



~ HJ Apprentice Training Manual ~  
Taking A Group Through The Hero's Journey Experience



## Group Facilitation Support and Guidelines

### HOW TO BEST USE THIS MANUAL

This particular manual provides you with a basic structure that encourages you to create the necessary conditions for a deep and meaningful group journey to happen. during a Hero's Journey immersion, intensive or online experience. It has been created as a reference and resource document to support your own particular facilitation presence and style.

Please use this manual to assist you in providing your group with a “solid support container” for their inner journey, as well as fostering dynamic interactions with one another. This will help you to support each individual's unique unfolding journey, while also cultivating the group container as a dynamic and vital entity unto itself.

In this manual, the groups session are broken down into four essential tasks:

- **The Group Task**
- **The Journeying Task**
- **The Technical Task**
- **The Teaching Task**

These tasks overlap one another and will help to focus and enrich the group experience for the individual journeyers. Please keep the following five facilitation pointers in mind as you use this manual:

**1. Remember that your primary responsibility is to the group as a separate and primary entity unto itself. Always keep in mind that *the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*, and therefore it must be served above any one individual.**

Thus, no one individual is more important than the overall group container. This is one of the most important understandings you can have about group work.

Think of your group's presence as *a communal fire*. Your task is to keep all the embers alive and near to one another, to keep the fire burning. Once you have been attending to any one ember for any significant length of time, always come back to the communal fire. Don't let the fire die down too low!

If you do, it will subtly reinforce old resistances, familiar defenses, and a gravitational pull towards sameness in all the group members.

**2. With these particular groups, you may at times have to become more pointed and directive with your leadership than you may be comfortable doing. Ride this developmental edge. Practice patiently waiting and watching, then step forward decisively with an intervention.**

You must be actively receptive as you witness the group, and you also have to demonstrate that you are in charge. Take your facilitator's seat, take your place as the leader, especially with each beginning and ending point. (This is different from being in control.)

Demonstrating to the group that you are in charge, without being domineering or controlling, will increase the group safety and efficiency, particularly at the beginning of each group and for the first few group sessions. Your embodied presence, demonstrated by activating your voice from the center of your being, is a primary task for yourself.

You will be gradually able to step back once you have stepped up, but you will find it hard or awkward to step up if you initially stay back too much. Take the leader's seat for getting the group established, especially related to specific tasks and *content* (the WHAT), then let the group's *process* unfold as it does (the HOW).

**3. Hold to appropriate and pre-determined limits and boundaries.**

Keep the communal fire contained. *Start group sessions on time and end them on time*. If there is a reason to run over for a critical experience, get the agreement of the group to do so, or don't do it. This creates safety for the members. *Make confidentiality overt and clear*. Members can say they are in a group with one another, but cannot reveal particular content by particular individuals. Get overt verbal agreement to this principle.

**4. Stick to the format this manual provides and use it as a support for your facilitation. Then you can begin to take up your challenge to follow your own creative instincts and impulses, whenever they speak to you.**

Use this structure to keep yourself and the group grounded and focused on the relevant themes and issues of the mythic journey. But also give yourself the liberty and the autonomy to develop your own particular style and way of working.

Experiment and try some things that come to you in the moment. Trust yourself.

### **5. Free yourself up as much as possible to be yourself with your group.**

Be a vital instrument; be willing to be remembered for your own particular and peculiar ways of being. *Your primary task here is to practice setting yourself on fire when you are in their presence.* You are to become a transmission of the mystery and adventure of the journey, so you will first have to let it take you. Keep finding your way to this grounding source of energy and inspiration within you.

Once you have access to this internal source, you can begin to intervene directly and succinctly, and also with clarity and compassion. *Do your best not to become analytical or too verbal when you speak!* (Please be mindful of this tendency. It will dull your group and they will be unlikely to tell you about it.) Be embodied and be vital instead.

Finally, you are to demonstrate your active interest in each one of them. Engage each of one the group members, and regularly address them by their name when you speak.

In these ways, you will become a force of nature with your group. And for goodness' sake, keep making sure that you are having some fun with them!



### **\*\*\* Building Your Ally Group \*\*\***

#### **Taking Up The Hero's Journey**

**1. PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY** – the first session is to be scheduled *prior to* the first web-course date. This is an orientation and welcome session for all group members.

#### **Group Task:**

Creating parameters for sharing and belonging within a supportive and responsive community presence:

- *Establish your leadership* and directive in the first session. Actively demonstrate that you are in charge of the group space, which will be experienced quite differently than wanting to be in control of what happens.
- *Establish boundaries and discuss the terms of confidentiality.* Explicitly state that the specific content of what is shared during your group sessions is to remain within the confines of the group experience.
- *Encourage each person to share what has brought them to their journey.* Ask what would help them to be more comfortable sharing their personal experiences with the others. Encourage group members to demonstrate interest by asking a few questions of each person who has shared, in order to support group member interaction. (Bridging)
- *Make sure all group members are brought into the group conversation.* As a rule of thumb for group leadership: *Refer to each person by name as you speak to them.* In this way, you call their presence into existence within the group. (This is especially important to do if you are facilitating an online group series.)

### **Journey Preparation Task:**

Remind group participants that *they are not to be giving advice* or suggestions to other group members, but rather they are to become more of an interested companion for the Journey experience.

*Allies go places together; they are willing to participate in one another's experiences.*

### **For Online Groups Only:**

#### **Technical Task:**

Have this session be a review of the technology to be used. Check if people have created a log in for the **Spreecast** software, have been able to get onto the **a course website** if there is one, and know how to use the **Fuze Meeting or Google Plus** software, if your group is an online group.

*Make use of the journey website as a resource and reference.* If you are providing an in person group series, walk people through the website if you have access to the internet at your group meeting space.

*Create a group email list.* Review with the group how to use the Reply All button.

Provide encouragement and support to those members who may be intimidated, doubtful or otherwise challenged by the technological aspects of an online course, or

to those who might not see the value or the possibilities of this way of being connected.

### **Preparation Session Teachings:**

Provide an understanding *the cyclical and non-linear nature of the journey*, despite the fact that we define the journey by various stages in the HJ myth. (Speak to how the stages of the journey in actuality interpenetrate one another, how one may be found within the other. *(Give an example of this, such as how allies may be present throughout all the other stages – the purpose of the group!)*) Note that for the sake of studying and learning, the stages are delineated in a sequential fashion.

*Emphasize that each person will be having their own individual journey, unique and different from the others, while you all explore a certain stage of the journey at the same time.*



## **2. WORKING WITH THEIR CALL TO ADVENTURE**

*A true calling involves a great exposure before it can become a genuine refuge. A true vocation requires shedding anything that would impede or obscure the call. A true pilgrimage requires letting go of the very things most people try to hold onto. In seeking after what the soul desires we become pilgrims with no home but the journey the hero within us would have us follow....*

- Michael Meade

### **Group Task:**

Supporting the desire for new possibilities and new experiences that will start to take place in their lives in the days (and weeks) ahead. Be encouraging towards all the group members; ask them to be *willing to go where they have not yet gone before*, in some important and doable way.

Encourage the spirit of adventure to come alive and to the surface.

### **Journeying Task:**

Provide an opportunity for each member to practice deep listening. Help them to focus inwardly. Make a space for group members to be open-minded, and begin to explore how one hears and knows an inner calling. Can they feel the aliveness of such a calling?

Practice short, repeated, meditative moments on deep listening, moments that follow and track one's breathing. Then feel one's bodily sensations while being

actively supported by the ground below them, and then within them. Keep pointing them towards opening to listening within by paying attention to the interior space of their body.

**Technical task:**

Check in with the group on how it is going with the technology being used. Continue to support and normalize the challenge of the learning curve for some in the group.

Review how the group email list is working. Make sure everyone is receiving communication from you in this way.

**Call to Adventure Teachings:**

Review and use **Lecture Notes for The Call to Adventure**, to be found on your apprentice website, in the documents section. Pay particular attention to the section from *Going Through the Door: Identifying and Responding to the Call*.



**3. CROSSING THE THRESHOLD**

*"If the call is heeded, the individual is invoked to engage in a dangerous adventure. It's always a dangerous adventure because you're moving out of the familiar sphere of your community...I call this crossing the threshold. This is the crossing from the conscious into the unconscious world, but the unconscious world is represented in many, many different images...It may be a plunge into the ocean, it may be a passage into the desert, it may be getting lost in a dark forest, it may be finding yourself in a strange city...but this is the adventure – it's always the path into the unknown, through the gateway or the cave or the clashing rocks...The idea in the hero adventure is to walk bodily through the door into the world where the dualistic rules don't apply."*

- Joseph Campbell

**Group Task:**

Bringing the group to sense of crossing over from the familiar into the unknown. Take them from a way of being that clings to sameness, to one that commits to the path of adventure and ordeals, in service of the soul's calling.

Keep helping members to let go of old and deadening routines and patterns, and to practice doing that right in the moment whenever possible. Emphasize this in small, do-able steps. *Perhaps enact a small threshold crossing ritual in the group.*

**Journeying Task:**

Identifying and facing one's personal threshold guardians, begin to look directly at whatever it is that most holds one back from going where they have yet to go.

Perhaps you can also make space for a focused, direct exploration and inner reflection on what one fears the most. Begin to actively engaging that fear more directing and in the present moment, stay with it, and then bring in reflections from other group members on how they experience the individual who is giving voice to their threshold guardian fear.

You can also have some of the group members share about their own daemons who stand guard at the threshold of new ground.

### **Technical tasks:**

Check in with the group on how it is going with the different technologies being used: Spreecast, the website, the Facebook page, etc. Continue to support and normalize the challenge of the learning curve for some in the group with this aspect of the journey. You can use the metaphor of the Forest to describe technological challenges!

Review how the group email list is working. Make sure everyone is receiving communication from you in this way. Check and see if everyone is at least reading these communications. Is anyone participant dominating the email communication?

### **Crossing the Threshold Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes from Crossing the Threshold**. Consider addressing the six steps of crossing over into the mythic realm:

1. Letting Go of Familiar Boundaries and Limits
2. Going from Half-Heartedness to Whole-Heartedness
3. Facing the Shadow in One's Self
4. Going Beyond Duality thinking and living
5. Facing a 'Point of No Return'
6. Entering the Spirit and Play of Adventure



## **4. ENTERING THE FOREST**

*"Stand still  
the trees ahead and bushes beside you are not lost.  
Wherever you are is called "here"..  
the forest knows where you are.  
You must let it find you."*

### **Group Task:**

Encourage the group to become willing to tolerate the “**un-doing**” of that which has been so familiar to them; this is the part of the deepening process, as an essential part of the heroic endeavor of seeking transformation, that people will resist the most. Their resistance will be quite direct, tenacious and obvious, or else it will be quiet, subtle and pervasive.

We all have to let go of the life we have had planned for us, in order to have the life that is waiting for us.

### **Journeying Task:**

“*Shedding a Skin*” - you can use this expression as a relevant metaphor for what will be required of each journeyer. Be willing to venture together, actively wander off the path you are on, and do this, literally, if you are near the forest. Keep wondering about new possibilities for each particular group member.

Keep letting go of what is no longer alive for each individual, while waiting for the new aliveness to come. Listen to where they tell old stories that no longer hold any vitality for them, or interest for others.

Hold the group to the necessary tolerance of the disorientation, the undoing, and perhaps the distress of the detachment from the familiar.

Practice becoming “Lost” in order to be found again, anew.

### **Technical tasks:**

Check in with the group on how it is going with the technology being used. Use any challenges group members are having as a version of being “lost” in new territory. Have them notice what they encounter within as they face these challenges.

Review how the group email list is working. Make sure everyone is now participating in some way with the group.

### **Entering the Forest Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes for Entering the Forest**. Work with the aphorism of “*that which you cannot experience positively you will experience negatively*”.

Work with the matter of adult concerns that are “dilemmas” - *the territory of no apparent way through*. Stay with those places within an individual, or with the group, where there is no immediately clear path to follow, and no obvious right way to go.



Matters or concerns with no easy or apparent solution require us to face and work with the deep forest of the psyche, and we must go deeper in than we typically go.

We have to work our way into the middle of these dilemmas, and work with ambiguity and patience, in order to work through them, *and eventually*, to way out. The treasures surface during that sustained and shared 'eventual-nous' experience.

Purposeful wandering is the best way to "come undone" from well-established routines. Not all who wander are lost!!



## 5. ALLIES AND SYNCHRONICITY

*"I have found that you only have to take that one step towards the gods and they will then take ten steps towards you. That step, the heroic first step of the journey, is out of or over the edge of, your boundaries, and it often must be taken before you know that you will be supported."*

- Diane Osbon

### **Group Task:**

Addressing the issue of '**being committed**'. This commitment to is both to one's own deep soul journey, and it is also becoming committed to being an ally for other's journey. How is the group bonding and flowing together? If they are committed to their journey and the journey of each group member, the mystery and the synchronicity will begin unfold.

Be persistent in directing and pointing communication to happen between group members, bridge them over and over again towards one another.

### **Journeying Task:**

Strengthening one's commitment to the hero's adventure is fundamental to a sense of adventure happening during the journey they are on. Directly explore the felt sense between committed and un-committed postures.

Can members see correlations between their commitment to the path, and the experience of synchronicity? Can they feel themselves as being an ally to others? Can they feel the others being allies for them?

### **Technical task:**

Continue to check in with the group on how it is going with the technology being used to support their online course. Get feedback on how they are using the website and whether or not they are watching the broadcasts. Have group members who are benefitting from the use of the technology share about their experiences.

## **Allies & Synchronicity Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes for Allies & Synchronicity**. Work with this important teaching point: *We must be able to learn the difference between doing things FOR ourselves vs. doing things BY ourselves.*

Also work from the lecture notes about how an ally is a particular kind of engaged companion and helper, which may be new to some in the group. Encourage group members to strengthen their commitments to their journey, and then be mindful in the experiences ahead of how synchronicity might be unfolding in front of them.



## **6. ADVENTURES AND ORDEALS**

*Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature,  
Nor do the children of men as a whole experience it.  
Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run  
Than outright exposure.*

*Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.  
To keep our faces toward change and  
Behave like free spirits in the presence of fate  
Is strength undefeatable.*

*- Helen Keller*

### **Group Task:**

Supporting the group in the sharing of the joy of their personal adventures as well as the sorrows of their personal ordeals. Speaking to and about the group as a whole, as an entity now capable of joining with each individual having their own experience, so that the whole group is sharing in the joys and sorrows of each unfolding experience.

How does this shared, felt experience deepen or enrich the heroic journey of walking between the worlds of mundane activities and the realm of mythic adventure?

### **Journeying Task:**

Perhaps offer a reflection space on one the most relevant and impactful experience of their journeying process thus far. Give them enough time and space for personal reflection. Then allow some of the group members to share *from this place, and bring it alive, and not simply share about their experience.*

Have each member be specific, and keep them in the present moment, with the other group members. Watch for any ways that the group gets rendered into a passive audience position, or slightly entranced by the sharing.

This is a kind of *deeper threshold crossing into the "Now Point"*, this is moving into the vital experience of the eternal as it unfolds in the group, similar to a council evening on the mountain.

### **Technical tasks:**

In addition to checking in about any tech issues, encourage group members to reach out and share their experiences via the group email or the Facebook page for the community at large.

Get feedback on how they are using the website and whether or not they are watching the broadcasts.

### **Adventures and Ordeals Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes on Adventures and Ordeals: *Going from the Ideal to the Real***. Sharing from one's lived experience, and not simply about it in a conceptual way or more removed way, is essential to access one's own vitality as well as engage and sustain the interest of the others.

This is like going *from the looking at a map to the entering the actual territory*. It is difference between the *looking at the menu and tasting the meal*.

Entering the territory of here and now lived experience is our way of it. We want to taste the meal, and share it with others. We become living embodiments of the passion of the eternal world, expressing itself through the uniquely human form that is our true nature.

Also speak about *The Deal of the Real* – that every adventure has embedded within it an ordeal, and every ordeal has embedded within it an adventure. This is demonstrated by the way the *yin-yang* symbol is represented.

This is what every human being must reconcile with. This is what we have to practice saying 'YES' to – the joyful participation in the sorrows of this world.



## **7. THE BELLY OF THE BEAST**

*The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of*

*conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died.*

*This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation....The hero goes inward, to be born again. The disappearance corresponds to the passing of a worshiper into the temple – where he is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is...The temple interior, the belly of the whale, and the heavenly land beyond...are one and the same.*

- Joseph Campbell

### **Group Task:**

Each member is learning ways to surrender over to a sense of something larger than and other than one's self. We do this in a way that benefits the whole, and thus benefits the self.

We are to offer a group teaching that when the group members are genuinely connected to one another, what one person does for him or herself, they also do for the group! This becomes the way of a life giving contribution each member brings forward, on behalf of the group.

### **Journeying Task:**

Have each group member feel into the one thing in their lives that they have had the most resistance to: what they have feared, avoided, hated, etc.

Invite the deeper support container of the group to be present to each member as they let themselves be 'swallowed' by this issue, without collapsing or avoiding.

Stay in the moment, and keep staying curious, and do not let anyone try to fix the individual. What emerges? Can some group members share about what this encounter brings up for them?

### **Technical tasks:**

Continue with a normal check in with the group on how it is going with the technology being used, at the end of the session. Get feedback on how they are using the website and whether or not they are watching the broadcasts.

### **Belly of the Beast Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes on The Belly of the Beast: On Facing the Dragon** - Ordeals bring us towards a particular epic internal encounter with forces that would apparently seek to annihilate our deepest wishes.

*We may not yet realize that these energies are disowned aspects of our own true nature. Rather than running from the life force energies within the self, at some crucial threshold point in our lives, we have to face them and we have to engage them. This is what we call “facing the dragon” from the mythic perspective.*

*Going Against the Ego’s Initial Impulse* – learning to practice deep awareness, and staying with what is foreign or difficult or un-naturally uncomfortable – is precisely that which begins to bring forth the deepest unrealized potential from our core! Emphasis this point.

Help each member of the group to experience surrender more positively, beautifully and gracefully.



## **8. THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOON**

*"Ah, dear friend, need I say, but to the brim my heart was full! I made not vows, but vows were then made for me. Bond unknown to me was given, that I should be singing greatly, a dedicated spirit. And on I walked in blessedness which even yet remains."*

*- William Wordsworth*

### **Group Task:**

Help each of the group members come to their own particular realizations of the boon that comes from within.

How do they know the value of their own vitality and capacity to love at the core of their being? What is their current capacity for wonder, awe, joy, love, expansion, and mystery? How does the living presence of the group help to be a reflecting mirror of the vitality and presence living within each of the individual group members?

*Is the group becoming a source of the boon to its members?*

### **Journeying Task:**

Provide the group members with some deep reflection time, sitting in silence together. Can they identify what has brought them deeply alive? What has opened their hearts?

Have them also reflect upon what has brought them most alive throughout their lives. Then have them reflect on how this has been sustained in various forms throughout the span of their lives thus far.

What is one thing that each member can undeniably claim as a boon for themselves at this point in their life?

**Technical tasks:**

Encourage group members to view any video features or poetry on the website that would support the calling forth or reflection of an expansive state of being.

See if the group is willing to sustain a group email chain about their ability or struggle to claim their boon. Can they stay with it?

**Discovery of the Boon Teachings:**

Use both **the HJ Essay and The Discovery of the Boon\_Lecture Notes** to support teachings on the Boon.

*One must be willing and able to span the bridge, the open and undefined space, between polarities and dualities within themselves, in order to have an awakening.*

*Becoming living embodiments of the divine nature expressing itself in incarnate human form, in this time and space here on earth.*

Vital life force energy, accessed and revealed through the emergence of our soul nature, comes forth in the mind and body of the hero on his or her journey. However, this is also transitory. The boon is often potent, fleeting, and incremental.

The revelation of soul consciousness can only happen little by little, across the span of a lifetime. But each 'little' revelation feels quite profound and expansive!

The boon reveals itself to the one who has embraced the hero task of reclaiming one's life purpose, yet only in the soul's own time and way. But there is no other way. Every opening, each revelation, however small – means everything.

The *boon*, the pearl beyond all price for the hero, is the discovery of *an embodied sense of vital life force energy, often co-arising with penetrating insight, awareness and irony*. This will almost always be accompanied by a sense of surprise, wonder and awe, combined with a sense of place, right timing and a peace beyond all human comprehension.



**9. THE RETURN HOME**

*The first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows,*

*banalities and noisy obscenities of life.  
Why re-enter such a world?  
- Joseph Campbell*

*"A man who has a vision is not able to use the power of it  
until after he has performed the vision on Earth  
for the people to see."  
- Black Elk*

### **Group Task:**

*Empowerment.* Engaging in actions that have impact, potency, influence. Actually doing things that matter deeply to us. The group now must encourage each of its group members to be committed to taking small but new (heroic) action steps.

Each member must go places inside they haven't gone before; they must speak in ways they have not before, and they must take specific and conscious actions in their daily lives that they have not before. This is how the boon is kept alive.

### **Journeying Task:**

*Bring the inner journey out towards the world. Bringing something new from the inner journey to one's external world waiting for them.*

Have each group member commit to at least one specific, heroic action step. It is a step to be implemented in their daily lives. It must be a way of being, combined with an action, that is freely given as a gift, or a giveaway to another.

This action step must come from an inner alignment with the empowering boon they have experienced along the way on their Hero's Journey. Have them report back to the group about their particular "acts of power", as Carlos Castaneda would call them, to the group in their follow up session, or as part of an Integration Group.

### **Technical task:**

Perhaps some group members would be willing to make a simple statement in their group email chain once they have taken their action step. *But don't have them reveal the outcome of their experience until the group gathers together next.*

### **The Return Home Teachings:**

Use the **Lecture Notes and the HJ Essay on The Return Home:**

*A Hero Action Step is defined as giving conscious and compassionate thought to how our most authentic response or action will best contribute to the lives of those upon whom we act, in any given situation or particular life opportunity.*

It is our very best effort, within the limits of our abilities, to bring forth something that has life within us, and we give it away without expectation of any return. This is what adult love is all about.

*Take the Action But Don't Attach to the Outcome* - We will have to take action and we cannot become too attached to how it is received or not received.

*New (hero) acts are a sign of life moving forward.* We now move from the downward and inward movement of soul awakening and shift towards a new forward moving direction. We come upward and outward towards self-expression, towards manifestation, towards definitive action.

Life moving forward, making our own way, as only we can, as we go – the way of mythic adventure in ordinary life.



## **10. INTEGRATION, COMPLETION AND LOOKING FORWARD**

### **Group Task:**

*Co-create a completion ritual as a group.* Reflect upon the life of the group as a whole, and how it has taken its own unique journey, one that could not have been anticipated or expected. Also have each group member reflect on where they have been on their journey, where they are now, and where they are most likely to go from here. Make sure all members say a verbal “goodbye” to the group, and consciously disband and let go of the group as your final act of completion.

### **Journeying Task:**

Create a sacred space and group center, and invite each group member to take the center, and share about their hero action step, and what transpired. Let them share briefly and spontaneously anything that is coming alive for them in the moment as they have the full attention of themselves and the group.

### **Technical task:**

Make a decision about what to do regarding the group email chain. Either have it continue to live for a designated period of time, or else consciously disband it. Let the group members know they will be receiving follow up information from *The Hero's Journey Foundation* about their experience.

### **Closure or Completion Session Teachings:**



This session is for you to come up with one or two of your own most embodied and vital teachings from your Hero's Journey tool kit. Choose one that you value most, or find most relevant to the group's experience of the moment. Radiate the work!



*“What I think is that a good life is one hero journey after another.  
Over and over again, you are called to the realm of adventure, you are  
called to new horizons. Each time, there is the same problem: do I dare?  
And then if you do dare, the dangers are there, and the help also,  
and the fulfillment or the fiasco.  
There’s always the possibility of a fiasco.  
But there’s also the possibility  
of bliss.”*

*- Joseph Campbell*