

Stages of the Hero's Journey

Call to Adventure

The hero is called to adventure by some external event or messenger. The Hero may accept the call willingly or reluctantly.

Meeting a Mentor

During the early stages of the journey, the hero will often receive aid from a protective figure. This supernatural helper can take a wide variety of forms, such as a wizard, and old man, a dwarf, a crone, or a fairy godmother. The helper commonly gives the hero a protective amulet or weapon for the journey.

Crossing the Threshold

Upon reaching the threshold of adventure, the hero must undergo some sort of ordeal in order to pass from the ordinary world into the world of adventure. This trial may be as painless as entering a dark cave or as violent as being swallowed up by a whale. The important feature is the contrast between the familiar world of light and the dark, unknown world of adventure.

Trials and Failures

The hero travels through the dream-like world of adventure where he must undergo a series of trials. These trials are often violent encounters with monsters, sorcerers, warriors, or forces of nature. Each successful trial further proves the hero's ability and advances the journey toward its climax.

Helpers

The hero is often accompanied on the journey by a helper who assists in the series of tests and generally serves as a loyal companion. Alternately, the hero may encounter a supernatural helper in the world of adventure who fulfills this function.

Death and Rebirth

This is the critical moment in the hero's journey in which there is often a final battle with a monster, wizard, or warrior which facilitates the particular resolution of the adventure.

Revelation

Having defeated the enemy and slain the dragon, the hero receives the prize. Pulling the metaphorical sword from the stone, the hero achieves the objective he set out to complete. Whether the reward is monetary, physical, romantic, or spiritual, the hero transforms. And often, the prize the hero initially sought becomes secondary as a result of the *personal transformation* he undergoes.

Final Changes

Perhaps the original quest was for personal gain. Now the hero takes greater satisfaction in serving the needs of others. The hero is no longer looking inward but instead is looking outward. The real change of the hero is *always internal*.

Atonement

Alas, the adventure isn't over yet. Now the hero must return to the world from which he came with the sacred elixir. Challenges still lie ahead in the form of villains, roadblocks, and inner demons. The hero must deal with whatever issues were left unresolved when he first departed on the journey. Examining his former self and performing constant self-inquiry helps the hero identify weaknesses that will later play against him in the ordinary world.

Gets Gift

The elixir, object, knowledge, or blessing that the hero acquired during the adventure is now put to use in the everyday world. Often it has a restorative or healing function, but it also serves to define the hero's role in the society.

Returned Changed

The hero again crosses the threshold of adventure and returns to the everyday world of daylight. The return usually takes the form of an awakening, rebirth, resurrection, or a simple emergence from a cave or forest. Sometimes the hero is pulled out of the adventure world by a force from the daylight world. The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow benefits on his fellow man.