

The Call To Adventure

When The
Time Comes
To Take
The Journey

Michael Mervosh





**The Call to Adventure:
When The Time Comes to Take The Journey**

THE JOURNEY

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice-
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations-
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do-
determined to save
the only life you could save. 1

- Mary Oliver



Joseph Campbell said, *“In the West, you have the liberty and the obligation of finding out what your destiny is.”* ²

How do we discover a way to live into our own personal myth, while at the same time living in the midst of the mundane affairs of our everyday world?

How can we learn a way to bring deeper awareness to matters that lie beyond all the things of this world – those things that pre-occupy and distract us, seeming to demand our immediate attention?

How do we find the necessary time and inner space to take up an authentic search for meaning and self awakening – and what exactly lies in our way of doing so?

Many of us have become so over-attached to the security of what is most familiar, of how we are to be provided for, that we’ve lost our instinctual need for venturing. Many of us have become too afraid to take the new risks needed to keep on with renewing ourselves. And many of us have given up on our deep longing to explore the ‘as-yet-unknown-ness’ of our world.

Maybe it is just that we are simply prone to being avoidant - due to our human nature that seeks the status quo, that seeks self-preservation - and so we forsake a certain kind of ‘leave-taking’ for the confinement of the couch, for the refuge of personal comfort, and for the protective sanctity of home.

In what ways have you grown accustomed to the status quo in your life? In what ways do you find yourself clinging to all that is familiar to you, and how does this keep you from ever really going forth, heading out into the world in new ways?



In his book *Pathways to Bliss*, Campbell poses these questions: *“What is the great thing for which you would sacrifice your life? What makes you do what you do? What is the call of your life to you – do you know it?”* ³

He goes on to say, *“A person who is truly gripped by a calling, by a dedication or a belief, by a certain zeal, will sacrifice his security, will sacrifice even his life; will sacrifice personal relationships, will sacrifice prestige, and will think nothing of personal development. He will give himself entirely to his myth.”* ⁴

Campbell also acknowledges, *“Now, it’s not always easy or possible to know by what it is that you are seized”.* ⁵ But upon the arrival of some worthwhile life dilemma or

confounding mystery, it does require us to lessen our habituation to rumination and threat, and instead increase our capacity for fascination and rapture.

What is that semi-conscious, ever-flickering, intangible thing that elicits such a peculiar feeling in us, a compelling inner 'pull' towards certain places, activities or yearnings?

What is that familiar, ungraspable and subtle sense of awakening we feel in certain life circumstances or settings, such as when we are in nature?

How is it that we find ourselves, over and over again, caught in repetitive, ill-fated patterns or situations? How do certain troubles or problems seem to always cleave to us, in particular ways that our personalities then have to keep confronting, exploring, and eventually, resolving?

We are often haunted by this ongoing interplay of fate and destiny in our lives. We find ourselves wondering what our true place is in the physical universe and social world; we seek to know our life's meaning and our purpose; we long for a vital connection to something larger than ourselves. But these matters are rarely resolved in the terrain of our familiar, pre-ordained life course.



In order to adhere to an inner call to adventure, we have two fundamental and complimentary tasks laid before us: *leaving home and venturing into an unknown world*.

We have to loosen our grip on much that is familiar, while turning our compass heading towards the unfamiliar, assessing the various elements of risk that must be undertaken as we make our way into and through the realm of the unknown.

To support our understanding of this call to adventure, let's turn our attention back to one of Mary Oliver's most well known poems that began this essay, appropriately titled *The Journey*:

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began

This poem's beginning implies the end of something else. *One day*. Before that day arrived, there were all the days before that it took, everything that had to be gone through, things that had to be endlessly repeated or endured, before you finally knew what you had to do.

Needless to say, this can take many years, or perhaps even most of a lifetime, or at least it can feel that way. All that had to be or refused to be, all that had to be lived or not lived, before the certain 'one day' arrived, reaching critical mass, and suddenly stood out among all the others.

Sometimes, we must first wade through our fears, confusions, doubts, and defeating sense of despair before our 'one day' is apparent to us. For others, it requires travels through ambiguity, emptiness, trepidation and numbness. For yet others, it is feelings of failure and chronic fogginess, or persistent low-level anxiety and listlessness – or some other combination of the aforementioned.

These are the many different negative and apparently necessary facets of our human existence that stem from a common denominator: some form of *not knowing how to be*. As well, there is the corollary of *not knowing what to do*.

The introduction of the Oliver poem begins like the first words (actually, the third verse) from *The Book of Genesis* in the Bible: "*And then there was light.*" But exactly what preceded 'In the beginning', and how long did that take? What was really going on in the pre-creation of this world, before the light came on? What was happening in that eternal void of universal darkness?

This takes us once again back to the inevitable and the unknowable, *the unknown*. On a true hero's journey, all roads eventually and mythically lead us here.

Rumi speaks of this in the beginning of the Coleman Barks' rendition of '*Who Says Words With My Mouth?*':

*All day I think about it, then at night I say it.
Where did I come from, and what am I supposed to be doing?
I have no idea.
My soul is from elsewhere, I'm sure of that,
and I intend to end up there.
This drunkenness began in some other tavern. 6*

This drunkenness, this lack of clarity of vision and purpose, it began somewhere else. Even the mystics often wisely insist that they *have no idea*. Perhaps the difference between mystics and us is that the lack of knowing likely troubles them less, or at least differently. Perhaps they even ultimately aim for that place.

When we are troubled by our unknowing, we are prone to become restless and anxious. When we become bound to anxiety, we are less and less able to listen inwardly or deeply. And when we can't listen within ourselves, we can't hear what calls to us.

What most keeps us from listening to what speaks from within? I have come to the sobering conclusion that many of us are simply unwilling to do what it takes to get close enough and deep enough within ourselves to really listen.

How many of us practice listening deeply to the silence we hear within, and can find peace within the silence? Yet this quieting inner descent and space making is what we each need, so that we become more able to listen to what is down there in the depths, waiting to surface, and at last be heard.



For those of us able to arrive at a quiet, centered, still place inside, we may find ourselves looking and listening for something *in particular*. We are sometimes searching for the *projection of our ego's wishes*. Joseph Campbell says, "*One way to deprive yourself of an experience is indeed to expect it. Another is to have a name for it before you have the experience.*" ⁷

By expecting what we are looking for, we become unable to hear or sense what is actually arriving, and wishing to make itself known within our interior world.

We become too pre-occupied and familiarized with fantasies created by our own ego wishes and projections, which are often born from our deficits. We find ourselves looking for the perfect match for our fantasies, and in the process, we are in danger of losing sight of everything else that comes our way instead.

Sometimes, we are unconsciously looking to have our inner call to adventure magically provided for us, in the ways that our desires can demand. Sometimes we are seeking a calling that comes pre-packaged and all at once, with a 'literalness' that we can confuse with clarity - actual voices or particular beings, delivering a deciphered message word by word; or a vision that looks only a certain way, with everything we need to do clearly spelled out for us. This type of calling, if it is a calling at all, is the exception and not the norm.

Sometimes, we naively wish for our interior world to look and sound just like our exterior world. We become 'fundamentalists' of the soul - making the critical mistake of taking our dreams, imaginings, and inner calls too concretely, too historically, or too literally.

We fail to see the mythic or metaphorical energies underneath it all that hold multiple meanings, which drives us even deeper into the psyche's regions of symbols and images, to be wrestled with even more.

As we learn to listen deeply for a call to adventure, we accept those initial and more subtle, dreamlike states of awareness that come; we pay closer attention to occurrences in our night dreams; we have an informed regard for our creative imaginings during guided meditations or creative visualizations. From there, we still have to do the inner work of the meaning-making that happens underneath the symbols, stories, people or words we encounter and are captured by.



The hero's adventure always begins with deep listening. The call of the soul has to be heard by the ego, in order to allow an adventure to take place - and the soul, most of the time, is a subtle herald.

Thus, we come to appreciate that the call to adventure is often very gentle; it is fleeting and flickering, especially at first. It's when we *don't* listen closely that the message or the messenger comes knocking much louder, and sometimes comes forth with a blunt *thud*.

So the paradox here is that once we can accept the condition of our *not knowing*, we can open up a space inside to begin paying attention to notice more deeply, and more subtly. Then we can even start orienting ourselves to what is actually *already there*.

This is a different way of being, one in which we shift from a *searching* consciousness, which is needed to get started on the journey, to that of a *finding* consciousness, which instead explores the deeper terrains of where one already is currently located within their interior.

Inevitably, when we arrive at the unknown aspects of the self, this will feel foreign or even alien to us, at first. We find ourselves encountering a troubling "not me" feeling. There is no way around this feeling whenever we enter unknown territory within us; but of course there are always many ways to avoid these spaces within.



Going from searching to finding is helped along by a neutral and open transitional space within the self. I refer to this open, unrealized space as *not-yet-ness*. This implies an accepting and open point of view where *something will inevitably happen*, even though it has not happened yet. This is a crucial shift in consciousness we have to make before we can recognize a meaningful soul journey unfolding itself before us.

If we can only take up the waiting we have to do more positively and more actively - with a curiosity, and even with a sense of play - something will inevitably begin to happen that hasn't happened thus far. This is often because something is *already* happening, and we have not yet become aware of its happening.

Tom Petty conveys this common struggle in his rock anthem '*The Waiting*', when he wails out the refrain, "*the waiting is the hardest part!*" As a modern culture, we are less and less inclined to wait for anything anymore, perhaps because we often no longer have to.

Our modern culture is built upon the notion of convenience and the function of speed. But speed doesn't often help with the heroic sense of venturing, especially as it applies to wandering. On the soul's journey, *active waiting* is a necessary skill that must be cultivated and practiced over and over, especially to support a gradual realization of one's destiny.

I am reminded of a humorous story in this regard, one that took place during a men's Hero's Journey wilderness intensive some years back. A member of our stewarding team ventured out for a day of solitude, and went out for a solitary exercise we call a 'Medicine Walk'.

His intention was to cultivate more patience for himself; he wanted to learn how to better wait. As it was a hot, sunny summer day, he had taken along an umbrella. He also had with him an old briefcase, curiously filled with carving knives, so he could whittle away at some wooden sticks when he felt so inclined, while waiting. But he mostly intended to practice standing in one spot for a long time.

As the day grew long, and in the intense heat of a sunny, mid-summer's afternoon, I myself was on a solitary walk. I was slowly meandering between thick, green forests and bright, sunny meadows near our base camp, high up in the West Virginia mountains. I suddenly became aware of a peculiar figure up ahead in the dramatic landscape, standing in a wide-open field, amidst wildflowers.

I could see that his umbrella was up, shading him from the fierceness of the sun's rays. He was wearing a straw hat, a colorful Hawaiian shirt, and a pair of shorts. As I slowly approached, I realized that his boots were set aside, and his feet were buried in sandy earth. This was indeed a strange and humorous sight, and it added greatly to the impression that he'd been standing in one spot for a very, very long time.

Beside him was his battered briefcase, standing upright as well. It gave the appearance of a man standing at a bus stop, waiting for the next bus. Yet here he was, in the middle of a wildflower field in a mountainous meadow, many miles from anything resembling such a thing.

In the spirit of play, I kept a sober demeanor, and walked right by him, saying only one thing to him as I passed. "Waiting for the bus?" His reply had me in stitches! "No," he said, "I'm waiting for the road!"



See if you can feel what happens within you when you reflect on the following question from two differing internal perspectives:

Have you found the thing that brings you utterly alive on the inside?

No. Feel what happens internally with that response. Now try on another response. *Not yet.* What are the differences that occur internally between these two responses?

Going from 'no' to 'not yet' invites a sense of possibility forward; it makes the challenge of venturing into the unknown somehow more feasible. It also allows for

unrealized outcomes to become more interesting. *Not yet* implies that *something's* coming eventually that isn't guaranteed.

This openness in attitude can help position us towards the possible, so when something fleeting yet un-ignorable starts to happen within us, we may be able to respond to this essential question - "*Have you found that thing that brings you utterly alive on the inside?*" - with a *yes!*



Another humbling realization to have, whenever we find ourselves agitated or distraught about *not knowing* something, is that *not knowing* can actually be an unconscious defense against having a *knowing*. Has this ever occurred to you about your own not knowing?

Searching is often the easy part of the journey, precisely because something has not yet been found. Sometimes, it is in the *finding* that the spirit of adventure brings forth the inevitable ordeal.

In the movie *No Country for Old Men*, Tommy Lee Jones plays a sheriff who has come upon a gruesome murder scene somewhere in the isolated, brown and lonely Texas plains - evidence of a drug deal gone bad, very bad. Not knowing exactly what has gone wrong, the deputy sheriff says to him, "It's a real mess, ain't it, sheriff?" Jones says, "If it ain't, it will do until the real mess gets here". Not knowing will often do as trouble enough, until the real trouble of knowing arrives.

When we begin to hear the call to adventure, the deeper trouble of knowing what is calling to us can really get us started on our way. Then we can feel the traction as well as the tension of living into the myth brought on by the journey.



though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice

As we tune more and more towards our own inner voice, sensing the call to adventure awakening within us, we will at some point bump against the voices of those around us - people who matter to us, people whose opinions we have valued and perhaps sought out, and also particular people who annoy us by offering their unsolicited opinions about how we should choose to pursue our lives.

Whenever we follow the path being made ready by the soul, advice from another is mostly of no use. In the same way that following a path already made will have us following somebody else's path, following another's advice means that we're not trusting enough our own inner guidance. When this is the case, our endeavors are

not likely to bear much fruit nor take us very far, nor hold much personal meaning for us.

Another challenge, once we begin hearing the call from within, is how to not readily abandon it, nor simply keep comparing it with differing advice from someone else. How many times, when we don't know what to do with our lives, do we seek out someone to tell us what to do? This sets us up for a dynamic in which we become unwitting 'help-rejecting complainers'. If you tell me what to do, then I am free to not do what you suggest. Or else I can do it, and then complain about the result when it doesn't appear to be working.

The only advice that has seemed of use to me, when it comes to answering a call to adventure, is this sage advice I was once given: when it comes to matters of great importance, listen to my own heart, and follow what I find to be my own bliss.

That doesn't mean I don't talk with others about it, or share my inner guidance with those capable of understanding me or challenging me. But there is nothing else we can do, if we want meaning and vitality in our lives, but follow the inner rhythms and songs for our own authentic life.

though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.



If we follow an inner calling to become more alive, to become more than what we already are, then we will inevitably move out beyond our comfort zone. As we start to cross the first threshold into the unknown, we must take leave of 'home', and enter the 'zone unknown' to us.

As we do, we are bound to feel an inner dissonance or pressure, something that will go against the grain of the usual way. We start to feel the breaching of old boundaries as we go against our homeostatic nature; we can hear the sounding of inner alarm. Then, as soon as we perceive that something is starting to go wrong, or that others are beginning to question us, or have become upset with our new direction, we are prone to feelings of panic, doubt and fear.

These are the old feelings that tug at our ankles; our feet then want to stop going forward. Here we find an ancient, reflexive impulse to turn back, to protect; it can quickly turn into a desperate need to return to the security that had us settling into a stagnant same-ness that became fixed and constraining.

Here something crucial must become re-established in the psyche of the hero, in the seeker of more meaning and fulfillment in life. There must be a gradual and

undeniable *shift in allegiance* to our most primary reality orientation. In order to better heed the inner call to the adventure that awaits us, we must shift from a *security-seeking* modality to a *vitality-seeking* modality.

To embrace the journey waiting to happen, we must make a shift in conscious awareness - from the safety we have come to know (which must happen first), to the enlivening we desire with our deepest being (which must come next).

Answering the call to adventure helps to do exactly that.



“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.

There is another obstacle that prevents us from being quietly pulled forward by that which brings us alive, and that which we truly love. This increase in energy and excitement can be threatening, and can be difficult to get adjusted to. As we feel our own life force energies begin to pour more through our sensate bodies in a direct and potent way, we may tend to unconsciously defend against this in-flow of energy. We will commonly do this in our culturally sanctioned and approved ways - we instead apply ourselves to fixing things – other people, the world around us, and of course, ourselves.

Often, we first try to fix others. Many of us who are “givers” have devoted our lives to caretaking tasks. One day it begins to strike us how unfulfilling this may actually be. (This usually takes a long while to realize.) We then turn our attention back to correcting or improving upon ourselves, which can be a much more efficient and effective use of our energy and attention. Except that when we resort back to a mental ‘problem solving’ mode for matters of the heart, this doesn’t work, either.

In this modality, life isn’t really meant to be lived, it is meant to be better managed.

In this modality, we find ourselves repeatedly chasing our tails with mental thinking. Or it may be better said that we chase after all of our problems, and think that if we can just fix them all, we will finally be okay, if not more alive. Fixing problems rarely brings more aliveness, though; it simply provides us with reassurance and temporary relief, until the next problem comes. And it certainly will come. This is the voice that says “*Mend my life!*” As a fixer, we can have a mission, a sense of purpose.

The deeper call - “*Grow my life!*” - lies buried beneath all of the surface repairs of a ‘just-fix-it’ mentality. The next threshold to be crossed is a letting go of mending everything, or mending *anything*, for that matter - so we can drop into deeper states of grounded awareness, beyond mental thinking and problem solving.

Here, we stumble upon a crucial and liberating insight about our world, and more importantly, about our selves - *What if nothing is broken?* Well now, what does someone *do* about that? New trouble.

At least, it will be a different kind of trouble; a better trouble, trouble worth having. And as we let go of fixing we will find ourselves instead being led once again, right back into the unknown.



You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations-
though their melancholy
was terrible.

If we practice a deep listening long enough, and we aren't looking to find something in particular, like when we are searching for a lost object - and we instead start looking for what is already there waiting for us (and only us), we will have crossed over into the territory of the journey myth, the hero's realm of adventure.

In this realm, we listen as a *practice*, simply for the sake of listening itself. We listen to allow ourselves to hear, feel and sense what comes. If we stick with this approach, inevitably something begins to stand out into our awareness, with the potential for our experience to become enlivening. We start to realize what we have to do to simply sustain this sense of aliveness. This awareness becomes obvious, and it's often a surprise to us as well, all at the same time.

The new trouble that can occur here is the realization that what we now feel called to do, *isn't what our pre-conceived ideas for our lives had been*. We start to see that what we planned for, what we endlessly tried to do or make happen, isn't really *the thing to do* any more. This can lead us to one of those 'oh, no' moments of awakening, and this is often a big one to be faced.

This is typically another threshold that has to be crossed: *Letting go of the mind's incessant demands, obligations, barbers, deals, fretting, etc.* Confronting realizations that we have wasted our time, our energy and our resources trying to fix someone else or ourselves. Or we've endlessly been holding something together that wants to fall apart. Or we've been fitting ourselves into something that doesn't really fit us any more.

We now come face-to-face with the fact that something in our lives just doesn't work. Perhaps it once did, or maybe it never did. But when we have invested ourselves in something that no longer bears fruit, or gives us life, and we know the truth of this -depending on your state of mind - this is really bad news, or else really good news.

If we listen to the deeper calling from within us, we understand that we have to shed what no longer serves life, in order to be available to move towards that which can give new life. There is simply no way around this universal truth, no matter how many times we try to take a by-pass route. This awareness will bring on a necessary grief, a deep sense of something being lost, and often, a tremendous sense of relief as well.



As we orient more and more towards a new way of sensing, feeling, and knowing what we have to do, we become more anchored and immersed in our own core – we feel truer to ourselves.

We can then become more able to move past external sources of motivation, and become pulled by a persistent and more steady energy source from within, like an inner compass heading. Something will just keep welling up from within, pointing us towards an unknown territory worth pursuing. This is how we are kept on track, kept enlivened, and kept close to our heart's desire, moving our lives in the only direction it can go – forward.

Being moved along by an inner yearning, however undefined or mysterious, requires us to move beyond the 'stiff fingers' of grasping that a rigidified ego holds, and past the fixed foundations of an old consciousness that appeals to our security-seeking bodies and minds, saying to us 'fool, don't leave what you know behind'!

And finally, in order to venture into new fields of play, we confront the vestiges of 'terrible melancholy' - an authentic mourning of something that will never be, and what could never be to begin with. *Dis-illusion-ing*. What Philip Slater called 'a kind of mourning period for our fantasies'. Which of course is the only cure for an illusion.

So listening for the call to adventure requires us, at some point along the journey, to let go of our 'stiff fingers'- our long-held illusions about safety and security. This is a necessary suffering, and preparation for the new way - the way of adventure, the way of mystery, and the way of new meaning.



It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.

Another obstacle that would hold us back from taking up the path of adventure is *regret*. Yet one more blockage would be chasing an illusionary belief that it is too

late for us, that we've missed our time, and the windows of opportunity have all closed down for us.

We buy into the perception that we are too old, too uneducated, too broken, too poor, too much a failure...well, you can name your own favored deficit or disadvantage. But this is just another wily defensive strategy, yet more clinging to an old and useless identification. These avoidance postures are also a likely indication that we must be getting closer to the source of the new wellspring, actually. Why else would we desperately resort back to these oldest of entrapments – 'it's too late for me' or 'I am not enough'.

So back to this essential reframing of the terrain – *so what now, if nothing is broken, and it is not too late?*



Answering the call to adventure invariably opens us towards our heart's desires for eros, for vitality and for mystery. We all want rapture to somehow overtake us. We all yearn for mystery to reveal itself to us in ongoing, curiosity-arousing, and surprising ways.

We learn to accept that we cannot know the outcomes of meaningful adventures in advance. We learn that things of the soul are revealed to us in their own time as we take the steps to journey forward, little by little.

little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly recognized as your own

As we cross over those thresholds that prevent us from listening deeply, we come closer and closer towards our own inner voice, the one that has been there all along, waiting until we are ready to listen. Waiting so it can begin to speak from silent depths, from the still space within the center of our being.

When we practice listening deeply, what is authentic and true will gradually burn through our clouds of confusion and despair. We will begin to recognize a familiar, insistent messenger within us, pointing the way as it will, as a compass seeks true north. It points us towards the sound of our own true voice, and the feeling of aliveness that surfaces from our own wellspring of vitality.

that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,

As long as we can practice the art of going inward and downward into our own source within, our wellspring, we can listen deeply to whatever emerges. This inner voice, or perhaps a presence, can become a steadying companion through the trials and ordeals we face in life. We know what we have to do, simply because it feels more and more unbearable when we are not doing it.

Following our bliss, as Joseph Campbell often said, is not self indulgent, it is essential. Our own life force energy, our sense of being an embodied presence, becomes a companion to us. It is reflected in our countenance, and in our 'en-theos', our 'God-filled-ness', our enthusiasm for life.

Our own presence keeps us company as a silent and invisible companion, providing us with the impetus and the courage to go forth ever deeper and deeper into the world, giving what is alive in us to the world, while becoming a part of something larger than ourselves.



To summarize, we begin our journey by feeling a call coming from deep within, and from another realm. The call is like a summoning, and it becomes insistent. It asks us to step more and more into the manifest world. As we walk with more awareness and go deeper into the world, we will need, more than ever, to be connected to the vitality of our own personal myth (ever near, ever ineffable) that echoes in the background of this world.

We then 'walk between these two worlds', and it is in this very 'in between' space that soul is activated, ignited and cultivated. None of us can say for sure exactly how or when this ignition will happen to us, but when and as it does, we become enlivened vessels – capable of becoming the embodiment of eternity's zeal to incarnate in us. We become signposts to something beyond ourselves, living out our creative expressions in the field of time.

determined to do
the only thing you could do-
determined to save
the only life you could save.

As we stay in tune with our call to adventure, we inevitably begin to gather an inner momentum; we feel more compelled to move forward in life; and we gain clarity from a powerful insight: There is only one life we can save, saved only by bringing forth what is within the self.

The Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, verse 70, quotes Jesus as having said, "*If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.*"

So let each of us, fellow travelers on this path of mythic adventure, listen deeply and closely to what is being whispered to our consciousness-seeking egos, from the inner depths of our souls. Each of us has to find our way to tune in, listen deeply, and feel with our skin what the divine winds ever blow our way.

Again, this type of deep listening will inevitably inspire something to move in us. Then we let go of our more childish ego wishes and fantasies, in order to be better positioned to follow the call to venture forth towards our bliss. What else could human beings want to do?



In following the call to our bliss, Joseph Campbell said that doors would open for us that would not open before now, and would not open for any others. But in order for these doors to open for us, we have to be authentically living into the myth of heroic endeavor. Here is Campbell's reflection on this very matter, from *Hero With a Thousand Faces*:

"This first stage of the mythological journey – which we have designated the "call to adventure" - signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of this society to a zone unknown. This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight." 8

The price to be paid for answering the call to adventure will be entering into encounters that at some point also turn into ordeals. But before facing the actuality of these ordeals, we must first come to the crossing of a threshold into the unfamiliar and the unknown, where the deeper, mythic terrains of the journey await us.

For now, it is our time to listen deeply to the call coming from within, without looking for or expecting a particular kind of summons. Then we are free to simply notice and trust what comes...because *whatever we have been looking for, is also looking for us.*

So let's be on the watch. Let each of us be open to surprising possibilities that have been waiting for the arrival of our awareness, and the attentiveness of our presence.

It may now be time to say 'yes' to life, and be taken forth by the subtle call of the soul, on the journey of a lifetime.

- Michael Mervosh



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