

Today's hero



Oprah Winfrey: Today's Hero

The concept of hero has changed through the years, evolving from the legendary hero figures, described in adventure or comic books such as *The three Musketeers* or *Superman*, to the current perception of heroes, seen as real persons with real lives and problems. In the past, a hero was believed to be a person with supernatural qualities who did extraordinary deeds for the society to instill order, law and justice. Such person had to have a noble origin and live up to the expectations of his family and the society he belonged to. One of the best examples of past heroes is *D'Artagnan*, the perfect gentleman and fighter.

He was considered a hero due to his physical and moral beauty, courage, loyalty for his cause and kindness towards the less fortunate ones.. Besides the legendary figures, the title of hero is also attributed to real persons who have the inner strength to face the hardship of life. It is not unusual for children to look up to their parents and think of them as having superpowers for finding the solutions to all their problems. Moreover, nowadays society tends to admire real people, who can beat the odds of life and change a dramatic way their life in for the better. The world is fascinated by real stories, by real people, rather than knights, kings and princesses. There is a constant need for heroes and role models in people's lives but in the same time these heroes have to be connected to people's everyday lives and stories. Therefore, the modern concept of hero refers to certain individuals who have the ability of guiding and challenging society's everyday existence.

Oprah Winfrey is believed to have all the qualities necessary for a modern day hero. She started as a poor black girl with a challenging childhood but she had the inner strength to become an icon of the American Dream. She achieved success through her own power and intuitive mind. Oprah ??? was born out of wedlock and into poverty in rural Mississippi on Jan. 29 1954 and lived with her grandmother in a farmhouse that lacked indoor plumbing??? (??? Biography??? 46).

Raped at the age of nine by several members of her family, she then went to live with her father who encouraged her to take education seriously. In her 55 years, Oprah Winfrey became an Academy Award nominated actress, producer, literary critic and magazine publisher, achieving success through her own power and intuitive mind. Her show is constantly in the top of the viewers???™ choice, and part of it is because she talks to the average American. Referring to this issue, Lee Siegel believes ??? Oprah Winfrey is to television what Bach is to music, Giotto to painting, Joyce to literature??? (19). She uses a language that is understood by everybody and the topics she chooses are interesting and relevant to people of all classes and races. She is the live image of a woman who succeeded in life although nobody would give her a chance. She is considered the first African American woman to become a millionaire and she is considered to be one of the most influential African American people on the planet.

Her charity works are also impressive. Jacque Jones states that Oprah ??? became the first person to receive the Bob Hope Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences at the 2002 Primetime Emmy Awards in recognition of her ongoing support of numerous human rights

<https://assignbuster.com/todays-hero/>

causes??? (16). She is not ashamed of where she comes from, she speaks her mind and she is an inspiration to her audience.

She is believed to have created an intimate confessional form of media communication. By the mid 1990s she had reinvented her show with a focus on literature, self-improvement, and spirituality. According to Lee Siegel, Oprah took ??? the most consequential strands in modern life and woven them together into an hour-long show that is a work of art??? (16). She is generally admired for overcoming adversity to become a benefactor to others. Nowadays, a hero has to have all the features of a traditional hero but this new born hero also needs to be a living inspiration for all.

The society, as an audience needs to identify its problems and challenges with the hero and what is more important, to establish a personal connection with him.