THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Follow the steps here to write your own Hero Quest story. The Stages of the Hero Quest are adapted from Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces.

The Great Adventure

Primitive man knew life as a cycle: birth and childhood (dependency), adulthood (independence), and death (a return to the eternal). He also saw life itself as an unending series of smaller cycles. This awareness of life's cycles is reflected in the hero(ine)'s journey which is seen repeatedly in mythology and literature.

Like a rite of passage, the journey requires a separation from the known world; an initiation to a new level of awareness, skill and responsibility; and a return. This pattern is not the invention of the ancient storytellers. Myths are metaphors for a process of growth and discovery which is a part of the human process.

The journey can be divided into eight stages. Each of these stages must be completed if the initiate is to become a hero.

Part I: The Separation

1. THE CALL

The Call to Adventure is the point in a person's life when they are first given notice that everything is going to change, whether they know it or not.

*Questions to help frame this step:*
- What stage of life is he or she in?
- What do you see coming next for this person?
- What would cause the person to leave this stage, to "leave home"?
- Is a possible refusal of the Call followed by acceptance?
- What is the person doing when the call comes? Is it an accident, a blunder, something planned, or hoped for? Is it anticipated or dreaded?

2. THE THRESHOLD

This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known.

*Questions to help frame this step:*
- What world is being left; what world is being entered?
- What or who is guarding the threshold?
- What obstacles must the hero(ine) overcome to truly begin the journey? Limits of home or society, limits of personality, limits of perception, physical limits?
- What events cause the person to cross the threshold?
- What is the threshold and how does the person cross it?

3. THE DESCENT

This stage represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. It is sometimes described as the person's lowest point, but it is actually the point when the person is between or transitioning between worlds and selves. The separation has been made, or is being made, and there is recognition of a voyage to a new world. The experiences that will shape the new world and self will begin shortly, or may begin with this experience which is often symbolized by something dark, unknown and frightening. By entering this stage, the person shows their willingness to undergo
a metamorphosis, to die to him or herself.

**Questions to help frame this step:**
- Is the person ready to transform? Does he or she enter the descent willingly, or is he or she thrust or captured in that place?
- What self is being left? The self of childhood? Of incomplete or unfulfilled adulthood? An outgrown self?
- What self is the person moving toward?
- What will symbolize the separation between the old or known world and the new in the story?

### Part II: The Initiation

#### 4. TESTS AND ORDEALS

The tests, tasks, or ordeals usually come in a series (three) that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests.

**Questions to help frame this step:**
- Given this person's background and experience, what kinds of trials or ordeals make sense for him or her?
- What would be truly challenging for this person?
- What does the person fear and how will this fear be represented to him or her?
- What does the person consider to be obstacles to progress or growth?
- What strategies, skills, insights, known or unknown strengths or talents, etc., does the person use or develop to survive or resolve these trials?
- What assistance, seen or unseen, does the person have or receive to deal with these trials?

#### 5. INTO THE ABYSS

The abyss represents the greatest challenge of the journey. Usually the initiate must face the abyss alone and overcome his/her greatest fears. The challenge is so great that the initiate must give him/herself over completely to the quest, and lose him/herself in the adventure. Here is where the initiate must "slay the dragon". The dragon often is the thing the hero most dreads and needs to overcome.

**Questions to help frame this step:**
- How does the person resolve him or herself with his/her greatest fear?
- What "dragon" must the person slay?
- What must the hero sacrifice to achieve this greatest challenge?

#### 6. THE TRANSFORMATION

As a result of successfully meeting the challenge of the abyss, the hero is transformed. The transformation is the moment of death and rebirth. Often the transformation takes the form of a revelation, a discovery or insight about oneself or one's culture. This revelation involves a change in consciousness, a change in the way the hero(ine) views life.

**Questions to help frame this step:**
- Given this person's background and experience, what transformation has the hero(ine) achieved?
- What does this person know or experience now that is beyond good and evil, male and female, life and death?
- Does the person give him or herself a moment to bask in the glow of what has been achieved?

#### 7. THE ATONEMENT

The atonement involves a process of accepting the new transformed self. The transformation has brought the initiate into harmony with life and the world. S/he may become stronger, a better leader, or spiritually enlightened. Also, the goal of the quest has been achieved. All previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step.
Questions to help frame this step:
• Given this person's background and experience, what would be the goal of his or her quest?
• Was there a stated goal of the quest? If so, has it changed? Has the person learned more or less than he or she expected?
• What are the rewards of this person's journey?

Part III: The Return

8. THE RETURN
The return to everyday life is one of the most difficult stages of the journey. The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world. This is usually extremely difficult. The hero(ine) may find frustration when her old world does not understand or accept her new found life view.

Questions to help frame this step:
• What marks the person's return to normal life?
• What challenges does the person face in integrating the experience of the quest into his or her life?
• Can/does the person share his or her experiences and the wisdom gained from them with others?
• How do others receive the person upon the return?

See also: The Hero's Journey, a project of the Maricopa Center for Learning & Instruction (MCLI) and the South Mountain Community College Storytelling Institute, for more in-depth directions. <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/smc/journey/>
Summaries and questions to help frame steps are taken from this site.

The Details:

1.) Map the Stages of your Hero Quest. Use words, symbols, pictures, and color.
   • place stages in an oval, or connect with lines, a road, or a ribbon
   • use sentences or phrases to note the progression of the story.
   • place the title in the center.

2.) Draft: Write the story. Minimum of 2 pages, 400 words. Label each stage, in the paper or the margin. Peer Edit the draft; turn in Draft on due date with edit sheet attached.

3.) Final copy: Use Manuscript Format, no Title Page but a title, a heading. May label with stages of quest.
   Save in Mac Lab files in folder with your name for your period. Give it a simple name, no punctuation, no caps. Due Date______________________________

We will create a Hero Quest Web Page, as our Home page. Two other pages will be linked off of this; one will have the Map (scanned in), the other the Hero Quest you have saved in Word, imported into a web page.

To place your finalized Hero Quest story into the web page, copy and paste it into a blank page, save that as quest.html within your folder. Your story will lose its formatting, so check the format after you’ve copied and pasted it. Do not copy the heading, but do include the title.