

Elements of the Hero's Journey

Joseph Campbell (1904–87) was an American author who wrote extensively about mythology and its influences in modern times. Campbell held that certain archetypal images, themes, and patterns are repeated in virtually all of the world's best-known myths and stories. Major ideas from Campbell's work will be used as a framework in the creation of this multi-arts performance piece. In this series, participants will refer to four parts of what Campbell called "the hero's journey."

1. The Call — The call is the invitation to an adventure. The hero may embark on a quest willingly or out of necessity. Sometimes, there is a sudden, shocking event, leaving the hero with no choice but to engage in the situation. At other times, the call is a subtle invitation, and the hero has time to decide whether he/she is going to get involved.

2. The Challenges — The challenges are fears, obstacles, and trials during a journey. Having accepted the call and started on the journey (which may be physical, psychological, or spiritual), the hero encounters a series of increasingly difficult challenges. Assumptions and beliefs are questioned and temptations threaten to divert the hero from the path.

3. The Transformation — The transformation is a change in way of thinking and way of viewing life. In the process of dealing with the challenges, the hero experiences a revelation about life, which changes the way he/she thinks and behaves.

4. The Return — The return to everyday life is the final stage of the journey. The hero returns a changed person, possessing new awareness and skill. The hero seeks to share his/her newfound understanding for the greater good of society. Sometimes, if people are not ready to change, the hero may face further trials, and others may be called to undertake their own journeys.