

Hero's Journey

Based on Joseph Campbell, Written by Heather Stang

Uses: Meaning Reconstruction, Posttraumatic Growth, Narrative Therapy

Loss has changed you. There might be times when sorrow seems endless, yet you've found moments of laughter, joy, and resilience even amid pain. Perhaps you've discovered a newfound strength or empathy that assists others in their grief. Despite the hardship, your journey has fostered wisdom, compassion, and an appreciation for life's transient beauty.

Consider your grief through Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, seeing your pain as part of a shared human narrative of trial, transformation, and growth. This meditation will guide you through each stage, offering understanding and a pathway towards healing.

Remember, each person's journey differs. If a stage feels too overwhelming or distant, it's okay. Grief doesn't adhere to a timeline or pattern. Acknowledge your feelings without judgment, reminding yourself that this meditation is a guide, not a rule. It's meant to help you process your feelings, not force you through discomfort. You can always imagine how your future self might feel, or what you might want to see happen. You can also move into a grounding practice, such as mantra or rest. Be patient with yourself; this is your journey to navigate.

Find a comfortable seated position. Close your eyes or find a soft gaze and take three deep breaths - in through your nose and out through your mouth. Feel the air fill your lungs and then release, letting go of tension with each exhale.

Imagine yourself standing on the edge of an unknown forest - this represents your 'Ordinary World', the life you knew before your loss. Feel the warmth of the sun on your face, the ground beneath your feet. Remember what it was like before the grief took hold. This was the comfort of your everyday life, but the winds of change have started to blow.

Now, step into the forest, entering the 'Call to Adventure.' This is the moment your loss occurred, a moment that shook you out of your ordinary world. Your journey through grief began here. It may have felt like an insurmountable challenge, a descent into an unknown world of pain.

Next, you meet the 'Refusal of the Call.' This stage reflects your initial resistance to the change, the denial, the wish to return to the life you knew. Acknowledge your resistance and understand it as a natural part of your journey.

In the middle of the forest, you encounter your 'Mentor.' This could be a friend, family member, therapist, or even the memories of the one you've lost. Their wisdom, love, and guidance give you the courage to proceed.

Now, we come to 'Crossing the Threshold.' You decide to fully embrace the grief journey, to explore your emotions and to let the healing process begin.

Next, you encounter 'Tests, Allies, and Enemies.' These represent the different emotions you experience, the support you receive, and the challenges you face during your journey. Some days are more difficult than others, but each step, each breath, brings you closer to understanding.

At the heart of the forest, you face your deepest sorrow in 'The Ordeal.' This is where you confront your most intense feelings of loss, allowing yourself to fully experience and acknowledge them. Cry if you need to, scream if it helps. It's okay to feel.

Emerging from this stage, you reach 'The Reward.' This is where you begin to find meaning in your loss, to appreciate the time you had with your loved one and the impact they had on your life.

As we move toward the edge of the forest, we approach 'The Road Back.' You decide to return to your everyday life, carrying your loved one's memory with you and using your experience to help others.

Reaching the forest's edge, you're at 'The Resurrection.' This is the rebirth of your spirit after the darkest period of grief. The pain may not be completely gone, but you now have the strength and understanding to move forward.

Finally, you step back into the sunlight, embodying 'The Return.' This is where you accept your new normal, realizing you've grown through your journey. You're not the same person you were before, but you are stronger, wiser, and more compassionate because of your experience.

Take a few more deep breaths and slowly open your eyes. It's this growth, this ability to persevere, that testifies to the indomitable human spirit. As you continue this journey, remember your strength and resilience. Honor your feelings, allow yourself to mourn, but also allow yourself to heal, to find joy, and to live fully.