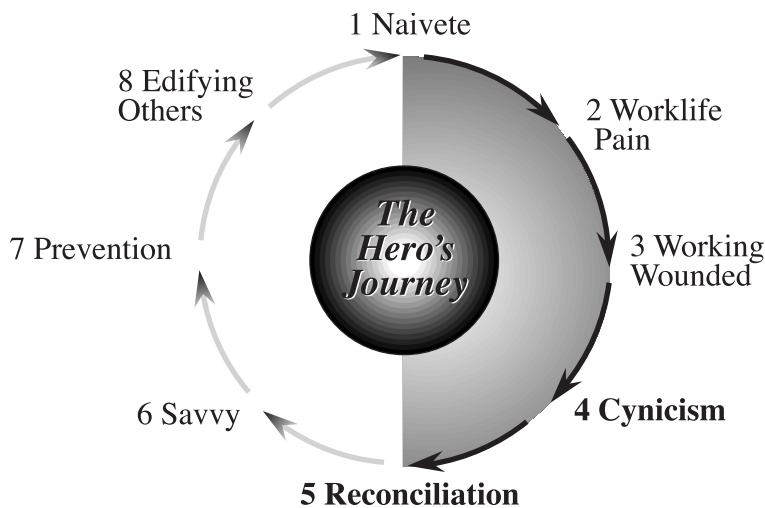


## **Part Two: The Initiation**

Changing hearts is the second part of the hero's journey. It is a perilous journey into obscurity, accepting the call to enter the winding labyrinth of the soul. We accept responsibility for ourselves and each other because we understand our connections to each other and to a higher power. We are aware that the self-destructive patterns are no longer working. It is time to grow again, to reconcile shattered dreams, to integrate important lessons learned.

Yet our vulnerability holds us back. Feeling alone, confused, angry, and afraid, we dangle untethered to outgrown rules and coping strategies of the past. Do we dare open ourselves up to each other in new ways? We are unsure of what we must do to rescue ourselves from harms way. Who will guide us? Who will help us find our way out or back if we fail? There are many obstacles—this is my *life* we are dealing with here. . .



It is an awesome and frightening thing to be totally dependent upon a job in the workplace today. If the organization is the primary provider of physical and emotional nourishment, our vulnerability to physical, emotional, and spiritual harm is extraordinary. When we learn how to break our dependency upon organizations, learn to disengage our self-esteem and personal authenticity from our jobs, only then will we have real control, real freedom, real victory.

For anyone to succeed in the workplace, learning the skill of detachment is essential to developing the hero within. We don't give up intention. We don't give up the desire. We only give up our *attachment to the consequences* or the results over which we have limited control. Detachment involves a radical transfer of emphasis from the external to the internal world. We resist the

temptation to be defined by the organizational pain we encounter. We shift our focus from trying to control the consequences to get what we want at work to the internal difficult journey of self-discovery, self-mastery, and leaving the rest to a Higher Power. Detachment reconnects us to our real purpose in life: to be good, to do good, to see good—even under adverse circumstances.

From the chastening, the hero in embryo learns to withdraw from the self-limiting practices of helplessness, self-pity, and blame in response to hurt and betrayal and stumble toward the vague but unlimited possibilities within. The experiences of the past, present, and future are integrated into the “big picture” of our lives and losses are reconciled. On the journey to find peace among the tyrannical, the hero revives forgotten powers, for these powers have been there all along, waiting to be known. It is a journey of rediscovery, of reattainment.

Underlying our personality is an inexhaustible reservoir of insight and joy, clamoring for rediscovery. But as dust and dirt may cover a lamp so that its light will be invisible, the almost impenetrable mass of diversions, false ideas, and self-centered inclinations of the workplace eclipses the nature of our true selves.

Recognizing our own negative attitudes, emotions, desires, and fears unhooks us from the seemingly unforgiving, fictional, and self-fulfilling world of blame and victimism. But we must not dwell on our weaknesses. The season of sorrow serves the purpose of *healing* the self-pity, impatience, defensiveness, resentment, fears, and doubts. When we attach ourselves to the truth about our own divine nature, self-respect, tolerance, humility, confidence, and hope flow to us. We develop a healthy separation from reactive behavior and its causes because we know who we are. We live from the perspective that *whatever someone else is doing to me says far more about them than it does about me, and the same is true for my own behavior*. We define ourselves within our own value system and accept responsibility for our choices; we allow others to do the same.

The hero in embryo yearns for someone to provide emotional support and also sound doctrine from which to make sense out of absurdity. And alas, the power source appears quite mysteriously, often just in the nick of time. In mythology, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure, such as a little old man or woman with special powers to ward off evil. For example, in the *Star Wars* trilogy, Obi-wan-kenobi helps Luke Skywalker resist the dark and evil power of Darth Vader. The figure plays the role of a guide or teacher who provides courage and knowledge to stay focused on the everlasting protective power of the inner life or heart of man. Such a figure represents a “protecting power of destiny;” one has only to trust that help will appear to aid in the chastening.<sup>1</sup>

The protector helps by *teaching* and *supporting*, not by *rescuing* the person or by continuing to spotlight personal weaknesses. Protectors help enlarge and expand the good that is already there within. Obi-wan-kenobi taught Luke Skywalker how to draw on the power of The Force to conquer Darth Vader for himself by painting the vision of the Jedi Knights as the champions of peace and justice. He supported Luke throughout the battle with darkness; he did not take the darkness away nor did he intervene in Luke's private battle.

In the workplace, a protector often appears in a mentoring relationship, whereby a more experienced worker takes a fellow employee under his or her wing to learn the ropes of the organization. But help often mysteriously appears in many forms in times of crisis or at key junctures in the road. Throughout my life, protectors have always come to guide me on my hero path. For example, Miss Janie Hargrave, my elementary school principal, wisely singled me out as an example of one of her "good students" by taking me along to Women's Christian Temperance Union teas at a time of great tragedy in my young life. This experience introduced me to a new world I didn't know existed: smiling women in beautiful houses gracefully attending to each other and *me*. Dale Browder, my high school band director, not only drove me to football games so I could strut my stuff as a majorette, he noticed the rage I silently carried and cared enough to ask me why. Willard Jordan, the financial aid director at Winston-Salem State University gave me a full scholarship, not once questioning the integrity of my facts about my needs. On every occasion, he championed my cause, recognizing the essence of my value—a value often imperceptible to me. Brigham Young University professor Bonner Ritchie gave me courage to stay in graduate school by giving me such positive feedback on my first paper that I couldn't wait to write another. Could it be that my life script of "good for nothing" was wrong? I was even more astounded when he asked me to be his teaching assistant the next year. Kerry Patterson gave up his stipend providing the funds for me to work for my department instead of moving with my two sons to a distant city. While writing this book, time again, Kreig Smith just appeared when I needed a boost most.

None of this power can be tapped, however, unless the hero in embryo answers the call and gets into the hero path. He or she must take a stand. Heroes must declare to themselves and perhaps to others, "*I'm not going to take this or be this any more*" In this section you will develop a new awareness about processes and skills needed to reconcile difficulties in your worklife.

## Endnotes

1. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 71-72.