The Hero’s Journey is a pattern of narrative identified by the American scholar Joseph Campbell that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual, and psychological development. It describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization.

Its stages are:

1. **THE ORDINARY WORLD.** The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero’s life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.

2. **THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.** Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.

3. **REFUSAL OF THE CALL.** The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.

4. **MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.** The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

5. **CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.** At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

6. **TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES.** The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

7. **APPROACH.** The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.

8. **THE ORDEAL.** Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

9. **THE REWARD.** The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.

10. **THE ROAD BACK.** About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

11. **THE RESURRECTION.** At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero’s action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

12. **RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR.** The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.
THE HERO’S JOURNEY

12. Return with Elixir
11. Resurrection
10. The Road Back
  9. Reward, Seizing the Sword

1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting the Mentor
5. Crossing the Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach
8. Ordeal, Death & Rebirth

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1. Limited awareness of problem
2. Increased awareness of need for change
3. Fear; Resistance to Change
4. Overcoming Fear
5. Committing to change
6. Experimenting with new conditions
7. Preparing for major change
8. Big change with feeling of life and death
9. Accepting consequences of new life
10. New challenge and Rededication
11. Final attempt(s) Last minute dangers
12. Mastery
THE HEROINE’S JOURNEY  adapted from Maureen Murdock

STAGE

1. SEPARATION FROM THE FEMININE
2. IDENTIFICATION W/ THE MASCULINE & GATHERING OF ALLIES
3. ROAD OF TRIALS, MEETING OGRES & DRAGONS
4. FINDING THE BOON OF SUCCESS
5. AWAKENING TO FEELINGS OF SPIRITUAL ARIDITY: DEATH
6. INITIATION & DESCENT TO THE GODDESS
7. URGENT YEARNING TO RECONNECT W/ THE FEMININE
8. HEALING THE MOTHER/DAUGHTER SPLIT
9. HEALING THE WOUNDED MASCULINE
10. INTEGRATION OF MASCULINE & FEMININE
THE ARCHETYPES

ARCHETYPES are recurring patterns of human behavior, symbolized by standard types of characters in movies and stories.

HEROES

Central figures in stories. Everyone is the hero of his or her own myth.

SHADOWS

Villains and enemies, perhaps the enemy within. The dark side of the Force, the repressed possibilities of the hero, his or her potential for evil. Can be other kinds of repression, such as repressed grief, anger, frustration or creativity that is dangerous if it doesn’t have an outlet.

MENTORS

The hero’s guide or guiding principles. Yoda, Merlin, a great coach or teacher.

HERALD

One who brings the Call to Adventure. Could be a person or an event.

THRESHOLD GUARDIANS

The forces that stand in the way at important turning points, including jealous enemies, professional gatekeepers, or your own fears and doubts.

SHAPESHIFTERS

In stories, creatures like vampires or werewolves who change shape. In life, the shapeshifter represents change. The way other people (or our perceptions of them) keep changing. The opposite sex, the way people can be two-faced.

TRICKSTERS

Clowns and mischief-makers, Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy. Our own mischievous subconscious, urging us to change.

ALLIES

Characters who help the hero through the change. Sidekicks, buddies, girlfriends who advise the hero through the transitions of life.
PITCHING TIPS

Know what your story is about – one word, one human quality.

Know your conflict. Point out a contradiction, a problem, a human conflict that cries out to be resolved.

Know the value of the “Not only, but also” form of presentation. Everyone knows X about the subject, but did you know Y?

Know your turning points. Let your listeners know where you are in the story, at least in terms of beginning, middle and end. Use three act structure to break the story down into manageable units.

Know your audience. Be aware of their attention span. Put them into your story. Somehow it’s about them.

Use questions, such as “What if…?” to HOOK your listeners.

Be specific about a few selected details to make your story real.

Be conversational. You’re telling an exciting story to a friend rather than giving a formal presentation. Smile.

Rehearse, prepare, but be ready to adapt and think on your feet.