

News for Life after 55

In a Dark Time, the Eye Begins to See

Hello. I continue to find deep wisdom and truth in Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth, which he created with Bill Moyers two months before his death.

The power of myth

According to Joseph Campbell, myths help you read the messages the world has for you. He says that myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, meaning, and significance. We need life to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.

So like Theodore Roethke's poem, *In a dark time, the eye begins to see*, here are some of the things we begin to see in difficult times, says Joseph Campbell.

The role of society

According to Campbell, society is supposed to help us have mythical realizations. Man should not be in the service of society, says Campbell, society should be in the service of man. When man is in the service of society, you have a monster state and that's what's threatening our world at this moment. The news of today with its destructive and violent acts are committed by people who don't know how to behave in a civilized society.

He shares that Star Wars has a valid mythological perspective. It shows the state as a machine and asks, is the machine going to crush humanity or serve humanity? Humanity comes not from the machine, but from the heart, teaches Campbell.

The in-group or the planet?

There comes a time in the U.S. when the machine begins to dictate to you the imperialistic thrust of a certain in-group culture. But it has got to open to the nature of all things, says Campbell, to open to all the possibilities that are there—mythology is the song and the only mythology that is valid for us today is the mythology of the planet.

Finding the ground of being

According to Campbell, within our soul where our inner person dwells, we live in accord with nature. Reason has to do with finding this *ground of being* and the fundamental order of the universe.



Our computers, our tools, our machines are not enough, says Campbell. We have to learn to rely on our intuition, our inner guidance, our true being—like Luke Skywalker who was never more rational than when he found within himself the resources of character to meet his destiny. Myths teach us, says Campbell, how to live a human life under any circumstances.

The divinity of nature

Joseph Campbell goes on to say that today we have to learn to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our brotherhood with the animals, with the water and the sea and to see that divinity informs the world. We are the earth, we are the consciousness of the earth. These are the eyes of the earth and this is the voice of the earth.

As touched on earlier by Campbell, the only myth that is worth thinking about in the immediate future is one that is talking about the planet, not the city, not in-people, but the planet and everybody on it. When you see the earth from the moon, you don't see any divisions, there are no nations or states. Campbell says quoting Chief Seattle in his 1852 letter to the President of the United States, the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unite us all.

We are all part of the Divine

In India, there is a beautiful greeting in which the palms are placed together and you bow to the other person. The position of the palms together—this we use when we pray, do we not? That is a greeting, which says that the Divine that is in you recognizes the Divine in the other. These people are aware of the divine presence in all things.

Each of us, says Joseph Campbell, is a manifestation of that mystery—that is a nice mythological realization that sort of gives you a sense of who you are and what you are. When we see that God is the creation and that you are a creature, you realize that God is within you and in the man or woman or creature with whom you are talking as well.

The hero, says Campbell, is the one who comes to participate in life courageously and decently in the way of nature, not in the way of personal rancor, disappointment, or revenge.

Small acts of kindness

According to Campbell, a breakthrough of a metaphysical realization is that you and the other are one—that you are two aspects of the one life and that you apparent separateness is but an effect of the way we experience forms under the condition of space and time. Our true identity is in our identity and unity with all life. This is a metaphysical truth which may become spontaneously realized under circumstances or crisis. For it is, says Campbell according to Schopenhauer, the truth of your life.

Schopenhauer declares, says Campbell, that in small ways you can see this happening every day, all the time, moving in life in the world, people doing selfless things to and for each other.

Strive to evoke your higher nature

According to Joseph, what all the myths deal with is the transformation of consciousness, which is transformed either by trials themselves or by illuminating revelations. You've been thinking one way, now you have to think a different way.

Our life evokes our character, says Campbell and you find out more about yourself as you go on. That's why it's good to put yourself in situations that evoke your higher nature rather than your lower.

It is not a mechanistic world in which the hero moves, says Campbell, but a world alive and responsive to your spiritual readiness. No matter what your age, in order to found something new, one has to go in quest of the seed idea, a germinal idea that will have the potential of bringing forth new life.



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Events & Services

Start or continue the Artist's Way journey with the third book in Julia Cameron's trilogy called *Walking in This World*. Robin Everest is teaching this nine-week class for women 55+ (\$195) on Fri. Feb. 27th to Apr. 24th 10:00 am to 12 noon at Capitola Recreation, call (831) 475-6475 to register.

The Crafting Your Life After 55 Workshop — Come explore creative ways to recognize and align with your life's direction after retirement. One participant said: *Outstanding! Amazing! Inspiring!*

Saturday, Feb. 21st and 28th, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm, Capitola Recreation
\$73 Resident/\$93 Non-resident. Call (831) 475-5935 to register.

The Crafting Your Life After 55 Workbook Release 4.0 Is Available

With Release 4.0, the workbook contains a number of stories about people living fulfilling retirement lives. One participant said: *This was one of the best things I've done for myself since retiring. So valuable.*

\$19.95 plus 6.74 tax and shipping. (Unbound budget version \$8.95 plus \$5.95 t/s)

Pay using PayPal or send a check to Robin Everest

1555 Merrill St. #72, Santa Cruz, CA 55062. Please include your shipping address.

Living in an authoritarian state

I think that anyone brought up in an extremely strict authoritarian social situation is unlikely ever to come to the knowledge of themselves, says Campbell, because they are told exactly what to do every bit of the time.

Darth Vader did not develop his own humanity. He was a robot living not in terms of himself, but in terms of an imposed system. This is the threat to our lives that we all face today, says Campbell. Is the system going to flatten you and deny your humanity or are you going to be able to make use of the system so that you are not compulsively serving it? The thing to do is learn to live in your period of history as a human being, says Campbell.

A greater power within

Are you going to be a person of heart and humanity, asks Campbell, because that's where the life is, from the heart, or are you going to do whatever seems to be required of you by what might be called the *intentional power* of the state.

According to Campbell, when Ben Kenobi says, *May the Force be with you*, he's speaking of the power and energy of life itself, not programmed political intentions.

The Force comes from within, says Campbell. But the external force of the empire state is based on an intention to overcome and dominate. Star Wars is not a simple morality play, according to Campbell, it has to do with the powers of life as they are either fulfilled or suppressed.

According to Campbell, one way or another, not matter our age, we all have to find what best fosters the flowering of our humanity in this life and dedicate ourselves to it. You've got to find the Force inside you, says Campbell—Oriental gurus tell you, it's in you, go and find it.

Slaying monsters

According to Campbell, myths inspire the realization of your possibilities, the fullness of your strength, and the bringing of light into the world. Slaying monsters is your slaying the dark things.

Sometimes we look outside ourselves for

great wealth to save us, a great power to save us, or great ideas to save us, when all we need and are given, says Campbell, is an Ariadne thread that leads us through the labyrinth one step at a time. All we need to do is to take the next step in the direction that life is calling us. Taking the leap of faith step-by-step a life unfolds which manifests the potential within you. You are learning to open your ears, so that you can begin to hear metaphorically. It is only later looking back over your life, says Campbell quoting Schopenhauer, that you come to understand the consistent order and pattern of your life.

Slaying bigger monsters

According to Campbell, the more challenging or threatening the situation or context to be assimilated and affirmed, the greater the stature of the person who can achieve it. The demon that you can swallow, says Campbell, gives you its power. The greater life's pain, the greater life's reply.

One thing that comes out in myths, says Campbell, is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light. I love these myths and they tell me this all the time, says Campbell.

This is the problem that can be metaphorically understood as identifying with the Christ in you, teaches Campbell. The Christ in you doesn't die. The Christ in you survives death and resurrects.

In conclusion, thinking in mythological terms, says Campbell, helps to put you in accord with the inevitabilities of this veil of tears. You learn to recognize the positive values in what appears to be the negative moments and aspects of your life. No matter what your age, the big question to ask, says Campbell, is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty yes to this adventure of being alive?