

Discussion Guide: *The Life Heroic*

1. Chapter 1 introduces a variety of definitions of heroism. In particular, it notes that being heroic doesn't necessarily mean putting yourself at physical risk. What does being a hero mean to you? What are some actions people take that qualify as "heroic"?
2. Chapter 2 asks you to identify a heroic goal or mission that truly inspires you. What problems in the world today require heroic action? Can you identify some of the ways people are already trying to solve these problems? Do these examples provide models for an action you could take?
3. Chapter 3 describes the universal mythic story of the hero's journey, in which a hero devotes him- or herself to an important goal, overcomes trials, and ultimately succeeds. What stories have you read or seen that embody the hero's journey? In what ways can these stories inspire us as we pursue our own heroic goals?
4. Chapter 4 discusses how role models and mentors can help us as we pursue a heroic path. What are some important qualities a role model or mentor should have? Who are some of your role models? What do you respect and admire about them?
5. In Chapter 5, Dave Rendall advises people to embrace their inner freak. What does being willing to stand out have to do with taking a heroic approach to life?
6. Chapter 6 describes how some schools are experimenting with different methods of heroic education. Do you think heroic qualities can be taught? If so, which ones, and what are some ways to teach them? If not, why not?
7. Chapter 7 discusses how to evaluate and minimize the risks of heroic actions. Is it important to keep yourself safe while helping others? What risks would you take in different situations, depending on what's at stake? How would you protect yourself from unnecessary harm?
8. Chapter 8 talks about how helping others sometimes forces us to face our own pain and hard times. Then again, sometimes our struggles are what inspire us to help people facing similar problems. What are some tough or difficult situations you've been through? What advice would you give to people going through the same thing? How might sharing difficult experiences help people?
9. Chapter 9 discusses the importance of allies and the power of group efforts. What are some situations where working as a group would make more sense than working alone? On the other hand, when might it be important to stand apart from the crowd?
10. Chapter 10 advises breaking large heroic goals into small, doable steps. This helps us avoid burnout and feeling overwhelmed. Do you ever get overwhelmed by big goals or problems? What are some ways you avoid this or recapture your zest and enthusiasm?