

## The Hero/Heroine's Journey in Communication: Responding to the Call of Our Time

by John Kinyon

"To be a spiritual warrior, one must have a broken heart; without a broken heart and the sense of tenderness and vulnerability, your warriorship is untrustworthy." ~Chögyam Trungpa

Destructive wildfires rage in California where I live and throughout the Western region states, darkening the sky with smokey orange light. Fires also blaze through the Amazon forests. Ice is permanently melting in the arctic poles, threatening to alter ocean and weather patterns upon which the stability of our civilization is built. In the U.S. and around the world there now seems to be a growing poverty and decline in health and wellbeing on myriad levels. More visible now are the links between economics, social injustices, and ecological collapse. Civilizations, as with all forms of life, go through cycles of rise and fall, birth and death. There is so much suffering, loss, and death in this world. Can I be fully present with it without turning away, without closing my heart in self-protection? Panic sometimes grips me in the middle of the night with its strong hand, awakening me with a jolt, the darkness closing in around me. Oh, how strong the desire to get away from this feeling, the fear for safety and security, for sustenance and survival, rather than face it and be with it in deep-rooted compassion.

Mythologist Joseph Campbell famously popularized the archetypal pattern in the human psyche of the Hero/Heroine's Journey (There is a recent documentary on this called Finding Joe that I found quite wonderful.). A prophecy in Buddhism speaks of the rise of Shambhala Warriors to courageously engage the powers of destruction in the world with compassion and wisdom (This video on the prophecy by deep ecologist Joanna Macy I found quite moving and beautiful. I also recommend Margaret Wheatley's work on Warriors for the Human Spirit.). The ancient traditions of soul work, psychological alchemy, and poetry show us pathways through the human heart, descending down into the depths of suffering and what we most fear in order to find transformation and rebirth, and to bring these gifts back to the community (I particularly value Francis Weller's work on this.).

I believe we have entered a sacred and very difficult time, a time in which the Hero/Heroine's Journey is for all of humanity, not just individuals. How will we engage the forces of destruction the whole world faces? I find deep meaning and purpose in this understanding, even the ability to experience joy and beauty in the midst of so much difficulty. I am also finding that a microcosm of this journey lives like a hologram in the simple elegance of the four empathic communication components — OFNR. As we Observe with awareness all that is happening in our world now (and our mind's evaluation of it), we can descend down into the depths of the body, Feeling what is beyond mind and belief and words to describe. Journeying even deeper into the body, we can feel the connection with all people and all life through awareness of universal Need as energy, space, and consciousness. We expand beyond the separate self, dying to a limitation

ready to be let go. From this universal connection with all things, we return to the world of suffering and conflicting dualities to bring healing compassion in the form of invitation and Request for giving and contribution. Ultimately, we return with the “Holy Grail”: The ability to respond with love to that which appears to be not love.

\*\*\*

For more inspiration, join this Saturday's Awakin Call with John Kinyon: "Mediating Our Lives with Nonviolent Communication Techniques." More details and RSVP info [here](#).