

the hero's journey

The red thread running through the entire Balanzs teacher training program is a cycle and story line called 'the Hero's Journey', based on the findings of Joseph Campbell.

Joseph Campbell was a comparative mythologist. He travelled the world collecting myths from different cultures and he compared them to each other. Campbell noticed that the most powerful myths had several things in common. He wrote down his observations which he called the Hero's Journey.

Myths are far from just being tools we use to coax children to go to sleep at night. Myths reveal the themes, patterns, and challenges within the life of each person. Myths can be understood as timeless stories about universal truths that are embedded in the hearts of all humans.

Based on that understanding, Campbell referred to myths not just as the search for meaning, but also the 'experience of life'.

The traditional Hero's Journey cycle is made up of three phases: Departure, Initiation, and Return. Within those phases are several stages which are detailed below. Moving through these stages, we hope to inspire you to not only experience the teacher training as a heroic journey, but also to live your life as one.

The Ordinary World

The Hero goes about his ordinary life.

Stage I: Departure

Call to Adventure

Some information is presented in the form of a problem, challenge or a request which is received by the Hero and will require some form of action which takes him off into the unknown. It is also called a Pull Towards the Unknown. Destiny has summoned the Hero.

Something led you to register for a yoga teacher training program (YTT). Perhaps it was a longing to live more authentically, to expand your awareness of yourself and your world, or to evolve into the best version of yourself.

Refusal of the Call

The Hero will oftentimes refuse the call to adventure, craving the comfort of the familiar and fearing the uncertainty of the unknown.

You may have doubted that a YTT was the right thing to do worrying that you are not good enough or don't have enough time/money.

Answering the Call

The Hero is no longer able to resist the call.

Your desire to know and experience more was greater than your doubts, so you registered for the YTT.

Supernatural Aid/Companions

Help is given to the Hero from someone with abilities beyond the normal or from something beyond the normal. They may or may not give the Hero a talisman to help him on his journey.

The teaching team will use their knowledge and experience to guide you on your Journey.

Crossing the Threshold

The Hero agrees to the Journey, often reluctantly or because outside forces have given him no other choice. This is the point of no return, a moment of commitment and change, leaving behind the old and accepting the new.

Once you finally committed to the YTT, you have reached the point of no return. You've crossed the threshold, leaving behind the old and familiar for strange, new territory.

Stage II: Initiation

Road of Trials

The Hero is faced with a series of tests and challenges. The tests and challenges are designed to expose the Hero's vulnerabilities and strengths and to prepare him for greater challenges that are yet to come.

There will be a point in the teacher training program where you will feel overwhelmed with the information and homework assignments. The fact that there will be an exam often creates anxiety. For those continuing on to Module II, the test is necessary to prepare you for becoming an inspirational teacher.

Meeting of the Goddess

This stage is all about unification with the Self. The Goddess is just a symbol that reminds us that there is much more to life than going to work and paying bills. The Hero is inspired to overcome his challenges when he remembers that life is full of magic and mystery. Life becomes worth living.

Yoga is a collection of tools, practices and techniques designed to help you reach your true potential and evolve into the best version of yourself. What you will experience through the teacher training will allow you to see the sacred and divine in your everyday life.

Temptress

The Temptress is the opposite of the Goddess, the Goddess pushes the Hero forward, but the Temptress tries to distract the Hero. After enduring the grueling road of trials, the Temptress throws up an option for the Hero to take the easy way out to give up on the quest. But by staying focused the Hero stands more firmly in his heroic nature.

Anatomy is one of the most fascinating and difficult subjects. When confronted with the planes of movement, types of movement or all the anatomical terms, you may be tempted to give up. Stay strong and focused.

Apotheosis

Expansion of consciousness that the Hero experiences after overcoming the challenges on the Road of Trials. The Hero now has abilities or knowledge that ordinary people do not possess. They can do things and they know things their old self did not know and could not do. He has discovered his life's purpose and realized about the world and his position in it. With his expanded consciousness, he is vastly different from the man he was at the beginning of his journey.

Once you have completed the teacher training program, you will discover that you have a greatly expanded awareness of your body, energy, nature, and the cosmos. Your yoga practice has been transformed and has travelled off the yoga mat and into the rest of our life. You are a different person than you were when the program began.

Stage III: Return

Ultimate Reward

The reward is the achievement of the goal of the adventure. Did you attain what you were looking for by participating in the teacher training? Do you feel a great sense of accomplishment?

Refusal of the Return

The Hero has achieved the ultimate reward and has proved himself worthy to complete the Journey. He now must return, bringing with him what he has learnt and what he has become.

However, sometimes the Hero wants to remain in the moment and enjoy the feeling of bliss and enlightenment the Ultimate Reward has brought. Fortunately, the pull of being a Hero is too strong and this distraction will not last.

A yoga shala is a beautiful thing. It feels great to be in the company of supportive, loving, like-minded people. However, we must go back to our normal lives. It can be difficult to do when those around us have not had the same experiences we have and don't share our values and outlook on life.

The Crossing of the Return Threshold

The crossing of the return threshold completes the circle.

It's the moment when the Hero has figured out what it takes to be a Hero and is willing to do it. He has finally worked out who he is and how he will show up in his life.

A key part of the Hero's Journey is returning to the community to share the experiences of the journey. It doesn't mean lecturing your loved ones on the Yamas and Niyamas. We best share our experiences through example. By living authentically and continuously working to refine yourself, you affect those around you.

Master of Both Worlds

At the end of this stage, the Hero has proven the ability to effortlessly pass back and forth between the two worlds.

You will have knowledge of different layers of your body, mind and soul and you are able to share the wisdom with others.

Freedom to Live

Freedom to live means freedom from negative emotions and thoughts which pull the Hero away from living in the moment. It is the power to think, speak, and act as in line with your ultimate truth without restraint, imprisonment or enslavement.

Yoga is ultimately about freedom.