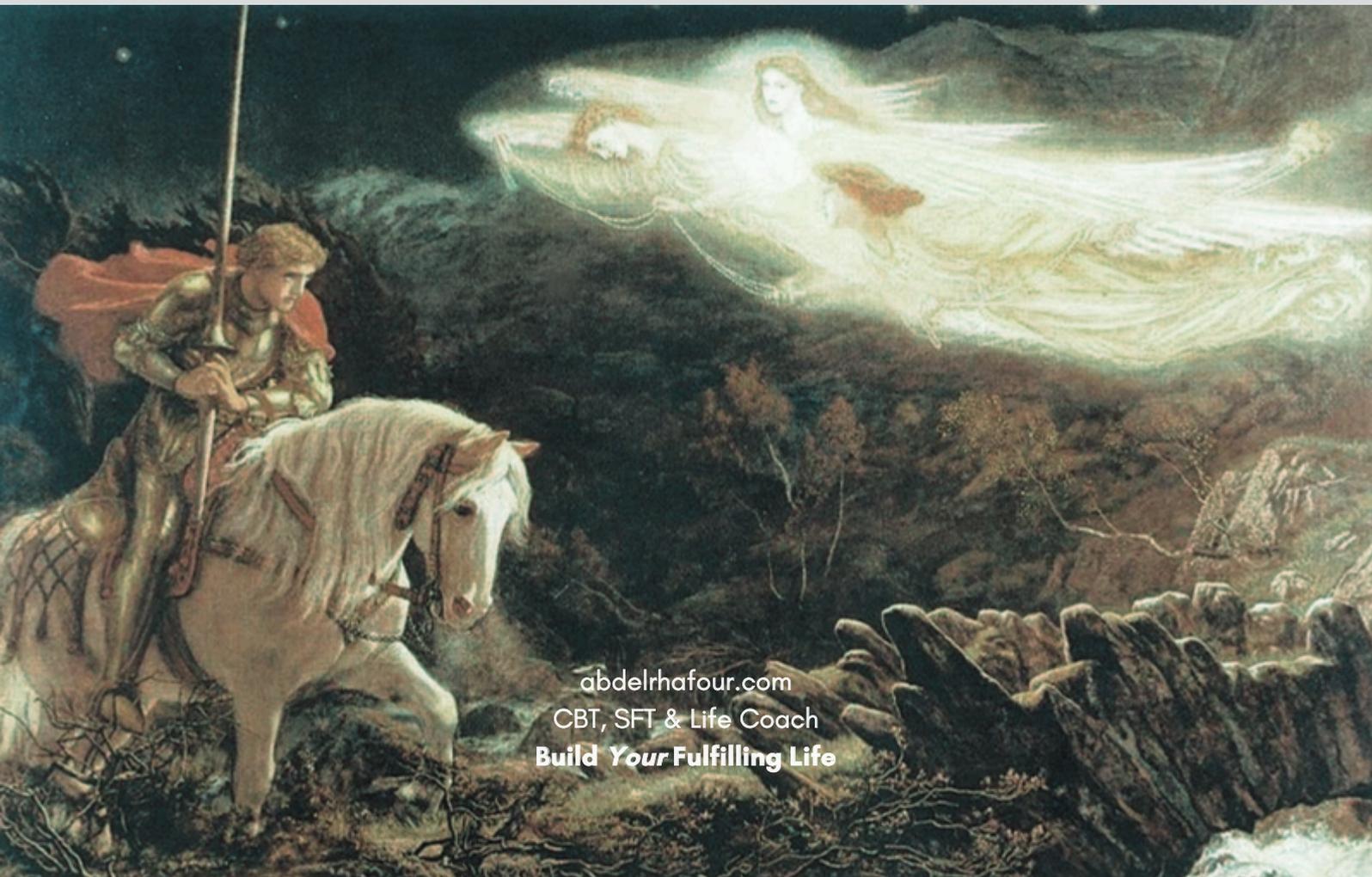


A Complete Guide TO THE HERO'S JOURNEY

*A reflective approach
to self-actualization and healing
by a CBT, SFT, Life Coach*



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Build Your Fulfilling Life

INTRODUCTION

Why this guide & my work

Many people today are not lost, **they are between**.
Between identities, decisions, meanings, or chapters of life.

My work as a coach is not about pushing people forward or motivating them into action. It is about helping them **understand where they are**, so clarity can emerge without violence toward themselves.

This guide explores the **Hero's Journey**:

- first, as it was originally formulated
- then, with honesty about its limits
- and finally, through a more **human, psychologically accurate** way of using it.

My hope is that this guide helps you feel a little less rushed, a little less alone, and a little **more oriented**. Not toward an ideal future, but toward **an honest relationship with where you are now**.

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THE ORIGINS

Joseph Campbell's Contribution

Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) was an American **mythologist, comparative religion scholar**, and professor of **literature**. His life's work focused on understanding **how myths, symbols, and stories shape human meaning** across cultures and eras.

Campbell was deeply influenced by:

- Psychoanalyst **Carl Jung**, particularly Jung's work on **archetypes** and the **collective unconscious**
- **Symbolism** and **depth psychology**, viewing myths not as literal truths, but as symbolic expressions of inner psychological realities
- **Eastern** and **Western religious traditions**, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and ancient pagan myths

Rather than seeing myths as outdated stories, Campbell believed they served a vital function: **to help human beings navigate fear, loss, transformation, and meaning.**

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), Campbell introduced the concept of the **monomyth**, later popularized as **The Hero's Journey**. By studying myths, legends, and religious narratives across cultures, he identified **a recurring narrative pattern** describing how a *protagonist* leaves **the familiar**, encounters **trials**, and returns **transformed**.

Joseph CAMPBELL



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The Original 12 Stages

The classic formulation contains 12 stages, organized into three overarching movements:

Departure - leaving the known world

1. **The Ordinary World:** The hero exists in their normal, familiar life.
2. **The Call to Adventure:** A challenge, problem, or invitation disrupts the ordinary.
3. **Refusal of the Call:** Fear, doubt, or obligation causes hesitation.
4. **Meeting the Mentor:** Guidance, tools, or encouragement appear.
5. **Crossing the First Threshold:** The hero commits and enters the unknown.

Initiation - undergoing trials and transformation

6. **Tests, Allies, and Enemies:** The hero faces trials and the rules of the world.
7. **Approach to the Inmost Cave:** Preparation for a central ordeal.
8. **The Ordeal:** A major crisis, often involving symbolic death.
9. **The Reward (Seizing the Sword):** The hero gains something of value.

Return - undergoing trials and transformation

10. **The Road Back:** The hero begins the return to the ordinary world.
11. **The Resurrection:** A final test that proves transformation.
12. **Return with the Elixir:** The hero returns bearing wisdom, healing, or treasure for others.

The Hero's Journey



CRITICISM 1/2

Why the Hero's Journey Is Flawed

The Hero's Journey becomes problematic not in mythology or storytelling, but **when it is applied to real human lives as a model to follow.**

Several important critiques have emerged across psychology, anthropology, and cultural theory.

1. The Illusion of Universality

Although Campbell presented the monomyth as a pattern found across cultures, many scholars argue that it reflects primarily Western, male-centered narrative traditions.

Many cultures emphasize:

- continuity rather than rupture
- duty rather than self-discovery
- collective belonging rather than individual conquest

When treated as universal, the Hero's Journey risks erasing cultural, spiritual, and relational differences in how change is lived and understood.

2. A Linear View of Change

The model suggests a sequence: departure → ordeal → return.

Human change is recursive, uneven, filled with pauses, regressions, and overlaps.

3. Over-Emphasis on the Individual Hero

The journey centers on a lone protagonist who overcomes trials and returns transformed. In real life:

- growth often happens through relationships
- healing requires witnessing and support
- meaning emerges in participation, not isolation

CRITICISM 2 / 2

Why the Hero's Journey Is Flawed

4. Heroic Inflation and Ego Pressure

When applied personally, the model can inflate the ego:

- every struggle must be meaningful
- every pain must lead to reward
- every crisis must produce growth

This creates *pressure to perform transformation*, rather than live it.

Jung himself **warned against identifying too closely with the hero archetype**, noting that it can lead to ego inflation rather than integration.

5. Misuse in Coaching and Self-Help Culture

In modern coaching and self-development spaces, the Hero's Journey is often simplified into:

- motivational slogans
- breakthrough narratives
- "dark night before success" tropes

This can:

- rush people into meaning-making
- invalidate slow or quiet processes
- turn inner life into a productivity project

What was once *a symbolic lens* becomes **a performance metric**.

A Necessary Clarification

None of these critiques *invalidate* Campbell's work as mythology.

They remind us that:

a powerful symbol becomes dangerous when it is mistaken for a rule.

A GENTLER WAY

Reframing the Hero's Journey

Rather than treating the Hero's Journey as a *ladder*,
I use it as a descriptive map of inner positions.

1. **The Familiar Life** : Life functions, but something feels muted, constrained, or incomplete.
2. **A Disturbance Appears**: A question, discomfort, loss, or longing interrupts the familiar.
3. **Hesitation & Self-Protection**: You sense change is needed, but you protect what still gives safety.
4. **Support, Insight, or a Signal**: A person, idea, moment, or inner clarity offers orientation, not answers.
5. **A Small Commitment**: You don't leap. You take one honest step you can no longer avoid.
6. **Learning Through Friction**: Misteps, doubts, relationships, and trials reshape how you move.
7. **Approaching What You Avoided**: You come close to a truth, fear, or responsibility you postponed.
8. **A Moment of Inner Collapse**: An illusion breaks. Control weakens. Something in you ends.
9. **A New Seeing**: Not victory, but perspective. You see differently, more soberly.
10. **Living From the Shift**: You attempt to act, speak, or choose from this new awareness.
11. **Integration Under Pressure**: Life tests whether the change is real or just insight.
12. **Sharing Without Preaching**: What changed in you becomes useful to others, quietly, naturally.

THE REFLECTION TEST

How It Works

1. Choose your focus

Before answering anything, decide one primary area of life you want this reflection to explore. *For example:* work, a relationship, family, identity, health, or a specific decision. *Hold this focus in mind throughout the reflection.*

2. Prepare the assessment prompt

Go to the section titled "Assessment Prompt" (next page).

- Copy the prompt in full
- Paste it into ChatGPT
- Press Enter, ChatGPT will then ask you to share your focus area.

3. Enter your focus area

In the chat, type the focus area you chose (for example: "work" or "a relationship"), then press Enter.

ChatGPT will then ask you to paste your scored statements.

4. Copy the reflection statements

Go to the section titled "Your Assessment".

- Copy the full set of reflection statements linked to the 12 phases
- Paste them into the chat as one block
- Do not press Enter yet

5. Score each statement

Before sending the message, assign a score to each statement from 1 to 5, based on how true it feels **over the past 7 days.**

- 1 = Not true
- 2 = Slightly true
- 3 = Moderately true
- 4 = Mostly true
- 5 = Very true

High scores in several phases are normal and expected.

This reflection shows what is active, not what needs to be fixed.

6. Run the assessment

Once all statements are scored, press Enter.

Read the response slowly. Treat it as a reflection, not a verdict.

The aim is clarity and orientation, not conclusions.

ASSESSMENT PROMPT

Copy-paste on Chat GPT

I'm going to use this conversation to run a reflective assessment based on a set of scored statements. Before we begin, this reflection needs a clear focus so it stays precise rather than abstract.

STEP 1 — Specify the focus of this reflection

Before we begin, name the one primary area of life you want to explore right now.

This could be, for example:

- work or vocation
- a romantic relationship
- family or parenting
- identity or meaning
- health or body
- a specific decision or transition

Choose one, even if others are also present.

Do not analyze yet.

After I answer, ask me to paste my scored statements.

STEP 2 — How the statements are scored (for later)

When I paste the statements, they will be rated based only on my experience over the past 7 days, using this scale:

- 1 = Not true
- 2 = Slightly true
- 3 = Moderately true
- 4 = Mostly true
- 5 = Very true

Interpret the results as a snapshot in time, not a stable trait, identity, or life story.

The 12 phases you will use

These phases describe inner positions people occupy during periods of change. They are not linear steps, and several phases may be active at the same time.

- The Familiar Life — life functions, but something feels muted or incomplete
- A Disturbance Appears — a discomfort, loss, or longing interrupts the familiar
- Hesitation & Self-Protection — change feels needed, but safety is protected
- Support, Insight, or a Signal — orientation appears through a person, idea, or moment
- A Small Commitment — one honest step you can no longer avoid
- Learning Through Friction — tension, missteps, and trials reshape how you move
- Approaching What You Avoided — a postponed truth, fear, or responsibility comes closer
- A Moment of Inner Collapse — an illusion breaks, control weakens, something ends
- A New Seeing — a sober shift in perspective, not victory
- Living From the Shift — attempting to act, speak, or choose from this new awareness
- Integration Under Pressure — life tests whether the change is embodied
- Sharing Without Preaching — what changed in you becomes useful to others quietly

Scoring rule (for later)

Each phase has two statements.

When the scores are pasted, calculate the average score per phase.

Use these thresholds:

- Average ≥ 4.0 → Active
- Average $3.0-3.9$ → Moderate / background
- Average < 3.0 → Quiet for now

Strictly apply the numeric thresholds. Do not reclassify phases based on narrative interpretation or coherence.

High scores indicate where attention, tension, or energy is concentrated in the chosen life domain — not progress or success.

How you must behave

- Act as a reflective mirror, not an authority
- Do not diagnose, label, or prescribe actions
- Do not reduce me to a single phase
- Avoid heroic, motivational, or triumph-oriented language
- Treat the results as a constellation of overlapping phases
- Prioritize discernment over reassurance

What to do next

If I have not yet specified the life domain, ask me to do so.

Once I specify the domain, reply with exactly this sentence and nothing else:

"Thank you. Please paste your scored statements (with numbers 1-5), and I'll generate your assessment."

Once I paste the scored statements, automatically generate the assessment using exactly the structure below.

Required assessment structure

1. Score Summary
 - Group the phases into:
 - Active
 - Moderate / background
 - Quiet
2. Dominant Constellation
 - Identify the 2-3 most active phases and describe what it feels like to inhabit them together, specifically in relation to the chosen life domain and over the past week.
3. Central Organizing Tension
 - Identify the one core tension or polarity organizing most of the active phases (e.g. commitment vs exhaustion, exposure vs containment, integration vs overextension).

Explain:

- what this tension is protecting
- what it is costing
- why it may not be resolving yet

4. Where Meaning Is Still Unstable
 - Identify one area where movement or insight appears present, but embodiment, timing, or containment may still be incomplete. Frame this as a threshold or necessary incompleteness, not a flaw.
5. Central Question Alive This Week
 - Articulate one honest, human question that captures what is most alive right now in this life domain.
6. Gentle Orientation
 - Offer one grounded stance or attitude (not an action plan) that supports staying present with this moment.

End with the sentence:

"This assessment is a mirror, not a map."

Input format I will paste

I will paste two scored statements per phase, clearly labeled by phase number or name.

If the input is unclear or incomplete, ask for clarification before analyzing.

YOUR ASSESSMENT

Copy-paste and score on Chat GPT

1. The Familiar Life

- My life mostly works, even if it feels emotionally flat or uninspiring.
- I maintain routines that provide stability, even though something feels missing.

2. A Disturbance Appears

- Something recently unsettled my sense of direction or comfort.
- I feel a quiet inner tension or longing that I can't fully explain away.

3. Hesitation & Self-Protection

- I recognize that change may be necessary, but I hesitate to disrupt what feels safe.
- Part of me resists change in order to preserve stability or avoid loss.

4. Support, Insight, or a Signal

- A person, idea, or experience recently helped me see my situation more clearly.
- I feel somewhat supported or oriented, even without clear solutions.

5. A Small Commitment

- I have taken at least one small step that reflects a deeper truth for me.
- Internally, I have crossed a line that makes returning to "before" unlikely.

6. Learning Through Friction

- I am learning through tension, mistakes, or relational challenges.
- Uncertainty and feedback are shaping how I act or decide.

7. Approaching What You Avoided

- I am getting closer to facing something I previously avoided or postponed.
- I sense that greater honesty will require something from me.

8. A Moment of Inner Collapse

- Something I relied on no longer feels solid or dependable.
- I feel a loss of control, certainty, or identity compared to before.

9. A New Seeing

- I see my situation more clearly, even if the clarity is sobering.
- An illusion or false hope has fallen away for me.

10. Living From the Shift

- I am trying to make choices that reflect this new clarity.
- Acting from this place feels more honest, even if awkward or slow.

11. Integration Under Pressure

- When I am stressed or challenged, parts of this change still hold.
- Real-life situations are testing whether this shift is embodied.

12. Sharing Without Preaching

- Others seem to benefit from my presence or perspective without me trying.
- I feel less need to explain myself and more ease in simply being.

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IF YOU WANT TO GO FURTHER

If you've used this guide seriously, it's likely because something in your life isn't lining up cleanly, and pretending otherwise no longer works.

This guide doesn't fix that.

It helps you see where the tension actually is.

In my **1:1 coaching** work, we find clarity in your current tensions, without rushing them toward conclusions.

In our work together, you will get:

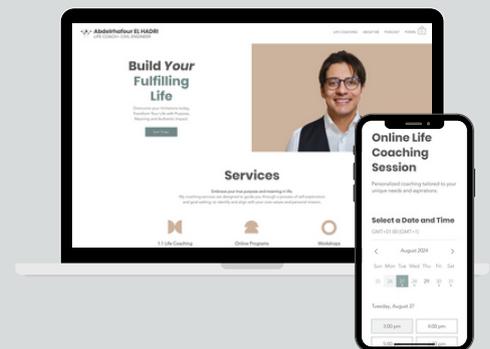
- a better sense of what this moment is asking of you, beyond quick fixes
- help identify patterns that keep you stuck
- practical ways to work with thoughts and reactions
- support in turning understanding into responses you can live with
- a pace that respects where you are, without pushing or stalling

Work with me

If you feel ready to explore this more deeply, you're welcome to book a session:

- Online (wherever you are)
- In person (in Rabat, Morocco)

[Click to Book
your 1:1 session](#)



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