

The way of the peaceful warrior essay



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Joseph Campbell, a well known mythologist states in “ the Power of Myth” that “ a hero is someone who has given his or her life to something greater than oneself” (Campbell 151). Campbell also indicates that there are two types of hero deeds. One type is a physical deed, “ in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life” (Campbell 151). The second is a spiritual deed, “ in which the hero learns to experience the supernatural range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message” (Campbell 152).

In his story “ The way of the peaceful Warrior”, Dan Millman tells us about his experience with a white bearded man known as Socrates who takes him on many adventures and gives him knowledge on life. Although the two stories are different they are alike in many ways. Campbell introduces us to the hero’s journey and the step required on becoming a hero. In Dan Millman’s, story we see how those steps of the hero’s journey such as departure, fulfillment and return are portrayed. The first step of the hero’s journey is departure.

In this stage the hero takes on the call of adventure. The call can take two different forms as Campbell explains, “ there are both kind of heroes, and some choose to undertake the journey and some that don’t” (Campbell 158). The first is intentional “ in one kind of adventure, the hero sets out responsibly and intentionally to perform the deed” the second for in unintentionally “ then there are adventures into which you are thrown — for example, being drafted in the army. You didn’t intend it but you’re in now” (Campbell 158). In Dan Millman’s case his call was unintentional.

It began when he started having dreams of the white bearded man and the grim ripper. One night after his dream he decided to go for a walk, and then he finally met this man from his dream. He didn't have a name so Dan called him Socrates. Socrates welcomes Dan as if he has known him for a long time, as he questions Dan and how he has lived his life, Socrates offers Dan an adventure " I wouldn't mind having one last student, and you obviously need a teacher" (Millman 14). Dan is naive and egoistic telling Socrates in what way can he possibly be useful him.

Reluctant Dan takes Socrates as a joke but what he doesn't know is that Socrates without Dan knowing already has become his mentor. Socrates is trying to help Dan change the way he lives by seeing the world for what it really is " the world out there" " is a school, Dan. Life is the only real teacher. It offers many experiences, and if experience alone brought wisdom and fulfillment...I can help you learn from experience to see the world clearly, and clarity is what you desperately need right now. You know this is true, but your mind rebels; you haven't yet turned knowledge into wisdom" (Millman 14).

Dan accepts the hero's journey but knows he will face difficult obstacles. Socrates explains to Dan that his biggest predicament is his mind and how he is a prisoner of the mind and it's illusions. Once Dan breaks free from his mind's grip he will understand everything Socrates has been talking about. Therefore, Socrates offers Dan the tool of meditation, the only weapon that can free him from the mind " The warrior uses the sword of meditation with skill and understanding. With it he cuts the mind into ribbons. Slashing through thoughts to reveal their lack of substance" (Millman 75).

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After practicing so much Dan finally makes a breakthrough he crosses the threshold he conquers the art of meditation and breaks free from his mind or so he thinks. Dan decides to take a trip to Los Angeles to visit his parents, Socrates tells Dan “ For you Dan, a conscious process of transformation has begun. There’s no going back”(Millman 89). Dan is ready for what is next the next phase of his journey, Socrates explains “ No one can help you beyond this point, Dan...you will be tested severely before it’s done. You’ll need great strength.

I only hope it comes in time” (Millman 89). And so Dan took off to Los Angeles not knowing what would lie ahead. The Next step of the hero’s journey is fulfillment. When Dan gets to L. A. , He buys motorcycle, one night just after leaving his parents’ house he gets into a tragic accident he ends up breaking his leg. This is when Dan enters the belly of the whale, explained by Campbell the belly is a dark and unknown place for the hero. Dan is a gymnastic gold medal Olympian with his leg broken he can’t do any of that.

He comes to a realization that everything that he has done and worked for might have been for nothing when the doctor tells him he can start forgetting about gymnastics. In the fulfillment stage Dan will undergo on series of trials to better himself to see what he really wants and to see if he’s really committed, Campbell explains, “ The trials are designed to see to it that the intending hero should really be a hero...does he have the courage, the knowledge, the capacity, to enable him to serve” (Campbell 154).

When Dan makes his decision that nothing will stop him from achieving what he wants not even his broken leg he begins his training with Socrates.

Socrates first tells him that he will have to change certain things for example his diet no more junk food anything that's unhealthy for him he can't eat it. Also he has to resist the urge of wanting to be with women in other words he can't have sex. These trial and temptations are tests to determine how ready Dan really is. Although at first he fails because he gives in to Valery the nurse, she feeds him steak and wine ultimately they have sex.

Dan realizes he has given into his mind the illusions and temptations so he sacrifices himself his wants and his needs in order go beyond what he wants. He goes on an inspirational transformation not only for him but for his teammates from gymnastics, he begins walking soon running then starts going on the gym bars doing exercises. Once Socrates sees Dan is ready he gives him the ultimate trial to slay the dragon, this comes to Dan as giant that he must kill, upon seceding Dan realizes he has transformed " while trying make everything work out for me, I kept getting sucked back into my own mind, always preoccupied with me, me, me.

The giant was me the ego, the little self who I've always believed myself to be. And I cut thought it" (Millman133). A perfect example of a transformation described by Campbell " Leaving one condition and finding the source of life to bring you forth into a richer mature condition" (Campbell 152). Still on his quest to become the peaceful warrior Dan also sacrifices his family his wife Linda and his daughter Holly it takes him about 8 years until one day in the woods Socrates finds him and takes him to a cave.

In this cave Dan Dies he sees himself dead on the bottom of the abyss his body dissolving into the earth being eaten he realizes that all the living

things that him, he was now their ancestor until they would be returned to the earth. Dan had found bliss what he had searched for so long “ The Dan Millman who had lived long ago was gone forever, a flashing moment in time but I remained unchanged through all the ages I was now Myself, the Consciousness that observed all, was all. All my separate part would continue forever; forever changing, forever new” (Millman 198).

Like the phoenix from his ashes Dan had resurrected he found the gates he was the peaceful warrior. The last stage of the hero’s journey is the return. Dan finding a new meaning new style and new life returns to where his journey once began. His mentor Socrates has done his job “ Well, then, it appears that my work with you is complete. My debt is paid” (Millman 200). Now that Socrates has taught Dan the way of the peaceful warrior it is now Dan’s turn to take the lead as a mentor.

The way Dan comes back with the message of the hero’s journey is by writing as Socrates describes “ you will write and you will teach. You will live an ordinary life, learning how to remain ordinary in a troubled world to which, in a sense, you no longer belong. Remain ordinary and you can be useful to others” (Millman 202). Dan became ordinary writing “ the way of the peaceful warrior” has brought many students to Dan. Those who can really take in the message and change their own lives those are the students who will one day become mentors themselves.

In conclusion, in Joseph Campbell’s “ The Power of Myth” he describes who and what a hero is. The two types of hero deeds and the steps required on becoming a hero. In “ The way of the Peaceful Warrior” Dan explains to us

the journeys, experiences, sufferings, and sacrifices that he had to make to finally become a warrior. These two stories are connected because Campbell explains to us what a hero is and what he must do on the other hand Dan goes through those phases and steps on becoming what he ultimately seeks.