

mountaintop we felt our souls expanding and prayed that some part of this newfound largesse of spirit would linger forever.

### **You Can Make Your Own Adventures**

We must all leap wholeheartedly into everyday life; we must commit ourselves daily to move in the direction of our dreams. If we are to make measurable progress we must define ourselves in deeds, not just words. The human doing creates the human being. With equal parts audacity and uncertainty, we take the plunge. Surprised at the

sound of our voice saying yes, the sight of our hand raising up to volunteer, we find ourselves stretching toward what we hoped we might become.

Although I won't be recommending anything that's truly dangerous, you should be aware that all true adventure entails some degree of risk. Here are three leaps you can try:

#### **1. Get Off to a Fast Start.**

You'll quickly learn how your inner life can be altered by a simple change in your external circumstances. Spend a day fasting from something you usually

## **Go for Maximum Aliveness**

Joseph Campbell, the scholar of mythology and philosophy, came to the conclusion that maximum aliveness is the ultimate prize. "People say we are seeking a meaning for life. I don't think that is really what we are seeking. What we are seeking is to feel the rapture of being alive."

In his book *The Hero of a Thousand Faces*, Campbell offers us a schematic of the archetypal hero's journey—a topographical map of the elevated terrain of the human spirit. This map is, far and away, the best navigational chart I can recommend for the trip. And Joseph Campbell is among the finest guides I have encountered. An archaeologist of the human story, Campbell has traveled the world sifting through our species' subconscious and digging up a template that transcends time and culture. His work provides a blueprint by which to construct a meaningful life and a resource to consult when the trek toward a goal seems to be getting off course. It is the map that all adventurers of the spirit will do well to keep on hand for easy and frequent reference on the circuitous path ahead.

According to Campbell, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

—Jeff Salz

depend on to get you through the day. The object of your fast can be a particular food or beverage, cigarettes, happy hour, television, even your car. The art of transforming hardship into a successful adventure requires learning to do without in order to go within. Occasional fasting in the midst of your everyday life keeps your inner resourcefulness honed and available for access. Make sure you fast from something you will notice, but don't turn it into self-punishment. Watch yourself get edgy from not doing what you usually do, but don't give in to the urge to return to normal. To be on the edge is to be on the frontier of adventure.

#### **2. Live for Forty-Eight on Fifty.**

This advanced version of the preceding exercise is guaranteed to jolt you out of your ordinary ways of getting through the day. Spend forty-eight hours away from home on fifty cents or less. Though this was the template for my earliest adventure, I wouldn't recommend it for other kids. As a teenager, I wanted to see what the world looked like outside suburbia. I slept on benches in Central Park and Penn Station until cops woke me with a night-

stick in the ribs. A few years later, I carried out a sort of dry run for all the adventures that would follow in my life: I spent three nights living in the Disneyland jungle at Anaheim, eating power bars. What I learned from these and other adventures is that the less you spend, the more you experience. The safety cushion we call money often insulates us from a more intense and invigorating reality.

#### **3. Become an Alien.**

Adventure is a sink-or-swim initiation; your learning curve accelerates dramatically as soon as you take the plunge. Nothing can replace uncertainty as a catalyst for growth. To create initiations in your professional life, go undercover in another department or even another company than your own. Whenever you can find a way to leap at work, expanding beyond your usual pigeonhole or accustomed sphere of expertise, your professional world grows larger. When you leap into new environments you always come out ahead, even if you don't know where you're headed.

Remember that for all of us, the initial step is always a leap of faith.

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