

Roots and Branches

Brief Background and Overview

Following 30 years of research, theory development, and practical application, Ryan J Hulbert, PhD, has created a training program for adolescents and emerging adults entitled “Roots and Branches: a multi-generational, cross-cultural, inter-faith training program for developing everyday hero individuals, families, and communities.” Following formulating “Connectedness Theory,” as a doctoral graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Hulbert has applied and further developed the principles of Connectedness Theory through assisting people in a wide variety of settings. From recovering alcoholics in Belgium while on a graduate research fellowship, to director of research at a state hospital in Iowa treating the chronically mentally ill, to Clinical Administrator of the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, to adjunct faculty at the Boise State University, and most recently training Iraqi women refugees, he has developed an engaging system of self-assessments, experiential learning experiences, and community connectedness.

The purpose of this training program is to harness and stimulate the intrinsic motivation in young people toward greatness, tap into and utilize the latent foundational community connectedness, and thereby address biological-social-psychological-spiritual needs. The lack of fulfilling these needs is at the origin of social disconnectedness, hostility, drug abuse, and educational and economic underproduction.

As an example of this training, a portion of the introduction is presented below.

“It is important to recognize that this process is not a race. Real growth usually does not take place in a rushed manner. This is also not a competition with others. Just as a tree grows at a natural pace and in an individualized way, so Roots and Branches is designed for an integrated, meaningful, and individualized process of grounding, growing, and giving.

In becoming your best self, you will be invited to participate in growth in knowledge and skills to become an Everyday Hero. Let me emphasize the importance of the phrase Everyday Hero. “Everyday,” in this process has 2 meanings. The first is the definition of “everyday” as common and ordinary. This

means that this process applies to each and every one of us as ordinary people. The 2nd definition of “everyday,” is that the steps involved with this process are to be taken every day.

To fully participate in this Everyday Hero training process, you will need to commit to approximately 30 minutes per day for the next 3 months. Built into this process are days to rest and reflect on your progress, but nevertheless a commitment and determination needs to be made for meaningful and significant growth through Roots and Branches. The investment of your time and energy has been designed to be invigorating, and one that will yield high returns in personal satisfaction, improved relationships, and a greater sense of meaning in your life.

You are invited to embark on three quests. The first quest is to become an Everyday Hero in your own personal life. The 2nd quest is to assist your family to become an Everyday Hero family. For those of you who are not currently in a traditional family situation, the term “family” can be used to describe those with whom you spend time on a daily basis or nearly daily basis. This can include your associates such as roommates, team mates, and work colleagues.

The 3rd quest is for you to assist your community to become an Everyday Hero community. For this purpose, the term “community” can refer to your broader network of associates such as in your hometown, neighborhood, school, faith community, company, or other organization in which you participate.

The Everyday Hero-Me quest is for 3 weeks, the Everyday Hero-Family quest is for 4 weeks, and the Everyday Hero-Community quest is for 5 weeks. This results in the Roots and Branches timeframe of 12 weeks or 3 months. During these 3 months, you will be invited to stay on the path outlined to accomplish 30 tasks. It is very important to stay on the path outlined, with the indicated time frames, to accomplish the tasks in each of the 3 quests. In any meaningful growth process, consistency is a key factor.

All of us need support to be consistent in any growth process. Therefore, it is very helpful for you to have another person who is willing to be on the journey with you to provide support, encouragement, and to stay focused. Even though that person may not be actually participating in Roots and Branches specifically, having him or her understand the basic process will be very helpful for you to have someone to discuss your progress.

In those circumstances where you do not have such an encouraging person in your day-to-day life, we, at Roots and Branches, can assist you by being a remote support by email. This email support is not intended to replace a real live encouraging person in your life, but is our attempt to help you fulfill the quests and to stay on the upward path as needed.

Just as the roots, trunk, and branches of a tree support each other, those skills and strengths which you will improve in the first quest as an Everyday Individual Hero, will need to continue to be nourished as you proceed with the Everyday Hero Family quest. Similarly, the combined individual strengths and family strengths gained during the first and 2nd quests, will need to continue to be nourished as you proceed in the Everyday Hero Community quest.”

For more information about Roots and Branches and related resources, please contact Ryan Hulbert, Ph.D. at ryanhulbertphd@gmail.com or by telephone at 208-880-5494.