hero to adore. So where is the boon that Campbell spoke of? What do we learn from these heroes? An immoderate life will inevitably destroy you, but it certainly is entertaining to watch it happen. Such is the hero's life.

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My Hero Is a Nine-Year-Old, Not a Celebrity

Christine Silverstein—The Summit Center

Who is a hero? Felix Adler (1851-1933), founder of the Ethical Cultural Society, once stated: "The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up blazing torches in the dark streets of life for men to see by." Does Tiger Woods fit Adler's description of a hero? Woods described the process he goes through to determine when or when not to play the hero. He wrote, "When I do hit an errant tee shot, I've learned to accept it and just get the ball back into play…There are times, though—if I'm down with two to play and have to make birdie, for example—that I will still try to hit the heroic shot" (Tiger Woods, *How I Play Golf*, 2001, p. 213). Does the ability to hit a "heroic" birdie (a hole-in-two strokes) to win championships make an athlete a hero?

Society puts athletes on pedestals and places them in

positions beyond reproach. Ironically, Woods is an example of a talented athlete who fell from favor because his morally clean image was tarnished by revelations of infidelity with various women. He did not know the difference between being touted as a hero, with multi-million dollar endorsements, and being a "genuine" hero. Although he commiserated that he has not been true to his values and that he is not without faults, his role model status for young golfers and minorities is currently in question, as well as his lucrative contracts (Lisa France, "Tiger Woods' role model status in question," CNN, http://www.cnn.com/2009/SHOWBIZ/12/04/tiger. woods. role.model/index.html).

Writer Gerald W. Johnson noted that, as in Woods' case, "heroes are created by popular demand, sometimes out of the scantiest materials, or none at all." But why does society create heroes? What purposes do they serve? Could it be that people live vicariously through the achievements of their esteemed heroes and see them as extensions of their ideal selves? Freud spoke about the "ego ideal" as a structure created by the internalization of cultural values, moral precepts that guide actions and concepts of self, and idealized parental representations (Richard Pfeiffer, "A brief psychoanalytical look at shame," http://growthcentral.com/shame.htm).

A French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, interpreted Freud's theories and created his own. He made a distinction between the "ego ideal" and the "ideal ego." The former was associated with the *symbolic order* and the latter with the *imaginary order*. Lacan's ideal ego is one of ideal perfection that the ego strives to emulate, which develops during the "mirror stage" between 6-18 months of age. This normal stage of development sets up the imaginary fantasies that dominate during a person's psychic lifetime. On the other hand, Lacan saw the ego ideal as the way a person views himself in contrast to that ideal perfection. From this vantage, he sees an inversion of his "normal life and views him-

self suddenly as useless, vain, and repulsive" (Dino Felluga, *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/psychoanalysis/psychterms.html).

In Woods' athletic drama, a point can be made that the establishment of the ideal ego, which was supported by his parents, culture, and moral tenets taught during childhood, drove him towards stardom with a focused eye for perfection on the fairway. However, in his personal "off-the-course" drama, the ego ideal has exposed an image that is not up to par. As Tauer, a psychologist and assistant college basketball coach, stated, "He's [Woods] made his bed, and no pun intended, he now has to sleep in it" (Quoted in Lisa France, CNN, http://www.cnn.com/ 2009/SHOWBIZ/12/04/ tiger.woods.role.model/index.html). So what is a true-to-himself hero to do when he gets caught in a sex scandal?

Boxer Jack Dempsey scored when he claimed: "A champion is someone who gets up when he can't." This skill of bouncing back from adversity is called resiliency, and it is necessary for all children to acquire so they can handle life's challenges with aplomb. One way to gain resiliency is to suffer a trauma and to learn from it. Richard Warshak, a professor of clinical psychology, discussed the phenomenon he called "the echoes of trauma," in which people gain strength from adversity and are inspired from their sufferings to create positive outcomes. If you understand the impact of trauma, Warshak enunciated, it becomes clear what role heroes play in transcending it. As an expert on heroes, trauma, and children, he upholds the belief that children need heroes and explains how parents can play a major role in teaching children what makes a genuine hero (The Atlas Society, *Navigator*, 2002, Interview with Dr. Warshak, http://www.warshak.com/ author/heroes.html).

The importance of children's heroes was stressed in an article by John and Barbara Frazier, who referred to the

ego ideal as "an image of the goal" (http://www.thesuccessfulparent.com/infancy/childrens-heroes-and-the-ego ideal). They noted that hero-worship begins to emerge towards the end of the preschool years and blossoms during middle childhood. During these times, children naturally desire to push themselves to master developmental tasks and to set new challenging goals. As a clinician, I considered this natural inclination of children and took advantage of it when working with a nine-year-old client who experienced an eating disorder. Karen (not her real name) arrived at my office, refusing to eat or drink and looking extremely frail.

Karen's mother, an intelligent and caring parent, explained that during the previous year, while Karen was playing soccer and scoring goals, she suffered an acute appendicitis attack on the field. Immediately, she was rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery. Her physical recovery was rapid, but her mental health lagged far behind. The hospital's psychiatric consultant called in for Karen's case neither spoke English well, nor understood her panic and trauma. Karen believed that she caused the attack by eating something toxic. After taking appetite stimulants that did not work, her pediatrician recommended treatment in a boarding facility for anorexia that was more than two hours from her home. Some months post-surgery, she was once again rushed to the hospital for heart irregularities and electrolyte imbalances, resulting in nasogastric tube feedings, which added to the trauma. At this time, her father, who was her soccer coach, and her mother were in a state of panic and were hesitant to send Karen away from her social network of family, friends, and school. Karen wanted desperately to please her parents but could not bring herself to eat.

In the mirror of her mind she saw herself as overweight as well as having ingested something toxic. Although the nutritionist recommended that she curtail playing soccer until she gained weight, I suggested that she continue to play,

while encouraging her to increase consumption of nourishing food and rest periods. During a six-month period of weekly visits, Karen and I worked with Ericksonian hypnosis, cognitive restructuring, and imagery, such as kicking her emotional pain out through the soccer ball into the net to score a goal. Such techniques assisted Karen with the release of vestigial traumas, to promote healing. We worked with imaginary order (ideal ego) and symbolic order (ego ideal) through the use of metaphors, which were told in stories, such as *Stone Soup* (Brown) and *Henry's Awful Mistake* (Quackenbush). Representing the ego, id, and the superego, puppets of three fledglings in a nest were used as an adjunct for Parts Therapy. To improve body image, we regularly visited the imaginary "Pond of Love," where she saw a reflection of her ideal self and nourished her body, mind, and spirit. The end result of our effort is that Karen is eating well, and is happy to be back to scoring goals in soccer, school, and life.

Poet Maya Angelou has noted how important it is for society to recognize and celebrate its heroes and she-roes. In Karen's case, her role model and hero, Mia Hamm, and her love for the sport of soccer won out. Karen dressed up as Mia for Halloween that fall. We watched video footage of Hamm giving instruction on nutrition. In contrast to Woods, Hamm is renowned for being the best role model in pro sports because she possesses humility and feels responsible to the following generations. She recognizes what her work means to millions of female players around the United States and the world (Ian Bellis, http://www.nasl.com/articles/best_role_model_in_pro-sports.htm).

So who is a hero and how does one become a hero? A hero, stated mythologist Joseph Campbell, "is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations." How do heroes accomplish their goals of heroism? Carol Pearson (author of *The Hero*

Within) wrote that, "Heroes take journeys, confront dragons, and discover the treasure of their true selves." Karen wants to share her journey with others, and I have helped by writing this article. Karen is my hero, for she has set up blazing torches in dark streets to see by!

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Sports Heroes and Mental Health Problems

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Professional athletes are no strangers to mental health problems, but the recognition, acknowledgment, and acceptance of these issues has been extraordinarily slow. The lack of public awareness, the macho sports culture, and the disdainful attitude of the sports leagues toward emotionally challenged players have contributed to this dilemma. The spectrum of mental health problems among professional athletes runs the gamut from anxiety, depression, narcissism,