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The Prenatal Hero's Journey A path to healing, genius and transformation

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Abstract: Making connections between Joseph Campbell's hero's journey and our common prenatal experience, this article leads us through the process of coming into this world. The author then traces his own journey to discovering prenatal and perinatal psychology and the development of his own approach to this work.

Keywords: hero's journey, prenatal communication, neo-development

Each one of us, the sons and daughters on the yellow brick road of transformation and metaphoric pregnancy, each one of us playing Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, yes, each one of us feels the strong contractile waves that move us down the mythic birth canal into a new vision of ourselves. Each one of us enters the cave we fear to enter, finding it holds the treasure that we seek. Each human is a new dream unfolding on the stage of life, and this drama is not predetermined but does have a plot line. Each one of us is on a life-long path to discovering our lion (inner courage), our Tin Man (collective heart) and our Scarecrow (innate genius). All of this is made possible by hearing the call from the universe to birth a holy human aimed at bringing our gifts and new worldview to the canvas of a holistic perspective. We have a golden thread pulling us in the direction of deep meaning and profound purpose. As we transform from fetus to newborn, we depend on conscious parenting and profound bonding to heal psycho-social wounds while equally magnifying genius, talent, wisdom for the benefit of our future world.

After exploring both prenatal development and "The Hero's Journey" model for more than 20 years, I have discovered a cross-fertilization of these two narratives. Joseph Campbell, in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, was very clear that the hero's journey is a transformational process. This transformation "midwifes" us into higher, more evolved worldviews of self, culture, and nature. My aim is to help birth a much needed new perspective by weaving both narratives toward a transformational worldview.

Michael Meade (2010), in his book, *Fate and Destiny*, reminds us,

A genuine calling must be followed to uncover the golden self and learn the purpose it would have us serve. Here, the intimate

relationship between our gifts and our wound becomes critical for healing and growth as well as for understanding both what we fear and what we love. (p. 12).

What rests inside the heart of each unborn child is both the remembrance of God-mind prior to birth as well as the divine agreement to “play” human again. We must remain humble to the fact that every fetus was just recently in spirit form, weeks or months before incarnation. This being is an infinite all-knowing God angel that now rests comfortably in the womb, awaiting the words, song, dance, genius, love, and emotional intelligence from both parents.

Our goal here is the opening of the inner eye that changes how the family looks at prenatal development and beyond. I feel that using the master context of both the hero’s journey and Ken Wilber’s (2007) four quadrants, from his book, *A Brief History of Everything*, provides a holistic map of stories and systems from which our culture and world will benefit greatly.

Michael Meade (2010) also reminds us,

We are the individual carriers of fate’s unending plotlines and we enter the stage of life inclined to play specific roles and bring to life certain dramas. The comedies and tragedies of the endless drama of life are continually recast through us with the auditions occurring before birth. Individuals take up the archetypal roles of sinner and saint, of tyrant and victim, of lover and outcast, yet each brings a unique twist and characteristic style to the plot. For, that too is fate, the twist that makes each soul specific, unusual in some way, and ultimately unique. (p. 40).

The idea here is to remain open to unconventional ways of thinking, open to listening to your unborn child’s voice through your dreams, through meditation, and through extra-sensory perception. We need to have a beginner’s mind, a mind that is simply free to be awake, aware, and interested in a deep and meaningful conversation with your unborn child. What story are they choosing to tell you?

There are three stages within the hero’s journey: separation, initiation, and return (Campbell, 1949).

Separation signifies both a newly forming identity as fetus/newborn and a newly formed identity as parent. As the newborn separates from God-space and takes its human form, the child starts to Identify with a new worldview, new sensations, sympathetic attunement, new stimuli, new bio-psycho-social perspectives, new neuro-hormonal links, neurotransmitters, neuropeptides, and so on.

Ken Wilber (2007) reminds us,

The oak has components in its own being that are quite new and different from anything found in the acorn. The oak has leaves, branches, roots, and so on, none of which are present in the acorn's actual "worldview" or "world-space." Different worldviews create different worlds, enact different worlds, they aren't just the same world seen differently. (p. 52).

It is important to understand that the metaphor of leaves, branches, and roots can represent vast knowingness, God knowledge, profound awareness, unhealed wounds, and unresolved trauma of the child awaiting communication, release, and unconditional love from the parents.

The initiation signifies the differentiation process of the prenatal worldview. A new perspective is emerging that encompasses everything that the universe is and knows placed in this human experience as fetus; also emerging is the bio-psycho-social differentiation that the mother/partner goes through while pregnant: the physiological changes, the hormonal fluctuations, dietary needs, emotional shifts, new bio-centric perspectives, etc. Differentiation does not mean dissociation. As we consciously differentiate our stories and systems, we find value in the parts that work, and we discover the value of learning from the parts that no longer serve our greater narrative.

I love the notion that, "We are spiritual beings having a human experience" as this fits perfectly in the context and capabilities of the unborn. If you can accept that your child is a profound all-knowing spirit ready to share its story with you, of God, angels, different realms of consciousness, and more, will you be open to listen deeply from within your extended realms of consciousness to hear their story? Your child, anxious and ready, would like to share with you a great mythology, if you're open to it.

Is your child communicating with you? How is this communication taking place? Is it through your dreams? Through meditation? Through yoga? Through nature walks?

After nine months of floating, breathing fluid, bonding, movement, good nutrition, profound knowledge, dance, love, full nature immersion, swimming in the ocean, planting in the garden, connecting with animals, connecting with plants, playing in old growth forests, listening to the Great Mother, the child is now ready to emerge into a new world and is equipped with a new meaning map, new tools, distinctions, and a heroic perspective needed to embrace this earthly dualistic drama with a sense of empowerment, community support, love, and trust.

The child will subconsciously or consciously mirror these distinctions back to the community for the rest of his or her life, making the world a

more beautiful and balanced place for all. I truly feel the more attention and care we give our beginning family, the more the world will benefit from this type of heroism and compassion.

The last part of the pre-nate's hero's journey is birth, signifying the return. You have returned to share your story, your adventures, your trials, challenges, and all the synchronicities that guided you. By sharing the treasure of your empowered story, your community thrives, evolves, and transforms.

In the autumn of 1994, I had a job teaching young children gymnastics at a place called Little Gym. At the time, I was working with children who were three to four years old in a group called, "Funny Bugs." The children explored basic movement and beginning gymnastics. It is so wonderful to see children playing, jumping, crawling, flipping, and excited to be in an environment that nurtured that type of activity. Children seem to love me because I'm silly and fun; it was one of the best times in my life.

My best friend, Brian Waite and owner of Little Gym, pulled me aside one morning in a stressful state, looked me straight in the eyes, and said, "You've got to teach the infant class, the instructor just called in sick and I need you to cover her class." I replied, "Bro, if you put me with those mothers and infants I will fail terribly!!" Frantically, I said, "Please do not do this to me, the mothers will sense my uncertainty and lack of knowledge with infants and be upset at me and Little Gym." My friend without hesitation said, "You will shine! They all will love you, just be yourself and have fun." This class is called, "Super Beast," and is for 9-month to 16-month-old-infants and their mothers.

When I first sat in circle with nine new mothers and their babies at Little Gym on that brisk Seattle morning, I was beyond nervous. Yet, the moment that I looked into the eyes of the infants, I felt my new roots and knew this was my destiny. It's hard to describe in words and I imagine might come off a bit metaphysical, but what I saw in their eyes was a clear view of the Universe. Every morning, my job was to play with God in human form; humble, and hungry to learn, give, love, extend, stretch, laugh, share music, and play. Every day, I was taught by Godlings about neo-humans and the evolutionary birth of humanity's new expression of self. I was home. I taught classes for about six years and was able to witness groups of children grow physically, emotionally, and intellectually. While watching the infants mature to children, or move from sensorimotor (birth to 2 years old) to preoperational (2 years to 7 years old), I observed something amazing. I noticed that little Bobby was learning faster than little Annie. Both children were the same age, use the same curriculum, had the same mental stimulus and the same embodiment exercises, yet Bobby had access to more, retained more,

remembered more, learned faster than Annie, and I didn't understand why.

My experience is what Joseph Campbell (1949) would identify as "The Call to Adventure." My life-long quest is now to identify and design the bridge between education, love, prenatal development, mother-father bonding, memory, genius, and healing wounds, and to amplify innate as well as learned gifts. Over the years of working with these children and noticing growth in cognition, personal development, and emotional intelligence, I also noticed that some children had access to deeper states of knowing. As in the story of Annie and Bobby, this expanded awareness, or lack of, propelled me to action.

I started asking mothers in my class what type of activities that they did for their child while pregnant.

- Did they have a focused intention with their unborn child?
- How many hours a day did they spend working with their child?
- Did they involve their husbands?
- Did they involve their communities?
- Did they embrace their own inner/outer wounds, so as to benefit the child?
- Did they enhance their own inner/outer genius, so as to benefit the child?
- Did they share their stories of success with the community?

What I discovered was amazing. The mothers revealed to me a very profound and long-lasting bond that would not only shape the *neo-development*¹ of the child, but also would have an effect on the health and creativity of the world. These ideas and ambitions propelled me into a mythic life, a narrative that was full of deep purpose and meaning that would guide my becoming and facilitate my expanding heart forever. Why did Bobby have access to more awareness, spatial ability, emotional intelligence, pattern recognition, and visual thinking than Annie?

We must gift our children with the proper tools, skills, distinctions, values, art, science, holism, nature, love, pluralism, universal care, healing our wounds, and amplifying our gifts in the very beginning for their benefit.

After talking to hundreds of mothers over a six-year period of time, a pattern started to reveal itself to me. While talking to Bobby's mom, I found that she read to Bobby *in utero*, talked to Bobby, sang, danced, philosophized, did yoga with Bobby and more.

¹ I came up with this term "neo-development" because neo means new, and this is new development, from the beginning.

She remarked that Bobby was smart, athletic, and full of life and love, and she attributes it all to intentional *in utero* education. And I got to see it all happen right in front of my eyes, contrasting the mothers who did spend conscious time with their unborn children and the mothers who did not. I was blessed to be witnessing miracles every day.

This hero's journey took me down the yellow brick road of three years of research concerning all these themes after which I wrote a 32-page paper entitled, "C.L.R.E. Cognitive Lucid Reality Education." I shared this paper with some of the top people in the field of health care, prenatal development, and cognitive neuroscience.

In 1996, I connected with David B. Chamberlain, one of the leading individuals in the field of prenatal research and development. I shared with him my paper and we started a wonderful and long-lasting relationship based on human potential, health, and the latest and greatest discoveries in the prenatal world. David and I kept in touch over the years until his recent death in May of 2014. He was so gentle and kind, a loving man who taught and wrote about the capabilities of the unborn child for the benefit of the human race. Although I never met him in person, our souls were connecting and aligned like love and grace. I love you, David. Thank you for your wisdom and friendship over the years. I was blessed to have you in my life.

Storytellers say that you must let a story rest in its own juices before it is time to serve. I feel that after 20 years of simmering, bubbling, and stirring, it is time for heroes to awaken within new stories based on profound bonds between the mother and father and unborn child.

I invite you to play the role of a scuba diver and explore the depths of this epistemological invitation. While submerged in love, discovery, and transformational education, know that divine synchronicity is playing a major role in your exploration, discovery, and insight into new worldviews. Like Jacques Cousteau, I invite you to dive into the mythos of this information, its context, its magic and its intention for you to cultivate and awaken your greatest family adventure ever imagined.

As a futurist, I've embraced this material and felt its unyielding ability to provide insight into the vocation of love. As a man, in the moment I am beside myself with joy knowing what expectant parents will receive and embrace this hero's journey. They will become like Jacques and explore the universe of their unborn child and see what love and joy this brings.

For the last ten years, I've been working with the homeless in a non-profit that I co-founded called Harmonic Humanity. After spending thousands of hours with this demographic, I've uncovered a wound on the social body that needs to be addressed from the inside out and before conception. James O'Dea, former President of Amnesty International for ten years and author of *Cultivating Peace* and *The Sacred Activist*, talks

about what it means to be a “Social Healer,” and defines it as someone who “seeks to transcend dysfunctional polarities that hold repetitive wounding in place” (O’Dea, 2014, para. 1). After ten years, I’ve heard many disempowering stories that keep repetitive wounding in place, stories about abuse, trauma, addiction, and lack of self-love and care. That being said, the most compassionate people I’ve ever been around have been the homeless. Individuals who have lost everything, are stripped to the bone, and still willing to give their last dime or coat off their back to someone who needs it more than themselves.

My work with traumatized human beings has brought tremendous insight into crafting developmental stages that set the tone of acknowledgement, love, bonding, community, storytelling, transformation, and holism from the beginning of life, until the end. By offering the hero’s journey rite of passage at every neo-developmental stage, it is my belief that we can reduce the amount of psycho-social wounding by embracing the transformational process that is essential for a new, expanded worldview.

Jacques’s 10 Stages of Neo-development and Rites of Passage

1. Preconception *3 months before birth*
2. Prenatal *conception to birth*
3. Sensory Motor *birth to 24 months* (Piaget)
4. Pre-operational *24 months to 7 years* (Piaget)
5. Concrete Operations *7 years to 12 years* (Piaget)
6. Teen Operations *13 years to 19 years*
7. Moral Adult *19 years to 28 years*
8. Proactive Adult *28 years to 50 years*
9. Ethical Adult *50 years to 65 years*
10. Wisdom Adult *65 years until death*

Over 20 years ago, I dedicated myself to creating curriculums that parents could use to better their relationship and bond with their unborn child, yet found that my audience in 1996 was limited in this field of human potential for the neonate. Because of APPPAH, I’m present to an abundance of momentum in this field and I’m poised through my own life experience to bring my insights to you.

My goal now is to present my community with curriculums for parents and unborns that act as that living bridge to healthy communities. Curriculums and rites of passage that highlight the work of Joseph Campbell, a great scholar and mythologist who discovered the story hidden in all stories, and he called it, “The Hero’s Journey.” The hero’s journey is a metaphor for the transformational process. A journey that everyone must take to evolve from adolescence to adulthood, or in

our case, from unborn to born. We use Joseph's hero's journey model to facilitate a healthy and empowering connection to the heart/mind of the transforming fetus. The parents play a supporting role in the development of the child by engaging in a deeper and more mythic part of themselves, a deeper part of the unborn, and a deeper part of the world.

When we create rites of passage that allow families inspired by the theme of prenatal education to participate, a playful bond between the parents and the child blooms. By having the mother and father spend intentional time with the unborn child, they are planting seeds for a lifetime of enhanced awareness, increased motor ability, increased mental capacity, long lasting joy and happiness all through life.

"Where the inner self meets the outer world," is what Joseph Campbell called, "The Seat of the Soul." Our sacred dance is to explore the inner self so that a happy and seen child will emerge and share its gifts with the world.

It is important that these developmental rites of passage are filled with great questions that both parents are invited to answer—questions that reveal the gift and heal the wound by making transparent the life narratives of both mother and father. By exploring both gifts and wounds, we amplify genius while healing and strengthening that self that gets wounded along the way. It is important to bring wounds out of their hiding place and dissolve them like salt in water, so the child when conceived does not carry the subconscious burden of unresolved wounds for the rest of his or her life.

As you birth your story through intersubjective questions, a magical new energy enters the womb. A deep family listening sets the stage for new life to enter its own worldview. My personal goal is to host family circles and lead workshops all over the world around this theme of prenatal education, healing wounds, amplifying gifts, transformation, and love.

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