

# The Hero's Journey: Discover Yourself

*A men's weekend retreat with Will Gethin & Alan Heeks*

Hazel Hill Wood, near Salisbury: April 20-22



Is there a next step in life calling you? Or a desire to explore? This weekend is a chance to move through the stages of the Hero's Journey, the mythical transformation process described by Joseph Campbell in the 'Special World' of this 70-acre woodland. Supported by the fellowship of a group of men and experienced guides, you can journey towards your chosen new horizon, facing your fears and learning from them, opening to new inspiration and direction, and integrating all this with the realities of everyday life and work.

This journey of inner and outer discovery is relevant for men of all ages looking to grow or evolve in some aspect of their life - be it a personal quest or crisis, creative project, or community or work-related endeavour. We'll also explore and reinvent the role of the modern "hero" and what it means to be a man, in these more collective and gender-equal times.

Complete with sharing circles around the campfire, ritual space, and time for silent reflection in the woods, this is a rare opportunity to connect deeply with yourself, others and nature. It's a chance to find a fresh sense of purpose, to feel revived, resourced and enlivened, ready to move forward with your chosen dream or goal.

Hazel Hill Wood has been a powerful venue for many men's groups since 1997, offering safety, nourishment and wisdom. This magical 70-acre conservation wood has simple, hand-made off-grid buildings, and special outdoor spaces, see more at [www.hazelhill.org.uk/](http://www.hazelhill.org.uk/)

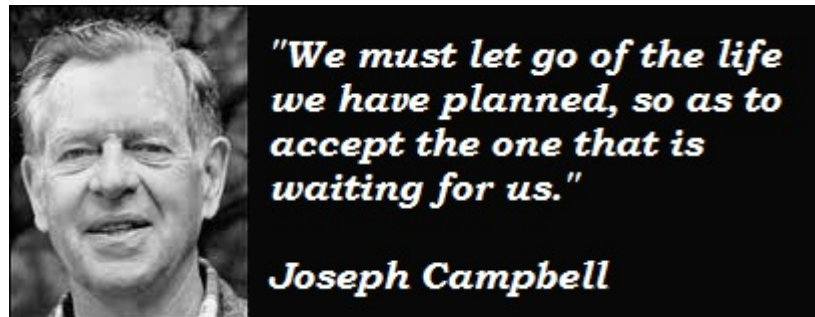
**Will Gethin:** as a holistic explorer and travel writer, Will has explored many edge-of-the-world frontiers on a quest for enlivened living. In 2012, he founded comms & events agency Conscious Frontiers to give voice to organisations and people engaged in creating a better world. He is also a qualified meditation teacher. More info: [www.willgethin.com](http://www.willgethin.com); [will@consciousfrontiers.com](mailto:will@consciousfrontiers.com)



**Alan Heeks:** Alan is a natural happiness writer, group leader and social entrepreneur with a passion for wellbeing, resilience and learning from nature. He has been involved in men's groups as a guide and member for over 20 years, and has led numerous workshops and retreats at Hazel Hill. His second book is *Out of the Woods: A Guide to Life for Men Beyond 50*. See more at [www.alanheeks.com](http://www.alanheeks.com); [www.naturalhappiness.net](http://www.naturalhappiness.net)

**Cost:** £160 including food and accommodation, £120 concessionary price. Accommodation is in shared twin bedrooms or small sleeping lofts. A few private single rooms are available at a premium of £25 for the weekend. **Timings:** from 7pm Friday until 4pm Sunday. **Food:** food costs are included in the price. We will share cooking and other practical tasks between us.

## *Outline for the weekend and the stages of the Journey*



Dedicating his life to the study of world mythology, Joseph Campbell discovered 'one story' at the heart of all great myths. Mapping the stages of this 'Hero's Journey', he provided a powerful template for storytelling which has been applied to countless films, from *Star Wars* and *The Matrix* to *The Wizard of Oz*. The story typically starts with the protagonist having their world shaken up. They go on a journey and face tests, challenges and their greatest fears, and return redeemed and transformed through their trials. The Hero's Journey is also a map for our own lives and the challenges we face.

For the purposes of this weekend workshop, we have condensed the Journey into five core stages.

### **1. Call to Adventure**

The Call to Adventure is an invitation to grow, face your fears and make changes in your life. Often precipitated by a crisis or a period of restlessness, the call invites you to re-evaluate your life and to "Follow Your Bliss", as Campbell called it. What is life calling you to do right now? What is the thing that you can't not do, in spite of any fear and resistance? What new goal would bring your life more meaning and fire up your passion? How can you best be of service to others? We set our personal intentions and prepare to journey towards our chosen destination.

### **2. On the Road**

Committing to the Journey, we set off on the road. It's a time for forging new allies and connections, raising morale and finding new strengths, assets and insights. Supported by the group, we may also learn new skills useful for overcoming challenges on our journey ahead.

### **3. The Dark Wood**

In "The Dark Wood" in the ancient stories is where heroes fought dragons and monsters. In modern stories, heroes often face internal dragons, fears and rejected parts of themselves, and integrate them as they grow towards more wholeness, self-acceptance and inner peace. In the safely held space of the woodland, you will have the chance to co-create your ultimate challenge, what Campbell called "The Ordeal". Whether a physical, outer challenge or an internal one, this is your chance to move through a major obstacle that stands in the way of you fulfilling your intention.

### **4. The Treasure**

As Carl Jung once said, "The gold is in the dark". And so it is that in meeting our greatest challenges and fears we have the chance to find our greatest gifts in them. The gift might be a new perception, understanding or clarity; an inner shift, or more love and acceptance for yourself. Part of you has died and something new has been born – part of the reward comes from facing that death.

## 5. The Return

*We have the choice to stay stuck or make that change.* In the stories, returning home, the hero must integrate any changes and redefine his place in the home tribe. He also has the chance to put to good use his discovered “unused potentials”, contributing to the welfare and happiness of the wider community. Taking silent time to reflect in the woodland, and in discussions around the campfire, we crystallise our learnings from the journey, and consider any adjustments needed to meet our intentions when we return to the outside world.

### **The workshop’s facilitators Will and Alan share their personal experience of The Hero’s Journey**

**Will:** In the year 2000, after the break up of my marriage, I followed a ‘Call to Adventure’, taking a year’s sabbatical from my PR job in London and travelling to India to explore its spirituality and pursue my dream of becoming a travel writer. Along the way I faced my fears and experienced a psychological breakdown that ultimately became a ‘breakthrough’: I found new strength, left the ‘London rat race’, and created a more meaningful and enlivening life. Starting to write about this life-changing period in what has since evolved into a novel (in progress), I discovered my real-life experiences mirrored the stages of the Hero’s Journey, and decided I’d like to use my lived experience of this transformation process to support others to move forward in their lives.

**Alan:** There are many reasons why I’m excited to be offering this workshop. One is to explore the hero at different life stages, including my own, as I approach elderhood. I also feel that our current times are so tough and crazy that they call for some radical reinvention of the hero, as a collaborative figure, just for starters. Although I have applied the Hero’s Journey structure to groups I have led on many themes, this is the first time I have devoted a weekend to exploring and embodying the structure pure and simple.

**For more about the wood, see [www.hazelhill.org.uk](http://www.hazelhill.org.uk)**

**For bookings and enquiries, contact Daniel Körner [daniel.koerner@getactive.org](mailto:daniel.koerner@getactive.org) or 07599774716. For content enquiries contact Will Gethin [will@consciousfrontiers.com](mailto:will@consciousfrontiers.com) or 07795 204833, or Alan Heeks [progress@workingvision.com](mailto:progress@workingvision.com) or 07976602787**