



Allure Article – for Sunday, February 2009

### **Find Your Inner Hero**

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.” Martin Luther King Jr.

Life has so much more depth and breadth when we find our deep purpose, some unique way we can contribute to the well-being of humanity. People with such purpose are true heroes. We tend to think of heroism as something that requires special abilities and resources and that produces spectacular results. Heroic opportunities seem to be far beyond us. Yet, I believe a hero is simply a person who lives from the heart, sees the need of the moment and steps forward. A hero is someone willing to take a risk to help another person in a way that renews their hope.

Can you be a hero? Yes, you can. Each of us can find the hero waiting within. In fact, voices –from next door and across the globe –are crying out to each of us to connect with our inner hero. We are all being called; we can all answer the call to serve.

For the past few years CNN has been running an unusual competition. Viewers are asked to nominate as heroes ordinary men and women from around the world. Each year the winners are featured in a special television program. The 2008 show, *CNN Heroes: An All Star Tribute*, was deeply moving. It reminded me once again that each of us can be a hero in our own way.

This week I want to share with you stories of some of these CNN heroes. Each of those featured found their special call in a surprising way. As you read these stories, I want you to consider what the Universe might be calling you to participate in. Just open your heart and relax. Why not begin 2009 by making service a priority? Open to *your* calling....

Notice your internal questions. Anne Mahlum, age 27, loved to run. She loved it so much that every morning at 5 a.m. she would hit the streets of Philadelphia to get her daily dose of exercise. As she ran she would be cheered on by homeless men she passed. A CNN.com article that tells her story recounts the question that arose in her heart: “Why am I running past these guys?” She recognized that while she was making progress in her daily life, these men were stuck in shelters. Then she made a connection: running had helped her deal with her father’s alcoholism.

Inspiration struck. And she took a few simple steps. She contacted the shelters to explain her idea. She found companies willing to donate running shoes and workout gear. And so began a running club she called *Back On My Feet*. Her willingness to answer a question that came to her heart is bringing change to homeless people in Philadelphia. Recently a second chapter opened in Baltimore. Now homeless people have an opportunity to join others in a morning run, improve their health, and generate movement towards restarting their lives.

Notice how the Universe knocks on your door. Viola Vaughn moved with her husband to Senegal for a relaxing retirement. Little did she know that a great job awaited her. Soon after their relocation Viola’s

husband died unexpectedly. To deal with her grief, she poured herself into homeschooling her grandchildren. One of her grandchildren's friends wasn't doing well in school and asked Viola to help her too. Viola spoke with the girl's parents. They said their daughter had already failed school once because she wasn't smart enough. Hearing their conclusion, Viola determined to help the girl. After all she reasoned, if this girl was smart enough to ask for help, she was smart enough to learn.

Viola began offering her young neighbor daily homework support. Within two weeks over 20 kids were showing up daily to get Viola's help. In 2001, Viola Vaughn converted bedrooms in her home into schoolrooms. Because they needed funds to keep the program running, Viola and the girls began baking cookies and selling them. Through this activity Viola saw the value of teaching the girls entrepreneurial skills. Now her educational program incorporates practical business components. The program includes a pastry shop, a catering business and sewing workshops so the girls can begin to make handmade dolls to sell around the world. Vaughn's organization, *10,000 Girls*, has transformed the lives of thousands of Senegalese girls since its inception. When the Universe knocked, Viola said "Yes!" As a result of her willingness, incredible changes have begun.

Find something that impassions you. Carmen Salva, 49-year-old teacher in Argentina, grew tired of the trash that littered the school grounds. Rather than complaining about it, she joined together with school children and started cleaning up. Every Saturday morning the group meets to collect trash. Over the years, efforts have expanded. Now other schools are following Salva's lead. This simple decision is having a powerful environmental impact. Whole communities are learning to take pride in the appearance of their school grounds and neighborhoods. And children are having fun as they learn that together, they can make amazing, visible improvements in their own communities.

What are your internal questions? How is the Universe "knocking on your door"? What stirs your passion? Identify something that you care about. If you like the game of futbol and know it well, why not use your time to teach young people how to play? If you enjoy reading and know someone who struggles with it, why not take time to help them? If you love children and know some in your community who suffer from a lack of support, why not find ways to offer them kindness?

What need do you see? What simple action can you take this week to begin to meet it? Be quiet and open to guidance. Then take a small first step. If you would like to hear more ideas on how to live your vision, please check out my gift of an inspirational video clip each Friday morning at 7:35 a.m. on Today on STV (on both Silverbird TV and DSTV.) If you can't catch them on TV, you can see them on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Just search by my name.

Acting heroically does not have to cost a fortune or consume all of your time and energy. When service comes from your heart and requires simple skills you already possess, it can feel like play rather than work.

### Food For Thought

"And then a hero comes along  
With the strength to carry on  
And you cast your fears aside  
And you know you can survive  
So when you feel like hope is gone  
Look inside you and be strong  
And you'll finally see the truth  
That a hero lies in you"

.....  
Excerpt from Mariah Carey's song *Hero*

© Patricia G. Omoqui 2008, All Rights Reserved

Patricia Omoqui is an internationally recognized inspirational speaker, life coach and writer. Patricia's mission in life is to inspire people to move beyond fear so they can reach their full potential.

To share your thoughts about this article, please email Patricia at [allure@patriciaomoqui.com](mailto:allure@patriciaomoqui.com) or visit her at her website: [www.patriciaomoqui.com](http://www.patriciaomoqui.com).