortunately, it remains true that most of us

receive no systematic training to acquaint us with our inner desires and resources. In fact, most people do not gain any real self-knowledge until or unless they get depressed or have some other difficulty great enough to send them to a psychotherapist for help.

Today, many of us realize that we bear some responsibility for our own physical health. It is not enough to trust the doctor to make you well when you get sick. It is at least equally important to exercise, eat well, and live a healthy lifestyle to prevent illness. When we are ill, most of us know we should read up on our illness, seek a second opinion when it seems warranted, and not simply give our power over to the physician, however competent she or he might be.

The same principle applies to mental health. Psychospiritual fitness is just as important as physical health. In providing expert information to the lay public, *The Hero Within* gives knowledge of the inner life back to readers. The point is that we can be safe and at home in our own psyches, and we also can learn the basics of what we need to know so that we can have access to the richness of our inner lives.

The Hero Within model can be used to increase people's emotional and spiritual intelligence. It is appropriate in a variety of settings because it allows for communication that is deep and authentic without prying into the details of people's personal lives or histories. It also can help individuals connect to their spirits and souls in a way that neither promotes nor violates their particular religious commitments (or lack thereof). Through this approach, they can go inward to find out not what is wrong with them but what is potentially very right, thus contributing to higher self-esteem and better functioning.

PUBLICATION HISTORY OF THIS BOOK

This third version of *The Hero Within* builds on the framework of the first and second editions. I was inspired initially to write *The Hero Within* out of a concern that we would not be able to solve the great political, social, and philosophical problems of our time if so many of us persisted in seeing the hero as “out there” or “up there,” beyond ourselves. The book was meant as a call to the quest, a challenge to readers to claim their own heroism and take their own journeys. This call is not about becoming bigger or better or more important than anyone else. *We all matter*. Every one of us has an essential contribution to make, and we can make it only by taking the risk of being uniquely our own selves.

Underneath the frantic absorption in the pursuit of money, status, power, and pleasure and the addictive and obsessive behaviors so prevalent today are, we all know, a sense of emptiness and a common human hunger to go deeper. In writing *The Hero Within*, it seemed to me that each of us wants and needs to learn, if not the “meaning of life,” then the meaning of our individual lives, so that we can find ways of living and being that are rich, empowered, and authentic.

Yet, even though I knew this, the massive cultural response to Bill Moyers’s interviews with Joseph Campbell on the PBS series *The Power of Myth*, along with the enthusiastic reader response to *The Hero Within*, was a pleasant surprise. More people than I ever dared imagine seem prepared and even eager to respond to the call to the heroic quest with an enthusiastic “Yes!”

The first edition of *The Hero Within* sold almost entirely by word of mouth. I was fascinated to learn how many readers bought multiple copies to give to their friends and co-workers as a way of calling them to the quest and, at the same time, creating a sense of community that would support their own journeys. Readers frequently complained that copies of the book had a way of disappearing from their offices and living rooms, by way, I gather, of friends, lovers, relatives, clients, and colleagues.

Many readers also have written or called to say how *The Hero Within* either named their own experience or in some other way empowered them. I was particularly touched by a man from Perth, Australia, who called three times, long distance, to thank me for writing the book, apparently undeterred

by always getting my answering machine. But most of all, I have been moved by stories of personal transformation. One young man from the Pacific Northwest told me that he had been on drugs and had lost everything. He was living alone in the woods, he said, when he read the book, believed it, and it changed his life. By the time he brought his tattered copy of the book to a lecture for me to sign, he was an executive in a small company and generally doing well. Such is the power of myth.

The second edition of *The Hero Within* was prompted by the question asked most frequently by readers: “Is it possible to do something to encourage the development of an archetype in one’s own life?” The answer is yes, and the exercises I added to the second edition were designed to do just that.

This third edition was inspired by the understanding that the world has changed a great deal since *The Hero Within* was first published. The original version provided a title format and an approach that became a model spawning many similar books—“The (fill in the blank) Within.” It also was part of a much larger movement of books and workshops helping people to recognize and awaken their inner resources. This abundance has made people much more sophisticated than they were just a decade ago about understanding their inner resources. Today, the president of the United States refers unself-consciously to our nation’s “journey.” Business books tell executives that they have to go on their heroic journeys to make the changes required in today’s competitive environment. Virtually all of us understand that we are entering a time so challenging that qualities we once expected to find only in exceptional people now are required in everyone.

I am thankful to Harper San Francisco for asking me to prepare this completely revised and expanded edition. Writing it helped me not only to see how my own ideas had evolved, but also to understand more clearly the way the collective consciousness of our culture was and is changing. I come away from this writing project ever more optimistic about the potential for individual and societal transformation. The seeds have been planted and new growth has begun to sprout. We can water this new life by our attention. Whatever we focus on tends to build and grow.

CHANGES FROM THE SECOND EDITION

My primary purpose in revising *The Hero Within* has been to make it more accessible. So many readers have shared with me how transformative

this material is that I simply wanted to make it available to a greater number of people. This necessitated major revision and expansion of the introduction to explain key concepts in a simpler, clearer way. (The original introduction has been replaced by two chapters.) It also required the addition to three chapters at the end of the book to help readers know how to use the archetypal approach in their everyday lives. Because people have been working with this material for more than a decade, we now have a rich trove of resources to draw upon that show readers how they can consciously employ the hero's journey as a model to take charge of their own.

Much of my knowledge comes from confidential situations. In Chapters 2 through 7, which describe archetypes, I frequently cite literary examples, augmenting them with a few true stories. In chapters exploring ways to use archetypal awareness in readers' lives (Chapters 1 and 8 through 10), I have used more illustrations from real people's lives. However, so as not to breach confidentiality, these generally are either composites or have been fictionalized enough that the original model for the story cannot be traced. I also have included a few incidents from my own life.

I began revising this book because the sex role revolution and its archetypal impact had dated some of the examples. When I wrote the original version of *The Hero Within*, I was concerned about the fact that women did not see themselves as heroes because the society saw them as "other." This is why I did not use the term "heroine." Women's journeys often differ in style and sometimes in sequence from those of men, but the hero's journey is essentially the same for both sexes. In the past decade, men's and women's lives have become more similar. As I returned to revise this work, I therefore updated many of the gender examples.

In the past, gender limited people, circumscribing the lives of both sexes. Men tried to be manly, but they also struggled not to be, or seem, like sissies. Women strove to be feminine and nurturing and not to seem masculine in any way. Now, an increasing number of men expect to nurture children, help "make a home," and share their feelings with their partner and even their friends. More and more women expect to earn a living, work out, and show toughness when it is needed.

Many of the changes I was advocating in *The Hero Within* have now come to pass, at least for the young. In the original edition of this book, I encouraged women to act on the world as Warriors, but I also encouraged men to expand their own sense of heroism to encompass the traditional

heroism of women—as Martyrs/Altruists—whose caring function has, in many ways, held our families and neighborhoods together. Women have been faster to embrace traditionally male forms of heroism than men have been to embrace female modes—largely because the culture still respects male models of behavior more than female ones. The last archetype discussed is the Magician, not only because it presides over the transformation of the kingdom, but also because it is intrinsically androgynous, bringing together the best of the male and female traditions. I believe the emergence of this archetype inevitably will bring about an empowering balance in which both the masculine and the feminine are honored equally within the individual psyche and society as a whole.

The greatest challenge I encountered in revising the book was the evolution in the way archetypes have been expressed in the past decade. This cultural shift necessitated major conceptual changes in the book influencing the naming of an archetype, the order in which the archetypes are presented, and the descriptions of each archetype.

When I wrote the first edition of *The Hero Within*, I was concerned that the Warrior archetype, with its need to conquer, would destroy the world. The cold war was heating up; the stockpiling of nuclear weapons was accelerating; racial tensions were increasing; and environmental catastrophe, fueled by unbridled competitiveness, seemed imminent. Since then, the Berlin Wall has come down, apartheid has ended in South Africa, environmental awareness has increased substantially, and the men’s movement (with its critique of the macho Warrior role) has erupted. Archetypes are eternal forms, but their expression is shaped by the level of consciousness of a particular historical time. For most of recorded history, men proved themselves in battle. Beginning with Vietnam, war became suspect.

With the advent of nuclear weapons, war has become too dangerous for civilization to use it as a rite of passage into manhood. As a result, the expression of the archetype is forced to move to a higher level. Today, we send our young men and women into corporate “jungles” with admonitions to make something of themselves. The Warrior energy is primarily channeled into the will to achieve—on the athletic field, in schools, and in the workplace.

We can see an equally radical shift in the Altruist archetype. Writing in the 1980s, I called this archetype the Martyr, noting in particular how women

were expected to sacrifice for their husbands and children. Since then, women's roles have changed markedly, the men's movement has exposed the self-sacrifice inherent in the traditional male as well as female role, and the psychological literature on codependence has identified the Martyr with pathology. As a result, martyrdom now is socially unacceptable. Indeed, the word "martyr" has taken on such negative connotations that it seemed wise to change the name of the Martyr archetype to "the Altruist" for this new edition. This is not simply a matter of renaming. The use of the term "Altruist" honors the evolution of the archetype that has occurred during the past decade. We are struggling to express altruism and care without being martyrs. In the process, the archetype is being suppressed. Faced with homelessness in the streets, neglected children in our homes, and a growing discrepancy between the incomes of not only the rich and the poor, but the rich and the middle class, we never have needed the Altruist more than we do today.

The Innocent archetype also has evolved. When I wrote *The Hero Within*, the reawakening of spirituality in the culture had only just begun. When spirit is denied, the Innocent expresses itself in childlike dependence, "me"-generation narcissism, materialism, and a massive cultural inability to pick up after ourselves (especially in the areas of environmental pollution and social injustice). When spirit enters a life, however, the Innocent becomes a mystic, experiencing the essential goodness of the universe. The return of spirit to the culture means that although innocence still is being evidenced in its spoiled-little-child aspect, the more hopeful sign is how many people today are experiencing the consciousness of the Innocent's return to Eden. The massive cultural emergence of the returned Innocent caused me to move the Innocent chapter to the penultimate position—after the Altruist and before the Magician. Working with the higher form of the archetype also allowed me to differentiate between the high-level Innocent and the Magician. The hero finds the treasure and recaptures innocence and then, as the Magician, transforms the kingdom. What this means is that we do not transform the world in order to be happy. We find happiness first, and then we transform our world.

I am aware that some readers may be displeased by so many changes in the book, especially if they liked the previous edition the way it was. I anticipated this, because at a speech I gave after *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help Us Find Ourselves and Transform Our*

World was published, a man in the audience stood up during the question-and-answer period to tell me how furious he was that I had written that book. He explained that he liked *The Hero Within* just as it was and resented my expanding the number of archetypes and describing them in a different way! He wanted me to leave well enough alone.

I ended the preface to the 1986 edition by saying, “If you happen to see me after a lapse of several years, do not ask me to defend ideas in this book. Very likely I will know more and may no longer agree with what I have said. Tell me what you think, and ask me, if you wish to ask me something, what I have learned since writing it.” This revised edition—as well as *Awakening the Heroes Within*—answers that question. I look forward to learning even more from reader responses to this edition and to the continued influence such interactions will have on my ideas and my life.

USES OF THIS BOOK

The Hero Within is written primarily for individual readers seeking greater self-knowledge and success on their journeys. It also is appropriate for use in:

- *parenting*: to encourage children to become successful, ethical, and happy;
- *psychotherapy*: as a means to identify archetypal strengths that can help with the therapeutic process as well as to know what archetypes may need to be developed for more successful functioning;
- *schools*: in character development and school-to-work programs, staff/teacher renewal programs, and student motivation efforts;
- *counseling*: to enhance career and life fulfillment, marriages and families, and out-placement efforts;
- *recovery programs*: to help people pick up life lessons missed because their families of origin were dysfunctional and/or because their own alcohol or drug use interfered with their development;
- *organizations*: as a tool for team building, diversity training, leadership development, and organizational change efforts;
- *executive and transition coaching*: to encourage leadership excellence from the inside out;
- *churches, synagogues, and other religious groups*: as an aid to spiritual development;
- *mediation, cultural diversity, and political organizing*: to help people understand each other's divergent perspectives and common ground; and
- *scholarship, journalism, and other forms of analytical thought*: to recognize (archetypally based) biases that undermine objectivity and what paradigms or mental maps are operating in different accounts of "reality."

Acknowledgments

I am inspired to revise and expand this work by the many readers who have shared with me the stories of their heroic journeys and anecdotes about ways *The Hero Within* touched their lives. I have been moved, encouraged, and occasionally challenged by the mail, phone calls, and e-mail I daily receive. I have learned not only from readers, but also professionals whom I have trained in the use of this model and other similar ones. It is fascinating to me that although I have been working with these materials for years, others using them always come up with some nuance or even breakthrough insight I have missed. I am particularly grateful for insights from what I call my training faculty “dream team”: Patricia Adson, whose book *True North* provides practical guidance for psychotherapists on the uses of these and other archetypes with their clients; Eileen and Patrick Howley, who apply these models to the training of educational leaders; Chris Saade, who integrates these ideas with existential philosophy/psychology and whose emphasis on the importance of existential choice strongly influenced this revision; and Suzanne Guy, who edits *Heroes Ink*, a newsletter to support people who are using the hero’s journey model in their lives and work.

A number of theories positively influenced the development of these models. The three major philosophical traditions this book integrates and develops are: Jungian psychology, scholarship on the hero’s journey, and new-thought spiritual principles. In the Jungian world, I wish to acknowledge particularly C. G. Jung, who provided the pioneering studies of archetypes, without which this book could not have been written; James Hillman, whose archetypal theories were essential to its development; and Frances Parks, whose skillful analytical training provided guidance in understanding my own inner archetypal life. For the hero’s journey material, of course, this book would not have been possible without the scholarly achievement of Joseph Campbell and the practical applications of these theories by David Oldfield, whose example was extremely helpful in developing the exercises herein. For insight into new thought spiritual traditions, I am particularly indebted to the work of Eric Butterworth.

Other theoretical perspectives that influenced my thinking include gestalt therapy, the fields of women's and ethnic studies, cognitive psychology, learning theory, family systems theory, and organizational development/systems theory.

I also am grateful to a series of editors who treated this book with professionalism and care: Pat Lassonde, who edited the first edition; Tom Grady, who edited the second edition and proposed this third edition; my agent, Angela Miller, who convinced me to take it on; Mark Chimsky, who edited this edition and provided invaluable guidance during the writing process; and Ann Moru for copyediting. I also thank Edith Lazenby for her work typing revisions for this book and my husband, David Merkowitz, for his substantial help in the writing/editing process and for his unfailing love and support.

PART 1

The Heroic Journey: The Map

Introduction

Making a Difference: The Heroic Journey

...We have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.

—Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*

You are a hero—or could be.

Heroes—in myth, literature, and real life—take journeys, confront dragons (i.e., problems), and discover the treasure of their true selves. Although they may feel very alone during the quest, at its end their reward is a sense of community: with themselves, with other people, and with the earth. Every time we confront death-in-life, we confront a dragon. Every time we choose life over nonlife and move deeper into the ongoing discovery of who we are, we bring new life to ourselves and to our culture.

The need to take the journey is innate in the species. If we do not risk, if we play prescribed social roles instead of taking our journeys, we may feel numb and experience a sense of alienation, a void, an emptiness inside. People who are discouraged from slaying dragons internalize the urge and slay themselves by declaring war on their fat, their selfishness, their sensitivity, or some other attribute they think does not please. Or they suppress their feelings in order to become successful performance machines. Or they become chameleons, killing off their uniqueness to serve an image they think buys success or just will keep them safe. When we declare war on our true selves, we can end up feeling as though we have lost our souls. If this goes on long enough, we are likely to become ill and have to struggle to

get well. In shying away from the quest, we experience nonlife and, accordingly, we call forth less life in the culture. This is the experience of the wasteland.

TRANSFORMING THE WASTELAND

At the beginning of the classic hero myth, the kingdom is a wasteland. Crops are not growing, illness is rampant, babies are not being born, and alienation and despair are pervasive. The fertility, the sense of life, has disappeared from the kingdom. This dilemma is associated with some failure on the part of the ruler, who is impotent, or sinful, or despotic. The old king or queen represents anachronistic ways that are hamstringing the culture. ¹

Therefore, a more youthful challenger goes on a journey, confronts a dragon, and wins a treasure, which may be riches or a more clearly symbolic object, such as the grail in the Grail myths or a sacred fish in the Fisher King myths. The journey transforms the challenger, whose treasure is the discovery of a new and life-affirming perspective. When the hero returns to the kingdom, this insight also changes life for everyone. For this reason, the returned hero becomes the new ruler. Because new answers have been found, fertility and abundance are restored. Rain falls, nourishing parched ground. Crops spring up, babies are born, the plague is cured, and people feel hopeful and alive once more.

In this story, you may notice generational conflicts. If you are a young person, you might identify the old ruler as parents and other authority figures. They are not necessarily bad; it is just that their truths come from another time. That is why you must take your own journey.

At any age, you may experience this pattern when you become dissatisfied with your family system, your organization, your community—or even just the way you are living your own life. As you go on a quest to find greater vitality and aliveness for yourself, you also seek answers that contribute to a collective transformation.

In fact, any time you identify a wasteland element in your life—illness, boredom, lethargy, alienation, emptiness, loss, addiction, failure, anger, or outrage—it is time to take a journey. You can be called to the quest by such dissatisfaction or simply by a desire for adventure. The journey you take inevitably will transform you. Systems theory tells us that when any element of a system changes, the whole system has to reconfigure. Therefore, simply by experiencing your own metamorphosis, you can contribute to the

transformation of all the social systems of which you are a part: family, school, workplace, community, and society as a whole.

Heroes, then, are not only people who grow and change and take their journeys; they also are agents of change. In *The Hero: Myth/Image/Symbol*, Dorothy Norman maintains that “myths of the heroes speak most eloquently of man’s quest to choose life over death.”² Joseph Campbell, in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, defines the hero as “the champion not of things to become but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast the keeper of the past.”³ The hero’s task always has been to bring new life to an ailing culture.

In ancient times, societies were governed by kings and queens. Most people had little power over their lives. Today, however, we prize the achievement of democracy. Yet living in an egalitarian society carries with it responsibilities. Instead of only exceptional people going on the quest, we all need to be doing so. Heroism today requires us all to find the treasure of our true selves and to share that treasure with the community as a whole—through doing and being fully who we are. To the degree that we do so, our kingdoms are transformed.

THE CALL IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Many people put off their journeys, expecting to be cared for, but in the contemporary world this desire soon is thwarted. Most of us would like to count on being safe, but the world has a way of throwing us out of the secure nest. The result is that we learn to fly or fall to the ground to try again. The following are just a few of the many ways the world requires us to be willing to face uncertainty:

- Many young people feel alienated, if not bitter, because it has dawned on them that they may not achieve the same level of prosperity as their parents. In the United States, we had come to expect that progress was automatic: each generation would have it better than the previous one. Now it looks as though this may not be true, at least for many. No matter how angry one feels about this, it still is necessary to grapple with making one’s way in the world.
- In the past, people assumed that when they married, it would be for life. Now divorce has become common. Some people whose spouses walk out on them are unprepared—emotionally or financially—and find themselves