

You Are a Heroine: A Retelling of the Hero's Journey

Susanna Liller

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Heroines are needed now more than ever, and Liller's self-help book uses classic paradigms to show women how to unlock their own heroic powers.

Myth and theory come to life in Susanna Liller's *You Are a Heroine: A Retelling of the Hero's Journey* as courageous women relate how they let go of the familiar in order to seek out freedom on their own terms.

Popularized by Joseph Campbell in 1949, the Hero's Journey is a universal template for personally evolving from humdrum conformity toward an extraordinary life. It follows a familiar pattern but is unique to each individual. This pattern is interpreted for women by Liller: The heroine has an experience or receives a "call" that removes her from all that is familiar; she is placed in a new, even dangerous situation to face tasks that demand that she change and grow. She emerges a fully realized woman, able to offer her gifts to the world.

"The point of the Heroine's Journey is to birth you into your real self, the self you may have been holding back," writes Liller. Her book illuminates the characteristic stages of the path—including the adversaries and helpers met along the way, from the "Threshold Guardians" whose job is to dissuade the adventurer and fill her mind with doubt, to the "Mentors" or "Magical Helpers" who appear as guides. It will not be easy; the "Belly of the Whale" is a place of turmoil and confusion, and there will be "Dragons" (deep-seated beliefs and roadblocks) to be faced. Liller writes that a woman's Journey will be different from that of a man; for example, when men encounter "Dragons," they tend to fight them, while women seek to befriend, understand, transform, and integrate them.

Comforting, encouraging, and compassionate in tone, the book honors women's right to choose whether or not to embark upon the Heroine's Journey while also emphasizing its role in personal growth. Engaging the imagination, it includes fun, interactive tasks, a printable map of the Journey with guiding principles for accepting and responding to its challenges, downloadable audio of interviews with others on the path, and an intuition-based strategy for engaging with the tasks in a spirit of play and discovery. Myths, legends, and contemporary stories come together to provide the necessary background and context for each woman adventurer to feel she is taking her place in a worthy lineage, one marked by authenticity, audacity, and power.

In a society ruled mainly by men, geared to favor their attitudes and needs and brought to the brink of disaster by their unwillingness to take action on behalf of the planet and all its creatures, Liller encourages women to share their stories with each other to "create a groundswell of women remembering who they really are." *The Heroine's Journey* issues a clear and compelling challenge to women: become the heroine of your own journey. It is always worthwhile.

KRISTINE MORRIS (December 7, 2018)

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