
The Heroine's Journey to Sovereignty

In a patriarchal culture, a heroine's journey is a process of healing and integrating both the archetypal sacred feminine and the sacred masculine within. It is first and foremost about reclaiming sovereignty.

While presented as a list, the steps below are not linear, and don't always go in order. We may bounce back and forth between several; some, such as sovereignty, are a lifetime practice.

REPUDIATION OF THE FEMININE

This first step often comes at a very young age and is likely expressed as a rejection of the mother and the culturally-defined trappings of being female.

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MASCULINE (FALSE)

Here, our heroine learns to value culturally defined 'masculine' values such as strength; rationality; stoicism. She sees that power, prestige and financial security come through the masculine.

ACHIEVEMENT OF (ILLUSORY) SUCCESS

After learning to play the patriarchal game and adopt (false) masculine qualities, our heroine experiences a high enough level of success to keep her engaged (e.g. "golden handcuffs").

OVERTAKEN BY DISSATISFACTION - THE GREAT AWAKENING

After reaching some level of success as defined by the culture, the heroine is shaken out of complacency and begins to notice there is something very wrong. The wake up call is often an external event (death of a parent, divorce, job loss). The body may also begin to rebel against the stress, workload, or lack of emotional expression.

SEPARATION FROM THE MASCULINE

Our heroine begins to reject the expectations of the patriarchal culture/false masculine, to the extent she can see them.

DESCENT TO THE UNDERWORLD

As she rejects what she has known, the heroine often feels lost and abandoned. She is in the "Underworld", the space in-between: she knew how to succeed in the patriarchal world; she does not know yet how to operate in a balanced, integrated way. This is a time of facing fears and shadows within. This is often the time of meeting her Soul.

RECLAIMING THE FEMININE

In order to reclaim herself as feminine, the heroine must forgive herself for her rejection of the feminine. She also follows a process of discovery of the true sacred feminine, discerning these qualities from what she has been taught.

HEALING THE MOTHER RELATIONSHIP

Part of reclaiming feminine qualities and values is healing the split with the Mother, both the human mother and - more importantly - mother as the body and the body of the Earth. Reclaiming the feminine rests on the foundation of appreciation and honor for the body.

HEALING THE WOUNDED MASCULINE

Once she has regained her feminine strength, the heroine heals her relationship with the masculine. This necessitates discerning true from false masculine qualities and seeing her own masculine shadow (very often through how she treats her body).

SOVEREIGNTY

At this point in the journey, the heroine has gained a high level of self-trust and self-love. She lives her life from the inside out, from her Soul. She reclaims her projections of authority and wisdom from all outside sources. She re-calibrates her life work to a new definition of success, one that is her own.

INTEGRATION AND EMBODIMENT

The heroine embodies what she has learned, balancing masculine and feminine energies within herself. Her body is her conduit for wisdom.

Adapted from Maureen Murdoch's *The Heroine's Journey*, with modifications based upon personal experience.