

The Hero/ine's Journey

Synthesized by Ariel Spilsbury

from Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

The Hero/ine's Journey. The adventure begins. It may look and feel like an open willingness, a special receptivity, a desire to expand or an impulse to discover something, to become new or more fully who you actually are as a soul. In the beginning, this state may be conscious or unconscious (whether it is a prior agreement between your Essence Self and Spirit before this life, or one that you are reconfirming consciously now.) This may begin as simply as the impulse to do something unusual, not reasonable, or as a prayer for help, asking for guidance and relationship with your Spirit (often times not knowing that the answer will come in a mythic call to adventure.)

The first step of the mythic quest is the Call to Adventure.

This call to adventure usually happens seemingly by accident - a phone call, a chance meeting, a dream or other synchronicity. As you become familiar with the adventurer's journey, you begin to feel when to expect a mythic call - when the familiar horizon has been outgrown, a change in perspective is appropriate, or you begin to have a great desire to know or and impulse to discover something about yourself as a soul. A mythic call often comes from something sparking a remembrance of your core essence, your purpose and destiny. Often it may come in the form of a remembrance of a potent childhood dream or discovering what the dream/vision of your heart's desire is. This may come in the form of remembering, discovering and working with symbols which stir a knowing in you, though often unconsciously. This call to adventure denotes that soul destiny has summoned you, the adventurer, transferring your spiritual center of gravity to the **unknown**.

This exciting region of both treasure and possibility may be represented as a distant land, a forest, a new city, etc. and the adventurer may be drawn in by "chance" or by consciously calling in such a mythic adventure for spiritual growth. For example, you may all of a sudden, receive a job offer in a distant city which may be looked on as a call to adventure. Only your heart knows what the perfect pattern of your unfoldment actually is. Trust and surrender to your divine self, will play a part in this call. Your heart will tell you whether to keep within the confines of the known or take the mythic call into the unknown.

The second step of a mythic quest is the Development of an Ally or Guide.

You know you are definitely on a mythic quest if a protective figure or symbol of same, gives you a clue or talisman to use with the testing, trials and initiation through which you will move in the quest. This ally or guide often comes in a dream, vision, or meditation, and if you are watchful, often this clue comes in the form of a real person in a chance circumstance in daily life. I was contemplating a decision one day, on a park bench, when a supposedly "crazy" woman came up to me, gave me a rock with a magical white circle around it, telling me that I

should "move ahead with my plan". Magical guidance can come from seemingly strange places, but if you are open to all possibilities, soon, nothing seems strange, coincidental or impossible.

There are many ways and systems which can invite contact with allies and guides. A useful technique may be using guided visualization or imagery to take a journey to find such allies. Another way is to closely observe your dreams, noting what figures reappear in your dreams, offering you imagistic or symbolic assistance with your process. Ask upon going to sleep that in dreamtime you will meet and receive assistance from your guides and allies. For example, if an eagle keeps appearing in your dreams, it undoubtedly has a symbolic key to offer you as an ally. Instead of just noting that you keep having eagles in your dreams, take it a step further and ask the eagle to give you a teaching, in a dream or in active imagination. Then the conscious process of guidance through an interface with guides or allies can begin. Guides and allies are attracted to your dreamfield especially if you are being a playful, joy filled magical child.

You will see the form and feel the energy the ally and guide takes at that moment, rather than the archetype or ally itself. The personal force of the ally or archetype may assume various forms and symbolic representations but you are always dealing with the forms and images (The Hero with a Thousand Faces that Joseph Campbell speaks of). Illusion can entrap the attention of your ego/mind, but an ally is a supra conscious force, whose origin is a mystery beyond conceptual grasp, and so is beyond the illusion. Therefore allies and guides can freely aid you in dealing with the illusions created by the ego/mind.

Often animal helpers, guides and allies may appear in everyday life to give you guidance and messages directly from Spirit, if you are willing to take the time to observe and be with the experience of the teaching. An example of another resonance may be **lucid dreaming** (being able to consciously and actively participate in or alter the experience you are having in dreams), or using shamanic journeying (such as drumming, Tibetan or crystal singing bowls, or trance work to access multi-dimensions of reality and guidance), or undertaking initiation and remembering processes with a trained guide or teacher.

The third step of the quest is the Road of Tests and Trials.

On any quest, the adventurer, in order to demonstrate what he/she has learned or is ready to learn, encounters apparent tests and trials, shadow issues or lessons, the nature of which, is to look at yet another mask of small ego, face another fear, or block that has been kept "hidden" from conscious understanding and integration. Poison can be turned into nectar by your willingness to embrace shadow so that the alchemical process can happen which transmutes shadow issues such as **fear**, issues of personal power or fear of death for example, into guides and allies for your journey. As we have learned, shadows hold teachings, gifts and magic which can aid you in removing the illusion ego creates in your journey.

As a general rule, the main purpose of the road of tests and trials is for you to move through

any blockages you might have to the fulfillment of your soul's destiny. This can look, oddly enough, like the loss of a job, the death of a loved one, the disappointment of failed love, rejection, betrayal, etc. The adventurer, however, rather than denying or excluding these tests/lessons and trials, embraces, accepts and blesses them as opportunities to grow and demonstrate what s/he has learned about the nature of illusion in the ego and spiritual evolution. Through reframing these potentially difficult experiences into gifts, the adventurer is illuminated, **seeing through the illusion of the ego/mind**. So the adventurer is thus aided in the fulfillment of the larger pattern of his/her spiritual quest which is continual expansion in the Divine Self.

The hero/ine is asked to stay aligned with the divine within. No matter how seemingly difficult any test/lesson may appear, the simplest way through the test is to surrender to the Greater Self, the Witness, knowing that the larger pattern and design is always being served, no matter what the surface appearance. One of the ways you can experience grace in any process is through conscious alignment with your guides and allies, which can enable you to walk through any test or dance through any trial as a trusting magical child.

The fourth step in the adventurer's quest is the Initiation with the Goddess.

In this step, because of your demonstrated courage, willingness to risk living on your growth edge, your ability to trust and surrender, following your heart, in successfully meeting the tests and trials you encounter in life, **a gift is usually given; a reprieve, a “prize”, a new skill, a magical tool, a fresh start**. The “prize” comes in many forms. Often it comes in the form of a creative idea or project which is born out of difficulties, depression, illness, or other apparent trials. Often it comes as a gift in meditation, directly from the Divine, as a feeling of grace and union with divinity, or a self-remembrance about who you are in the larger pattern and what your purpose is for coming in this lifetime. In the language of myth, the adventurer comes into contact with larger realities, higher resonances and harmonics, to get a glimpse of the vast nature of his/her unlimited potential for spiritual growth. This is the process of initiation.

This step may reflect acknowledgment for the adventurer, for the successful passing of a test/lesson. This might come in the form of a rite of passage or celebration, which brings the metaphorical into a potent life experience. It represents the bestowing of gifts which you have proven ready for. Initiation often represents making commitments which create a direct teaching relationship with guides, allies and connecting directly with the energies of archetype and divinity. These initiations may come in near-death experiences, spiritual, peak and transcendent experiences of all kinds. The gifts come from these energies in myriad forms personally suited to your acknowledgment and initiation, to being taken to temples in the etheric realms for initiatory work and if part of your soul journey, to be personally initiated by embodied spiritually illuminated beings. The symbols given in these ceremonies represent the power or knowledge either thus far attained or to offer an incentive to further growth and expansion. Sometimes in initiations, you are introduced to or can work with the larger pantheon of selves within you, (the parts that are dimensional aspects in the larger constellation of Self.)

For some adventurers, the acknowledgment comes in the form of an experience of initiation directly with divinity. For some kinds of initiatory experiences, a real, heartfelt desire must be expressed to divinity and a quest often undertaken to discover a living person holding specific appropriate lineages and illumination), who can initiate you into the deeper mysteries. Only your heart can lead you on that quest!

The fifth step in the adventurer's quest is the Return, Master of Two Worlds.

For a time, the radiance of a transcendent experience of initiation, or any peak or mystical experience, filters into and transforms the daily life of the adventurer back from their quest. Upon the adventurer's return, often there is a test to discover whether the truth held in these mythic realms can be brought back, in whatever form, to create more joy and fulfillment in daily life. The bridge between worlds becomes diffused. Everyone has had a peak experience, a view of a sunset that united them with the Source for a moment, or myriad other transcendent experiences, either deliberately sought out or experienced as moments of grace, especially in nature and ceremony. The challenge is to bring the mystical experience of union into expression in daily life, to define less and less exactly where and who you are, drawing from all sources presented to you. In doing this, you don't have to "know" the answers, they just arise from Emptiness when they are needed.

The circumstances of your life never prevent you from experiencing connection with myth and magic. **You are limitless. You are always at choice.** You have an opportunity to be the divine fool/magical child in the midst of any situation, being in the world, as an active player in the duality, without becoming lost in it. By seeing that everything is an illusion, part of the dream of reality, simply a holographic evolutionary playing field and that you are just the player in that field, you can consciously create a more delight filled pattern. When you bring conscious participation into the larger pattern, the greater symbolic processes that are attempting to emerge and become conscious, through your adventure and life situation, create and support your experiencing more fully being a co-creator. If you look only at the small ego pattern of your life, you may get lost in the world which can prevent you from seeing the truth of your situation in the larger mythic pattern. If you only identify with the cultural collective, everyday life, personal routines, attachments and involvements, it is difficult to see beyond them. From that point of view you may be living your dream and vision somewhere in the future. If you can take an active role of mythic playership, things seem to begin to happen less randomly, more coherently, and synchronously.

The sixth step of the adventurer's quest is the Gift Back to Daily Life.

The concluding part of a mythic quest is the bringing back of renewed energy, purpose, creative ideas, clarity, commitment to your spiritual unfoldment in daily life. The gift of this part of the journey, is to enrich and **re-circulate what has been received in the quest to others whom your life touches.** This can take the form of teaching/sharing what you have learned, making a

work of art which expresses it etc. Perhaps it comes merely in being less judgmental, lost, despairing - in your presence and energy, sharing what you have experienced. As your new awareness shines through your being and presence, it touches and awakens others to the excitement of the spiritual quest! When your chalice is filled to overflowing, let your joy direct the flow of the gifts garnered on your quest. Remember, YOU are the gift!

All of these steps of the mythic quest, are found in the things and stuff of daily life. The quest is, like all magic, a matter of perception. You are the hero/ine of your mythic script. Discover and co-create the soul directed script for which you have been seeded, always beckoning you toward the exciting and mysterious unfoldment of your life as a myth.