

The following is a more detailed account of Joseph Campbell's original 1949 exposition of the monomyth in Seventeen stages.

I. Departure

1. Call to Adventure

The hero begins in a situation of normality from which some information is received that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.

2. Refusal of the Call

Often when the call is given, the future hero first refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his current circumstances.

3. Meeting the Mentor

Once the hero has committed to the **quest**, consciously or unconsciously, his guide and **magical helper** appears or becomes known. More often than not, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid him later in his quest. *(The Goddess figure from Stage 7 may transpose with the stage, rather than later.)*

4. Crossing the First Threshold

This is the point where the hero actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are unknown.

5. Belly of the Whale

The belly of the whale represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, the person shows willingness to undergo a **metamorphosis**. When first entering this stage, the hero may encounter a minor danger or set back. *(He or she acknowledges their heritage or worthiness as a hero.)*

II. Initiation

6. The Road of Trials

The road of trials is a series of tests that the hero must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the hero fails one or more of these tests, **which often occur in threes**. Eventually the hero will overcome these trials and move on to the next step. *(Common situation in fairy tales.)*

7. The Meeting with the Goddess

This is where the hero gains items given to him that will help him in the future. *(See Stage 3.)*

8. The Woman as Temptress

In this step, the hero faces those temptations, often of a physical or pleasurable nature, that may lead him to abandon or stray from his quest, which does not necessarily have to be represented by a woman. Woman is a metaphor for the physical or material temptations of life, since the hero-knight was often tempted by lust from his spiritual journey.

9. Atonement with the Father

In this step the hero must confront and be initiated by whatever holds the ultimate power in his life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has life and death power.

10. Apotheosis

This is the point of realization in which a greater understanding is achieved. Armed with this new knowledge and perception, the hero is resolved and ready for the more difficult part of the adventure. (Def.: Apotheosis is the glorification of a subject to divine level.)

11. The Ultimate Boon

The ultimate boon is the **achievement of the goal** of the quest. It is what the hero went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the hero for this step, since in many myths the boon is something transcendent like the elixir of life itself, or a plant that supplies immortality, or the holy grail.

III. Return

12. Refusal of the Return

Having found bliss and enlightenment in the other world, the hero **may not want to return** to the ordinary world to bestow the boon onto his fellow man. (Happy endings are not always guaranteed; heroes do not always retain a sense of morality.)

13. The Magic Flight

Sometimes the hero must escape with the boon, if it is something that the gods have been jealously guarding.

14. Rescue from Without

Just as the hero may (still) need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, often he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.

15. The Crossing of the Return Threshold

The trick in returning is to **retain the wisdom** (even if a bitter realization) gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world.

16. Master of Two Worlds

This step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Gautama Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds. (Not all heroes achieve this.)

17. Freedom to Live

Mastery (can) lead to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past.