

5 signs you're on the hero's journey.

AUG 15, 2013 VIA REBELLE SOCIETY

"The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there is something lacking in the normal experience available or permitted to the members of society. The person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir. It's usually a cycle, a coming and a returning." ~ Joseph Campbell

You won't feel ready for it when it comes. No one does.

Castor doesn't train heroes anymore. No, your call will come when you are folding the laundry, punching the time clock, sitting at your desk with stacks of paper in neat and organized piles. One day, when you are writing checks, the wind will blow through you, and you will wonder where that chill came from as you notice your windows are so safely shut, and the room is a comfortable seventy-five degrees. This is your warning.

For those among us who are prone to leaping off bridges just to feel the thrill of falling, your call may not feel like a call at all.

You might meet a tall dark stranger who extends to you a harmless invitation and find yourself suddenly hurdling through space- gleefully- while cosmic dragons hurl fire that whizzes past your ear, singeing your hair and giant spiders weave nets all around. Be careful out there.

Your call to adventure may come as a shriek in the stillness of the night while you lie awake ruminating about the rising waters, the secrets you keep, the way your lover turns away from you after sex. Or it might come as haunting and melodious pipe music you can only almost hear, being played by a nymph in the wild places of your dreamscape.

Your call might be a regal horn blown by the breath of a great angel through a million tree branches scraping against your window. Finally, if you're truly destined for greatness, your call may not arrive until the skies catch fire, and set ablaze all the small comforts you've so meticulously collected, turning the house you were raised in to ash.

No matter how your call comes, it is the trumpet of your destiny. You will say that you have more important things to do: you are raising children, punching the clock, planning a vacation to escape from an oppressive life.

You will protest to the messenger. You will say he has confused you with someone else, that you've not a heroic bone in your whole body, that your Honda, your atrium, your sensible beige walls are who you really are- what you see is what you get- and you simply cannot accept his invitation right now. You're too young. You're too old. You're not financially ready. You're not emotionally ready. You're blind. You're deaf.

"But the makers of legend have seldom rested content to regard the world's great heroes as mere human beings who broke past the horizons that limited their fellows and returned such boons as any man with equal faith and courage might have found...."

The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.” ~Joseph Campbell

It's already too late. When you are called, no refusal, no denial, no sputtering rejection can stop it from beginning, so don't go back to sleep.

1. The calling itself is your qualification.

“The real work of our lives is to become aware. And awakened. To answer the call.”
~Oprah Winfrey

You don't feel qualified? Good. Neither does anyone else. In the ass-backward and meaningless world created by our collective insanity, you must qualify. You must qualify to be permitted to work, to be housed, to have status as a human being. If you are batshit crazy and poor, you are diagnosed with a thought-crime from the big book of The Healthy State's Conformity Manual (fake book title- you know the one).

If you're crazy- and you find a way to monetize it- you're eccentric and brilliant, a sharp and creative mind (relative to the growth and return on your bank account, that is).

How strange, to give so much power away in a world that measures the value of a human life with numbers in a vast virtual databank. What is your life worth? Do the numbers add up?

Are you qualified to receive the right to live with dignity and purpose? Do you qualify for healthcare? A safe home in which to raise your child? Food? This is a system that we collectively- and literally- just made up. It is insane. It is meaningless. Only our agreement allows it to exist at all.

Underneath all your concessions, your hold-outs, your hold-ins, your thrashing, your frozenness lies something original, unique and profoundly real, truly alive, bursting with creative ecstasy.

If you have done everything right-or even if you haven't — and you don't know why it feels hollow, how you've become so tame, so stiff and gray and boring, like the color has been squeezed out of you, then your call has come right on time. Pick up. The phone. Fate knows you're home. Don't make her blow a tornado through your living room to get your attention.

2. Your life begins taking on magical or supernatural qualities.

“Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell others.” ~ Mary Oliver

Once you have been called it is not so far-fetched that you would begin to experience unusual phenomena. After all, you do not yet know what you are called to- what you will become could not be explained to you because it is not in your frame of reference.

Can you imagine a color that does not exist?

Even as you take your very first step, you are blind. It seems unfair to be asked to walk a path that you cannot see, but in exchange for your lack of sight, you shall be awarded vision. You will see with the eyes in your hands as you feel your way forward. You will

peer into worlds that lay upon the dust under your physical feet; you will see the greater focus of existence and you will learn to let go your attachment to appearances.

With any luck at all, it will start small: a glimmer out of the corner of your eye, a strange encounter with an old woman who says the oddest thing you'd ever heard, the sense that you are not alone in an empty room. You will wish to brush these off as tricks of your clever mind, but failure to heed the secret knowledge of your gut will only result in more powerful demonstrations designed to dash the illusions under which you live to pieces.

If you think the chill rolling down your spine in the silence is eerie, just dare to ignore it.

If you insist on physical demonstration it will come, but great risks you take with this demand, whose form you cannot control. Do you really think you are ready to kneel before an apparition as solid in your perception as your own flesh? Do you really believe that you could withstand the light of your own being without being shattered to your humanity? Would you become a prophet or an empty shell housed in the nearest nuthouse?

You cannot answer these questions. You are too fragmented as yet to know what you are. We all are. If you do not think you are shattered, then you do not yet know even the most basic thing about your human condition. When finally you see yourself break, which may not become evident to you without great loss, only then have you begun to see what has happened to you in your sleep. This is the first hint to the true purpose of your journey.

3. You begin to lose your grip.

"We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another, unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present." ~ *Anais Nin*

So tightly clenched have been your fists around what is left of your old life- of the pre-called self- that your fingertips have turned white, the joints in your knuckles ache, the ragged edges of your nails draw blood in half-moon shapes from the meaty bases of your palms.

Your old reality is now called into question. What was solid and true begins to warp and fade. The bedrock on which you built yourself is turning to dust beneath your feet, the walls on which you have hung photos of your dearest memories turn to ash before your eyes.

At every threshold you lose something: your shoe, your watch, your favorite negligée. Yesterday you needed these things; today the Universe teaches you that you don't. You're in a perpetual state of grief and wonder. In every mirror you will see yet another of your many faces. The days of being two-faced have ended as you discover, slowly, that you are everything that has ever been.

What a great and terrible responsibility that falls upon the awakening human. Ever more weary as you tread, you cannot return for you have lost your way in the vastness of yourself now.

Time, you find, moves in every direction. The alarm clock still rings, you still drink coffee, your body still sits in traffic, but your spirit is stretched across eternity. Everything looks the same, and yet, not at all.

Your skin becomes increasingly uncomfortable as you try to contain all that you are. You find you cannot stuff anymore in, and so now you must begin to sort through the storage of your eternal self and cast out what no longer seems valuable, what no longer seems true, what no longer seems real.

You no longer look with your eyes, but with your inner sight. You see all the world, all its devious systems, the way it lulls, the way it oppresses, the way it is designed against all truth. You have fallen for so many deceits. You can no longer trust anything you once knew. You begin to realize that this quest will claim your life, and one blink later...

4. The Abyss has taken hold.

"It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life. Where you stumble, there lies your treasure." ~Joseph Campbell

Lost and empty, there is no longer a road, only darkness all around. It breathes, it hisses and all lights go out. You no longer exist, and yet you are in pain. All but catatonic, you lie there in your sweat, your tears, in the blood spilling from your broken and hopeless heart.

You believe in nothing, in no one. You are sure your end is upon you; you wish for it to come swiftly and terribly. You can do nothing but wait for your heart to stop beating, and out of this long dark night, a distant, golden glimmer, and harp music calls you through the boundaries of worlds.

Finally, you've broken. Finally, all your defenses have been defeated. Finally, you have no choice but to see that all you have clung to is meaningless, that it could not save you. Finally, you have surrendered to the void.

"When there's no sign of hope in the desert, so much hope still lives inside despair. Heart, don't kill that hope..." ~ Rumi

You die.

You dream.

So many sights from a life now over: streamers and cupcakes, past due notices and pink slips, campfires and moonlight. Here, in the nothing you face your fears, no longer formless they rise as phantoms in the dark.

War weary, fightless, you watch them hang you and light you on fire, drag you through the dust by a rope around your neck on horseback, throw you from bridges, chop your head off on dusty cobblestone streets. You hear yourself screaming, through the long hallways of time. You hear yourself wailing from a cavern on the ocean floor. Your spirit has carried this pain since the first time you took form. You are sharing the womb with thousands of selves, frozen in the traumas of ages in human time.

You begin to realize what you have done. You begin to realize that your cleverness is not so clever after all. You start to see that your mis-creations never die, not even when

you do. You see that you have forgotten, but your creations never did; they cannot. They are bound to you and you are bound by the laws you made for them.

You are ready now, to accept your undoing. You are ready to become a stem cell again. Formless. Helpless. You might become anything: a liver, a heart, a uterine lining. A star, a queen, a priestess. You've lost your will. You await instruction from the vast dark womb of the Mother.

5. You are ready to accept your transformation.

"The deep parts of my life pour onward, as if the river shores were opening out. I feel closer to what language can't reach. With my senses, as with birds, I climb into the windy heaven... in the ponds broken off from the sky. . ." ~ Rainer Maria Rilke

The cacophony of all worlds falls silent as you cross the bridge, the only direction you can now go. Behind you there is no life. It's funny how you glide now, swimming through the etheric soup, no longer hindered by your clumsy body, loaded down with heavy, dented armor, or bags of worthless trinkets from a world that no longer exists for you.

It is dark in the womb, but it is peaceful. You have made it to the temple. You lost everything along the way, even your identity, which no longer hinges on what you do for money, what you do for specific individuals, what kind of car you drive.

You are utterly empty and without will, you have come to realize that you cannot know what to be next and have finally let yourself go into the arms of the Great Mother, whose embrace is a soft golden cocoon where your emaciated self can finish safely disintegrating.

The caterpillar cannot imagine what it is to be a butterfly. The sperm cannot imagine what it is to be a human. And ever so slowly, you are being rebuilt. You are being made new.

You are going to be birthed one day, into a world you cannot yet fathom, into a life you did not know was possible. Where you have come from will seem like a dream, and your slate will be wiped clean by the hand of She who created you.

Though the home you now live in seems to get increasingly cramped and tight as you grow, you also have been given new ears and eyes, new limbs, a fresh and open heart, innocence. You can sense the excitement as you float, you can feel that a new dawn is now close.

You can hear their voices now, the voices of those who you are coming to save, to heal, to love into newness. You can hear them speak of you as the royalty whose arrival they eagerly await.

It takes some effort- the labor- it is uncomfortable and your new muscles, new lungs, new eyes work hard to adjust you as you squeeze through the same bridge you crossed as a tiny speck of pure potential all those long months ago, so you can emerge atoned, and blazing with soul.

"Everything changes when you start to emit your own frequency rather than absorbing the frequencies around you, when you start imprinting your intent on the universe rather

than receiving an imprint from existence." ~ *Barbara Marciniak*

You are no longer a slave, but a true and compassionate servant. You have no needs, only desires that burst into being by the power of the divine will you now are.

Your body, your brain, your singing heart exist only to embody God, as you, in a world that once seemed so scary, so dark, so dangerous. The dark armies are now like ant colonies.

They climb over your your big toe on their way to feed on the crumbs left behind by picnicking families, but they cannot see you, let alone harm you. Now, the dark cities where you were chased by monsters are the playground of creativity, mercy, joy, peace and happiness. Miracles are ordinary occurrences, and you give them away freely to everyone you meet. Your breath raises crystal cities, and your heart beat is the rhythm of the music that holds the universe together.

You are home again.

Then, the phone rings.

Pick it up.