The Hero’s Journey

Eight Step Transformation

• The Separation
  1. The Call
  2. The Threshold (with guardians, helpers, and mentors)

• Initiation and Transformation
  3. The Challenges
  4. The Abyss
  5. The Transformation
  6. The Revelation
  7. The Atonement

• The Return
  8. The Return (with a Gift)

The Separation

1. The Call
   • Many forms:
     – Something taken; quest is to reclaim it.
     – Senses that there is something lacking; must find which is missing.
     – Something is not permitted to members of his/her society; he/she goes to win these rights for his/her people.
     – Save or restore honor; for self, for family, for country

2. The Threshold
   • Once called to adventure, must pass over Threshold.
     – Interface between the known and the unknown.
   • Threshold Guardians
     – People, beings, situations which block passage into the journey
     – Two functions: 1) Protect us from journeys before we are ready; 2) Once ready, they step aside and point the way into the journey
   • The Helper
     – At the threshold and often later during the journey
     – Provides assistance or direction.
     – Often comes in the form of a “divine” gift (i.e. talisman) which helps in challenges ahead.
   • The Mentor or Guide
     – Most important helper
     – Mentor keeps the initiate focused on the goal and give stability and/or a psychological foundation for when the danger is greatest.
     – Can appear throughout the journey.
     – Often appear at most opportune time like when the initiate is about to be killed.

The Initiation

3. The Challenges
   • After passing the threshold
   • Journey from the known to the unknown
     – Can be physical but is often psychological
   • Faces challenges and temptations
     – Challenges become increasingly difficult, testing him/her to the utmost, forcing him/her to change and grow.
     – Leads into transformation
     – Challenges seem to highlight the initiates biggest weaknesses or fears; these are the things he/she must learn to overcome.
       • If he/she can’t overcome these, the adventure ends and the initiate turns back
4. The Abyss
   - The biggest challenge of the journey
   - Must overcome his/her greatest fears, and must face them alone.
     - He/She must “slay the dragon” which often takes the shape of something he dreads or needs to resolve.
   - If not ready or has a character flaw, the challenge can beat him/her. Or maybe he/she cannot surrender to the quest/adventure and must retreat.
     - Unless he/she tries again, his/her life becomes a shadow of what it should be, and he/she will become dissatisfied and bitter.

5. Transformation
   - Conquers Abyss and overcomes fears, his/her transformation is complete.
   - Often the final step is a moment of death and rebirth: a part of initiate dies so that the new part can be born.
     - Fear must die to make way for courage; ignorance must die for the birth of enlightenment. Dependency must die so independence and power can grow.

6. Revelation is the sudden dramatic change in the way one thinks or views life.
   - Usually during or after the Abyss

7. The Atonement
   - After initiate has been transformed, he/she goes on to achieve Atonement
   - He/she is “At One” with new self and life.
   - Is fully “reborn”
   - Initiate is in harmony with life and the world.
   - The imbalance that sent him/her on the journey has been corrected (until the next call).
   - Initiate is truly a “hero” and is content at last

The Return (To the known world)

8. The Return
   - Final stage of journey
   - Essence of the return is to begin contributing to one’s society
   - In mythology, the initiate may return as a great hero because he/she has saved or renewed his/her community in some way. Others return to create a city, nation, or religion.
   - When things don’t go smoothly:
     - Initiate returns with a spiritual message but the message is rejected, he/she is shunned or even crucified for his/her ideal.
     - Initiate runs the risk of losing his/her new understanding, or having it corrupted by putting him/herself back in the same situation/environment he/she left earlier
     - Can become disillusioned or frustrated and leave society to be on his/her own.

The Journey is a Map
   - Originated with ancient myths and legends but is still relevant today with each and every one of us.
   - Is the basis for almost all books, plays, and movies. They are fictional depictions of the Hero’s Journey
   - The Journey gives you a means for understanding and benefiting from these fictional adventures.
   - While the characters aren’t real, the journey they take and the challenges they face are reflections of the real journeys and challenges we all face in life. We can learn from their experiences.
   - The Journey is a pattern we follow in our own lives.
   - Understanding the pattern (archetype) can help you achieve wisdom, growth, and independence.