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Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation

By Joseph Campbell



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Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation By Joseph Campbell

Joseph Campbell famously defined myth as “other people's religion.” But he also said that one of the basic functions of myth is to help each individual through the journey of life, providing a sort of travel guide or map to reach fulfillment — or, as he called it, bliss. For Campbell, many of the world's most powerful myths support the individual's heroic path toward bliss.

In *Pathways to Bliss*, Campbell examines this personal, psychological side of myth. Like his classic best-selling books *Myths to Live By* and *The Power of Myth*, *Pathways to Bliss* draws from Campbell's popular lectures and dialogues, which highlight his remarkable storytelling and ability to apply the larger themes of world mythology to personal growth and the quest for transformation. Here he anchors mythology's symbolic wisdom to the individual, applying the most poetic mythical metaphors to the challenges of our daily lives.

Campbell dwells on life's important questions. Combining cross-cultural stories with the teachings of modern psychology, he examines the ways in which our myths shape and enrich our lives and shows how myth can help each of us truly identify and follow our bliss.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This ninth volume of Campbell's previously unpublished material deftly marries his sweeping grasp of myths with the needs of contemporary people looking for meaning and inspiration. Expert editor and seasoned Campbell authority David Kudler makes the mythic-stature-mythicist come alive again. Fans will recognize Campbell's comforting cadence and intimacy, conveyed by use of the second person and by his masterful storytelling. Campbell realized he was essentially saying the same things over more than two decades. As such, this volume breaks no new ground, but does give explicit directions for identifying and connecting oneself to a meaningful mythic overview, unbounded by specific cultures or historical facts. Campbell gives adequate coverage to the historical development of myth as it pertains to the individual, especially through the eyes of Jung. The final chapter, a distilled jewel of the hero's journey mono-myth that Campbell made famous, is followed by "Dialogue," several pages of conversation between Campbell and anonymous people, exploring the application of gender differences to the hero's journey. Campbell assesses life now as pathless: "We are in a sort of free fall into the future." He is, however, perennially hopeful that if we discover our own mythological underpinnings, carried on the wings of artists and poets, we can find our way to individual bliss. This is a fine volume for old friends and new followers.

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Review

If you followed the television series with Bill Moyers or have read any of Campbell's books, this book presents a new look at some of his ideas and a clearer picture of how to interpret myths for your own journey. --Bayswater Books

Wonderful insight into the essential Joseph Campbell... a guidebook for finding one's own inner hero or heroine, and for finding the guts to listen to one's own story. --Bloomsbury Review

"No one in our century — not Freud, not Thomas Mann, not Lévi-Strauss — has so brought the mythical sense of the world and its eternal figures back into our everyday consciousness."

— **James Hillman**

"Campbell has become the rarest of intellectuals in American life: a serious thinker who has been embraced by the popular culture."

— *Newsweek*

"In our generation the mythographer who has had the fullest command of the huge scholarly literature, the analytic ability, the lucid prose, and the needed staying power has been Joseph Campbell."

— *Commentary*

About the Author

JOSEPH CAMPBELL was an American author and teacher best known for his work in the field of comparative mythology. He was born in New York City in 1904, and from early childhood he became interested in mythology. He loved to read books about American Indian cultures and frequently visited the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where he was fascinated by the museum's collection of totem poles. Campbell was educated at Columbia University, where he specialized in medieval literature

and, after earning a master's degree, continued his studies at universities in Paris and Munich. His first original work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, was published in 1949 and was immediately well received; in time, it became acclaimed as a classic. In this study of the "myth of the hero," Campbell asserted that there is a single pattern of heroic journey and that all cultures share this essential pattern in their various heroic myths. In his book he also outlined the basic conditions, stages, and results of the archetypal hero's journey. Joseph Campbell died in 1987. In 1988, a series of television interviews with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, introduced Campbell's views to millions of people.

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