



About the Book

Please consider *Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes* by corporate America executive-turned schoolteacher Stefania Shaffer. In her book, Ms. Shaffer fondly recalls a few influential teachers who shaped the adult she became and brings to light the importance of having teachers as role models in our nation's schools. The other fictional characters grew from her observations and imagination and represent the thirteen types of teachers we meet in every classroom, on any school campus, in any city.

Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes is a coming-of-age story about Vandra Zandinski, whose sense of panache gets her through the tumultuous traumas of childhood. The story opens with Vandra, now an

adult, flashing back to the teachers who became her heroes and the many life lessons they taught her.

Not since the classics—*Up the Down Staircase*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, *To Sir With Love* and *The Blackboard Jungle*—has there been such an engaging story targeting the importance of the student-teacher bond. The focus has always been on the classroom from the point of the view of the teacher. Finally, *Heroes* brings to light what the student in the back row sees.

Two generations have passed since teachers were celebrated in books and films. The author hopes to refocus the nation's priorities on the importance of education and reignite a passion for educators to willingly serve in the daunting capacity as mentor and role model. "I may not live off of big commission checks anymore," Stefania notes, "but the rewards of making a difference in my community and seeing my students achieve what they never thought possible are priceless."



About the Author

After a long, successful career in television advertising, Stefania Shaffer gave up her six-figure commission checks in order to give something back to her community. Ms. Shaffer earned her Teaching Credential from San Francisco State University and is now teaching English Language Arts to seventh-graders.

A writer for most of her adult life, with credits in writing courses from Stanford, Stefania is also the author of two plays, and a non-fiction narrative slated

for release in June 2013 on the daunting role of being the adult child coming home to care for an elderly parent until the very end. She currently resides in northern California.

The key selling points of the book include:

- The book fondly captures the author's own experiences of teachers who had a profound influence in her life used as a baseline; other teacher characters represent the thirteen styles of teachers we meet in every classroom across the country;
- Promotes the importance of teachers as strong role models for students;
- Identifies teachers as the heroes they really are and why there is a need for more;
- The importance of strong role models for students in public schools;
- Enables parents and students to share their own student/teacher relationships;
- Helps students understand that teachers are as individual as they are.

(*Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes* by Stefania Shaffer; ISBN: 0-9772325; \$14.95; soft cover: 5.5 x 8.5; 160-pages, with Discussion Questions; PRESSMAN BOOKS; Available through [Amazon](#), [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and author-direct at stefaniashaffer.com)

Title: HEROES DON'T ALWAYS WEAR CAPES

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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

WHY DID TV AD EXEC GIVE UP SIX-FIGURE SALARY FOR JOB IN CLASSROOM?

Here's one you won't find on the SAT. Question: What do you call someone who would give up a glamorous job in television advertising with a six-figure salary to become a teacher? **Answer:** A Hero.

No, it's not a trick question, but you do have to wonder why anybody—let alone someone who was earning big bucks—would want to choose teaching as a profession at a time when schools are under microscopic scrutiny to improve test scores and kids are coming to class armed with pistols, knives and shotguns.

"I know people though I was crazy to give up my career for the classroom," says Stefania Shaffer. "I simply tell them, "I may not be rich, but I'm now enriched."

Stefania Shaffer had figured she would carve out an upwardly mobile path in corporate America after graduating from Brigham Young University with a degree in Communications. But after several reminders that life is short, she decided something was missing. "I wanted to make a difference in people's lives, to help them become the best they could be."

So, after working 12 years selling television advertising, she chucked it all to go back to school to become a public school teacher. She earned her Teaching Credential from San Francisco State University and Stefania now finds herself surrounded by seventh-graders rather than corporate sponsors.

"Every day, I can see the impact I'm having on the lives of these kids," says Stefania. "It's wonderful and humbling. It is a daunting responsibility to know that I am leaving an impression."

Ms. Shaffer is so enthusiastic about her newfound profession and the relationship between students and teachers that she decided to put it all down on paper. The

result is a new book, *Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes*, which fondly recalls the author's own experiences of influential teachers and brings to light the importance of having role models in our nation's schools. The fictional characters built into this story represent the thirteen styles of teachers you will meet in any classroom, in any school, in any city.

Not since the classics—*Up the Down Staircase*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, *To Sir With Love* and *The Blackboard Jungle*—has there been such an engaging story targeting the importance of the student-teacher bond. To quote title character from *Miss Jean Brodie*: “Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life.” The focus has always been on the classroom from the point of view of the teacher. Finally, *Heroes* brings to light what the student in the back row sees.

“It has been two whole generations since teachers were celebrated in books and films,” says Stefania. “It made me wonder about our priorities in our homes and our country. Nothing is more important than education. I may not live off of big commission checks anymore, but the rewards of making a difference in my community and seeing my students achieve what they never thought possible are priceless.”

Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes is a must-read for students, teachers, and parents—in fact, anyone concerned about public education and helping students find heroes in their educators. After all, our teachers are the ones on the frontlines. They are the ones who come to the rescue of our kids, whether preparing them for jobs, teaching them new subjects, saving them from bullies, turning them on to new possibilities in their lives, or helping them navigate the often choppy waters of pop culture or the influences of the Internet.

“I am inspired by the heroes who taught me unforgettable lessons and I pay tribute to them with every teaching moment,” says Stefania. “School districts who have purchased this book for their teachers hope to remind them about the daunting position of being a role model. The message of the book is what kids learn from your classroom may not have anything to do at all with your lesson plans. It is the connection, or the dis-connection that students remember through their lifetime. From this story, teachers can take heart in knowing that for that one kid, you just might be the best part of his day.”

A writer for most of her adult life, with credits in writing courses from Stanford, Stefania is also the author of two plays, and a non-fiction narrative released in July 2013 on the daunting role of being the adult child coming home to care for an elderly parent until the very end. She currently resides in northern California.

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TALKING POINTS

What made you give up such a successful career in television advertising and a six-figure salary to become a teacher?

I will always value the experience and I am proud of that career and its financial rewards. But, as time passed, I began to think that it couldn't all be just about the money. I wondered where I was going to leave my mark on society. I wanted to give something back to my community. Now, as a teacher, every single day I can see the impact I have on the lives of my students and it's a wonderful and humbling feeling. My seventh-graders are filled with a sense of accomplishment and I like knowing they might have it a little easier in life because they can learn from my experiences.

Surely there must have been people who thought you were crazy to give up the money.

Absolutely, but I think it was worth it. I am lucky I had such an extraordinary group of students my first year. That teaching year was one of the best I have ever had. Thankfully, the second group I had did not come first, or else I would have returned to corporate America. I don't cash big commission checks anymore, but the rewards for my students and me are priceless.

What compelled you to write this book?

I received a letter from a former student sharing some very kind words about what she remembered from my class and I realized kids take away lessons that are not always part of our plans. Education is so important and the relationship between students and teachers is so pivotal, yet it has been two whole generations since teachers were celebrated in books and films. I wanted to put into words a story based on how memorable teachers influenced my own life. That was where I started, but the story is fictional because I got creative in constructing thirteen types of teachers we meet in every classroom, on any school campus, in any city.

Do you think your book will elevate the status of teachers?

I believe there are only thirteen styles of teachers we meet in the classroom. I hope teachers will read this book to discover which teaching style is their own. Early in our careers, teachers are encouraged to always self-reflect. I think this book will inspire teachers to look at the characters who are the real hero teachers and find pieces to emulate. Most teachers on any campus serve as heroes who come to the rescue of our kids, whether preparing them for jobs, teaching them new subjects, saving them from bullies, turning them on to new possibilities in their lives, or helping them navigate the often choppy waters of pop culture or the influences of the Internet. I feel the book brings to light the importance of having real role models in our nation's schools. And someone with real heart and soul will find a way to

afford serving in this capacity, a rare breed of career that has such a low commensurate pay but expects an inordinate amount from educators.

Who should read your book?

Teachers should read it for the reminder that for the one child sitting in the back of your class, you just might be the best part of his day. Parents should read it as a way to talk to their kids about the teachers who made an impact in their own life, and how we should value education and educators, and what we should expect from them. Students older than sixth grade should read it as a reminder to thank a teacher. Our greatest reward is to know we helped you in some way.

Do you have a particular message for students? And for teachers?

I think it is important to understand that their teacher is human and has a unique personality just like they do. For the teachers, the message is to be aware that what students are taking away from our classroom ultimately has very little to do with our lesson plans, and everything to do with the connection, or dis-connection, we have made with them. I hope my book opens up dialogue in the home for parents and their kids to talk about school and the teachers who have influenced their lives.

Do you see your book surviving the test of time?

Yes, I think it will have a long shelf life. It offers a different message to each reader for every stage of life. I want it to rank right up there with the classics for future generations to enjoy.

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PRAISE AND ENDORSEMENTS

“An authentic picture of a teacher’s life...whoever went to school will immediately recognize incidents and types of teachers in this spirited book any student will be able to identify with.”—Dr. Robert L. McCaffrey, Superintendent, Galt (CA) School District

“Through laughter and tears, this book reminds teachers that we teach...to the heart and soul of our students.” —Jerrianna Boer, Principal, Modesto (CA) School District

“Inspiring...humorous...riveting...this book will make you laugh, cry, and reminisce about childhood adventures.”—Kathy Nelson, Teacher, Elk Grove (CA) Unified School District

"A witty, heartwarming, can't-put-it-down plunge into the life of a character we can all relate to." --Aimee Walsh, "Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America"

"An authentic picture of a teacher’s life..." --Dr. Robert L. McCaffrey, Superintendent, Galt (CA) School District

"...so rich in humor that you can open it anywhere and smile..." --Tonja Kendrick, Marriage and Family Therapist

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