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## Conclusion

# **The New Entrepreneurship: A Heroic Path in a Time of Transition**

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When one reads this collection of articles there is a sense not of individual knights jousting with dragons for the hand of some fair maiden but rather of real heroes for today, people dealing with the challenges of a world in chaotic transition. These heroes and heroines are operating from a perspective of what they can do in service, competing yet moving more and more into cooperation and co-creation with others.

Because they have been on a personal quest, they know there are dragons out there. They know the difficulty and suffering that is part of this world. But they also have full faith in their inner creativity or spirit with its infinite intuition, will, joy, strength and, most importantly, compassion. They know, as we all must, that the joy and promise of life is taking these inner qualities and bringing them forth into the world to deal with challenges in a constant quest for the highest—for themselves and everyone around them.

What is key, though, is that these are only a handful of the millions around the world who have turned to entrepreneurship as a way of life, a heroic path. We are living in a time of what is perhaps the greatest global mind change in history—this is a paradigm shift

(change in fundamental assumptions) equaling and perhaps surpassing the triumph of Christianity in the 4th Century that moved the Western world from the classical to the medieval worlds, or the 17th Century Scientific Revolution that gave us the paradigm under which we are living today.

## **The Transition**

The signs of this current shift are all around us. Every one of the authors in this book refers to it in some way. The change is so revolutionary and discontinuous, almost moment to moment, that we can't depend on the structures of business and society that seemed to be so long-lasting in the past.

We have to move forward into something new, because it is apparent that the old paradigm isn't working. Technology and the scientific view have brought us abundance in many ways. But the side effects are alienation and despair, hunger, bitter conflict over what is seen as dwindling resources, and environmental degradation that challenges our very existence. These are forcing us to look for new ways of being and working together that are represented by this book.

I'm reminded of Layton Fisher of Imperial Oil, who was speaking at a symposium of Bill Veltrop's International Center for Organization Design. He pointed out that if you represented all the knowledge that had been amassed from the beginning of time to the year 1980 by one book, you would have to have two such books in 1987, four such books in 1994 and so on. In fact, recent estimates have it that the mass of cumulative knowledge now is doubling at twice that rate, every three and a half years.

"Trying to manage your life or your organization in a world changing that rapidly is like dancing with a gorilla," said Fisher. "You don't stop when you get tired. You stop when the gorilla gets tired."

There is no sign that the gorilla is going to stop. As we have tried to deal with this kind of world, we have seen that momentary victories change into difficulties and new challenges. Business has flirted with solutions such as management by objectives, zero-based budgeting, total quality management, empowerment, self-direction

teams, reengineering, and on and on. Although all of these have some value, none is the Holy Grail.

In fact, within the old ways of business, an intense application of any one of them can lead to great difficulty. As one visitor to our New Paradigm Business course at Stanford said, “If you were doing TQM in the seventies, you were a pioneer. If you were doing it in the eighties, it was probably a good idea. But TQM in the nineties is corporate suicide.”

The answer to getting through this time is not to be found in a technique. It is to be found in what this book represents—taking a path with heart, operating from your deepest inner resources in concert with others, seeing a vision and staying with it, dealing with difficulties as challenges but always following the quest in a bigger way.

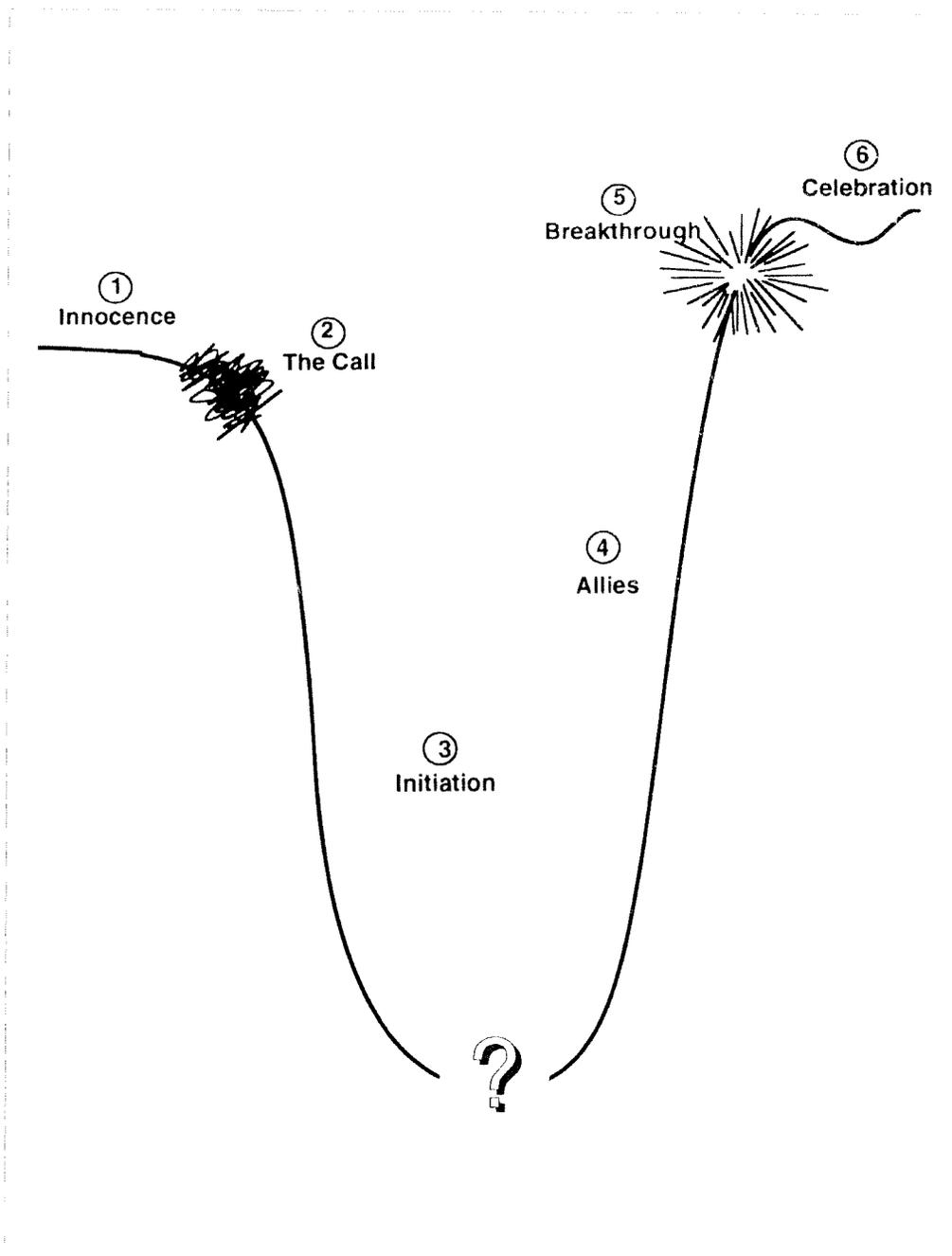
## The Hero’s Journey

In short, the answer to getting through this time of transition with exultation rather than misery is to live the life of a hero. But it is to live the heroic life in the new entrepreneurial way, as represented by the authors in this book, bringing out all aspects of your resources—the feminine as well as the masculine, the cooperative as well as the competitive, the creative as well as the destructive, the individual as well as the organizational, the passion as well as the peace, the unstructured as well as the structured—all in the service of something higher, something more functional in today’s world of chaos.

In the Introduction of this book, John Renesch refers to probably the most important part of the hero’s journey—the “calling.” He was referring to entrepreneurship as a vocation, as an individual’s meant-to-be, the purpose of their life.

In *The Path of the Everyday Hero*, Lorna Catford and I explore the call in a lifetime way as Renesch does and also look at the process of the hero’s journey that we all go through over and over again in our lives. Our depiction is based on myths and stories that span the times and cultures of the globe. Myth is beyond paradigm. The stories of the hero have enriched people in the classical, medieval and modern scientific periods. They will give us sustenance in this

period of transition now because, like the lives of the entrepreneurs in this book, they show what is possible, even if the adversary isn't really a physical threat but our own attitudes and outdated assumptions.



In the heroic myth, the hero goes through tests but always comes out with a breakthrough and celebration in the end. As shown on the previous page, Catford and I represent this repeating journey with a U-curve. At first the hero is in Innocence, a period that is a respite following his or her previous adventure. This is shown by a flat portion on the left side of the figure.

Then there is the Call. Once it is accepted, the journey goes downhill into a Pit, the bottom of the U-curve. Most people, companies and nations try to resist the Call, but their lives are empty and useless until they take it. As Renesch implies in the Introduction, this is not the case with the entrepreneur and the potential entrepreneur in all of us. The entrepreneurial spirit leads to taking the Call and going down into the Pit. This is precisely the kind of spirit that is needed now.

Interesting things happen in the Pit, the bulk of the hero's journey. First, there is Initiation, in which the hero receives a full understanding of the challenge through a difficult situation. Second, there are Allies, people and events that help the hero along. When Paul Hwoschinsky writes about non-financial assets, he is talking about the allies that we all have but often don't recognize. Other entrepreneurs in this book talk about the chance events in their journeys that carried them forward. These too are the Allies.

Finally, due to the experience and validation of Initiation and the help of Allies, the hero achieves a Breakthrough, and our curve moves up to an higher plateau than the Innocence one. And this plateau, on the right side of our diagram, represents Celebration.

Celebration is inevitable, followed by Innocence and the chance to start the cycle all over again. Entrepreneurs, the kind that are needed for the present times, understand this. The entrepreneurial stance to the hero's journey has a constancy about it. Failure is used as a springboard for further advances. There is an understanding of the cyclical nature of the journey:

One entrepreneur told me that he loved the low periods. He likened those times to low tide when you can actually see all the underwater dangers. He said that sailing along at high tide, you don't really know what is going on. This kind of precise observation is exactly what is needed now.

## **Giving Birth**

The same man talked about being in the delivery room with his wife for the birth of their first child. He said he began to realize that giving birth to a business had a lot of similarities to giving birth to a baby. There was contraction and then relaxation and contraction and relaxation—all moving toward birth and the continuing of the process in a different way following that. Again, another hero's journey that entrepreneurs understand so well.

This analogy of the birth process and the process we must now go through in this world should not be taken lightly. You read over and over again in this book how this journey's dramatic course energizes and fulfills entrepreneurs, even as it pushes them on to deal with new levels.

This is strikingly similar to actual experiences of the birth process that have been discovered by the psychotherapist Stanislav Grof. He first used psychoactive substances and later non-drug therapeutic methods to catalyze unconscious memories of their own births in thousands of subjects in Europe and America. His highly reliable and effective findings bear a resemblance to not only the entrepreneurial experience but also the kind of change that we all are going through in this time of transition.

Like the hero's journey, Grof's sequence is painful and causes much discomfort along the way, but it ends in the sort of exultation that can give people a way to move forward with greater humanity.

The first stage of the perinatal (surrounding birth) sequence that Grof found is a state of undifferentiated unity, not unlike the Innocence part of the hero's journey. Then, in the second stage, just as in the Call and Initiation stages, there is constriction, conflict, and contradiction, with an accompanying sense of separation, duality, and alienation. The third stage, somewhat comparable to being in the Pit, is like a death. Subjects talk about it as complete annihilation. Then there is a final stage, like the Allies and Breakthrough steps, that writer Richard Tarnas describes in *The Passion of the Western Mind* as "an unexpected redemptive liberation that both overcame and fulfilled the intervening alienated state—restoring the initial unity but on a new level that preserved the achievement of the whole trajectory."

## A Different Kind of Entrepreneur

It is tempting to presume that active entrepreneurs have some better memory of this birth process and are acting it out in a way that most people avoid. Whether or not this is true, it is clear that the kind of entrepreneurship represented in this book is different from the stereotype.

One difference comes from an uncommon level of compassion. The kind of compassion I am talking about here is not the mushiness of “do gooders.” It is loving kindness, first for oneself and then for others. It is a deep faith in one’s own creativity and goodness and, as a result of that, an ability to see it in others. Over and over in this book you see how the entrepreneurs’ own breakthroughs come from and are given as gifts to others.

This connection to others is related to the second difference in the new entrepreneurs, a tendency to move beyond even cooperation to a state that Terry Mollner calls Self-Conscious Consensus or Harmony. In this state, each individual in the group makes decisions that are good for both the individual and the group. Over and over again in this book you read about individuals, contrary to the entrepreneurial stereotype, making moves that benefit others—and that then come back to enrich them a thousand fold. This is the kind of hero that we all need to be in the current times. Entrepreneurs are leading the way in showing that it works.

There is also a new way that the entrepreneurs in this book move and work with others. I remember when I asked Herman Maynard, then a DuPont intrapreneur and now an entrepreneur himself, at a World Business Academy meeting what it would be like if an organization was composed completely of enlightened individuals (having in the back of my mind that one overarching objective for new paradigm business would be the enlightenment of all those within it). I was astounded when he said, “We’ve talked about that a lot. We think that it would be a situation in which there wouldn’t be a need for meetings or even technological communication as much as we see today. People would begin to work together and move together and know what to do without even having to verbally express their needs or their intended actions.”

This stimulated me to think about how I had heard of the

Guarneri String Quartet practicing with each other without talking, of basketball great Bill Russell having certain games with the Boston Celtics in which he moved effortlessly with both his teammates and his competitors in the "zone." I also remember the times when I saw dance companies perform incredible individual and group feats of great beauty. This is the sense of the possible nature of work, leadership and organization that I get from reading this book.

Earlier I said that I sensed that these authors know that the present challenge is in taking the inner qualities and applying them in the world of change. One ancient tradition says that there are three obstacles to such a task— a feeling of smallness and inadequacy, a feeling that there are differences and separation between individuals, and a false sense of doing or attachment to the outcomes of actions.

What I have learned from this book is that there are some individuals, perhaps many, who go beyond these obstacles. Without ego, they recognize their own inherent greatness and manifest it in action. They see this same value in others to the point that they feel connected, trusting, and responsible. They act without attachment to the results, but rather for the joy and contribution that action gives.

This is the new "heroism" —the new entrepreneurship that we all need to get us through the present transition.