

## Quick Reference - Elements of the Heroic Journey

ASPECTS OF THE JOURNEY	EXPLANATION
<i>THE HERO OR INITIATE, The protagonist</i>	The initiate is the future hero - a person who needs, or desires to change and grow and will display the courage and strength to do so. The initiate has great strengths or skills and also has hamartia (greatest weakness) and the strengths and hamartia will be integral in the transformative journey. In movies, books or storytelling, the main character is usually the primary hero, although there may be many heroes in the story, each on their own journey.
<i>THE ORDINARY WORLD, The world of common day, The Preparation, "Once Upon A Time..."</i>	THE ORDINARY WORLD is the "known" realm. The hero may be gathering skills, people and/or a growing discomfort that will prepare the initiate to accept the call when it occurs. During this time, the initiate is not usually aware of the problem - internal or external - that s/he faces.
<i>THE CALL TO ADVENTURE, The Call</i>	There is usually an external and an internal call. The external is a problem that is usually visible to others. Movies focus more directly on the external challenge. The internal are the emotional and intellectual challenges the initiate/hero may experience that is unseen by others - at first. <b>THIS IS THE TRUE BEGINNING OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CRISIS.</b> A HERALD is often the person who delivers the call. Generally, remaining the same will become impossible, for the hero. Situations in life may thrust initiates out of their "comfort zone." An internal longing or yearning or a growing sense of dissatisfaction in some aspect of life may lead the initiate to seek out a new way or a new life. <b>THIS IS PART OF THE SEPARATION FROM THE KNOWN STAGE.</b>
<i>REFUSAL of The Call, Resisting the Call</i>	After the initiates receive a nudge to take a step, to change their life or their ways, s/he may <b>REFUSE THE CALL</b> . Because of fear (fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear of failure or success) or not knowing what to do, the initiate may remain in that refusal state for a long period of time (even a life time). Often, a sense of restriction in life is a part of our constant refusal to step across the threshold. The refusal does not always take place. Some initiates are more willing than others to move into action. If refusal occurs for a long time, there is often stagnation, disintegration and death (emotionally, physically or spiritually). <b>THIS IS PART OF THE SEPARATION FROM THE KNOWN STAGE.</b> Resistance is a normal part of change and shows us important information about our fears.
<i>CROSSING THE (FIRST) THRESHOLD, Taking the Leap, The First Step, Threshold to Adventure</i>	<b>CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD</b> is the moment the initiate takes the leap or a definitive step into the unknown. Sometimes the moment of crossing the threshold creates an immediate sense of relief and release. After the initial acceptance, there may be a brief honeymoon period before the <b>ROAD OF TRIALS</b> . This can also be a moment of standing at the crossroads. There can be <b>INVOLUNTARY</b> Crossings (i.e. experiences where there is little or no control over, such as most traumatic events) or there can be <b>VOLUNTARY</b> Crossings. <b>THIS IS PART OF THE INTO THE UNKNOWN STAGE.</b>
<i>THE JOURNEY</i>	<b>THE JOURNEY</b> is separation and departure from the known into the unknown realm. The initiate may develop metaphors by imagining the terrain (i.e. "wild, alien and unfriendly; a desert or wilderness; a forest; a countryside full of dangers; or the wild and treacherous sea.") can be helpful to conceptualize the challenges and the skills needed for the journey. <b>THIS IS PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.</b>
<i>ROAD OF TRIALS, Arrival in the unknown, Frustrations, Boulders, Challenges, Tests</i>	After the initial <b>CROSSING THE THRESHOLD</b> , there is often a honeymoon period where things may be easy and there is a sense of relief. After the initial arrival to the unknown, the initiate experiences a myriad of frustrations, challenges and tests. During the road of trials, the initiate moves from immature behaviors or ideals to mature and developmentally advanced behaviors - if successful. Each subsequent test prepares the initiate to face the Supreme Ordeal. These uncomfortable experiences are pivotal to growth, strength and resilience. <b>THIS IS PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.</b>

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<i>TEMPTATIONS</i>	Most journeys are fraught with temptations - often temptations involving instant physical, sexual or financial gratification or fame, but are often in conflict with the values or goal of the journey and act as a distraction for the initiate. The temptations may tap into the core internal "Dragons." Sometimes the temptation is to do what is easiest, but it will eventually make the journey more uncomfortable and intensifies the consequences or delays the transformation. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD</i>	This is a spiritual and/or metaphysical aspect of the journey and may be a time that people embrace their Higher Power, God or a religious tradition. It may also be a time where there is a sense of being guided by "Soul" or those who have gone on before. In movies, this has been shown by the crossing of the river Styx (in "What Dreams May Come") or decent into Hell. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>Wounds</i>	The wounds may be related to the spiritual or psychic wounds inflicted by others: such as abandonment, defectiveness and shame, etc. The wounds often become "the dragons." Traumatic life experiences often carry erroneous beliefs about self. Those beliefs may be the driving force of the initiate. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE, BELLY OF THE WHALE THE ABYSS, Night Sea Journey, Wilderness Wanderings,</i>	The intention of the APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE is preparation for the SUPREME ORDEAL. This is a break, a planning and preparing time. In Westerns the initiate/hero prepares for the gunfight; in war movies - they dress for battle; or in romantic comedies the character is getting ready for the big event or meeting. This is sometimes the point of no return and the initiate must rededicate to the mission or journey as they come face-to-face with the "giant," the bad guys, or the Supreme Ordeal. In life, the initiate may feel a sense of dread, excitement or apprehension about whether they are prepared for what comes next.
<i>THE SUPREME ORDEAL, Final Battle, Transformation, Place of Revelation</i>	THE SUPREME ORDEAL is the pivotal part of the Hero's Journey. It is often the initiate's greatest fear. The final ordeals of the journey often come when the initiate is nearly through with the lessons and another set of challenges come to him/her. The goal is within sight. During this part of the journey, the hero may be exhausted and tempted to give up. Pure grit, curiosity (about the ending) and tenaciousness help him/her to push through the last part of this journey. Sometimes, a companion on the journey may be essential during this phase. The initiate may be alone or feels like they are alone on the journey. This may be the most frightening and challenging of the tests and frustrations. The abyss is the lowest point, the most difficult place and is also the pivotal place of transformation. This is the stage of death of the ego. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>THE (SECOND) CROSSING OF THE THRESHOLD</i>	Sometimes, THE SECOND CROSSING occurs prior to the supreme ordeal in the form of a second refusal. The initiate is often exhausted by this part of the journey and the journey isn't over yet. In movies, there is often a plan and preparation to outwit the enemy in order to return. The initiate sometimes doesn't wish to return to the ordinary world, but must.
<i>ATONEMENT</i>	ATONEMENT is the beginning of the integration of the transformed self or a rebirth by being "at-one" with his/her new self. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>SEIZING THE SWORD, Treasures, The Rewards, The lessons, The lessons, gifts, elixir, The Ultimate Boon, Achieving the Goal, Resurrection, The Blessing</i>	SEIZING THE SWORD can be the internal (and maybe external) resources coming into THIS journey (sometimes development began in previous journeys). The treasure may be the special talents, skills, gifts and special abilities, philosophies and more. After the journey or a pivotal phase of the journey, the lessons the initiate returns with are dependant on the type of journey. Journeys of loss may be due to death, divorce, job loss, health, innocence) or it may be a journey of completion (school, a marathon, etc.). Until the lessons or gifts are shared with others, the initiate is not yet a hero. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.

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<i>THE RETURN (to the known world), Final crossing (of this journey)</i>	The initiate RETURNS TO THE ORIGINAL WORLD transformed/changed, having experienced a rebirth and an awakening. To be "reborn" in the heroes journey, s/he may have to be "cleansed" of the last ordeal. THIS IS THE RETURN STAGE.
<i>APPLYING THE BOON, Life-renewing goals</i>	APPLYING THE BOON occurs upon returning from the journey, when the initiate finds s/he must do something different with their life. The goals are end-results- oriented of may be accomplished or a philosophy or message to be passed on to others. APPLYING THE BOON is the "pay it forward" part of the journey. The gift can be given to the community, humanity, the world or the hero's loved ones. What the hero learns has the opportunity to positively impacts others. THIS IT PART OF THE INITIATION STAGE.
<i>THE HERO'S COMPANIONS</i>	Along our life journey, heroes have COMPANIONS - others who are an integral part of the journey. Sometimes the "others" are those who are known, strangers and or may be internal "parts" of the one journeying. The initiate is never alone in the journey, although s/he may feel that way.
<i>THE HERALD</i>	The HERALD may be the one who CALLS the initiate to action. They may also act as a MENTOR or other role. The HERALD may also reside within the initiate through dreams, insights or visions that encourage the initiate to take a journey. An example of a HERALD may be a physician giving information about a pending health crisis. The HERALD presents the challenge. In movies, the HERALD might be the voice in <i>Field of Dreams</i> "If you build it, they will come." May be a message from God or a Higher Power during a time of prayer or contemplation. In <i>Romancing the Stone</i> it was a treasure map which showed up.
<i>THRESHOLD GUARDIAN(s), gatekeepers</i>	THRESHOLD GUARDIANS are really helpers, though they may first appear as people who wish to "rain on our parade." Perceived as adversaries, they test the initiate to see how committed s/he is to accepting The Call. They may come across as naysayers, but when the initiate is truly ready, they generally will step aside. Their intention is usually to protect the initiate from harm, from impulsiveness or wish to make sure the initiate has thought through the next step thoroughly. Viewed negatively, at times, their role is important in the journey.
<i>THE MENTOR(s)</i>	Usually a more experienced person and often the main HELPER on the journey. A true MENTOR is not attached to the outcome of the initiate's journey. The mentor may also be an internalized "voice" - such as conscience, life code or empowered belief system.
<i>HELPERS, ALLIES, Teachers, Guides, Shaman, Supernatural aid, the sidekick, the trickster</i>	HELPERS on the journey can be actual people, spiritual leaders, or God (or gods), teachers, characters (living, dead or fictional), prophets, friends, etc. Helpers are there to support, to encourage, to provide a sense of or an actual place of rest. They may give guidance to keep the initiate on track through love, acceptance or advice. Can be internal or external. In movies, usually perceived as an external - a person, animal or creature. Heralds can also be helpers or mentors. TheTRICKSTER can also be the sidekick. Tricksters can see the absurdity of the situation and may use humor or irony to point it out. The trickster is not satisfied with the status quo and wants to change the system. Allies, shaman and teachers are usually perceived as positive helpers on the journey. The trickster sometimes may be perceived as picking on or complicating the situation. Supernatural aid can be God, Higher Power, The Divine, Angels, Guides, those loved ones who have passed away. In movies, the Supernatural aid may be shown as wizards, a bold voice from the sky, fairy godmothers or a witch like "Glinda the Good Witch" in the Wizard of Oz.
<i>THE TRICKSTER</i>	The role of the TRICKSTER is to disrupt the status quo. In movies they may be portrayed as Sidekicks, mentors (particularly in romantic comedies) or even the hero - if the hero is trying to infiltrate the enemy camp. Examples of tricksters: Br'er Rabbit, Bugs Bunny or Road Runner. The trickster serves to cut down big egos and may do so with laughter. They may draw attention to incongruence. May manifest in humor or slips of tongue.

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<i>THE SHADOW</i>	THE SHADOW can represent our most unhealthy part of our psyche and has the power to destroy us. It can also symbolize our greatest fears and phobias. In drama, the Shadow challenges the hero and presents a worthy opponent, thus bringing out the best of the hero. "To use Star Wars as an example, the Shadow is the Dark Side, personified by Darth Vader." (quote from Stuart Voytilla). The psychological function of THE SHADOW powers repressed feelings. In dreams can be portrayed as monsters. The shadow can be all the things we don't like about ourselves. The Shadow may present with other masks - such as the THRESHOLD GUARDIAN or the SHAPESHIFTER (example in movies - Hannibal Lecter in Silence of the Lambs and also becomes a mentor to Jodie Foster's character).
<i>STRANGERS</i>	The strangers on our journey can begin as strangers and then become a part of a community (i.e. - survivors; the recovering community). Strangers may take on the mask of any of the roles listed (i.e. trickster, allies and enemies, etc.)
<i>SHAPESHIFTER(s)</i>	A person or character which is changeable and hard to read. THE SHAPESHIFTER is meant to keep the initiate off balance. Examples: Glenn Close's character in Fatal Attraction. The Shapeshifter can also be the internal aspects of self: i.e. addict, victim/survivor, etc. These are sometimes our "Life Traps" or schema that we have carried for years (decades). Often the foil is there to tell us "we can't" do what we are trying to accomplish. In literature, these can be portrayed as large and seemingly powerful creatures. The Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of who we are. Can sometimes be our shadow side. In movies, this is usually another person (or creature) who the audience has a difficult time figuring out if they are the good guy or bad guy. The focus of the shapeshifter influence is for the hero to trust him/herself and to be able to trust others.
<i>THE WHOLE</i>	THE WHOLE is often a spiritual or universal community. This can be a sense that we are all "One" or inter-connected. This is often the seeming flip side of the stranger section, but now with a sense of love and acceptance.
<i>INITIATE'S GREATEST STRENGTHS</i>	Possession of gifts and talents which assist and sustain the hero on the journey. These gifts and talents are INTERNAL qualities: such as the gift of discernment, teaching, tenacity, courage, intuition, etc.
<i>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</i>	Skills are usually the EXTERNAL abilities the Hero possesses. Some SKILLS will be indicated on resumes (i.e. ABILITY to develop, to manage, to organize, etc.) or in their general life.
<i>Sacred or secular BELIEF</i>	These are BIG PICTURE beliefs and/or Myths that we live by - such as "Life is an adventure," "My Higher Power is always with me," "Everything happens for a reason," "Everyone is my teacher," etc.
<i>HEROIC FLAW, the initiate's greatest weakness</i>	The heroic flaw is usually in polarity with the greatest strengths and talents.
<i>LIFE TRAPS, Schema, irrational or self-defeating beliefs</i>	The life beliefs that individuals have, which come from repetitive life events or influences. These LIFE TRAPS often cause people to respond to stress, others and self in ways that are self-defeating.