



"In between living and dreaming there is a third thing: Waking Up."

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PREPARING FOR YOUR HERO'S JOURNEY INTENSIVE

Ask Me

by William Stafford

*Some time when the river is ice ask me mistakes I have made.
Ask me whether what I have done is my life.
Others have come in their slow way into
my thought, and some have tried to help or to hurt: ask me what difference
their strongest love or hate has made.*

*I will listen to what you say.
You and I can turn and look
at the silent river and wait. We know
the current is there, hidden; and there are comings and goings from miles away
that hold the stillness exactly before us.
What the river says, that is what I say.*



The Hero's Journey Intensive is inspired by our passion for ancient wisdom traditions, as well as the mythic teachings of Joseph Campbell. This particular journey intensive has been created to provide you with a deeply personal and meaningful experience of crossing a certain threshold in your life – one that has never quite been crossed before.

This type of journeying is a kind of 'rite of passage' into yourself as a man, one that may be unlike anything you have previously encountered.



Introduction

By reading this preparation guide, the journey intensive is already beginning for you. It actually started with your heeding of an inner pull towards a greater and more meaningful life. We assume this is why you have signed on for this upcoming journey.

You will be taking leave of your daily life, setting it aside for one week's time. You'll be letting go of things that are familiar and known to you on the surface of your life. You will begin crossing threshold after threshold, again and again, separating yourself from everything already known to you, and entering new territory that invites the unknown inside yourself, and along with it, the unrealized potential lying in wait within you.

You can be assured of having adventures and ordeals along the way. You will have important and essential encounters with allies in your journeying group, and you will experience unforeseen synchronicities as they unfold before you. You are also likely to encounter an inner strength, precisely when challenging circumstances arise that make this strength necessary in order to move forward with your life.

You will be surprised by life-renewing encounters and essential conversations that are well beyond your mind's capacity to imagine right now. If you are adventurous and daring enough, you will experience an emerging sense of life itself meeting you, and coming alive within you. This force of life can become ignited as a loving power, capable of bringing new life and new action into fruition.

Finally, you will be tasked with returning to your daily life and your familiar circumstances with new perspective and with a fresh differentiation from the world around you. You will have the challenge of bringing forth your aliveness to the things and the people in your life that matter to you.

The journey ahead promises to be an inevitable, remarkable, and unforgettable passage. Let's get ready.



The Call to Adventure

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice...

- Mary Oliver

Joseph Campbell said that those of us living in the Western world have both the freedom and the obligation of finding out what our destiny is. What must we do if we want to find out what the deeper meaning and purpose is for our life? And what is it that seems to be stopping us?

- Have you become over-attached to the security and sameness of what is familiar?*
- Have you become overly concerned with how you will be provided for, and have you lost sight of what you have to provide to the world?*
- Have you become more hesitant or afraid to go out beyond what you have already learned or accomplished?*
- Are you afraid of repeating a failure, or afraid to face what you've failed at over and over again?*
- What is it exactly, that keeps you from going deeper into the unknown, beyond the world you already know?*

In a busy, overwhelmed, conflicted and distracted world, you may not ever really have to go for the real and lived adventure of your own life. As a human being, you are free to ignore it, or avoid it, or refuse to answer the call to the one true life that awaits you.

An inner calling always takes you out beyond the world you have known, and gets you moving and searching for the new way, the new direction the new focus – or towards a new skill, or a new resource within the depths of yourself.

It makes you do the necessary inner exploration to find what you alone have within you, and finally, to make use of what you find within, to be of service to life.

In his book *Pathways to Bliss*, Campbell poses this question: *“What is the great thing for which you would sacrifice your life? What makes you do what you do? What is the call of your life to you – do you know it?”*

How can you align more – right now - with a new beginning? With a new journey, and answer more authentically and fully a personal call to adventure? Learn to let go of self-serving fantasies and childlike wishes that require nothing of you, and turn your attention towards a deeper sense of something waking up inside - something that has groundedness and gravity, something that will spur you towards fresh action?

Bill Plotkin has this to say about what happens when you hear the inner call to new life:

- 1. It is not an avoidance of responsibility, but rather a facing of something difficult, something unknown and frightening that summons you.**

Far from feeling like an opportunity for escape, a call feels more like a compelling need to face an important challenge, to walk out into the night and toward a storm. You have a profound sense that *something essential is waiting for you in the midst of a wilderness* and your one true life depends on your being willing and able to find it.

- 2. It has paradoxical features – like *déjà vu*, where you know you belong to it, even though you have never before encountered it and can't really explain it.**

Joseph Campbell said the call feels “*profoundly familiar to the unconscious – though unknown, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality*”.

- 3. You have the feeling that the chapter of your life that you had just been living is suddenly, somehow over, whether you wanted it to be or not, and usually, not.** What was formerly meaningful becomes ‘strangely emptied of value’.
- 4. The call is almost always unexpected, and sometimes even unwanted.** Yet you will feel summoned by destiny, as if your own future has just grabbed you by the collar and is tugging you forward. You will feel summoned forth, pulled forward, in ways that feel unexpected but compelling. It doesn't make sense to the ego, but to the soul, there is a strong feeling of it just being right.



Crossing the Threshold

*Gamble everything for love, If you're a true human being. If not, leave this gathering.
Half-heartedness doesn't reach into majesty.*

-Rumi

A meaningful adventure cannot be entered into through the thinking that happens in your head. If you try to approach this upcoming journey - one worthy of your true self - with your old and familiar mental reasonings guiding you, you will fail in your endeavors miserably and quickly.

The gamble Rumi speaks of in his poem is really no gamble at all, but it does involve a sense of **risking something worthwhile**. In the end, you must begin to see that seeking security becomes your final danger, as it will lull you back to the sameness of things that don't really work.

The reason you would seek out something like a hero's journey is because some part of you recognizes that 'security seeking' is on the low end of the evolutionary scale. In fact, it is often the contrary counter-force to a heroic endeavor.

It goes without saying that there are definite places to play it safe in life, and there are times for being perfectly reasonable. But this will not be a high commodity with the mythic task of re-vitalizing your life.

The toll to be paid and the reward to be gained, as you cross the threshold into meaningful adventure, is a wholehearted, loving presence. You will be required at times to become more yielding and tender-hearted and at other times, more resolved and fiercer.

If you lack these capacities, you are likely to turn back in the face of any stark threat to your sense of security, in the heat of emotional intensity, and at the doorway inward that makes you dive more deeply.

There are inner threshold guardians that will challenge to you to 'get to know your heart, get real, be a vital human being, live from your own experience and truth, or go back from where you came - go back home to the safe and familiar ways of thinking'.

Whenever you are caught up in the mental grasping at abstractions and conceptualizations, you can't pass through to the depth of your own soul. You are someone who has simply confused the menu with the meal.

Therefore, on this particular *Hero's Journey Intensive*, we are asking you to leave behind the man you already know too well. Let go of revealing certain details about your personal history that could limit or pre-define you - what we refer to as "credit card information" - upon your arrival to our basecamp.

We are asking you to refrain from immediately revealing your age, your occupation, your home place, or other usual identifying information that would 'pigeon-hole' you in any way to yourself, or label you to another. You will be asked to symbolically surrender your attachment to linear time, as it will only pull you into the familiar dance

you have with measuring everything by time increments, and distract you from the larger dimension of the kind of 'timeless' space that we plan to enter.

- *We will focus on being attentive only to the moment that unfolds before us and between us. We do our best to leave everything else behind.*

What is being asked of you now, is to practice entering into the *spirit* of the unknown-- the Great Mystery of life – and to live beyond the usual - surrendering to the potent uncertainty that is to be found there.

This is the first of many symbolic letting go processes that are required for a worthwhile hero's journey. You might begin to better recognize and feel how tight your stranglehold is on controlling your environment in order to feel comfortable and "secure".

- *When you have a clear awareness that you are literally stepping "off the paved road", going where there is no clear path, you allow a certain alertness and "immediacy" to enter into your present moment existence.*

This is what begins to bring you alive to the world around you once again. Without crossing this threshold, without this relaxing of your habitual mental thinking, you will tend to live a "life of quiet desperation", says Thoreau.

We are all quite capable of living - for years - in a kind of life-sapping sameness of routine, falling asleep in the safety of bland, lifeless caricatures of manhood that are culturally sanctioned and reinforced.

You can be easily seduced by the world around you into taking up a path that is so well established that your senses will no longer be stimulated or re-awakened.

Crossing the threshold from your everyday world into the non-ordinary time and space of a *Hero's Journey Intensive* means entering an arena of **uncertainty** that comes with any true adventure. Fortunately, during this prolonged time of a threatening global health pandemic, uncertainty is precisely what we all have to learn to face.

It is within this arena of uncertainty that you can actually discover yourself in a new way, and make new meaning for your life; you can risk entry into a new way of being that is more life-giving and sustaining; you can re-connect to the potency of your own masculine self – all by traveling this path that is 'as-yet-unknown' to you.

- *New life is an inevitable outcome from any courageous act of surrender.*

Don Juan said it well to Carlos Castaneda: *"The path of the heart requires a full gesture, a degree of abandon that can be terrifying. (But) only then is it possible to achieve a sparkling metamorphosis... and there is just one simple thing wrong with you - you think*

you have plenty of time."

To prepare you for a deeper threshold crossing into your upcoming journey, *you now must reflect on eight questions*. You will need to make some time and space to think about them, wonder about them, and not just immediately answer them. Listen closely to your heart and not your head; let something simmer inside; and then gradually put together at least two type written pages summarizing your reflections.

Your authentic response to each of The Eight Questions is to be emailed to us Friday, July 17th. Your thoughtful responses will help us connect with you more quickly and be more effective in our interactions with you upon your arrival.

Use each question as an arrowhead that points the way to some of the more obscure truths that lie within the depths of your being. You may want to write more about these in the *Personal Journal* you are required to keep and bring along with you on the Journey.



Eight Questions (These questions may also be found on a separate document)

What Calls Me To This Particular Journey At This Exact Time In My Life?

What events of significance are presently taking place in your life? What kinds of transitions are you facing right now? What are you hearing within, that tells you that you need to take this type of Journey? What feels right about doing this now?

What Is It Within Me That I Am Looking For?

What are you seeking to discover about yourself or within yourself? Is there a particular issue or challenge that you need to face? Does something specific in you need to heal, change or develop? If so, what is it? What place within you do you want to know better, or need to connect with more fully? Is there a particular kind of passage that you feel you need? How would you name this path you are now stepping on?

What Is It Within Me That I Am Avoiding or Rejecting?

What are you running from inside yourself? What aspect of your way of living is the hardest to sit with and look at? What makes this aspect of yourself so hard to bear? What judgment do you hold against yourself? How can you begin looking at this matter differently? How can you open yourself to new ways to think about it as well? Can you bring this with you to your Journey Immersion?

What Is It Within Me That I Want – More Than Anything Else – For My Life?

What is it that you really want? How does it feel to be asked this question? We suspect that you do not have an immediate and clear answer to this question. Reflect quietly on the question itself. How does it affect you? What comes to the surface of your mind? How does it feel to speak it, write it – claim it as a truth?

What Is the Greatest Obstacle Or Threat That I Am Currently Facing In My Life?

What is the biggest thing within that holds you back from living the life that matters to you? What is the specific obstacle or fear that keeps you from getting into what you most desire or need to live? What feels like an insurmountable challenge that you are currently facing in your life?

What Is My Greatest Inner Strength?

Can you pinpoint and name one higher aspect of your own nature? Can you speak to a particular asset or character trait within yourself that you know to be valuable? What within you can you draw from and rely on most, when life becomes difficult? Can you give a specific example of how you are presently making use of this strength or trait in your life? Are you willing to use this strength to be of service to yourself and your fellow companions on your mountain journey?

How Do I Need To Be Supported On My Hero's Journey Intensive?

Support allows us to be more accepting of where we presently are, it serves as a stabilizing and securing function, so that we can become better able to go forward from where we are.

Tell us honestly how you feel about your capacity to receive support from others. What are your needs or vulnerabilities about being helped? In what ways are you open to being supported, and in what ways do you have difficulty being supported? Name one specific way that would you like us to support you during your upcoming journey.

How Do I Need To Be Challenged On My Hero's Journey Intensive?

Challenge allows us to go beyond where we are, it points us towards where we are not yet. It opens us to new possibilities, new ways of thinking, being, and acting, that we have not yet been able to step towards.

Now tell us honestly how you feel about being encouraged and challenged to go where you haven't gone before. How do you relate to the notion of a *risk-worth-taking*? In what ways are you open to the idea of life-giving challenges as opportunity, and in what ways do you have difficulty allowing or facing personal challenges? Name one specific way would you like us to challenge you during your upcoming journey.



Entering the Forest

Stand still, the trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost.

Wherever you are is called 'here', and you must treat it like a powerful stranger...

- David Wagoner

Now that you have committed yourself to this upcoming journey, and as you cross the various thresholds that take you to a "point of no return", it is important to understand that an important 'un-doing process' will start to take place.

You will inevitably need to let yourself experience a type of shedding or letting go taking place within you, whether you want it to happen or not. You will start to find yourself in unfamiliar landscapes within and in unfamiliar positions with those around you. In this state of mind, you will temporarily lose your perspective and your grounding; you'll have certain and important 'misadventures', and you'll find yourself caught up in growing irritations and distractions. This is all a necessary part of the journey process.



Also be aware that you can be easily led astray by old fears during your preparation time. Remember that it is normal to suddenly feel lost or 'unlike yourself' inside. You will even be literally losing or misplacing things from time to time. You will invariably feel a sense of disorientation at any point where you go beyond what you are most familiar with. Again, this is a normal part of the journeying process, and it can't be avoided.

When any old fear resurfaces, keep in mind that your fear is just like the gargoyles that sit above the entrances to all the ancient holy shrines and medieval gothic churches. You have to face them, and walk past them - in order to be worthy of entering any whole or sacred territory, whether this is within you, or outside of you.

Old fears will start to question your judgment, cause self-doubt, challenge your courage and urge you to 'turn back'. You will tend to be stalked by old fears whenever you begin to renew yourself, as fear will cling most desperately to your old identity, and try to prevent it's being shed. Also know that your fears will manifest and clothe themselves

in the form of old and familiar resistances.

Resistance is to be expected; it manifests in a multitude of ways. You might re-experience feelings of isolation or alienation; you might even feel more further away than ever from your connection to *"a path with heart"*.

In these moments, taking this upcoming journey suddenly might seem foolish, misguided or suddenly unimportant. The journey starts to feel like too much of a hassle or ordeal. You can find yourself saying, *"Why am I doing this to myself"?*

Whenever inner resistance shows up, you will not surprisingly also encounter external obstacles that seem to reflect your inner fears - life (or the lives of those around you) begins to feel as if it is falling apart – rather than falling together in a new and unfamiliar way. This is when you are most vulnerable to retreat, wanting to revert back to security seeking and to familiar ways that, in the long run, don't really work.

Once again, remember that these fears and resistances are an inevitable and integral part of the hero's journey adventure. Thoreau says, *'Not until we are genuinely lost do we finally have the opportunity to find and understand ourselves'*.

Do your best to go easy on yourself as you face any undoing, disorientation, and resistance. If your nervousness or anxiousness starts speaking loudly to you in the days ahead, make sure that you give this a voice to another you can trust or confide in.

Naming your fears out loud is important to do. What is speakable becomes more manageable. Deep resistance is often a strange kind of sentinel, offering confirmation that you are approaching your true, life-affirming path. It's just a sign that provides you with a test, as your new path is not yet revealed to you.

So what the inner gargoyles are really saying is *"bring your fears with you"*. Know that compassion, attention, and support from others will be there for you each step of the way during your journey—perhaps beyond your ability to fathom - as you go forward toward the new life awaiting you.



Allies and Synchronicity

*"You know, the jackass doesn't have much sensibility.
But even he gains spirit from the company of his own kind.
But when the jackass crosses the desert alone, how many more blows it takes to get him there.
Now this is what this poem says to you –*

if you're not a jackass, don't cross the desert alone!"

- Rumi

"If you follow your bliss you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. When you can see that, you begin to meet people who are in your field of bliss, and they open doors to you. I say, follow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be."

- Joseph Campbell



Because the shadow side of the hero believes that he has to do everything by himself, and that he should also be able to do any task better by himself, you are likely to not factor into the equation the importance and impact of allies and helpers that you will meet along your journey. You may also not be able to imagine ways of receiving synchronistic support, and feel an alliance with the intangible world of spirit.

If you are being true to the pursuit of your own calling, the universe will at times provide you with numerous sequences of coincidental events, that open up doors and opportunities that previously weren't available to you – or you didn't previously notice them. Such is the surreptitious nature of synchronicity. It requires you to get current and pay attention *right now*, not dwelling on well-worn stories or familiar wounds from the past that limit you and stop you from going forward.

Even now in these days of preparation, you may suddenly happen upon a particular awe-inspiring event with peculiar circumstances that surprisingly emerge from the chaos and confusion in your life. Watch for this occurring in your current days, now that you have committed to going forward with your upcoming journey.

During the *Hero's Journey Intensive*, you will also have direct opportunities to examine your way of relating to the support of allies. You will have the chance to experience the powerful and life-sustaining ways of *mutuality* among kindred people -- the strongly felt sense of a shared and desired connection that supports the life of all. These will be the building blocks for a sense of belonging and worth.

Of course, you can also experience how directly helping others, and not only seeking the help of others, keeps you from a spiral of self-preoccupation that feeds inadequacies and fears of failure whenever you are being tested by life.



The Belly of the Beast (Initiation & Surrender)

"There is an unknown territory, a mysterious area where the presence of death does not equal the end of life...."

"The point is to be able to undergo a little death in order to find the genuine thread of one's life."

-Michael Meade

"All things of Beauty are birthed from the Darkness into the Light"

- Caroline Joy Adams



Any intensive experience can become an 'initiatory experience' - a life-altering event that transforms you - as you go through a kind of metamorphosis of being. You will begin feel a profound letting go taking place beyond your will to make happen or prevent from happening. You may feel like you are losing something important, that you have been deeply attached to.

But you will also simultaneously feel like you are finding yourself entering into a wondrously new and more highly integrated way of being, an essential part of something more than just yourself.

You may approaching your upcoming Journey being propelled by the overwhelming force of your desire, or you be hesitantly coming to this Journey simply because you have had enough of your old ways, and are presently more determined and ready to make a shift out from an old way of being.

A deep initiation, or a 'belly' experience, can occur at any given point in your *Hero's Journey Intensive*. It may happen during one of during one of our experiential elements, or during one our evening councils. It may come during a time of deep solitude, or in a conversation or encounter with an ally that never happened for you before, or even through a rich and meaningful dream sequence during your journey.

A surrender into 'the belly of things' can happen in any random moment when you are caught 'off guard', but it can also happen through an acquired discipline of 'living fully in

the present moment' – or in any moment that you can remain fully present and attentive to, and allow yourself to be immersed in.

An initiation experience is likely to be intimately linked to an encounter where you feel yourself being swallowed or enveloped by an inner or outward challenge. The "beast" represents a part of the psyche that is coming forward to be awakened, digested, refined - and then, transformed. In ancient times, it was said that beasts represented the sacred, which ultimately does not want to be controlled by us.

The experience of being consumed by an old fear is like getting *swallowed* into its belly. You then have to find your way out of it, without seeing the way in front of you clearly.

Or your entry into 'the belly of the beast' may come about by being *overcome* by tremendous love and support, *surrendering* over to a new and larger territory of oneness, and then finding your way back to an individual sense of yourself that is in good relation to *a much larger world* relatedness.

Regardless of the method or form it embodies, the initiation of surrender engages us in a dynamic face-to-face encounter with long sought-after parts of our greater or true self, beyond our ability to predict or control.



In many of the ancient mythological stories of the journey, the hero is often required to make a great personal sacrifice. The sacrifice of surrendering the self over to something greater is a sign of honorable intention, demonstrating that the journey is not purely for your own personal benefit and gain-- but that your gain is to be for the benefit of all life.

Offering a sacrifice, or the surrender of the ego over to the soul, is often necessary for higher consciousness to awaken. The act of sacrificing something of value often brings us in direct contact with grace and mercy.

It is only by parting with something of real value that we can return home with a clearer and vital connection to our true inner treasures. This kind of experience is deeply memorable, and will change us on a fundamental level; our lived experience is that we will never be the same.

During your *Hero's Journey Intensive*, you will pay tribute to this act of humility through the ritual of *The Giveaway Ceremony*. The giveaway acknowledges the importance of the circulation of energy, of the wonder, mystery and vitality bestowed upon the giver which also goes to the receiver.

In fact, with a true giveaway, the boundary blurs between the giver and receiver, and they become indistinguishable. In these moments, we experience a deep and abiding well-being in our bodies and minds.

Any thought, behavior or material substance that stays with us beyond its time, begins to weigh us down and diminish our vitality. This *holding on*, ultimately rooted in fear, limits our creative and generous self-expression, and our reduces our capacity for new manifestations.

To remain alive and vital, we must be willing and able to continually outgrow ourselves, ever renewing ourselves, and we must learn to practice the art of surrendering to the natural ease and joy of this process.

The Native American Lakota tribe has an ancient phrase-- *śkan, taku śkanśkan* – which is roughly translated for the purpose of your Journey as ‘life force in motion’. Literally, it means ‘something in movement, spiritual vitality’. It is helpful for you to consider your own life force in these terms-- that is, as the *vital movement* of your existence.

Living the adventure of an authentic hero's journey moves you forward and brings you alive, throughout the course of our lives.

In choosing the gift you will offer to *The Giveaway Ceremony*, be guided by your deep desire to be vitally alive, and free to live from authentic self-expression. Take the risk of letting go of something of significant value that has *stood still* for too long in your possession.

Choose something that has gifted you abundantly with its beauty, meaning and significance. Choose something that may likewise *move* another. Let your choosing take you to the edge of your (dis)comfort zone, unlike choosing a book, for example, that might be easily replaced. Choose something that creates a fresh void in your life – a space for new vitality that is seeking its way to you.

It is essential to prepare for this ceremony by giving significant time and thought to the object from your personal life you will give away. If you are stymied, *we suggest you make a list of five personal items of value that you think you could never part with* - and pick one from that list.



Discovery of Your Boon

"Ah, dear friend, need I say, but to the brim my heart was full! I made not vows, but vows were then made for me. Bond unknown to me was given, that I should be singing greatly, a dedicated spirit. And on I walked in blessedness which even yet remains."

- William Wordsworth

The boon is about receiving *'the pearl beyond all price'* for a successful navigation through your hero's journey – it is the discovery of an embodied sense of vital life force energy, often co-arising with penetrating insight, awareness and irony. This will be accompanied by a felt sense of surprise, wonder and awe, combined with a feeling of right place, right timing and a moment of peace or wholeness beyond all human comprehension.

This inward experience is very intimate. It is like that of a deeply personal visit from a universal presence that cannot ever be anticipated or described, and could not in any way be ignored. It is a feeling of the eternal bending down from above to enter you, as Campbell says, down in the field of time - which can only be found in the *here and now*, in the lived experience of the moment.

Perhaps this is how eternity awaits us all. The boon is not something to wish for only once before you die. It is something to journey for, again and again, while you are still living. The boon will become apparent to you only with an awareness awakened by the Journey myth.

What brings forth the boon for us? Genuinely and wholeheartedly going through all the prior stages of the journey. Then, the boon is inevitable, although it is unknowable in advance. The boon is always a surprise to you when it arrives, and it is always a joy for you to experience.

Through the gradual surrendering and letting go of your ego's hold on your experience of living, the soul finds its way to shine forth – not on your terms, but only in accordance with your ability to respond to the call to adventure, and by the subsequent experience of a deep mystery working into you, and unfolding through you.

We can't ever guarantee how, or even if, this will take place for you, but we can assure you that the less you try to make it happen, the more likely it is that it will come for you. The boon seems to emerge in just the right time and way to be deeply rewarding and meaningful to *you*. The dawn is often right after the darkest hour, or right after the deepest exploration of the unknown.

You don't have to believe this; you just have to be available to experience it. The poet R.S. Thomas can bring this notion forth better than we can:

*"I have seen the sun break through to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl of great price, the one field that had treasure in it.
I realize now*

that I must give all that I have to possess it. Life is not hurrying

*on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you."*

- R.S. Thomas



The Return Home

*"In loving the spiritual,
you cannot despise the earthly.
The purpose of the journey is compassion.
When you have come past the pairs of opposites, you have reached compassion.
The goal is to bring the jewel back to the world, to join the two things together.
We are not there until we can say "yea" to it all."*

- Joseph Campbell

The return home is very likely to be the most challenging part of the journey for you. Integrating the journey takes time, and happens on its own time, but you will also need help and support to see to it that it takes place. Ultimately, the initiatory journey that you take has to be digested slowly, and being to live from *within* you.

You will find yourself being presented with the opportunity and the challenge to bring back something of significant value to your family, friends, community, work and life-style. The fundamental gift of your return is the larger and more numinous *presence* that you will have discovered or reclaimed through the passage through the adventures and ordeals on your journey.

This emerging presence will naturally seek to uplift all conditions of your life at home, and it will initially orient your heart more fully toward what it is that you have to offer to the world around you at large.

- *This dynamic meeting between the enlarged world of your own presence, cultivated within the sacred time and space of the hero's journey, and the ordinary world and the life that you left behind, must be given considerable attention and care upon your return.*

After all is said and done, the uplifting of the everyday world is the ultimate purpose of the Hero's Journey.

This phase of the journey requires your full attention in order to reap the full harvest of your efforts. Otherwise, the rewards and benefits of your Journey Intensive can quickly recede out of your awareness.

We strongly recommend that you clear some free time for yourself immediately after the intensive. This is not easy to do, but it is one reason why we end on a Saturday instead of a Sunday. (If at all possible, consider taking Monday off work, if you are scheduled to be at work on that day.)

Some participants find that bringing their Hero's Journey Intensive experience into some personal process work with a skilled counselor or therapist is a considerable help in the re-incorporation process.

It is also helpful to keep the awareness and movement of your journey alive by continuing to journal about your ongoing hero's journey at home, as well as staying in touch with fellow participants.

We have provided a private Facebook group linked to the HJF website for dialogue among kindred participants who have experienced a Hero's Journey Intensive.

- ***The Hero's Journey Integration Program*** also provides a deeply supportive and sustaining container for keeping the hero's journey process alive at home. It is done through monthly online sessions with your Ally Group and your Group Facilitators.

Please see the HJF website for further information on this program and other opportunities for continuing involvement.

Remember that it will take a number of months, and even a year or two, to fully integrate this upcoming experience into your own new way of being. It will be of immeasurable help to imagine the time and effort leading up to and following this Journey as being integral to the Journey itself.



~ OTHER PREPARATIONS ~

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

If you are not currently physically active, it is *recommended* that you immediately start dedicating at least a half hour out of each day, at least 3-4 times a week, to do some aerobic activity such as brisk walking, jogging, or yoga.

Choose something manageable that you could enjoy. Enroll in a class if you need the motivation and support. It is best to choose an activity that integrates both movement

with conscious awareness. Start now, and continue this movement practice immediately following your completion of the Journey Intensive.

- *Transformation must take place in and through the body if it is to be of any effective use.*



READING

Here is a list of books that can support your preparation for the Hero's Journey Intensive. None are necessary, but they may be helpful in providing some inspiration and focus for your preparation.

Primary Recommendations:

- *The Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living*, By Diane Osborne.
- *Pathways To Bliss*, by Joseph Campbell.
- *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*, by James Hollis.

Additional Recommendations:

Perhaps just choose one or two that stand out to you...

- *Nature and the Human Soul*, by Bill Plotkin.
- *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, by Joseph Campbell.
- *Fate & Destiny*, by Michael Meade
- *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell On His Life and Work*, by Phil Cousineau.
- *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor*, by Joseph Campbell.
- *New Self, New World* by Philip Shepherd
- *Sacred Manhood, Sacred Earth*, by Joseph Jastrab.
- *The Power of Myth*, by Joseph Campbell.
- *Who Do We Choose To Be?* By Margaret Wheatley
- *Iron John*, by Robert Bly.

You can also do shorter reading by going to our website, to the *Inspiration* section, and reading the Hero's Journey essays written by Michael Mervosh. You will find one for each stage of the Journey. www.herosjourneyfoundation.org

Finally, above all else:

Stay as close as you can to your desire for a life that is vital to your true nature, and likewise could enliven the whole of life.

Make preparations for your journey as if the quality of your future life depends upon it. Because it does.