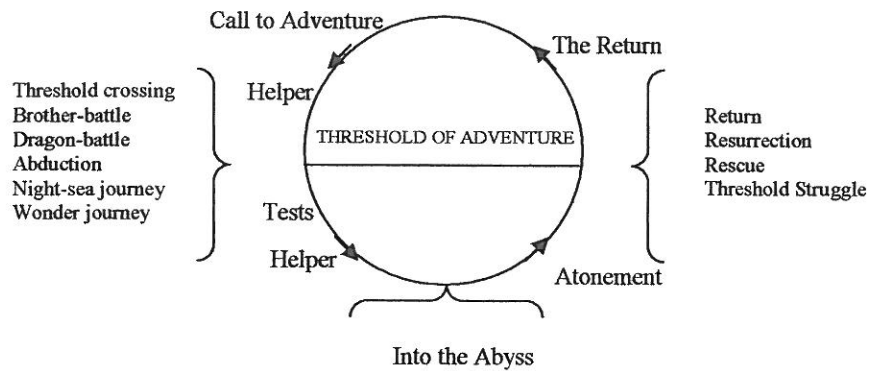


The Hero's Adventure



Mythological heroes take great journeys: to slay Medusa, to kill the minotaur, to find the golden fleece. It's the pattern of life, growth and experience -- for all of us. We see it reflected everywhere, from a television comedy to the great works of literature to the experiences in our own lives. The journey is a process of self-discovery and self-integration, of maintaining balance and harmony in our lives. As with any process of growth and change, a journey can be confusing and painful, but it brings opportunities to develop confidence, perspective and understanding. Understanding the Journey pattern can help us understand the literature us read, the movies us see, and the experiences which shape your life

The Call

The Call invites the hero into the adventure, offers us the opportunity to face the unknown and gain something of physical or spiritual value. We may choose willingly to undertake the quest, or we may be dragged into it unwillingly. We often have a guide or a "helper" throughout the journey.

The Threshold

Once called to the adventure, we must pass over the Threshold. The Threshold is the "jumping off point" for the adventure. Once past the threshold, however, we enter the unknown, a world filled with challenges and dangers. We need to understand, too, that the journey is ours. Our mentor and helpers can assist and point the way, but they cannot take the journey for us. The challenge is ours, must be ours if we are to benefit from it and grow.

Appendix #16a

The Tests

Once past the Threshold, we begin the journey into the unknown. On our quest, we face a series of challenges or temptations. One of our greatest tests on the journey is to differentiate real helpers from "tempters." Tempters try to pull us away from our path. They use fear, doubt or distraction. We must rely on our sense of purpose and judgment and the advice of our mentor to help us recognize true helpers.

Into the Abyss

When we reach the Abyss, we face the greatest challenge of the journey. The challenge is so great at this point that we must surrender ourselves completely to the adventure and become one with it. In the Abyss we must face our greatest fear, and we must face alone. As we conquer the Abyss and overcome our fears, our transformation becomes complete. The final step in the process is a moment of death and rebirth: a part of us dies so that a new part can be born. Part of the Transformation process is a Revelation, a sudden, dramatic change in the way we think or view life. This change in thinking is crucial because it makes us truly a different person.

The Atonement

After we have been transformed, we go on to achieve Atonement, that is we are "at-one" with our new self. We have incorporated the changes caused by the Journey and we are fully "reborn."

The Return

After Transformation and Atonement, we face the final stage of our journey: our Return to everyday life. Upon our return, we discover our gift, which has been bestowed upon us based on our new level of skill and awareness. We may become richer or stronger, we may become a great leader, or we may become enlightened spiritually.

Adapted from The Hero With a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

Appendix #16b