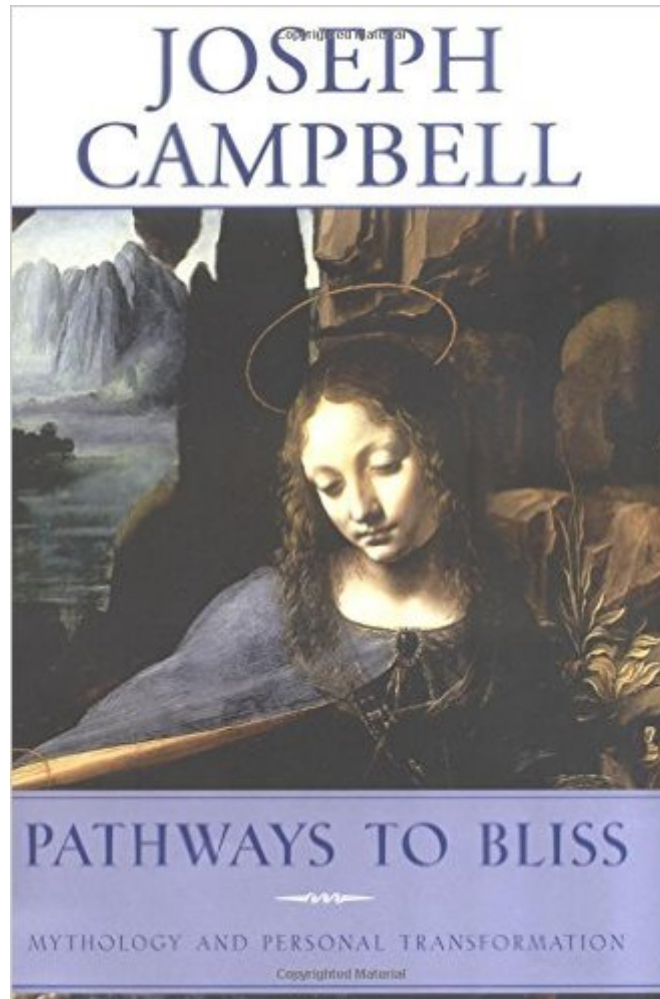


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# Pathways To Bliss: Mythology And Personal Transformation



## Synopsis

Joseph Campbell famously defined myth as "other people's religion." But he also said that one of the basic functions of myth is to help each individual through the journey of life, providing a sort of travel guide or map to reach fulfillment; or, as he called it, bliss. For Campbell, many of the world's most powerful myths support the individual's heroic path toward bliss. In *Pathways to Bliss*, Campbell examines this personal, psychological side of myth. Like his classic best-selling books *Myths to Live By* and *The Power of Myth*, *Pathways to Bliss* draws from Campbell's popular lectures and dialogues, which highlight his remarkable storytelling and ability to apply the larger themes of world mythology to personal growth and the quest for transformation. Here he anchors mythology's symbolic wisdom to the individual, applying the most poetic mythical metaphors to the challenges of our daily lives. Campbell dwells on life's important questions. Combining cross-cultural stories with the teachings of modern psychology, he examines the ways in which our myths shape and enrich our lives and shows how myth can help each of us truly identify and follow our bliss.

## Book Information

Series: The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: New World Library (October 26, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1577314719

ISBN-13: 978-1577314714

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 5.8 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,896 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#9 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Mythology](#) [#14 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Fairy Tales](#) [#38 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Comparative Religion](#)

## Customer Reviews

Everyone with the slightest familiarity with Joseph Campbell, of course, knows the famous catch-phrase: "Follow Your Bliss". And everyone pretty much knows what it means, as well: Figure out whatever your passion is, and responsibly and diligently move forward, and pursue it... for the rest of your life... above and beyond anything else. Sounds like words of wisdom from a worthy and

knowledgeable teacher.... but how exactly does one go about following their bliss? That's what this book aims to answer. Joseph Campbell, of course, died in 1987, yet this book didn't appear on store shelves until 2004. That's because it has been assembled posthumously by the Joseph Campbell Foundation from many of Campbell's unpublished notes/lectures/interviews/drafts/etc... Their aim is to bring the great mythologist's unfinished works into a form suitable for public consumption. With that as their aim, the Foundation had the inspired idea to organize a whole book around the premise: *How To Follow Your Bliss*. So, it's the usual brand of Campbell's 'Mythology as Psychological Resource', albeit this time around in the guise of a sort of 'mythological self-help book'. A satisfying one nonetheless. As ever, Campbell's basic premise is that the grand purpose of mythology is to ground an individual in relation to an order of being that is larger than himself. Through metaphor and through ritual, an individual is brought into accord with: 1. The great mystery 2. The physical world 3. The societal order 4. The appropriate stage in one's own development as an individual (These you may recognize as Campbell's four functions of myth).

I am drawn to *Pathways to Bliss* because it is very much "practical Campbell," focusing directly on the wisdom that myth presents pertaining to our individual lives. "Pathways" offers practical observations for life based on Joseph Campbell's study of mythology. I find "Pathways" a delightful read. Campbell's voice is fresh, his words full of wit and wisdom - definitely has more of an intimate feel than some of his heavily referenced scholastic tomes. There is no mincing of words, either - Campbell makes very clear that ancient myths remain guideposts for our individual lives today - if we know how to read them ... as in the following passage: "Now all of these myths that you have heard and that resonate with you, those are the elements from round about that you are building into a form in your life. The thing worth considering is how they relate to each other in your context, not how they relate to something out there - how they were relevant on the North American prairies or in the Asian jungles hundreds of years ago, but how they are relevant now - unless by contemplating their former meaning you can begin to amplify your own understanding of the role they play in your life." Here Campbell makes clear that his books aren't just for armchair scholars, as he brings mythology out of the Academy and into the street... which is indeed unnerving for many in specialized disciplines. They might study myth, but to apply patterns discovered therein to one's own life carries the same stigma as an "objective" anthropologist "gone native." For Campbell, though, the same elements of story that power myth remain active in our lives today.

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