✦ IDEA · CHEAT CARD · ARTS

hero's journey

A story pattern in which a hero leaves everyday life, is tested in an unknown world and returns changed, with a gift for others.

How it works

1. A call breaks into everyday life, and the hero often refuses it at first.
2. With a helper, the hero crosses into an unknown, dangerous world.
3. In the unknown world, hard trials change the hero and win a prize.
4. So the hero returns home changed, with the prize as a gift for others.

Example

Luke Skywalker in Star Wars, 1977

- Farm boy Luke first refuses Obi-Wan's call, because his uncle needs him.
- Luke leaves home after soldiers of the Empire kill his aunt and uncle.
- → Luke destroys the Death Star by trusting the Force.
- → Luke returns to the rebel base with a medal for saving the rebellion.

Use it for

- ✓ Retelling your own life as one connected story to find more meaning
- ✓ Seeing a move abroad or a new job as leaving, trial and return
- ✓ Asking why a film's hesitant hero, mentor and final test feel familiar

Watch out

- ✗ The hero's journey is a common pattern, not a formula every story must follow.
- ✗ Campbell chose the myths that fit his pattern, and his hero is a man.

Remember In a big change, ask what you will bring back to other people.