



Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey Archetype As A Leadership Guide

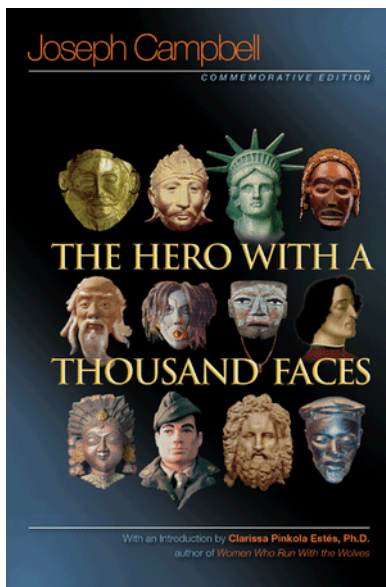
One of the most important tools to assist with guiding transformation throughout a leadership career, in my experience, has to be Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey Framework. I have personally used this as a guide in many of my most complex and difficult circumstances. Learning through experience, the rhythm and features of the journey have been such a help in making sense of what was happening to me and how to make the most of whatever circumstances arise. Slowly, very slowly, little by little, I have learned to trust its archetypal rhythm and be observant and attentive to the key features as they arise. Many times, being able to reflect on unfolding happenings through the lens of the Hero's Journey Framework has made such a difference in being able to survive various leadership challenges and make sense of them for myself and others that I was working with at the same time. A key feature has been a mindful approach to the transformative gifts that always arise in the midst of the most difficult of circumstances. The Hero's Journey framework is the best tool that I know of that can act as a guide for an intentional transformational experience.

It is therefore not surprising that The Hero's Journey features in a very strong and embedded way in the Guiding Transformation Program. All clients undertaking the Guiding Transformation Program and/or Depth Coaching are encouraged to learn the rhythm of The Hero's Journey and to engage in the reflective practice of mindfully observing the archetypal features and sharing their thoughts about their own journeys with others.

In the long run, one of the most influential books of the 20th Century may turn out to be Joseph Campbell's THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES. Campbell exposed the pattern or archetype for all hero myths. The pattern is always the same. Retold endlessly in infinite varieties. He found that all storytelling, consciously or not, follows the ancient patterns of myth and that all stories, from the crudest jokes to the highest flights of literature, can be understood in terms of the hero myth.

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The theme of the hero myth is universal, occurring in every culture and in every time. It is as infinitely varied as the human race itself, and yet its basic form remains the same. An incredibly tenacious set of elements that spring in endless repetition from the deepest reaches of the mind of man.

When you tell someone a story, do you plan it out beforehand so that it will sound good? Do you carefully plot what you will say, in a specific order? Or does the story find a way of telling itself. The plot coming from within you -from an inherent understanding of story structure?

This is what American mythologist, anthropologist, writer and professor Joseph Campbell (1904- 1987) was interested in. Inspired as a child by Native American culture and artefacts, he spent his life comparing myths and religions from around the

world in an attempt to understand humanity and its fascination with stories.

The Hero's Journey is a pattern of narrative identified by Joseph Campbell that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual and psychological development. It describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilisation.

Stages and Phases

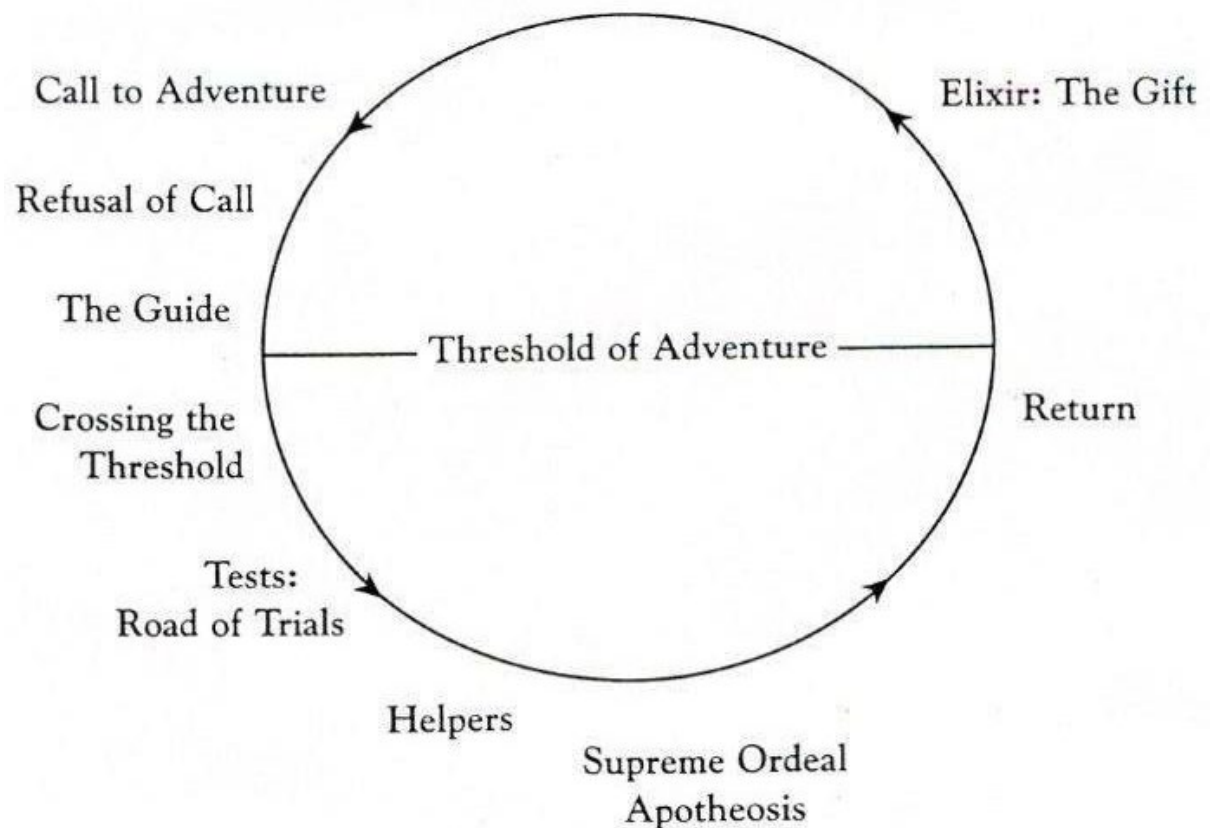
They are always stories of going forth, death and return. There are many Hero's Journey patterns that vary from as few as three stages (Life, Death, Resurrection) through to others with as many as 20 stages and features.

This one with 12 has:

1. The Ordinary World
2. The Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting with the Mentor
5. Crossing the Threshold
6. Test, Allies and Enemies
7. Approach (to the inmost cave)
8. The Ordeal
9. The Reward
10. The Road Back
11. The Resurrection
12. Return with the Elixir (back to the ordinary world)

The hero is introduced in his ordinary world where he receives the call to adventure. He is reluctant at first to cross the first threshold where he eventually encounters Tests, Allies and

Enemies. He reaches the Innermost Cave where he endures the Supreme Ordeal. He seizes the Sword or Treasure and is pursued on the Road Back to his world. He is resurrected and transformed by the experience. He Returns to his ordinary world with a treasure, boon or Elixir to benefit his world.



Archetypes Or Myths

- Recurring patterns of human behaviour
- Models of the workings of the human mind
- True maps of the psyche

Stories built on the model of the hero myth have universal appeal that can be felt by everyone. They deal with the child-like but universal questions: Who am I?, Where did I come from?, What is good and what is evil and What must I do about it? Where will I go when I die? What will tomorrow be like? Is there anybody else out there?

The idea embedded in mythology and identified by Campbell can be applied to understanding any human problem. They are a great key to life.

The Key Stages & Features

The Ordinary World:

The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history.

Call to Adventure:

Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress. This can be an internal unrest or the arrival of unrest from the outside.

Refusal of the Call:

The call to adventure is rejected once or many times in an attempt to stay in the Ordinary World .

Meeting with the Mentor:

The hero comes across a seasoned traveller of the worlds who give him or her training , equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

Crossing the Threshold:

At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

Tests, Allies and Enemies:

The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World and learns the conditions, unfamiliar rules and values.

The Approach:

Prior to facing the greatest fear or threat the hero enters a place or stage of great aloneness, carrying the burden of the imagined ordeal to come. Friends and Guides are often absent.

The Ordeal:

Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

The Reward:

The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.

The Road Back:

About three-fourths of the way through the story the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

The Resurrection:

At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more

complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

Return with the Elixir:

The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

Twenty Things I Have Learned To Support A Leadership Career

1 Unexpected or Unwanted

The Call to Adventure comes when least expected or wanted. The flow and order of usual life is disrupted. It might be the threat of external danger or an internal disquiet, or even anguish. It might also be the prospect of fame, fortune or treasure. It could also be an impetus for action to right a wrong or bring into being something to heal the world. The Call can come from deep within or be imposed into your seemingly peaceful world via external forces. Sometimes The Call is very loud and apparent. Other times it is a whisper that grows over time. Sometimes The Call comes loudly just once and never comes again if ignored. Other times it comes again and again in a relentless way. Sometimes The Call is to something attractive and noble. Most of the time The Call is to face or do something that provokes fear and dread. A Call to Adventure is often accompanied by thoughts such as 'Why me? 'Can't someone else do this?' 'I am not ready' 'I don't have what it takes to do this' 'What if I fail?'

2 Enneagram Journeys for Inner Work

Sometimes the quest or challenge of the Call to Adventure comes from within yourself. Sometimes the challenge arrives from the external world. The inner ones are often hidden from your view initially and uncovering them might even be part of your Hero's Journey. Psychotherapist and Enneagram expert Dr Beatrice Chestnut espouses the theory that throughout our lives we all have at least one Hero's Journey for each Enneagram type involving the challenge of facing and integrating the shadow of each Enneagram Type. She also believes that we are likely to repeat the psychic journey of our core Enneagram type repeated times and with more intensity. This is definitely true in my experience.

3 Never the Same Journey Twice

You never get to go on the same journey twice. That would be too easy. Strangely the Hero's Journey that you have been on before equips you to be ready to try the next one. It is a bit like mountain climbing. One thing leads to another and before you know it you are on a journey in the higher places where you could not have imagined that you could or would ever go.

4 Hero's Journeys Emerge in Response to either External and Internal Challenges, or Both.

'What is mine to do?' The nature of each Hero's Journey can change very significantly in response to the challenges you are facing in your external world but also your stage of development. Answering the critical vocational question of 'What is mine to do?' at regular stages throughout your life can open the door to the emergence of new adventures.

5 Archetypes to Support Your Journey

Different Hero's Journeys can be supported with different leadership tools and styles depending upon the situation, the demands on the Hero and stages of development. This is where the full cast of archetypal characters with their unique leadership strengths as presented in the PMAI can be utilised in creative ways to support the particular journey. Pearson in 'Persephone Rising' introduces us to four important

additional archetypes that can be utilised by leaders in their Heroic Journeys. Zeus, Demetrius, Persephone and Dionysus. Integrating the power and shadow of each of these archetypes can form part of a Hero's Journey and the transformative gifts from each of them can unleash new leadership powers. Such authentic situational leadership allows you to transform events and relationships by responding to the situation in which you find yourself

The Power of Zeus

The power to get things done and maintain a peaceful prosperous kingdom but with a need to balance the unleashing of your energy.

The Generous Nurturing heart of Demeter

Valuing the generous nurturing heart of Demeter and standing up for what you care about.

The Deepening Authenticity & Transformative Power of Persephone.

The deep authentic power of Persephone. Learning the way of transformation and making choices to realize your destiny doing life in a simpler way.

The Freedom of Dionysus

Expressing the freedom and joy of Dionysus. Living spontaneously. Experiencing life's great beauty and joy.

6 The Path of Descent is the Path of Transformation

You learn far more in difficult places. How I wish that this was not so. This includes the Road of Trials and encounters with Enemies, the Approach, the Cave, and the Supreme Ordeal. Unfortunately, this is where transformation is most likely to occur. The transformative power of pain and suffering, especially if we can find meaning in and through it. Theologian and Contemplative Mystic, Richard Rohr teaches that transformation can be achieved through contemplation and mindfulness but this is a time-consuming lengthy process requiring intense devotion and application. He teaches that the fastest way to transformation, unfortunately, is through great suffering or great love. Both are likely to be painful and intense.

7 The Magic of encounters with Synchronicity and Transcendence

The magic of serendipity, synchronicity, mystical encounters and transcendent experience is always present and heightened on a Hero's Journey. This is especially apparent in the darkest, lowest, and most alone places. Paradoxically this is where the most amazing, unexpected, and mysterious experiences take place. New insights emerge that are usually not possible in your real world. The 'dark night of the soul' experiences. These can be truly transformative and are often the pre-cursor to The Gift that emerges from The Hero's Journey in a form that is able to be brought back from the journey and shared with the world.

8 An Upside-Down World

Many things in the Hero's Journey landscape are upside down or Topsy-Turvey. You learn to Expect the Unexpected. Lucky Unlucky Who Can Tell. The worst thing becomes the best thing. Paying attention and noticing when Enemies have become Friends, when Friends have disappeared, when a Guide suddenly turns up in a form that you would not have imagined and when meaningful coincidences occur with encounters, events, resources, and pathways forward.

9 There is Always a Guide and Always a Helper. Do you Notice Them?

There is always a Guide and Helpers or Friends who are companions for at least part of your journey. They show up when least expected and often in forms that you would not have imagined. You just need to be still and pay attention. Opening your eyes to encounter what has emerged. Notice and be astonished. Guides and Friends are often not in an instantly recognisable form. They may not conform with your pre-existing expectations and requests. Sometimes they will be the last people you would expect or ever choose for yourself

10 There is Always a Transforming Gift

On a Hero's Journey there is always a Gift, some Treasure or Elixir. Once again this often takes the form of something unexpected and possibly not even initially recognised as a Treasure. However, in my experience the Gifts usually end up being so much better and more valuable than anything that could ever be imagined. The timing of their arrival often forms part of the Elixir. Many Gifts are the result of inner psychic transformative journeys integrating and transcending the shadow of Enneagram and Archetypal types. For example the Gift of courage out of fear and serenity out of anger/resentment.

11 Dark Luminosity

The times of extreme challenge, despair and suffering encountered on a Hero's Journey are often accompanied by a heightened empathy, resonance, and entrainment with other people. There can be a heightened awareness of the needs in others and resonance with their emotional and psychic state. There is often an unexplained magnetic attraction from others to connect with you. This often coincides with your own feelings of depletion and belief that you have nothing to offer. Clinical Psychologist and contemplative mystic James Finley calls this 'dark luminosity'. Right when you believe that you are broken and with nothing to give others seek you out and respond to you in more intensive ways than usual. These experiences heighten transcendent experiences of altered levels of consciousness and awareness.

12 There is Always a Return to Normal Life

You always eventually Return to normal life. In the middle of a Hero's Journey, you might find it difficult to imagine how this could happen, but it always does.

13 You Return Transformed

While you do Return, you are however never the same. You have been forever transformed by your journey. You carry with you your Gift for the world. Sometimes it takes a while, even years, to integrate the experience of a Hero's Journey and to identify and articulate the Gift.

14 A Seasoned Traveler Learns the Map

A well-practiced Hero's Journey traveller can get better at recognising the archetypal pattern of the stages and element of the Hero's Journey. When you realise that you are being called to yet another Adventure you can become more aware and alert for each of the stages establishing a contemplative practice that witnesses your Adventure as it unfolds. You then have the opportunity to participate in each of the stages in a deeper way with more capacity to be an observing witness. There is even sometimes and opportunity to deliberately slow the stages to mindfully increase learning, transcendence, and integrated transformation.

15 Shared Hero's Journeys

Is it possible to undertake a shared Hero's Journey? In my experience you can intentionally contract with others who are undertaking a shared Adventure involving an external challenge and agree to travel together. This might involve mindfully supporting and learning from each other through the stages of the

Adventure. In doing this you might simultaneously be a Hero in your own Journey but a Guide or Friend for others. You might even become a Gift to a fellow traveller. Acting as a Guide or Friend in a communal or shared Hero's Journey is a potentially intensive transformational experience and deeply privileged leadership work.

16 Never a Volunteer

Hero's Journeys mostly involve a call to go somewhere or do something that you would normally not volunteer to do. They are not innately attractive options. It doesn't seem to matter how experienced you are with Hero's Journeys, they never become more attractive.

17 Learning to Relax Into the Rhythm

As you learn the pattern of The Hero's Journey you can, however, learn to relax into the Journey and the inevitable stages. You can even learn to do the seemingly impossible and embrace the murky depths and the darkness. Face the metaphorical demons or dragons regardless of whether they come from your inner world or outside. You might even learn to intentionally slow down your Hero's Journey to deepen or prolong your experience, learning and transformation.

18 The Paradox of Pain

The darkest and most difficult places in your Hero's Journey are here the most amazing things are more likely to happen including deep encounters with transcendence and different levels of consciousness in line with quantum physics and synchronicity. Unexpected and unasked for gifts from others who may not even know your or your circumstances emerge. Perception-changing and healing insights about your inner psyche occur. You have more experiences of being 'in the flow' where surprising and delightful things frequently occur around and through you. It is the place of paradox where the most profound experience and learning takes place in the very last place that you want to be.

19 Learning to Say Yes

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20 Always Invitational

Hero's Journeys are always invitational. It is indeed possible to ignore them and say no to the Call to Adventure. You always have within your reason the capacity to say yes, no, or not yet, to the invitations to leave your normal world and move into the Adventure of the unknown. This is central to the understanding of why the central character is a Hero. The Hero chooses of their own free will to go on the adventure or at least to not say no. It is possible to say no and to keep saying no. In my experience, sometimes the invitations come once and don't reappear. Other invitations, if ignored or rejected, reappear at intervals over time offering you additional opportunities to accept but there is always free will with a capacity for the Hero to accept or decline. The tragedy of some people's lives is that they never say yes.