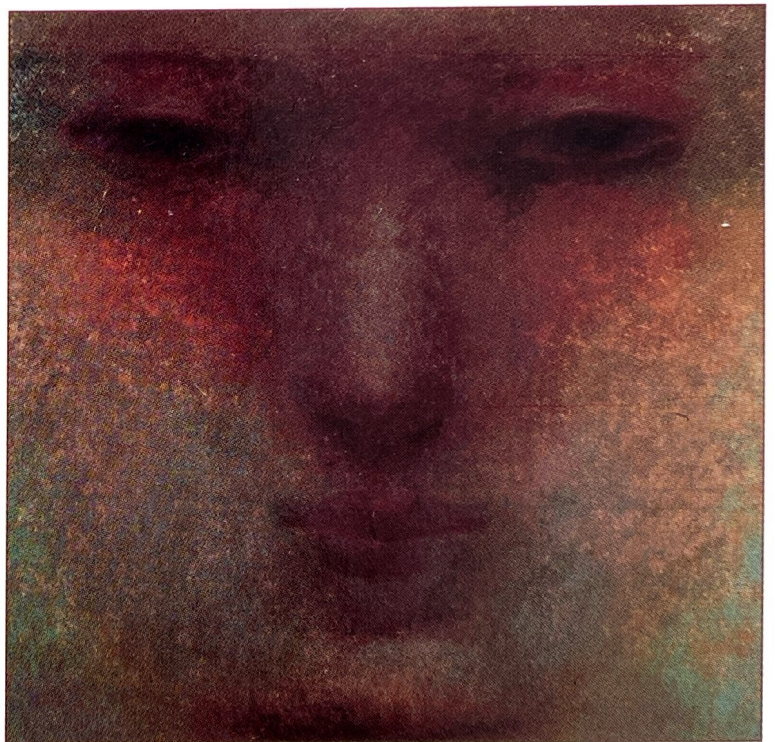


the **Quest**  
of the  
**Warrior**  
**Woman**

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A PATH OF  
HEALING,  
EMPOWERMENT  
AND  
TRANSFORMATION



**Christina**  
**Feldman**



# INTRODUCTION

This book is intended to honour and celebrate the spark of passion and vision that lies within the heart of every woman. Women are not newcomers to the warrior tradition; it is our heritage. Ancient myth and legend give to us the stories of cultures created and guided by wise and courageous women. The goddesses depicted in Buddhism, Hinduism and pre-Christian religion reveal to us a picture of warrior women who held the power to create, to preserve and to destroy. They are portrayed as raging angels—inspired by passion and vision to give birth to and foster communities, civilisations and values rooted in compassion, wisdom and freedom. They are women dedicated to healing and preserving life, dignity and spirit. They are women fearless enough to overthrow and destroy the ignorance, conventions and structures that hinder their journey to freedom.

This book is not about women of the past, but women of the present. Contemporary women breathe life into the epic journey of the warrior. Warrior women of the present have given birth to an authentic vision for women; banishing forever the dark models, structures and conventions which previously condemned women to invisibility and shadows. Women have found new creativity and passion in their own lives; a renewed commitment to healing not only the wounds within their own psyches, but to our wounded planet, our societies and our relationships. This renewal of creativity, passion and clarity rises

from the courage of the warrior.

An integral part of every woman's journey to freedom is learning to reclaim the warrior within herself. It is not just in ancient legends and myths that we find the story of the warrior. The heroines of our age are found in the stories of women who live with remarkable dignity and courage in the midst of oppression and exploitation. Women who speak with truthfulness and honour when it would bring more applause to be silent or to conform, reveal to us a fearlessness of spirit. Women who teach their children dignity and integrity in the midst of superficiality and dishonesty bequeath a heritage of freedom. Women who treasure compassion, freedom and liberation more than safety, approval and affirmation embody the warrior spirit. These women are not strangers to us; they are part of our own stories, our teachers, our allies—they are ourselves.

It is not always an easy task for women to reclaim and honour the warrior within. The dominating, destructive, overpowering warrior we are familiar with has wounded and scarred our planet, our communities and our lives with its obsession with winning. We know the dark side of the warrior who is intent upon enemies, power and victory. We know the pain and grief of being disempowered, silenced and devalued. The work of unmasking this defective and distorted warrior has left many women exhausted and frustrated. We may be reluctant to associate ourselves in any way with the warrior tradition, fearing that we will fall into the same patterns of dominance and insensitivity. A generation of women has committed itself to valuing and honouring everything about being a woman: our bodies, sexuality, receptivity, capacity for emotion, sensitivity and openness. For all of this to co-exist with the warrior spirit appears both impossible and contradictory.

*The Quest of the Warrior Woman* describes the journey of a qualitatively different kind of warrior. The warrior of the spirit is not concerned with the overpowering of enemies and

adversaries. She does not include in her arsenal of weapons dominance, control or mastery. Nor is she obsessed with victory, subjugation or conquering. The woman warrior is not intent upon individual gains or possessing the spoils of battle. She is a woman of poise; finely balanced. She knows how to be responsive and clearly focussed. Patience and determination merge happily within her. Strength and gentleness, receptivity and creativity, are not polarised but integrated. She is a woman of passion and creativity, power and healing. This is born of her vision, trust and commitment to freedom, oneness and the end of all dualisms.

The warrior woman is a woman with a calling. Her journey is about the destruction of ignorance, the healing of schisms, the realisation of freedom. Undistracted by the false dualisms of inner and outer, masculine and feminine, spirit and matter, she is not deceived by the promises of empty victories or false defeats. She is a warrior of the spirit, knowing deeply that we can make no difference between outer change and inner transformation. It is a journey which is filled with challenges. The warrior woman embarks on her odyssey inspired by vision and passion, but carrying with her too her own shadows and demons. She must learn how to embrace them with the same skills and balance that she brings to the shadows that she meets in her life. Fear, passivity, distractedness, resignation, doubt, self-negation are demons that will be transformed by the fearlessness, perseverance, courage and creativity that lie within her. Don Juan, an Indian shaman, once said, 'To an ordinary person everything is either a blessing or a curse. To a spiritual warrior, everything is a challenge.' The journey of the spiritual warrior is a journey that involves no enemies; it is a journey of wisdom and transformation.