

JOSEPH CAMPBELL and THE POWER OF MYTH WITH BILL MOYERS

The Hero's Adventure Part 1 of 6

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The Hero's Adventure

Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth

with Bill Moyers

1. The Hero's Adventure

[Tease]

JOSEPH CAMPBELL: We have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero path. And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall find ourselves. And where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.

[Titles]

BILL MOYERS: Joseph Campbell believed that everything begins with a story, so we begin this series with Joseph Campbell with one of his favorites. He was in Japan for a conference on religion, and he overheard another American delegate, a social philosopher from New York, say to a Shinto priest, "We've been now to a good many ceremonies and have seen quite a few of your shrines. But I don't get your ideology, I don't get your theology." The Japanese paused as though in deep thought, and then slowly shook his head. "I think we don't have ideology," he said, "we don't have theology. We dance."

Campbell could have said it of his own life. When he died in 1987 at the age of 83, he was considered one of the world's foremost authorities on mythology, the stories and legends told by human beings through the ages to explain the universe and their place in it.

The 20 books he wrote or edited have influenced artists and performers, as well as scholars and students. When he died, he was working on a monumental *Historical Atlas of World Mythology*, his effort to bring under one roof the spiritual and intellectual wisdom of a lifetime.

Some of his books are classics: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which established his fame 40 years ago; and his four-volume study of mythology, *The Masks of God*.

Joseph Campbell was one of the most spiritual men I ever met, but he didn't have an ideology or a theology. Mythology was to him the song of the universe, music so deeply embedded in our collective unconscious that we dance to it, even when we can't name the tune.

Over the last two summers of his life, we taped these conversations in California, at Skywalker Ranch, the home of his friend, George Lucas, whose movie trilogy *Star Wars* had been influenced by Campbell's work. We talked about the message and meaning of myth, about the first storytellers, about love and marriage, gods and goddesses, religion, ritual, art and psychology. But we always came around to his favorite subject, the hero with a thousand faces.

[Interviewing] Why the hero with a thousand faces?

CAMPBELL: Well, because there is a certain typical hero sequence of actions, which can be detected in stories from all over the world, and from many, many periods of history. And I think it's essentially, you might say, the one deed done by many, many different people.

MOYERS: Why are there so many stories of the hero or of heroes in mythology?

CAMPBELL: Well, because that's what's worth writing about. I mean, even in popular novel writing, you see, these—the main character is the hero or heroine, that is to say, someone who has found or achieved or done something beyond the normal range of achievement and experience. A hero properly is someone who has given his life to something bigger than himself or other than himself.

MOYERS: So in all of these cultures, whatever the costume the hero might be wearing, what is the deed?

CAMPBELL: Well, there are two types of deed. One is the physical deed; the hero who has performed a war act or a physical act of heroism — saving a life, that's a hero act. Giving himself, sacrificing himself to another. And the other kind is the spiritual hero, who has learned or found a mode of experiencing the supernormal range of human spiritual life, and then come back and communicated it. It's a cycle, it's a going and a return, that the hero cycle represents.

But then this can be seen also in the simple initiation ritual, where a child has to give up his childhood and become an adult, has to die, you might say, to his infantile personality and psyche and come back as a self-responsible adult. It's a fundamental experience that everyone has to undergo, where in our childhood for at least 14 years, and then to get out of that posture of dependency, psychological dependency, into one of psychological self-responsibility, requires a death and resurrection, and that is the basic motif of the hero journey. Leaving one condition, finding the source of life to bring you forth in a richer or more mature or other condition.

MOYERS: So that if we happen not to be heroes in the grand sense of redeeming society, we have to take that journey ourselves, spiritually, psychologically, inside us.

CAMPBELL: That's right. And Otto Rank, in his wonderful, very short book called *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, he says that everyone is a hero in his birth. He has undergone a tremendous transformation from a little, you might say, water creature, living in a realm of the amniotic fluid and so forth, then coming out, becoming an air-breathing mammal that ultimately will be self-standing and so forth, is an enormous transformation and it is a heroic act, and it's a heroic act on the mother's part to bring it about. It's the primary hero, hero form, you might say.

MOYERS: There's still a journey to be taken after that.

CAMPBELL: There's a big one to be taken.

MOYERS: And that journey is not consciously undertaken. Do heroes go out on their own initiative, or do they—

CAMPBELL: Well, there are both kinds. A very common one that appears in Celtic myths, of someone who had followed the lure of a deer or animal that he has been following, and then carries him into a range of forest and landscape that he's never been in before. And then the animal will undergo a transformation, become the Queen of The Fairy Hills or something like that. That is one of not knowing what you're doing, you suddenly find yourself in full career of an adventure.

There's another one where one sets out responsibly and intentionally to perform the deed. For instance, when Ulysses' son Telemachus was called by Athena, "Go find your father," that father quest is a major hero adventure for young people, that is, the adventure of finding what your career is, what your nature is, what your source is. He undertakes that intentionally.

Then there's one into which you are thrown and pitched; for instance, being drafted into the army. You didn't intend it, you're in. You're in another transformation. You've undergone a death and resurrection, you put on a uniform, you're another creature.

MOYERS: So does the heroism have a moral objective?

CAMPBELL: The moral objective is that of saving a people or saving a person, or saving an idea. He is sacrificing himself for something, that's the morality of it. Now you, from another position, might say that something was something that should not have been realized, you know. That's the judgment from another side. But it doesn't destroy the heroism of what was done, absolutely not.

MOYERS: Well, that's a different angle on heroes than I got when I was reading as a young boy the story of Prometheus, going after the fire and bringing it back and benefiting humanity, and suffering for it.

CAMPBELL: Yeah. I mean, Prometheus brings fire to mankind and consequently civilization. That's, by the way, a universal theme.

MOYERS: Oh, it is?

CAMPBELL: The hero—the fire theft theme with a— usually with a relay race after it. Often it's a blue jay or a woodpecker or something like this, that steals the fire and then passes it to something else, and something else, one animal after another, and they're burned by the fires as they carry it on. Well, that accounts for the different colorings of animals and so forth. It's a worldwide myth, the fire theft.

MOYERS: Do these stories of the hero vary from culture to culture?

CAMPBELL: Well, it's the degree of illumination or action that makes them different. There is a typical early-culture hero who goes around slaying monsters. Now, that is in the period of history when man is shaping his world out of a wild, savage, unshaped world. Well, it has another shape, but it's not the shape for man. He goes around killing monsters.

MOYERS: So the hero evolves over time, like most other concepts and ideas and adventures.

CAMPBELL: Well, he evolves as the culture evolves. Now, Moses is a hero figure in his ascent

the hero?

CAMPBELL: Oh, perfect, it does the cycle perfectly. It's not simple morality play, it has to do with the powers of life and their inflection through the action of man. One of the wonderful things, I think, about this adventure into space, is that the narrator, the artist, the one thinking up the story, is in a field that is not covered by our own knowledges, you know. Through it's—much of the adventure in the old stories is where they go into regions that no one's been in before. Well, we've now conquered the planet, so there are no empty spaces for the imagination to go forth and fight its own war, you know, with the powers, and that was the first thing I felt, there's a whole new realm for the imagination to open out and live its forms.

MOYERS: Do you, when you look at something like *Star Wars*, recognize some of the themes of the hero throughout mythology?

CAMPBELL: Well, I think that George Lucas was using standard mythological figures. The old man as the adviser, well, specifically what he made me think of is the Japanese swordmaster.

(Clip from "Star Wars")

OBI WAN KENOBI: Remember, a Jedi can feel the force flowing through him.

CAMPBELL: I've known some of those people, and this man has a bit of their character.

MOYERS: Well, there's something mythological, too, isn't there, in the sense that the hero is helped by this stranger who shows up and gives him some instrument, a sword or a shaft of light?

CAMPBELL: Yes, but he gives him not only a physical instrument, but a psychological commitment and a psychological center.

(Clip from "Star Wars")

OBI WAN KENOBI: This time, let go your conscious self and act on instinct.

CAMPBELL: When he had him exercising with that strange weapon, and then pulled the mask over, that's real Japanese stuff.

(Clip from "Star Wars")

DARTH VADER: I'll take them myself.

MOYERS: When I took our two sons to see it, they did the same thing the audience did; at that moment when the voice of Ben Kenobi says to Luke Skywalker in the climactic moment—

(Clip from "Star Wars")

OBI WAN KENOBI: Use the force, Luke. Let go, Luke.

MOYERS: The audience broke out into elation and into applause.

CAMPBELL: They did. Well, you see, this thing communicates. It is in a language that is talking to young people today. And that's marvelous.

MOYERS: So the hero goes for something, he doesn't just go along for the ride. He's not a mere adventurer.

CAMPBELL: Well, a serendipitous adventure can take place, also. You know, what the word serendipity comes from? Comes from the Sanskrit, *Swaranwipa*, the Isle of Silk, which was formerly the name of Ceylon. And it's a story about a family that's just rambling on it's way to Ceylon, and all these adventures take place. And so you can have the serendipitous adventure as well.

MOYERS: Is the adventurer who takes that kind of trip a hero in the mythological sense?

CAMPBELL: Yes. He is ready for it. This is a very interesting thing about these mythological themes. The achievement of the hero is one that he is ready for, and it's really a manifestation of his character. And it's amusing, the way in which the landscape and the conditions of the environment match the readiness of the hero. The adventure that he's ready for is the one that he gets.

(Clip from "Star Wars")

HAN SOLO: Look, I ain't in this for your revolution and I'm not in it for you, Princess. I expect to be well paid. I'm in it for me.

MOYERS: The mercenary, Solo, begins as a mercenary and ends up as a hero.

CAMPBELL: He was a very practical guy, a materialist in his character, at least as he thought of himself. But he was a compassionate human being at the same time, and didn't know it. The adventure evoked a quality of his character that he hadn't known he possessed.

(Clip from "Star Wars")

PRINCESS LEIA: I love you.

of the mountain, his meeting with Yahweh on the summit of the mountain, and coming back with the rules for the formation of a whole new society. That's the hero act. Departure, fulfillment, return. And on the way there are adventures that can be paralleled also in other traditions.

Now, the Buddha figure is like that of the Christ; of course, 500 years earlier. You could match those two traditions right down the line, even to the characters of their apostles, of their monks. Christ, now, there's a perfectly good hero deed formula represented there, and he undergoes three temptations: the economic temptation, where the devil says, "You look hungry, young man; change the stones to bread." Jesus said, "Man lives not by bread alone, but every word from the mouth of God." Next, we have the political temptation: he's taken to the top of a mountain and shown the nations of the world, and says, "You can come into control of all these if you'll bow to me." And then, "Now, you're so spiritual, let's go up to the top of Herod's temple and see you cast yourself down, and God will bear you up and you won't even bruise your heels." So he says, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." Those are the three temptations of Christ. In the desert.

The Buddha also goes into the forest, has conferences with the leading gurus of the day, he goes past them. He comes to the bo tree, the Tree of Illumination, undergoes three temptations. They're not the same temptations, but they are three temptations. And one is that of lust, another is that of fear, and another is that of social duty, doing what you're told. And then both of these men come back, and they choose disciples, who help them establish a new way of consciousness in terms of what they have discovered there. These are the same hero deeds; these are the spiritual hero deeds — the Moses, the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed.

Mohammed literally, and we know this about him, he was a camel caravan master. But he would leave his home and go out into a little mountain cave that he found and meditate, and meditate, and meditate and meditate. And one day a voice says, "Write," and we have the Koran, you know. It's an old story.

MOYERS: Sometimes it seems to me that we ought to feel pity for the hero instead of admiration. So many of them have sacrificed their own needs—

CAMPBELL: They all have.

MOYERS: And very often what they accomplish is shattered by the inability of the followers to see.

CAMPBELL: Yes. They come out of the forest with gold and it turns to ashes. That's another motif that occurs.

MOYERS: In this culture of easy religion cheaply achieved, it seems to me we've forgotten that all three of the great religions teach that the trials of the hero journey are a significant part of it, that there's no reward without renunciation and without a price. The Koran speaks, "Do you think that you shall enter the garden of bliss without such trials as come to those who passed before you?"

CAMPBELL: Well, if you realize what the real problem is, and that is of losing primary—primarily thinking about yourself and your own self-protection. Losing yourself, giving yourself to another, that's a trial in itself, is it not? There's a big transformation of consciousness that's concerned. And what all the myths have to deal with is transformation of consciousness. That you're thinking in this way, and you have now to think in that way.

MOYERS: Well, how is the consciousness transformed?

CAMPBELL: By the trials.

MOYERS: The tests that the hero undergoes.

CAMPBELL: The tests or certain illuminating revelations. Trials and revelations are what it's all about.

MOYERS: Well, who in society today is making any heroic myth at all for us? Do movies do this, do movies create hero myths?

CAMPBELL: I don't know. Now, my experience of movies, I mean, the significant experience I had of movies, was when I was a boy, and they were all really movies. They weren't talkies, they were black and white movies. And I had a hero figure who meant something to me, and he served as a kind of model for myself in my physical character, and that was Douglas Fairbanks. I wanted to be a synthesis of Douglas Fairbanks and Leonardo da Vinci, that was my idea. But those were models, were roles, that came to me.

MOYERS: Does a movie like *Star Wars* fill some of that need for the spiritual adventure, for

HAN SOLO: I know.

CAMPBELL: He thinks he's an egoist, he really isn't, and that's a very lovable kind of human being. I think, and there are lots of them functioning beautifully in the world. They think they're working for themselves, very practical and all, but no, there's something else pushing them.

MOYERS: What did you think about the scene in the bar?

CAMPBELL: That's my favorite, not only in this piece, but of many, many pieces I've ever seen.

MOYERS: Why?

CAMPBELL: Well, where you are on the edge, you're about to embark into the outlying spaces. And—

MOYERS: The real adventure.

CAMPBELL: The real adventure. This is the jumping-off place, and there is where you meet people who've been out there, and they run the machines that go out there, and you haven't been there. It reminds me a little bit in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, the atmosphere before you start off the adventure. You're in the seaport, and there's old salts, seamen who've been on the sea, and that's their world, and these are the space people, also.

[Clip from "Star Wars"]

HAN SOLO: I've got a bad feeling about this.

LUKE SKYWALKER: The walls are moving!

PRINCESS LEIA: Don't just stand there, try and brace it with something.

MOYERS: My favorite scene was when they were in the garbage compactor, and the walls were closing in, and I thought, that's like the belly of the whale that Jonah came out of.

CAMPBELL: That's what it is, yes, that's where they were, down in the belly of the whale.

MOYERS: What's the mythological significance of the belly?

CAMPBELL: It's the descent into the dark. Jonah in the whale, I mean, that's a standard motif of going into the whale's belly and coming out again.

MOYERS: Why must the hero do that?

CAMPBELL: The whale represents the personification, you might say, of all that is in the unconscious. In reading these things psychologically, water is the unconscious. The creature in the water would be the dynamism of the unconscious, which is dangerous and powerful and has to be controlled by consciousness.

The first stage in the hero adventure, when he starts off on adventure, is leaving the realm of light, which he controls and knows about, and moving toward the threshold. And it's at the threshold that the monster of the abyss comes to meet him. And then there are two or three results: one, the hero is cut to pieces and descends into the abyss in fragments, to be resurrected; or he may kill the dragon power, as Siegfried does when he kills the dragon. But then he tastes the dragon blood, that is to say, he has to assimilate that power. And when Siegfried has killed the dragon and tasted the blood, he hears the song of nature; he has transcended his humanity, you know, and reassociated himself with the powers of nature, which are the powers of our life, from which our mind removes us.

You see, this thing up here, this consciousness, thinks it's running the shop. It's a secondary organ; it's a secondary organ of a total human being, and it must not put itself in control. It must submit and serve the humanity of the body.

[Clip from "Star Wars"]

DARTH VADER: Join me, and I will complete your training.

CAMPBELL: When it does put itself in control, you get this Vader, the man who's gone over to the intellectual side.

[Clip from "Star Wars"]

LUKE SKYWALKER: I'll never join you!

DARTH VADER: If you only knew the power of the dark side.

CAMPBELL: He isn't thinking, or living in terms of humanity, he's living in terms of a system. And this is the threat to our lives; we all face it, we all operate in our society in relation to a system. Now, is the system going to eat you up and relieve you of your humanity, or are you going to be able to use the system to human purposes?

MOYERS: Would the hero with a thousand faces help us to answer that question, about how to change the system so that we are not serving it?

CAMPBELL: I don't think it would help you to change the system, but it would help you to live in the system as a human being.

MOYERS: By doing what?

CAMPBELL: Well, like Luke Skywalker, not going over, but resisting its impersonal claims. **MOYERS:** But I can hear someone out there in the audience saying, "Well, that's all well and good for the imagination of a George Lucas or for the scholarship of a Joseph Campbell, but that doesn't— isn't what happens in my life."

CAMPBELL: You bet it does. If the person doesn't listen to the demands of his own spiritual and heart life, and insists on a certain program, you're going to have a schizophrenic crack-up. The person has put himself off-center; he has aligned himself with a programmatic life, and it's not the one the body's interested in at all. And the world's full of people who have stopped listening to themselves. In my own life, I've had many opportunities to commit myself to a system and to go with it, and to obey its requirements. My life has been that of a maverick; I would not submit.

MOYERS: You really believe that the creative spirit ranges on its own out there, beyond the boundaries?

CAMPBELL: Yes, I do.

MOYERS: Something of the hero in that—I don't mean to suggest that you see yourself as a hero.

CAMPBELL: No, I don't, but I see myself as a maverick.

MOYERS: So perhaps the hero lurks in each one of us, when we don't know it.

CAMPBELL: Well, yes, I mean, our life evokes our character, and you find out more about yourself as you go on. And it's very nice to be able to put yourself in situations that will evoke your higher nature, rather than your lower.

MOYERS: Give me an example.

CAMPBELL: I'll give you a story. I'm dealing with an Iroquois story right now. There's a motif that comes in American Indian stories very often, what I call the refusal of suitors.

A girl with her mother lived in a wigwam on the edge of the village. She was a very handsome girl, but extremely proud and would not accept any of the boys. They proposed to her through the mother, and the mother was terribly annoyed with her. Well, one day they're out collecting wood, and they have gone a long way from the village. And while they are collecting the wood, a terrific darkness comes over them. Now, this wasn't the darkness of night descending; when you have a darkness like that, there's some magician at work somewhere. So the mother says, "Well, let's gather some bark and make a little wigwam of bark, wigwam for ourselves, and collect wood for a fire, and we'll just spend the night here." So they do that, and the mother falls asleep. And the girl looks up and there's this magnificent guy standing there with a wampum sash, glorious, and feathers and all this kind—black feathers. He says, "I have come to marry you, and I'll await your reply." She accepts the guy, and the mother accepts the man, and he gives the mother the wampum belt to prove that he's serious about all this. So he goes away with the girl; she has acquiesced. Mere human beings weren't good enough for her, but here's something that really—ah. So she's in another domain.

Now, the adventure is marvelous. She goes with him to his village, and they enter his lodge. The people in there greet her and she feels very comfortable about it and all. And then the next day he says, "I'm going off to hunt." So he leaves the lodge and the door is closed with a flap, there's a flap. When he closes the flap, she hears this strange sound. So there's the whole day and she's just in the hut, and as evening comes, she hears that strange sound again. And the door flap is flung off and in comes this prodigious serpent with his tongue darting, and he puts his head in her lap, and says, "Now, you must search my head for lice," and things like that, and she finds all kinds of horrible things there and kills them all. And then he withdraws, and in a moment after the door has been closed, it opens again and in he comes, he's the same beautiful young man again, and said, "Were you afraid of me when I came in just now?" No, she says, she wasn't at all afraid.

Next day he goes off to hunt, and then she leaves the lodge to gather wood. And the first thing she sees is an enormous serpent basking on the rocks. And then another, and then another, and she begins to feel very badly, very homesick and discouraged. Then the evening, the serpent and then the man again. The third day when he leaves, she decides she's going to try to get out

of this place. So she goes out and she's standing in the woods thinking, and a voice speaks to her. She turns, and there's a little old man there, and he says, "Darling, you are in trouble. The man that you've married is one of seven brothers. They are great magicians, and like many people of this kind, their hearts are not in their bodies. There's a collection of seven hearts in a bag that is hidden under the bed of the eldest, to whom you are married. You must go get that and then we'll deal with the next part of the adventure."

She goes in and finds the bag of hearts and is running out, and a voice calls after her. "Stop, stop." It's the voice of the magician. And she continues to run and he says, "You may think you can get away from me, but you never can." And just at that point, she hears the voice of the old man, he says, "I'll help you, dear." And he's pulling her out of the water, she didn't even know that she was in water.

MOYERS: What does that say to you?

CAMPBELL: That's to say you have moved out of the hard land, the solid earth, and are in the field of the unconscious. And she had pulled herself into the transcendent realm and got caught in the negative powers of the abyss, and she's being rescued now by the upper powers. What you have done has been to elevate yourself out of the local field and put yourself in the field of higher power, higher danger. And are you going to be able to handle it? If you are not eligible for this place into which you've put yourself, it's going to be a demon marriage, it's going to be a real mess. If you are eligible, it can be a glory that will give you a life that is yours, in your own way.

MOYERS: So these stories of mythology are simply trying to express a truth that can't be grasped any other way.

CAMPBELL: It's the edge, the interface between what can be known and what is never to be discovered, because it is a mystery transcendent of all human research. The source of life: what is it? No one knows.

MOYERS: Why are stories important for getting at that?

CAMPBELL: Well, I think it's important to live life with a knowledge of its mystery and of your own mystery, and it gives life a new zest, a new balance, a new harmony to do this. I mean, in therapy, in psychological therapy, when people find out what it is that's ticking in them, they get straightened out. And what is it that life is. I find thinking in mythological terms has helped people, visibly you can see it happen.

MOYERS: How, what does it do?

CAMPBELL: It erases anxieties, it puts them in accord with the inevitables of their life, and they can see the positive values of what are—the negative aspects of what is positive. It's whether you're going to say no to the serpent or yes to the serpent, as easy as that.

MOYERS: No to the adventure?

CAMPBELL: Yes. The adventure of being alive, of living.

MOYERS: When I was growing up, tales of King Arthur, tales of the medieval knights, tales of the dragon slayers were very strong in my world.

CAMPBELL: Dragons represent greed, really. The European dragon guards things in his cave, and what he guards are heaps of gold and virgins. And he can't make use of either of them, but he just guards. There's no vitality of experience, either of the value of the gold or of the female whom he's guarding there. Psychologically, the dragon is one's own binding of oneself to one's ego, and you're captured in your own dragon cage. And the problem of the psychiatrist is to break that dragon, open him up, so that you can have a larger field of relationships.

Junger had a patient come to him who felt alone, and she drew a picture of herself as caught in the rocks, from the waist down she was bound in rocks. And this was on a windy shore, and the wind blowing and her hair blowing, and all the gold, which is the sign of the vitality of life, was locked in the rocks. And the next picture that he had her draw had followed something he had said to her. Suddenly a lightning flash hit the rocks, and the gold came pouring out, and then she found reflected on rocks round about the gold. There was no more gold in the rocks, it was all available on the top. And in the conferences that followed, those patches of gold were identified. They were her friends. She wasn't alone, but she had locked herself in her own little room and life, but she had friends. Do you see what I mean? This is killing the dragon. And you have fears and things, this is the dragon; that's exactly what's that all about. At least the European dragon; the Chinese dragon is different.

MOYERS: What is it?

CAMPBELL: It represents the vitality of the swamps and the dragon comes out beating his belly and saying "Ha, ha, ha, ha." You know, that's another kind of dragon. And he's the one that yields the bounty and the waters and all that kind of thing. He's the great glorious thing. But this is the negative one that cuses you down.

MOYERS: So what you're saying is, if there are not dragons out there, and there may not be at any one moment—

CAMPBELL: The real dragon is in you.

MOYERS: And what is that real dragon?

CAMPBELL: That's your ego, holding you in.

MOYERS: What's my ego?

CAMPBELL: What I want, what I believe, what I can do, what I think I love, and all that. What I regard as the aim of my life and so forth. It might be too small. It might be that which pins you down. And if it's simply that of doing what the environment tells you to do, it certainly is pinning you down. And so the environment is your dragon, as it reflects within yourself.

MOYERS: How do I slay—

CAMPBELL: How do you?

MOYERS: Slay that dragon in me? What's the journey I have to make, you have to make, each of us has to make? You talk about something called the soul's high adventure.

CAMPBELL: My general formula for my students is, follow your bliss, I mean, find where it is, and don't be afraid to follow it.

MOYERS: Can my bliss be my life's love, or my life's work?

CAMPBELL: Well, it will be your life.

MOYERS: Is it my work or my life?

CAMPBELL: Well, if the work that you're doing is the work that you choose to do because you are enjoying it, that's it. But if you think, "Oh, gee, I couldn't do that," you know, that's your dragon blocking you in. "Oh, no, I couldn't be a writer, oh, no, I couldn't do what so-and-so is doing."

MOYERS: Unlike the classical heroes, we're not going on our journey to save the world, but to save ourselves.

CAMPBELL: And in doing that, you save the world. I mean, you do. The influence of a vital person vitalizes, there's no doubt about it. The world is a wasteland. People have the notion of saving the world by shifting it around and changing the rules and so forth. No, any world is a living world if it's alive, and the thing is to bring it to life. And the way to bring it to life is to find in your own case where your life is, and be alive yourself, it seems to me.

MOYERS: But you say I have to take that journey and go down there and slay those dragons. Do I have to go alone?

CAMPBELL: If you have someone who can help you, that's fine, too. But ultimately the last trick has to be done by you.

MOYERS: In all of these journeys of mythology, there's a place everyone wishes to find. What is it? The Buddhists talk of nirvana; Jesus talks of peace. There's a place of rest and repose. Is that typical of the hero's journey, that there's a place to find?

CAMPBELL: That's a place in yourself of rest. Now this I know a little bit about from athletics. The athlete who is in championship form has a quiet place in himself. And it's out of that that his action comes. If he's all in the action field, he's not performing properly. There's a center out of which you act. And Jean, my wife, a dancer, tells me that in dance this is true, too, there's the center that has to be known and held. There it's quite physically recognized by the person. But unless this center has been found, you're torn apart, tension comes. Now, the Buddha's word is nirvana; nirvana is a psychological state of mind. It's not a place, like heaven, it's not something that's not here; it is here, in the middle of the turmoil, what's called samsara, the whirlpool of life conditions. That nirvana is what, is the condition that comes when you are not compelled by desire or by fear, or by social commitments, when you hold your center and act out of there.

MOYERS: And like all heroes, the Buddha doesn't show you the truth, the illumination; he shows you the way to it.

CAMPBELL: The way. But it's got to be your way, too. I mean, how should I get rid of fear? The Buddha can't tell me how I'm going to do it. There are exercises that different teachers will

give you, but they may not work for you. And all a teacher can do is give you a clue of the direction. He's like a lighthouse that says there are rocks over here, and steer clear.

MOYERS: You talk a lot about consciousness.

CAMPBELL: Yes.
MOYERS: Most people hear that term and like me, have only a veiled understanding of it. What is it?

CAMPBELL: Jean and I are living in Hawaii, and we're living right by the ocean. And we have a little bama, a little porch, and there's a coconut tree that grows up through the porch and it goes on up. And there's a kind of vine, plant, big powerful thing with leaves like this, that has grown up the coconut tree. Now, that plant sends forth little feelers to go out and clutch the plant, and it knows where the plant is and what to do—where the tree is, and it grows up like this, and it opens a leaf, and that leaf immediately turns to where the sun is. Now, you can't tell me that leaf doesn't know where the sun is going to be. All of the leaves go just like that, what's called heliotropism, turning toward where the sun is. That's a form of consciousness. There is a plant consciousness, there is an animal consciousness. We share all of these things. You eat certain foods, and the bird knows whether there's something there for it to go to work on. I mean, the whole thing is consciousness. I begin to feel more and more that the whole world is conscious; certainly the vegetable world is conscious, and when you live in the woods, as I did as a kid, you can see all these different consciousnesses relating to themselves.

MOYERS: Scientists are beginning to talk quite openly about the Gaia principle.

CAMPBELL: There you are, the whole planet as an organism.

MOYERS: Mother Earth.
CAMPBELL: And you see, if you will think of ourselves as coming out of the earth, rather than as being thrown in here from somewhere else, you know, thrown out of the earth, 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. What else?

MOYERS: How do we raise our consciousness?

CAMPBELL: Well, that's a matter of what you are disposed to think about, and that's what meditations are for. And all of life is a meditation, most of it unintentional. A lot of people spend most of it in meditating on where their money's coming from and where it's going to go, but that's a level of meditation. Or, if you have a family to bring up, you're concerned for the family. These are all perfectly, very important concerns, but they have to do with physical conditions, mostly, and spiritual conditions of the children, of course. But how are you going to communicate spiritual consciousness to the children if you don't have it yourself? So how do you get that? Then you think about the myths. What the myths are for is to bring us into a level of consciousness that is spiritual.

Just for example, I walk off 52nd Street and Fifth Avenue into Saint Patrick's Cathedral. I have left a very busy city and one of the most fiercely economically inspired cities on the planet. I walk into that cathedral, and everything around me speaks of spiritual mystery. The mystery of the cross, what's that all about there? The stained glass windows which bring another atmosphere in. My consciousness has been brought up onto another level altogether, and I am on a different platform. And then I walk out and — I'm back in this one again. Now, can I hold something from that? Well, certain prayers or meditations that are associated with the whole context there; these are what are called mantras in India, little meditation themes that hold your consciousness on that level instead of letting it drop down here all the way. And then what you can finally do is to recognize that this is simply a lower level of that.

MOYERS: The cathedral at Chartres, which you love so much—

CAMPBELL: Oh, well.

MOYERS: —also expresses a relationship of the human to the cosmos, doesn't it?

CAMPBELL: Well, I think everyone who has spent any time at Chartres has felt something very special about this cathedral. I've been there about eight times. When I was a student in Paris, I went down there about five times and spent one whole weekend, and I identified and looked at every single figure in that cathedral. I was there so much that the concrete, this little old fellow who look care of the cathedral, he came to me one morning and he said, "Would you like to go up with me and ring the bells?" I said, "I sure would." So we climbed the Rectorie, the tower up to where the great bell was, the great enormous bronze bell, and there was a little,

like a seesaw. And he stood on one end of the seesaw, and I stood on the other end of the seesaw, and there was a little bar there for us to hold onto. And he gave the thing a push and then he was on it and I was on it, and we started going up and down, and the wind blowing through our hair up there in the cathedral, and then it began underneath. Bong, you know, bong, bong — I tell you, it was one of the most thrilling adventures in my life.

And when it was all over, he brought me down, he said, "I want to show you where my room is." Well, in a cathedral you have the nave and then the transept, and then the apse. And around the apse is the choir screen. Now the choir screen in Chartres is about that wide, and he took me in a little door into the middle of the choir screen, and there was his little bed and a little table with a lamp on it, and when I looked out, there was the Black Madonna, the virgin, the window of the Black Madonna and that was where he lived. Now, there was a man living in a meditation, huh? A constant meditation. I mean, that was a very moving, beautiful thing. Oh, I've been there time and time again, since.

MOYERS: What do you find when you go there? What does it say about all that we've been discussing?

CAMPBELL: Well, first thing it says is, it takes me back to a time when these principles informed the society. I mean, you can tell what's informed the society by the size of the — what the building is that's the tallest building in the place. When you approach a medieval town, the cathedral's the tallest thing in the place. When you approach a 17th century city, it's the political palace that's the tallest thing in the place. And when you approach a modern city, it's office buildings and dwellings that are the tallest things in the place.

And if you go to Salt Lake City, you'll see the whole thing illustrated right in front of your face. First, the temple was built. The temple was built right in the center of the city. I mean, this then the capitol was built right beside the temple, and it's bigger than the temple. And now the biggest thing is the office building that takes care of the affairs of both the temple and the political building. That's the history of Western civilization, from the Gothic through the princely periods of the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, to this economic world that we're in now.

MOYERS: In New York now the debate is over who can build the tallest building, not to praise but to build the tallest building.

CAMPBELL: Yes, and they are magnificent. I mean, some of the things that are going up in New York now really are, and this is a kind of architectural triumph. And what it is, is the statement of the city, we are a financial power center and look what we can do. It's a kind of virtuosic acrobatics done.

MOYERS: Will new myths come from there?

CAMPBELL: Well, something might. You can't predict what a myth is going to be, any more than you can predict what you're going to dream tonight. Myths and dreams come from the same place; they come from realizations of some kind that have then to find expression in symbolic form. And the myth, the only myth that's going to be worth thinking about in the immediate future is one that's talking about the planet — not this city, not these people, but the planet and everybody on it. That's my main thought for what the future myth is going to be. And what it will have to deal with will be exactly what all myths have dealt with: the maturation of the individual, the gradual — the pedagogical way to follow, from dependency through adulthood to maturity, and then to the exit and how to do it. And then how to relate to this society, and how to relate this society to the world of nature and the cosmos. That's what the myths have all talked about, that's what this one's got to talk about. But the society that it's going to talk about is the **MOYERS:** There's that wonderful photograph you have of the Earth seen from space, and it's very small and at the same time, it's very grand.

CAMPBELL: You don't see any divisions there of nations or states or anything of the kind. This might be the symbol, really, for the new mythology to come. That is the country that we are going to be celebrating, and those are the people that we are one with.