

The Hero's Journey of the User

Description

What follows is a little bit of fun, but one that may help you take another look at how you are planning your user journey in gamified systems. In storytelling and therefore in games there is a structure that is well known and well used called the Hero's Journey or [Monomyth](#). It was first described by [Joseph Campbell](#) in 1949 to show how many myths all followed a very similar structure. In the modern world, it can be seen in stories such as Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings. It can be seen in video games as well, one example being the Zelda games.

The basic idea is that a normal person is given a calling to go on an epic adventure. They may refuse, or just go along with it. Before they get too far they are helped by a mentor of some sort. Soon they leave their normal life and enter the world of their adventure. Along the way, there will be trials and temptations, ups and downs, loss and gain. Eventually, the Hero will have gained enough skills to achieve their goal. After this, they will have to return to their original "normal" life. This may also be filled with new trials and need more help, but when they return they will never be the same. They will have to come to terms with being one foot in their old world and one foot in their new world. With this, they master their new understanding and can share it with others.

The original Monomyth contains 17 steps across three distinct phases. This has been reduced and changed by others. Below are the original steps – check out Wikipedia for the details though.

1. Departure

- The Call to Adventure
- Refusal of the Call
- Supernatural Aid
- The Crossing of the First Threshold
- Belly of The Whale

2. Initiation

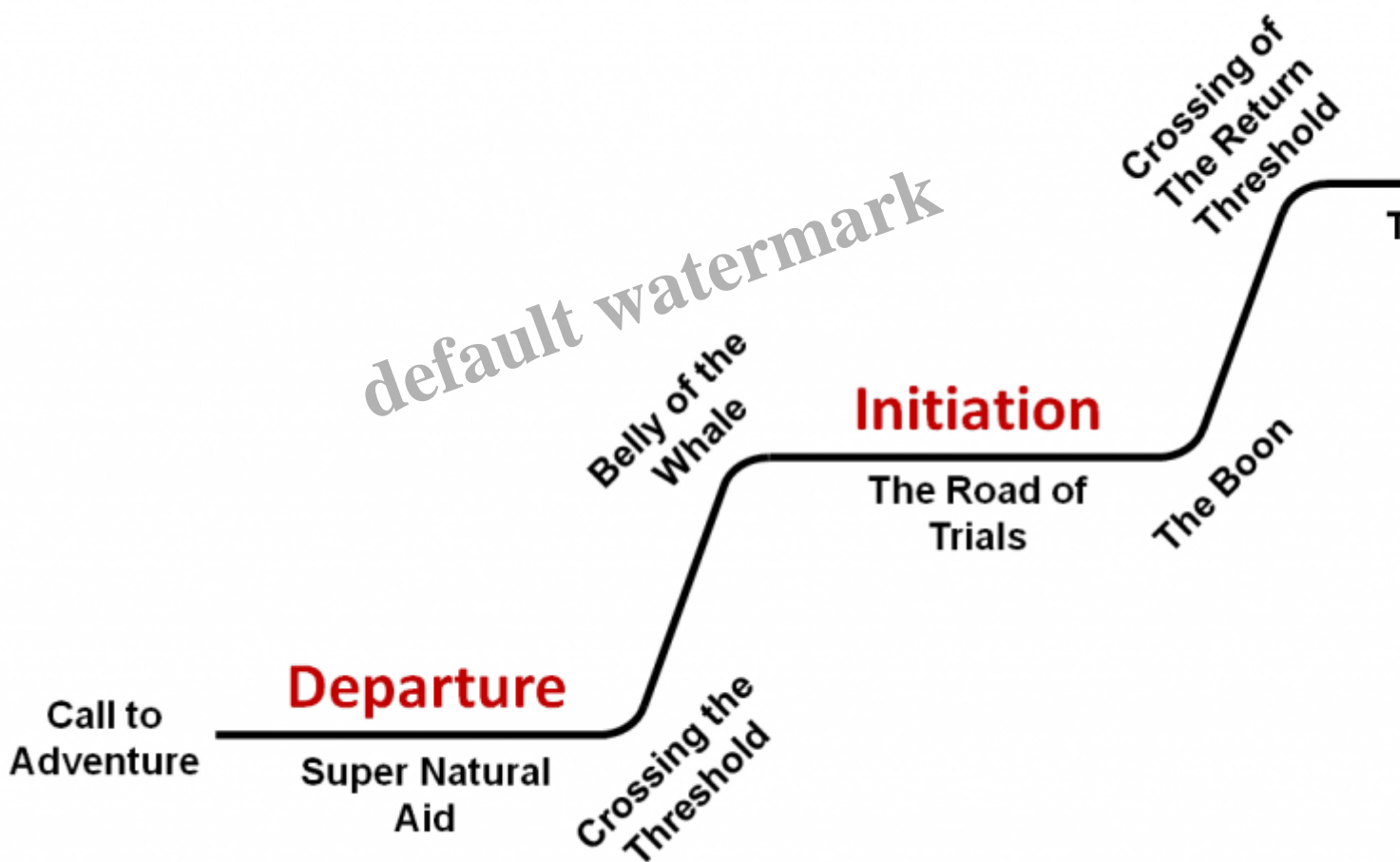
- The Road of Trials
- The Meeting With the Goddess
- Woman as Temptress
- Atonement with the Father

- Apotheosis
- The Ultimate Boon

3. Return

- Refusal of the Return
- The Magic Flight
- Rescue from Without
- The Crossing of the Return Threshold
- Master of Two Worlds
- Freedom to Live

For our gamified User Hero's Journey, I have chosen to use just nine steps of these steps. Also, for added enjoyment -I have merged it with [Amy Jo Kim's](#) Player Journey!



How does this translate to gamification? Glad you asked!

1. Departure

- Call to Adventure
 - Your entry into the system. The moment you get an email with a link to click on, or a

tweet that looks interesting.

- Super Natural Aid
 - In our gamified system, this is the tutorial and **on-boarding** phase.
- Crossing the Threshold
 - Once the user is armed with enough information, they are tested to make sure they are ready for the journey ahead.
- Belly of the Whale
 - Once in the system, they are willing to carry on with the trials that face them.

2. Initiation

- The Road of Trials
 - The day to day tasks of the system, where the user gains more skills and faces more challenges on their way to mastery. This is the **Habit Building** stage of Amy's journey.
- The Boon
 - A final reward, something the user has been working towards. This may be a trophy (but I hope it isn't), it could be a new understanding of something – either way it is something that was worth all the work.

3. Return

- Crossing of the Return Threshold
 - Now the user is ready to enter the final stages before **mastery** but must face a final test.
- The Master of Two Worlds
 - The user knows what they needed to know now, they understand your system and why they should be using it. All doubts are now in the past.
- Freedom to Live
 - Mastery at last. They are using your system for purely intrinsic reasons now. They are now the type of user who understands its importance and will evangelise its use.

If you can start to think of your user's journey in terms like this, you can see it is far more than just giving points and badges to people. That will only get them to The Boon!

Category

1. Gamification
2. Gaming

Tags

1. amy jo kim
2. Hero
3. Heros Journey
4. Joseph Campbell
5. Lord of the Rings
6. Monomyth
7. Star Wars
8. Video game

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