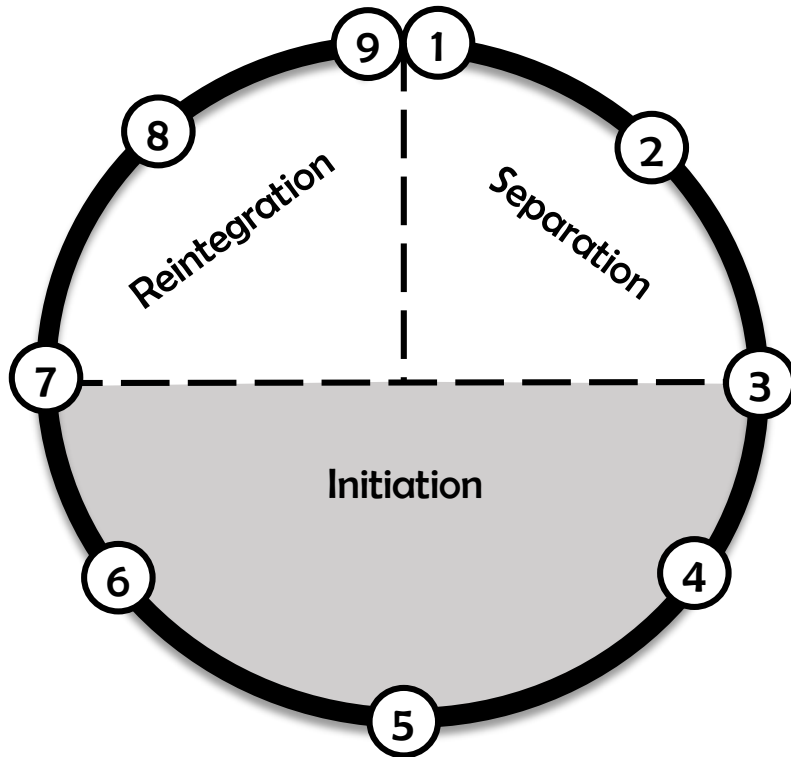


Be Your Own Hero



1. The Call

A character or event presents itself to the hero, introducing a quest.

Life will present you with opportunities. Sometimes you may be forced down a path you will not want to take, but you must face it all the same. Will you refuse the Call? Will you be a reluctant hero? Resisting life's opportunities can leave you feeling dissatisfied and stuck. A hero must be willing to face their fears, to change, and separate themselves from what they know to be "normal."

2. Aid/Mentor

An elder, or another form of supernatural aid, will come to present the hero with some wisdom or tool to succeed. This tool could be a weapon or talisman which will assist the hero in their success.

Accepting wisdom, training, and support from others will increase your chances of success. Relying on the assistance of others will help during future trials and tribulations. Sometimes having faith in those around us will be crucial to overcoming future obstacles.

3. Crossing the Threshold

The hero exits the known world, leaving it behind, and enters the vast unknown. The threshold propels him/her fully into the adventure, there is no turning back from here.

Whenever you try something new, there is always fear. If you give in to the fear, you will fail at your endeavor. In order to overcome these fears and proceed on your journey, you must take a leap of faith, as one would leap while parachuting from an airplane.

4. Trials/Challenges

The hero faces a variety of challenges to prepare for the Supreme Ordeal, the final battle with the Dragon.

Trials along the way will test your meddle and increase your stamina. Overcoming these challenges will make you stronger and better prepared to face your greatest challenge yet.

5. The Supreme Ordeal

The hero fights the Dragon in the final battle.

The Dragon is a symbol for the hero's adversary. Sometimes this is an external person or force, but all too often it is an internal aspect of ourselves we must overcome. This internal Dragon is called Shadow. Defeating the Dragon in your own life means conquering your own fears and weaknesses. This requires a death of the old self so that a new Self can be reborn. A part of you must die. This is representative of many myths throughout the world tales where the hero is swallowed into the belly of the whale. This is the deepest, darkest place of the unknown and often seems like there is no hope, no way out. Yet, through death, the hero will endure and rise anew!

“The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth. [...] The font of life is the core of the individual, and within himself he will find it—if he can tear the coverings away.”

—Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (p.190, 191)

6. Reward

Also known as Seizing the Sword, the hero receives a reward for their hard work. In many tales the hero defeats the Dragon to retrieve the hidden treasures stored in the Dragon's cave.

Alchemy is the ancient art of transmutation, of turning lead into gold. In overcoming your own shadow, what gold did you uncover in the process? What aspect of your situation can be turned into a gift for the world at large?

7. The Road Back

The hero prepares for the journey home.

Life continues after we face our deepest struggles. This is the time to decompress and take stock in your new strengths, moving back into the known world with a new level of confidence that never existed before.

8. Resurrection

The hero returns home, though not as the person they were before. As a new person (unrecognizable to the community) the hero uses their reward to change the world for the better.

What gift did you receive your journey? What lessons were learned and how can those be taken back into your community to benefit others? You are now a new person. At this point, you bring new life to old habits and relationships. Your old self has long died and now this is your opportunity to put your new Self into action.

9. Master of Two Worlds

Having returned and using their new strengths to restore the world, the hero becomes a master in their own right. He or she can become a mentor to others, understanding the hero's journey is just a cycle, there is no beginning or end. The known and the unknown are as one.

You will face another journey again, but now you are a master of your past, rather than being slave to it. The hero's journey is a circle, the hoop of life recognized by cultures the world over. Understanding the whole story, rather than just its separate parts, will allow you to walk onward in balance and wholeness.