



Noah Blumenthal: Exploring Your Heroic Self

## The Courage of the Hero

When Noah Blumenthal, respected executive coach and writer, tells you about his new book *Be the Hero*; he tells you the stories of people in his life. Noah has been an executive coach for over 10 years, and in the course of those years he has worked with a great variety of people. While all very different, the connecting element between them is the fact they wanted to change something. The challenge they each had to confront was how to get started on that road to becoming their better selves.

Four years ago, Noah had a breakthrough experience. His six-month old daughter Ella suddenly became ill and her illness confounded doctors. Her five days in the hospital were gut wrenching for Noah. As he waited for answers, he began to meet other parents. These parents had children in the hospital who were sick as well and some had quite serious conditions. Nonetheless, these other parents went out of their way to reach out to Noah and his wife to provide them support and remind them they weren't alone. Noah saw that even in this extremely stressful situation, these parents were looking for the hope in the moment. They could do nothing to change their situation, so they chose to focus on how to face their reality.

Following little Ella's health scare, Noah kept thinking about those other parents. Through that experience he was reminded that our ability to choose our attitude is our last freedom. He could look at Ella's sudden illness and moan, "Why me!?" or look for the opportunities that came from it and say, "I met wonderful, loving people." He recognized that the way he tells his story affects his attitude. If he looked at how to embrace the moment, he could focus on being hopeful and grateful.

Noah explores this idea further in *Be the Hero*. He sees the concepts of the hero and courage as being clearly connected and describes the courageous hero as, "Someone who rises to their best when their challenges are also on the rise." Noah reminds us that what we see in our lives is what we are looking for.

"Can I tell you another story," Noah asked? Once on a flight, he struck up a conversation with his seat mate. The guy next to Noah was a semi-pro road bike racer, so he and Noah started a great conversation about biking. Hours into the conversation, Noah realized that this man only had one leg. He had set out

on a bike ride like any other day, but that day he was hit by a car and his leg was severed. As the biker recovered in the hospital, one of his first questions to himself was, "What opportunities will this bring to my biking?" This highly trained athlete had embraced his new reality and sought out the opportunities rather than the limitations.

Noah presents a framework in *Be the Hero* that helps us all to aspire to our heroic selves. He presents three primary questions we must explore: how do you see other people, what story do you tell about your situation, and how do you see yourself? Noah suggests that the first step in becoming more heroic is to get in touch with the idea of being a hero. Being a hero may mean being different from how you are being right now. It is easy to adopt a "miserable mindset," but that misery will inhibit your ability to see something new.

Does misery and the heroic mindset apply to our work lives? Well, wouldn't you know that Noah had a story for that one too. He was catching a flight to Kansas City but the flight had encountered multiple delays. The passengers had waited in the terminal, had waited after boarding, had waited after taxiing, and were now being asked to wait some more. The frustration level of everyone was high. One flight attendant stepped forward to apologize for the delays and announced it was time to play a game. Somewhere in the pages of the on-board magazine was a phrase, and the first person to find that phrase would win a free adult beverage. Everyone dove for their magazines. The winner was rewarded, and they went on to play two more rounds of Find a Phrase. Once the game was done, people on the plane were talking to one another and laughing. That flight attendant could have chosen to be frustrated by the delays. Instead they decided to do what they could to make it the most enjoyable delay possible.

The parents of those sick children, the road biker, and the flight attendant all chose to rise to their best selves when their challenges were also on the rise. *Be the Hero* serves as a valuable tool to examine your own choices and provide the catalyst to embrace the everyday hero in you.

For more information on *Be the Hero* or the work of Noah Blumenthal, please visit [www.be-the-hero.com](http://www.be-the-hero.com).

"Being a hero may mean being different from how you are right now. It is easy to adopt a 'miserable mindset,' but that misery will inhibit your ability to see the possibility of something new."

Noah Blumenthal,  
author and executive  
coach

An installment in the ongoing Giant Leap Consulting series *Profiles in Courage*. These profiles seek to highlight the courageous stories of the people around us, whether they are in the community or the workplace. We strive to shine light on the stories that surround us but are often not told.