

Hero, It's Me

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I confess: Hercules and I have our differences. I am not extraordinarily buff by any means; nor am I from ancient Greece. Nonetheless, Hercules and I share one common trait (besides the fact that we both seem to be fond of gladiator sandals): we're both heroes.

Now, I may not be a legend to all of Greece and I may have never strangled a Nemean lion or defeated a Hydra, but to at least one person, I am a true hero. That person is me.

That's a little conceited, some might say. Others might ask, isn't everyone by default their own hero?

Well, not always. In my case, it took me a long, long time to even accept myself for how I was, much less consider myself my own hero. As many other teens in my community might agree, it is terribly easy to feel overshadowed in a high achieving city like Palo Alto. When I walk to class every day, I brush shoulders with social media gurus, patent holders, tech startup founders, nationally ranked athletes and even television starlets. And while I'm incredibly proud that I'm part of such a talented community, it's nigh impossible to avoid comparing myself to my friends. Seeing their successes inevitably prompts me to ask myself: how could I ever match up to *that* ?

Part of my journey to becoming my own hero involved letting go of that question or, At least, modifying it. Instead, I began asking myself: *how* could I match up to that? With a little motivation, I could turn my envy and self-pity into passion and ambition.

I started by celebrating the small achievements. I smiled when I scored well on even just a small quiz. I cheered when I hit personal, day today milestones. When I hit bigger goals, I would take the time to dwell on my success and congratulate myself for all the effort I'd put in. In time, I became my own personal cheerleader. I have to admit, it felt good having a number one fan, even if that fan was myself.

Now, I'm still not a famous YouTuber or the star of a TV drama, but that's alright with me because I choose to let it be alright with me. And while I may not be immortalized as a myth to be passed down through thousands of years, in a way, I too can call myself a hero. I can be my own knight in shining armor