

The Hero's Path

“From Detachment to Exponential Engagement”

Why are some wholly involved and engaged at work while others drag themselves out of bed to go to work and give their minimum trying to get back home as soon as possible?

Let me answer this question by citing a revealing study based on psychologist Susan David's work with highly engaged employees*:

In describing their motivations at work, highly engaged employees “highlighted feeling autonomous and empowered, and a sense of belonging on their teams.”

The question now shifts to how leaders empower their collaborators to feel autonomous and have a sense of belonging? The answer is to facilitate a process for them to become the hero of their own story at work. **We are talking about leaders capable of co-creating a hero's journey for their workforce.** We know that this is feasible and that it boosts engagement.

The complete process of implementing the hero's journey at work is described in chapter five of my book Exponential Engagement “How to ignite passion and productivity in the workplace with the wisdom of archetypes.” In this article, I will share how Boehringer Ingelheim laboratories in Mexico successfully applied the Hero's Path to more than 300 employees. Combined with other initiatives, they obtained a record engagement company figure of 89%.

Business Case:

The Human Resources Director at Boehringer Ingelheim wanted to get an engaged and happy workforce that put their passion at work and delivered breakthrough results.

*Extract from an article by Neil Shah <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/maslows-hierarchy-needs-applied-employee-engagement-neil-shah/>

He believed that besides analyzing the engagement assessment results thoroughly, identifying the root causes, and working on them, the key to boosting engagement was to facilitate that every single person in the company had an authentic expression of their true SELF.

How many workers know themselves in such depth? How could leaders balance the expression of their staff's true SELF with stakeholders' numbers?

We are used to compromising our authentic SELF and morphing into what is expected from us at work, but there is no need to do that. Furthermore, we can align the company's expectations with who we truly are and give back outstanding results.

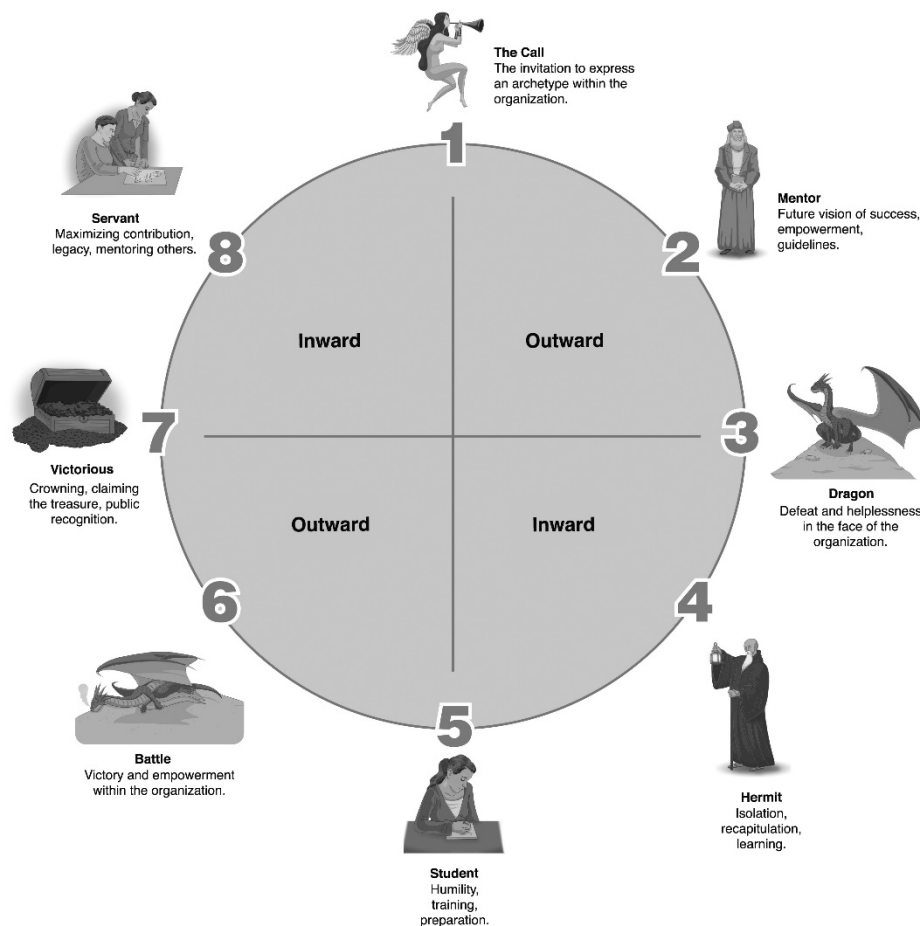
Boehringer Ingelheim commissioned organizational development experts (including me) to design a series of offsites that had at its core the development of the employees' authentic SELF combined with a careful selection of soft skills such as situational leadership, coaching, trust building, high-performing teams, and diversity, among others.

I worked for them on the employee's authentic SELF-expression side, enabling their leaders to manage their direct reports' hero's journey. Following are some of the learning obtained from this rich experience:

- The employees' true SELF is an expression of their archetypes since they guard their deepest desires and needs and are a continuous source of energy and stamina.
- The best way to identify their archetypes is by observing their attitudes and behaviors, especially those they can't stop doing. The ones that unconsciously bring them pleasure and reassurance. Archetypes are life companions, so they should be able to track them down in their life. Archetypes will lead you to shine or show your shadow and never leave you.
- You don't need to buy an expensive and complex test to know what archetypes you use; just identify those two or three you tend to express the most at work. You will have more than enough to deal with. As a first step, I invite you to download and explore the PDF: What are your archetypal superpowers?
- Many symptoms signal that an archetypal need is not being addressed: mood swings, being absent, detachment, irritation,

lack of commitment, nostalgia, or even depression. Experienced leaders help their workers express what is behind all of these; usually, there is an upset and mistreated archetype.

- You don't always have to make career changes every time you want to manage someone's hero's journey; just make sure the repressed archetype has space to express itself while it helps the team achieve their goals. For example, give a communication campaign to a networker archetype, have a detective archetype finding the culprit of an organizational problem, or an athlete archetype working on an improvement process going beyond its limits.
- As leaders, when working with career development, one of the most valuable skills is identifying the stage of the hero's journey our direct reports are going through. Please take a look at the following image



We

continuously tell our employees they own their careers. Still, we

fail to give them tools to know themselves better (get to know and own their archetypes) and understand the cycles their development goes through (the hero's journey stages).

- Facilitating a process to empower, enable and encourage our employees to move through the eight stages of their hero's journey once they identify the archetypes that need expression requires the best of our leadership skills: as a coach, a mentor, a role model, and sometimes as the antagonist of their drama while they grow and mature. The return on investment and the personal satisfaction you will get is priceless, not to mention the positive impact on results and engagement levels beyond this world.

Where to start? As my grandmother used to say: You must broom the house from inside to outside, so let us begin with you. If you learn to go through the hero's journey and become completely satisfied and engaged, that road becomes your training to facilitate the process for others. Ready?

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