

# Hero Training

Identifying effective ways to teach and spread heroic acts in people's everyday life around the globe

The Hero Expert-Panel about:

1. What to teach
2. Questions for the students  
(Reflection)
3. Defining questions for the trainer
4. For a researcher
5. Where and how to spread the word?
6. Putting theory into practice
7. Next step
8. Introducing the Expert-Panel

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## Content

Dear Expert-Panel, .....	1
What to teach (Mental preparation for heroic acts).....	3
1 MindSet, Mindfulness & Zivilcourage.....	3
2 Examples of the role that heroism plays in daily life .....	4
Questions for the students (Reflection) .....	4
3 Can you identify your guiding/defining principles? .....	4
4 What do you care about, and how do we know?.....	4
5 Who do you want to be? (Self- deception and situational awareness).....	5
6 In a situation, ask: "Would you tell your children?" .....	5
7 What barriers prevent you from taking heroic action in your life? .....	5
8 Can you describe a situation in your everyday life where you wished a hero would step in and take action? .....	6
9 How can you be a hero yourself? .....	6
10 Why should I be an everyday hero? .....	7
11 How can you make a change? .....	7
Defining questions for the trainer.....	8
12 What constitutes heroic action in the 21st century?.....	8
13 How do we define "heroism"?.....	9
14 Can heroism be taught to youth or is it a special trait? .....	9
For a researcher .....	10
15 What characteristics (personality, lifestyle, training, etc.) are most often found in people who carry out heroic acts?.....	10
16 Foster inclusive attitudes towards others .....	10
Where and how to spread the word? .....	11
17 Training/development/integral programs .....	11
18 Education.....	12
19 How can we combat meaninglessness, ignorance, fear of change and apathy?.....	12
Putting theory into practice .....	13
20 How can we support heroes to remain heroes? .....	13
21 How to avoid learning about heroic actions as an abstract concept? .....	14
22 How do we reach out to people? .....	14
Next step.....	15

23	Education and media! .....	15
24	Build an organization with business model! .....	15
25	Build a comprehensive program! .....	15
26	Connect with young people! .....	16
27	Social media! .....	16
28	International SuperHeroDay! .....	16
29	Social changes! .....	16
30	Create curriculum! .....	17
31	Create a community! .....	17
32	Inspire in media! .....	18
33	Locate educators and “Hero Town USA”! .....	19
34	Conferences, cooperation, schools, workplaces, social media! .....	19
35	Online forum! .....	20
36	Research: identify characteristics! .....	20
	Introducing the Expert-Panel .....	21

Dear Expert-Panel,

Here is all the material from the questionnaire. Some of you have chosen to be anonymous, and some have sent me unpublicized material. This is of course not included here.

I am doing a Master in Leadership here in Norway, and instead of going by the book, I decided to go by me. I wanted to write my masters assignment about my most naïve, secret wish for as long as I can remember: how can we spread good, altruistic, and heroic acts around this globe. How do I do that? Well, as a humble start, I started nesting in people who are asking them selves the same question, and I luckily found you. So I asked you:

**The aim is to identify effective ways to teach and spread heroic acts in people's everyday life around the globe.**

- 1) What do you consider as the most important question to ask in this matter?
- 2) What would be your answer to your question?

It was important to me to get different interpretations on my questions, as I wanted as many different perspectives as possible. Then I made a map over all your answers, that you got a chance to edit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and last question round. I was trying to make a map over important topics to have in mind when the day comes that I go out in the world to teach and spread good, heroic deeds. I see this map as a start and far from done. It will grow bigger together with my ideas and knowledge about how to spread heroism. Maybe you would like to join in?

**Let's work together.**

The last question I asked you was about the next important step in order to effectively teach and spread heroic acts in people's everyday life around the globe. I was excited to see so many likewise answers. Seems to me that we are up to something, and we should really work together. Matt Langdon is working on a hero-list for researchers and teachers. This could be the beginning of an online hero- community. Dana also gave me this great idea of making the

map interactive. That is no problem – so for those of you interested in being a part of the future of this heroic-map: please let me know, and I will gladly add you in. You will then be able to edit, and create even more branches to share. It is easy to keep track of the changes that have been done. So next step for you to join a worldwide hero-community for researchers and teachers is to stay tuned, and I will add you into Matts list as well as the coggle.it map. If you are not interested in being a part of taking the next step for global heroism, please let me know, and I will of course put you off the list. No problem!

### **Thanks for now**

I hope you enjoy your answers. And I certainly hope to be in touch. I know there are coming up interesting conferences this year – maybe we'll meet then?

Love from

Hanne Viken

And, oh yes: thank you once again. So much! It has been a true pleasure a great honor to work with you.

Thank you!

# What to teach (Mental preparation for heroic acts)

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## 1 MindSet, Mindfulness & Zivilcourage

By Michelle Werning

The first is that we need to teach (teachers, students, parents, companies, governments, aid-organizations) about MindSet - how the brain works and how we can instill a growth MindSet in our children, ourselves, our communities, etc. A growth mindset means that most things are possible if we are willing to work for them and that this work is rewarding. Children especially benefit from being taught and raised this way because they grow up with the idea that learning, determination, and hard work are rewarding and motivating.

The second step is Mindfulness - as with MindSet, learning how the brain works is an integral part of Mindfulness. I use six steps from the MindUp Mindfulness program - Perspective taking, Choosing optimism, Appreciating happy experiences, Expressing gratitude, Performing acts of kindness, and Taking mindful action in the world. Once we know how the brain works, we know that doing these 6 things regularly builds neurons in the brain, rewards our brains and bodies (also of those we're helping) with happy/healthy hormones, AND most importantly, trains us for taking heroic action. People who grow up in small communities or work in areas where they regularly help others tend to respond better in situations calling for heroic action. Which leads us to the third part of the program and the next step in my answer.

Heroic action (Zivilcourage in German) is the third component. The same knowledge about the brain tells us what happens to our bodies when we encounter stress situations, emergencies, questionable business practices, etc. Learning about the obstacles associated with bystander behavior (the reasons we don't intervene, why we enjoy having power over others, why it's often so hard to do what we know is right when the crowd is doing something else, etc.) and then learning to ways to overcome these obstacles is an essential part of «heroic training».

It is my personal belief that programs that promote helping others should be an integral part of our education, government, and corporate systems.

## 2 Examples of the role that heroism plays in daily life

By Shawn Furey

Q: I think that this question and answer illustrates to an audience the role that heroism plays in daily life. What does Martin Luther King Jr, Robin Hood, and Katniss Everdeen have in common?

A: They all acted on purpose to transform situational conditions so that people could experience basic [universal] human psychological need-satisfaction.

Martin Luther King Jr facilitated the experience of 'equality of value' for African-Americans during the civil rights movement.

Robin Hood facilitated the experience of 'sufficiency' or access to resources for the poor in his community by stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

Katniss Everdeen facilitated the experience of 'hope' for the despairing people of District 13 when they watched her overcome adversity on a reality TV show in 'The Hunger Games.'

## Questions for the students (Reflection)

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### 3 Can you identify your guiding/defining principles?

By Anonymous

For me, the most important question to ask others with regard to spreading heroic acts in people's everyday lives is what they regard as the most important principles or beliefs they hold. In asking people, especially students, to think about the guiding or defining principles of their lives, my sense is that we encourage them to consider what are the things for which they'd be willing to risk or sacrifice, especially on behalf of others.

### 4 What do you care about, and how do we know?

By Chad Ellsworth

Q: What do you care about, and how do we know? (In other words, what are you ready to give yourself for, and what is the evidence of that commitment?)

A: Each of us has our own journey, story, and struggle, but the depth of the commitment to that struggle is the seed of heroism.

## 5 Who do you want to be? (Self- deception and situational awareness)

By Cathrine Moestue

Q: How well do you know your self? How well do you understand how different situations affect you? Who do you want to be?

A: Knowledge about self-deception to normalize is essential for heroism (courage). Knowledge about how the situation affects our choices, are important mental preparations. A heroic act is often based on a mental preparation or experiences, in that way we act without much thinking when we find our selves in a situation.

Having faith in our selves is often a buffer for influence from unethical leaders. You believe that what you do is the right thing. It takes courage. Also, having faith in your self makes you less susceptible for unethical leaders. It takes a lot of practice and some great role models to develop your personal courage. (Translated from Norwegian)

## 6 In a situation, ask: "Would you tell your children?"

By Dr. Barry Schwartz

To me, the most important question to ask of oneself in matters of everyday heroism (and the display of other everyday virtues) is this: "would you tell your children?" I think that if, in general, people acted with that question in mind, the world would be a much better place.

## 7 What barriers prevent you from taking heroic action in your life?

By Dr. Elaine L. Kinsella

Q: What barriers prevent you from taking heroic action in your life?

A: In physical-risk settings, I would tend to think there are other people who are stronger, better qualified (e.g., medical intervention, water safety), or more experienced. These thoughts would most likely lead to inaction and promote bystander effect. In non-physical risk

settings, after many years of schooling in a system that promotes conformity and rule-adherence, I may occasionally lack confidence in my own judgement and choose not to speak out against a moral or ethical issue to avoid disrupting the status quo. As a child, I acted and spoke out immediately about matters I was concerned about, without imagining the potential risk or cost to me or my family.

8 Can you describe a situation in your everyday life where you wished a hero would step in and take action?

By Dr. Fathali M. Moghaddam

Q: Can you describe a situation in your everyday life when you wished a hero would step in and take action.

A: The situation is schools that fail and result in difficult lives for many minorities.

9 How can you be a hero yourself?

By Nathalie Van Gerrenvink

Q: 1. What is a hero?

2. What does being a hero mean to you personally?

3. Why are heroes important?

4. How can we create more heroes?

5. How can you become a hero yourself?

6. How can you inspire other to be heroes?

A: 1. “Those who make sacrifices for others, come to their aid, defend a moral cause, show moral courage in their heroic actions on behalf of others – aware of potential risks and costs.” (Zimbardo)

2. Somebody who is in touch with their humanity and lives true to their beliefs and values. Someone who is willing to take risks, if it means staying true to their morality and humanity.

3. Heroes are what make us human. If we lose touch with that, then what are we doing here?

4. By thinking about heroism, by talking about heroism, by inspiring people to become heroes themselves.

5. Thinking about your own values and really exploring the things that are important to you, share your thoughts and feelings with others and live true to your findings.

6. Show them how to do it. Teach them by example. Teach them how to be a hero by being a hero yourself.

## 10 Why should I be an everyday hero?

By Anne Berggraf

Q: The most important question to ask is to oneself, Why is it important to engage in other peoples lives, to care. Why should I be a everyday hero?

A: Important to reflect upon that question. If you know how you would want yourself to act it is easier to do the right thing when the moment arises. Because we are all human. We are dependent on each other. Reflecting helps defining our own thoughts on justice and moral, and helps us to become better persons. By strengthen others dignity with action you feel more dignified yourself. This also strengthen you self and gives confidence.

## 11 How can you make a change?

By Jensen Kile

I am generally stuck between interpreting your question #1 as "What do I consider the most important question for a person to ask others who want to teach and spread heroic acts?" or interpreting it as "What should we as heroic teachers be asking ourselves to make sure we are effectively teaching and spreading heroic acts?"

(see also "How can we support heroes to remain heroes?")

Answer to interpretation #1

In my experience encouraging others to take heroic actions, I have found that it is best to ask them "What is a need (or something wrong or broken) in the world around you, and what

small step can you take to begin changing it?" In my opinion the best place for someone to start. Essentially, it is asking them to identify an area of need and identify a small and simple step they can take to address that need.

I believe that upon seeing a need, it is too easy for someone to become overwhelmed and feel like nothing they will do will make a difference, or that there is nothing they can do. So often people remain as bystanders instead of taking heroic action. However, by asking them this question in advance, they will be more aware of areas of need and more prepared to take action when the time comes, because they have already primed themselves by practicing taking action in that scenario in their mind.

In response to your question 2 from this interpretation: I would say for that me personally I find economic inequality to be an area of need needing heroic action, and I can (and have) begun taking a small step towards changing it by becoming active in my neighborhood association to help steer the recent gentrification of my neighborhood to make sure the changes are benefitting the poor currently living in my community.

## Defining questions for the trainer

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### 12 What constitutes heroic action in the 21st century?

By Dr. Dana Klisanin

Q: The most important question to identify in regard to teaching and spreading heroic acts in peoples everyday lives is to ask and arrive at consensus in so far as what constitutes heroic action in the 21st century. To explain: We live in a complex, global society where heroism means many things to many people. For example, the recent murders in Paris were carried out by individuals who will be considered "heroes" to Islamic extremists. While for the rest of the world, they are terroistic acts by misguided individuals. To promote "everyday heroism" we must have a definition that is broad enough to encompass a wide array of "heroic acts".

A: I believe we should define heroic action or heroic acts in terms of those actions that further the accomplishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Earth Charter. The UDHR states that actions to achieve the UDHR should not violate the articles

within the Declaration itself. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

### 13 How do we define "heroism"?

By Ellie Jacques

Q: To me, before you can even begin to teach HOW to be a hero, it is most critical to make sure that individuals understand what a hero IS.

A: There are many theories as to what makes a hero whether you are asking me, Dr. Z, or Matt Langdon. But an individual must have some sort of working definition in order to pursue a heroic lifestyle. For instance, some theories on what a hero is:

Matt Langdon: a hero is a person who takes a risk for the good of others (more or less)

Dr. Z: a hero is a person who is self and situationally aware, who does little good things every day, etc....

Chris McDougall (author of "Born to Run" and "Natural Born Heroes") believes a hero is a person who cultivates their STRENGTH, COMPASSION, and SKILL specifically for the moment when they are called to be a hero

Me: I believe that heroism is in the eye of the "victim" or the "saved" person. I do believe that heroes must incur some type of risk or sacrifice whether that is physical, social, or a resource risk. I would not necessarily say you are a hero if you give a homeless man a one hundred dollar bill (that is more altruism) but I would say that if you change that homeless man's life with that money and he considers you a hero, then by all means you are one. I believe in varying degrees of heroism whether you are a "positive deviant" who does little good things every day, a "hero in training" who practices self and situational awareness, compassion, mindfulness, and skill....or you can be a HERO, having committed a heroic act and incurred some risk or sacrifice.

This is also VERY important to discuss because often children will think that heroes are superheroes or celebrities!!!!

### 14 Can heroism be taught to youth or is it a special trait?

By Dr. Philip Zimbardo

Q: Do you think heroism can be taught to youth or is it a special trait that only some people possess?

A: Heroism is a universal aspect of human nature that can be taught to almost anyone, so it is totally democratic, not selective of a privileged few, to educate youth how to take wise and effective actions in emergency situations, aware of risks and obstacles, but still to behave with moral courage.

## For a researcher

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15 What characteristics (personality, lifestyle, training, etc.) are most often found in people who carry out heroic acts?

By Elizabeth Svoboda

Q: I think the most important question to ask is what characteristics (personality, lifestyle, training, etc.) are most often found in people who carry out heroic acts. Then we can think of ways to replicate these predisposing factors in the lives of others. For instance, if heroes are more likely to have a growth mindset than a fixed mindset, you could come up with training courses to foster a growth mindset in children and adults (which I believe Phil Zimbardo's team has started to work on).

A: From previous research, we know that people who are willing to extend themselves to help others have a very inclusive mental perspective. In other words, they do not see the world in terms of "us vs. them" or "worthy vs. unworthy"; instead, they basically see all people on earth as members of an extended human family, and thus equally valuable and worthy of help. (See political scientist Kristen Monroe's study on rescuers, bystanders, and perpetrators during the Holocaust.) Therefore, I would say any effective heroic education program should take steps to foster this inclusive attitude in students.

16 Foster inclusive attitudes towards others

Comment by Olivia Efthimiou, 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

My only immediate comment is that the branch "For a researcher (to find out more)" needs further developing compared to the other branches of action (and I cannot speak for these as they lie beyond my area of expertise). I believe that providing a bridge between the research

and heroic activism community will be critical. This has been traditionally one of the main problems of academia – that knowledge is way too often debated in its halls in lavish words that are difficult for the everyday citizen to grasp. And that is especially an issue with the overarching aim of fostering and spreading everyday heroism. Therefore, I suggest that this branch incorporates a clause on “research strategies” for every researcher, both established and emerging, to: advocate greater funding for the emerging field of heroism science; be abreast of university and government policies driving the funding; be actively aware of emerging heroism science research from various fields and their application to the community, and therefore encourage (and implement through organised workshops) an interdisciplinary mindset in the field of heroism science by considering collaboration avenues with projects from disparate fields ; and every researcher, no matter how theoretical their work, to actively consider how their work can be implemented in the broader community with clear applied strategies. I intend to outline and contextualise this proposal further in my upcoming doctoral publications.

## Where and how to spread the word?

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### 17 Training/development/integral programs

By Elisabeth Heiner

By providing support to parents that allows them to effectively nurture and attach to their children while in infancy.

This would include moral development classes during pregnancy, financial assistance, and extended paid leave for at least one parent/primary caregiver until the child reaches at least three years of age.

After that, moral development training should be provided to the child in school. Implementing programs that increase the child's feelings of self-esteem, secure attachment, and internal levels of courage could assist in this process. I also believe that heavily limiting screen time for children, as well as for adults while they are in their children's company (or in the company of another adult for that matter), is imperative to the survival of empathy in all societies.

## 18 Education

By Dr. Scott T. Allison

Your goal is to teach and spread heroic actions, and I can think of no better goal to make the world a better place. Some questions to ask are:

Q: 1. How can people be made to feel individually responsible for helping others?

2. How can we combat bystander apathy?

3. How can we help children believe at a young age that they can be heroes?

A: Education is the key. We need to begin working with young children in schools to empower them to become heroes. We need to teach children to feel more empathy for others. We can teach them to identify situations where they can make a positive difference to others.

## 19 How can we combat meaninglessness, ignorance, fear of change and apathy?

By Olivia Efthimiou

Q: How can we combat meaninglessness, ignorance, fear of change, apathy and a higher interest in materialism and self-serving pursuits, and replace their prevalence with higher intelligence (emotional and physical), compassion and the pursuit of self-fulfilment - and therefore a heroic mode of being - in the 21st century?

A: Human civilisations go through natural cycles of evolution. They come and go. But the one constant has been heroism. I think there are some key ways that we can begin to reverse and prevent the road to failure and catastrophe the world appears to be slowly heading towards:

a. Develop biopsychosocial resilience (one of my key definitions of heroism) in the face of personal and social crisis.

b. Greater emphasis on interdisciplinary and creative thinking.

c. Changing the education system and the curriculum in schools. Teaching ideas, philosophy

and advanced spirituality to children from a young age (along with science and other subjects). The hero's journey, history of heroism and analysis of stories is a must focus of this new curriculum.

d. Changing the social system and social structures. The existing social system is inadequate with the focus on neoliberalism, capitalism and consumerism. Unless this is replaced with a system that champions spiritual wealth and advanced thinking, selfishness and ignorance will stand in the way of effective change. Education is the key.

e. Advocate for research funding into heroism. Establishment of a global heroism research centre that aims at passing on innovative research findings and applications to the public. This is research driven for the greater good, not egos or publication quota.

f. Establishing scholarship funds for young emerging students to encourage pursuit of the study of heroism.

g. Uncover corruption at the highest levels of government, and poverty that fuels inequality and racism. These are responsible for wars, and fuelling violence and hatred, and therefore great obstacles to heroism and the development of a heroic consciousness.

h. Reconsideration of the place of organised religion in society - merging of science and spirituality in new forms of religious freedom and conceptions of the cosmos.

i. Proving that heroism is part of our genetic makeup and the basis of evolution.

j. Use of the media (especially television and social media and internet) to promote a deep understanding of heroism, its processes, purpose and impacts in our society. Collective awareness raising through documentaries, blogs and sharing of positive news stories that demonstrate the power of just one person to change the world, our thoughts and actions.

## Putting theory into practice

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20 How can we support heroes to remain heroes?

By Jensen Kile

Q: What should we as heroic teachers be asking ourselves to make sure we are effectively teaching and spreading heroic acts?"

I believe that we as heroic teachers should be asking ourselves "How can we support heroes to

remain heroes?" I feel that this is the most important question to ask because it is easy to get an auditorium of students to think heroically for a week, but it is much more challenging to support their development as heroes so that they continue to take heroic actions and network with other heroes long after the "inspirational moment" is gone.

A: I would say one of the best ways that I have seen life-long heroes thrive is that they build mentor networks with other people taking heroic action. Life-long heroes find someone further along on the heroic journey to give them guidance and encouragement, while simultaneously taking newer heroes under their wings. (Examples of this can be found in the civil rights movement and women's suffrage movements in the United States, as well as other social change movements around the world). So we as heroic teachers/enablers should be making sure we leave behind a support network and not only inspirational ideas.

## 21 How to avoid learning about heroic actions as an abstract concept?

By Kevin Kelly

Q: How do you help people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds to see themselves potentially performing everyday heroic acts, rather than learning about heroic actions as an abstract concept?

A: Provide concrete strategies to put the social psychology concepts into practice. Engage participants through diverse case stories that showcase people like them performing heroic actions. Involve participants in role play that includes the participants generating and responding to scenarios they have seen or experienced themselves. Discuss and address barriers to heroic action that participants identify having recognized as a personal challenge.

## 22 How do we reach out to people?

By Matt Langdon

Q: The big question I'm tackling now is how to actually reach people around the world.

A: My answer is to create a nonprofit whose mission is to spread the material/training for free.

## Next step

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### 23 Education and media!

By Nathalie Van Gerrenvink

I think spreading heroic acts can be seen as a result out of a slow and gradual change in society. Changing the way we view ourselves, our roles and our heroes; this will help create long lasting sustainable change. Education and media are good starts to get this chain reaction going. Educating children in a way that they are being prepared for life, and not just a career. Teaching them how to take care of themselves emotionally and in doing so, also being compassionate and caring for their surroundings. Media could facilitate world views by changing we portray our heroes in films. But also how we portray women, or people from a different race (I think there is a lot of implicit sexism and racism transferred through our movies in the minds of young viewers).

Long story short, in my opinion education and media have a primary role in spreading long lasting sustainable change in world views and thus creating more heroes.

### 24 Build an organization with business model!

By Gábor Orosz

We need no only volunteers but paid employees, it would be great to build an organization with business model, structure, and keeping volunteers motivated. In this way teaching and spreading heroic ideas can be the most effective.

### 25 Build a comprehensive program!

By Chad Ellsworth

I think there is a significant opportunity to build a comprehensive program that leverages all of the components that we have collectively identified. Each of us has our own area of specialty expertise, but each of our programs is not as strong in some area as others' programs

are in those areas. Also, as I said above, I think we need this training to be experience-based and practical. People are more likely to do what they've done before, compared to what they have heard or said before.

## 26 Connect with young people!

By Anonymous

My sense is that the single most important step in teaching and spreading the idea of heroism is finding ways to connect young people to the idea of training for heroism. Rather than assuming that people will act heroically, my sense is that people need to learn about the building blocks of heroism and working on putting those in play in every day life.

## 27 Social media!

By Dr. Dana Klisanin

I think the next important step is to spread everyday heroism throughout social media (and the Internet) because there is currently a great deficit in this area.

## 28 International SuperHeroDay!

By Anne Berggraf

The challenge is to sell a non-commercial message. It costs money, an other than the economical benefits for the society, is it hard to finance. Campagins with messages in posters, papers, Internet, can be an option. One can make one yearly day with focus on this – the SuperHeroDay, get sponsors and tell all the good stories.

## 29 Social changes!

By Elisabeth Heiner

I believe the next important step that would have the most immediate effect on teaching and spreading heroic acts around the globe would be to implement moral teachings such as Matt

Langdon's Hero Construction Company training into classroom curriculum. My dissertation research showed an increase in children's levels of courage after watching his program, and these increases were sustained 30 days later. As courage is an element necessary to propel one into heroic action, these findings suggest this type of training has the potential to increase levels of courage in the population at large, thus increasing the number of heroic acts.

For the long term, I believe there are fundamental issues, at least in American culture, that need to be addressed in order to increase heroic acts nationwide. Specifically, I believe the focus on self-reliance and monetary achievement in our society is destructive to feelings of attachment and empathy within the population, making it less likely for heroic action to occur.

Two issues I believe need to be addressed are: 1) longer maternity leave for families so they do not have to put their infants in day care immediately and 2) social awareness around cell-phone and electronic device use. I believe longer maternity leave is needed for children to feel securely attached, leading to increased likelihood of feeling empathy for others in the future, and a greater chance for heroic behavior. This change would have to be done through legislation. I believe social education around cell-phone and electronic device use needs to happen immediately in order to curb the negative effects their usage can have on empathy within our society.

## 30 Create curriculum!

By Matt Langdon

I think we (the experts) need to quickly agree on a definition, decide once and for all if it's teachable, and then create a basic curriculum to test.

## 31 Create a community!

By Kevin Kelly

At my last business, Wiley Learning Institute, we created a cycle diagram that captured our philosophy and also worked as a mantra--"Learn it. Apply it. Share it." This initiative should

create a similar cycle to emphasize the importance of each phase of the process.

Why? Learning is just the first step. You must put what you learn into practice and after that you must share with others what you did--to inspire others and show how you made changes based on context.

Create a community of heroes

Why? So people have a place to share training ideas as well as examples of heroic actions from around the world.

Work with like-minded groups to improve hero curriculum and get it into more schools and organizations where students can begin their heroic journeys.

Why? We can reach and teach more people if we work together--sharing ideas, opportunities, and more. Also, international collaboration is attractive to many funders, who might provide grants to grow the effort.

## 32 Inspire in media!

By Olivia Efthimiou

I think building greater solidarity between heroism science researchers is required. Establishing an annual conference on heroism that is research focused and publishes its conference proceedings, and uploads them on YouTube would be a critical strategy to foster interdisciplinarity and the cross-fertilisation of ideas. This will also be a space that will really enable researchers to truly think about the question “What does a researcher need to find out more of?” and begin to produce innovative answers to bold questions. We must think big, and we will only be limited by our imagination and pre-conceptions of our disciplinary silos. This collaborative spirit will be the key to making leaps, rather than steps in this all-too important field. It is my aim to host the possibly first such conference in Australia in 2016. Such spaces can provide an avenue for researchers to think about how to (a) prepare applied strategies for their work and (b) how to disseminate their work to the community, by liaising with like-minded heroic activists ‘plugged into’ the community.

The second strategy I propose as perhaps the most powerful tool in disseminating heroism to the broader public is to utilise the media – film and television, alongside the internet, have incredible power, perhaps more so than the written word in many ways. Taking lead from the

field of science communication can prove to be a key tool in this endeavour – that is, how to put complex concepts simply, demonstrate their relevance to everyday lives, and inspire.

### 33 Locate educators and “Hero Town USA”!

By Elizabeth Svoboda

The next most important step, now that this map has been created, is to find ways to make sure this training actually reaches kids and adults. From my interactions with heroic educators, I know that convincing school districts, non-profits, and after-school programs to incorporate heroic education into the curriculum can be an uphill battle. I think the focus should be on locating educators who are in tune with the heroic education philosophy and training them to a degree where they can serve as ambassadors, communicating the merits of heroic education to students and to other teachers within their sphere of influence. Larger-scale civic initiatives, like Flint, Michigan's "Hero Town USA," can also help spread awareness of the heroic education concept and can get local corporations on board to serve as major donors.

### 34 Conferences, cooperation, schools, workplaces, social media!

By Michelle Werning

I think that the Hero Conferences are a great step toward raising awareness for this idea. I would like to see more cooperation between the hero camp and Corporate social responsibility (CSR) groups (if corporations have similar rights as humans they should have the capability of performing heroic acts and because they have so much influence I think we need them to join the conversation).

Getting into schools and workplaces are great ways to start. In Germany there is a trend toward teaching social competence in schools. I'm working to include heroism as part of that curriculum. CSR is receiving more attention as we see the success of Fairtrade initiatives, etc. Spreading heroic stories on social media is another positive movement. We need to hit this harder I think. There is a lot of negativity online and positive stories inspire people. The other thing is finding sponsors for these kinds of conferences on a global scale - maybe as this network grows we can start connecting organizations with money and clout to stand behind

this idea and make bigger projects possible.

### 35 Online forum!

By Ellie Jacques

I have an idea.... What do you think about creating an online forum where we can have these discussions regularly? It could be a “closed” forum so that only people with some level of expertise could be a part of the conversation and the experts in the conversation could invite others to join who they think are qualified. This is not to exclude people, but rather to make the conversation small, manageable, and to ensure that all responses received would be of high quality. But it would be a platform where the handful of researchers, speakers, trainers, etc. around the world could regularly communicate, pose questions, share resources, announce new research, and share findings.

Imagine your results, but in a website form...not in a pdf that YOU have to type, because other people populate the conversation themselves.

Example of benefits of this: I have had separate communications with Hero Square in Budapest, Matt in Australia, HIP in California, and another woman in Poland, etc...and I have asked them all basically the same questions: what are you doing, what methods are you using, what are your future plans, etc. But in asking one of those questions to a large GROUP, it would save a lot of time. Everyone could have a profile that explains their background, their work or research, etc.

### 36 Research: identify characteristics!

By Shawn Furey

I think the next step is for researchers to identify the beliefs, values, and levels of meta-cognition, self-reflection, and behavioral habits of people who perform heroic acts.

## Introducing the Expert-Panel

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Some of you have answered once, some of you twice. Here you are, all of you -alphabetically:



**Anne Berggraf is project coordinator of Global Dignity**

Norway, which aim is to strengthen people's dignity through the choices we make in our everyday lives.

Global Dignity has three purposes: Promote value based leadership, stimulate to a global conversation about dignity and to engage youth in the meaning of dignity.



**Barry Schwartz** (born 1946) is an American psychologist.

Schwartz is the Dorwin Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action at Swarthmore College. He frequently publishes editorials in the New York Times applying his research in psychology to current events. He became a speaker and presented a speech on TED Virtue & Practical Wisdom Conference in 2009.

(Wikipedia)



**Cathrine Moestue**, Cand.Psychol Organizational Psychologist,

Lecturer and Columnist, earned her degree in Psychology at University of Oslo. She received her training in ethical influence directly with Dr. Robert Cialdini, as one of the first in

Scandinavia. She is now a lecturer in Oslo School of Management teaching students how to influence and negotiate in ethical and effective ways. She has a special interest in social psychology and published her interview with Phillip Zimbardo

for The Norwegian Psychological Association (NPF) Journal in 2009.



confidence, strategies, and tools they need to live up to their fullest potential in order to make the world a better place.”

**Chad Ellsworth:** ”I am an Academic Advisor for the College of Biological Sciences (CBS) and an Academic & Career Coach for the Center for Academic Planning & Exploration (CAPE) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. I work with college students and young professionals who want to make a difference in the world around them, through small group training and one to one coaching. These group workshops and personal coaching programs are designed to challenge people, and develop the



**Dana Klisanin, Ph.D.**, is a psychologist and futurist researching the impact of media and digital technologies on the mythic and moral dimensions of humanity. She received the Early Career Award for Scientific Achievement in Media Psychology from the American Psychological Association, Society of Media and Technology, for her pioneering research in integral media, digital altruism, and the Cyberhero archetype. Dr. Klisanin is the Founder and CEO of Evolutionary Guidance Media R&D, Inc. and Executive Director of the MindLab at c3: Center for Conscious Creativity. She maintains a blog at Psychology Today and her research is featured in interviews by BBC, Time, USA Today, and other media outlets.

**Elaine L. Kinsella,** BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD, CPsychol  
Enterprise Partnership Postdoctoral Research Fellow, funded by the Irish Research Council, Department of Psychology, University of Limerick

**Elisabeth Heiner:** ”I am currently working the state of Washington as a post-doctoral resident while applying for licensure. I am working toward establishing a private practice.”



**Elizabeth Svoboda** is a writer in San Jose, CA and author of *What Makes a Hero? The Surprising Science of Selflessness*, published in 2013 by Penguin Current.



**Ellie Jacques** “I am a program developer and presenter for Hero Town USA in Flint, Michigan. My work includes designing and delivering presentations directly to students in schools, to teachers, administrators, and community members to train them to develop the characteristics of a hero. Our organization is new and on a steep learning curve. Currently facilitating practices and delivering regular presentations on the topics of: Growth mindset development (Heroic Imagination Project), Combating bystander behavior (Heroic Imagination Project), Mindfulness, Hero’s journey. My blog: <https://elliejacques.wordpress.com/>”



**Fathali M. Moghaddam** is an Iranian psychologist, professor of psychology at Georgetown University and director of Conflict Resolution Program. Department of Government, Georgetown University. (Wikipedia)



**Gábor Orosz** «I'm a Hungarian social psychologist, but I'm interested in educational psychology and individual differences, as well. I teach at the Eötvös Lorand University, I have research programs at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and I work as a volunteer for the Heroes Square Initiative. We just started a follow-up study concerning the effectiveness and efficacy of the bystander and mindset modules and in the next two years I intend to carry out further online and offline studies in this field.»



**Kevin Kelly**, EdD, has 15 years of experience teaching educators how to improve their teaching with pedagogical strategies and technology. Over the last 7 years, he has worked on the other side as well. His course "How 2 Lrn w ur iPod" teaches students how to improve their learning with metacognitive strategies and technology. He currently works as a consultant with Dr. Phil Zimbardo and the Heroic Imagination Project to help build capacity for training more everyday heroes.



«I'm **Matt Langdon**. I've been trying to teach heroism to kids since 2006 and have had countless great discussions with people during that time. I also run the Hero Round Table in order to both get experts together in the same room and spread the word.»



**Michelle Werning**  
Generation-Hope.org



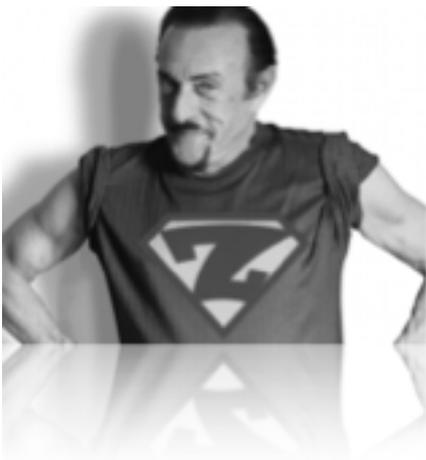
**Nathalie van Gerrevink** «I came to LA from the Netherlands about a year ago as an exchange student. I started studying psychology hoping that I would learn how to move and motivate people to step up and do their part to contribute to a better world. I was lucky enough to have met Philip Zimbardo during the last stages of my bachelor and found that we have very similar goals. I have now happily been working for Phil and his Heroic Imagination Project for the past 5 months helping to expand their

educational material. I hope to grow within the world of heroism and do my part in creating long lasting sustainable positive change.»



**Olivia Efthimiou.** PhD Candidate & Research Assistant, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia (expected completion, 2016). «I am a transdisciplinary researcher dedicated to bringing the body-mind connection into the forefront of heroism discussions. My work is also dedicated to dismantling traditional disciplinary confines by bridging disparate, especially cutting-edge and emerging, schools of thought and creating multi-level readings of heroism. Its is my mission statement that this is the only means by which we can truly uncover the timeless and intricate architecture of the phenomenon of

heroism. Developing sound strategies for collaborative research, innovative epistemological and methodological frameworks for advancing our understanding of heroism, dismantling our preconceived notions of the phenomenon, bridging culture and science by daring to ask bold questions, and disseminating these findings to the broader public, will be the main focus of my postdoctoral research.»



**Philip George Zimbardo Ph.D.**, is a psychologist and a professor emeritus at Stanford University. He became known for his 1971 Stanford prison experiment and has since authored various introductory psychology books, textbooks for college students, and other notable works, including *The Lucifer Effect*, *The Time Paradox* and the *The Time Cure*. He is also the founder and president of the Heroic Imagination Project. (Wikipedia)



**Scott T. Allison** has authored numerous books, including *Heroes and Heroic Leadership*. He is Professor of Psychology at the University of Richmond where he has published extensively on heroism and leadership. His other books include *Reel Heroes*, *Conceptions of Leadership*, *Frontiers in Spiritual Leadership*, and the *Handbook of Heroism*. His work has appeared in *USA Today*, *National Public Radio*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Slate Magazine*, *MSNBC*, *CBS*, *Psychology Today*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. He has received Richmond's Distinguished Educator Award and the Virginia Council of Higher Education's Outstanding Faculty Award.

<http://richmond.academia.edu/SAllison>



**Shawn Furey:** «I first got inspired to get to work in this heroism field after watching one of Matt Langdons' videos on YouTube - that was in 2012. I had been working on a preventative behavior management program since 2011 which I hoped would serve the function of helping people to avoid the pitfalls associated with making poor choices. After watching Matt's video I realized that heroism would become the organizing principle around which my program would best come together. Now, my interest is in getting people to take a 'hero training' so that they can be proactive and make positive personal changes in themselves and in their circumstances prior to losing themselves in social problems like domestic violence, alcoholism and substance abuse, homelessness, and incarceration.»