

Celebrity and a hero



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A celebrity and a hero are definitions which are poles apart and which give distinct meanings in its use. A celebrity is portrayed as a person who has developed a “ star” image. On the other hand, a hero has decided to do something which does not originally present any opportunities at self-advancement. Though many use both words interchangeable at times, they represent two different concepts, ideologies, and people. What clarifies meaning between these two words in the face of ambiguity is context. In modern American society, the adulation of celebrities and American idols is very commonplace.

People who have made no meaningful contribution to the world besides entertainment and self-display is what would be classified as being a celebrity. Vast audiences are fascinated by celebrities, who have become popular because of their wealth, beauty, career, dynamic personality, bohemian lifestyles, and / or an exceptional ability to amuse the world. The media (paparazzi) usually chases after these famous individuals in order to get the latest scoop in what is going on behind the curtain in their private lives. The celebrity stands as a societal cynosure for the person naturally draws a crowd.

Celebrities are featured very often in the media since public popularity translates to higher ratings and more endorsements from corporations and financial institutions who desire to capitalize on the attention as well, hence the celebrity becomes an “ advertised” icon. The aim of the celebrity is mainly to earn money and advance his or her career or personal agenda so that the ulterior motive is monetarily defined, and where projecting a successful, glamorous image is all-important. The etymology of celebrity

derives from the Latin word *celebritatem* or *celebritas* which signifies renown and multitude; crowded and frequented.

In 1600 “celebrity” meant the state of being famous and from 1849 it assumed new meaning that is in often use today, a famous person. The celebrity’s world is more often self-focused when compared against the hero’s. The nobility of the hero is the emphasis whenever he or she is represented; this is in contrast to the celebrity who has a more superficial focus. The irony of heroism is that the origins of the word hero actually identified the worship of a half-man and half-supernatural being (demigod), widely accepted among the Greeks who had a pantheon of gods whom they venerated.

Hero comes from the Greek words *herwos* and *Herwa* which is link to the worship of the goddess Hera, the deity of marriage who protects and defends. However, the word *Heros* is affiliated with the Latin *seruare*, which bears connotations of safeguarding or safekeeping. Seeing that Hera worship in Greek religion and mythology was so popular and drew the masses, it can be no doubt that the hero or heroine came to symbolize an individual who also attracts attention. The hero fades in and out of public attention and can often sink into obscurity after a while.

The greatest indignity against heroes is forgetting what they have done to contribute to the greater good of society and in helping men, women, and children realize their dreams or the hero protects and saves other sacrificially neglecting his or her own well-being and safety. Although popularity vacillates, the reputation of the hero is solid more likely to be

remembered since his or her actions give a more outstanding and honorable memorial of the life-if not in the lifetime, posthumously. Posthumous appreciation and respect are never endowed to simple celebrities.

There is an inherent confusion between both worlds of celebrity-hood and heroism since heroes often transform to celebrities overnight. Philanthropy, excellent achievement, and bravery are virtues which tend to be esteemed and recognized. Although deserved recognition does not happen at all times, it happens often enough to correctly identify a few hero-celebrities.

Sometimes the hero may be featured so often, paraded before the public that he or she may make the decision to commercialize the developed image and capitalize on the popularity.

Another category of hero is the one who does noble acts without the expectation of financial reward or compensation and who refuses such – and refuses to set a price on beneficent deeds. Contrary to modern perception, heroism does not only mean extraordinary. Nevertheless because of the sensationalism prevalent in the media today, larger-than-life characters appear and disappear. Ordinary people are heroes in their own way. Doing something that another person would not elect to do, given a certain situation, places him or her above the peers. Moral caliber and willingness to serve others are two defining traits of the hero.

At the same time, celebrities may perform acts of charity which may be termed as heroism. However, one would question the inspiration of such actions – if it springs from a determination to be of service or to be published in the media, and enhance the self-image. In conclusion, motives are often

the touchstone test which decides who want to be a celebrity or hero.

Heroism does not depend heavily on popularity or a constant following.

Doing selfless acts automatically places one in the position of hero.

Heroism's main goal is not recognition but respect for one's fellowman,

whereas celebrity-hood has claims of fame, fortune, and flair.