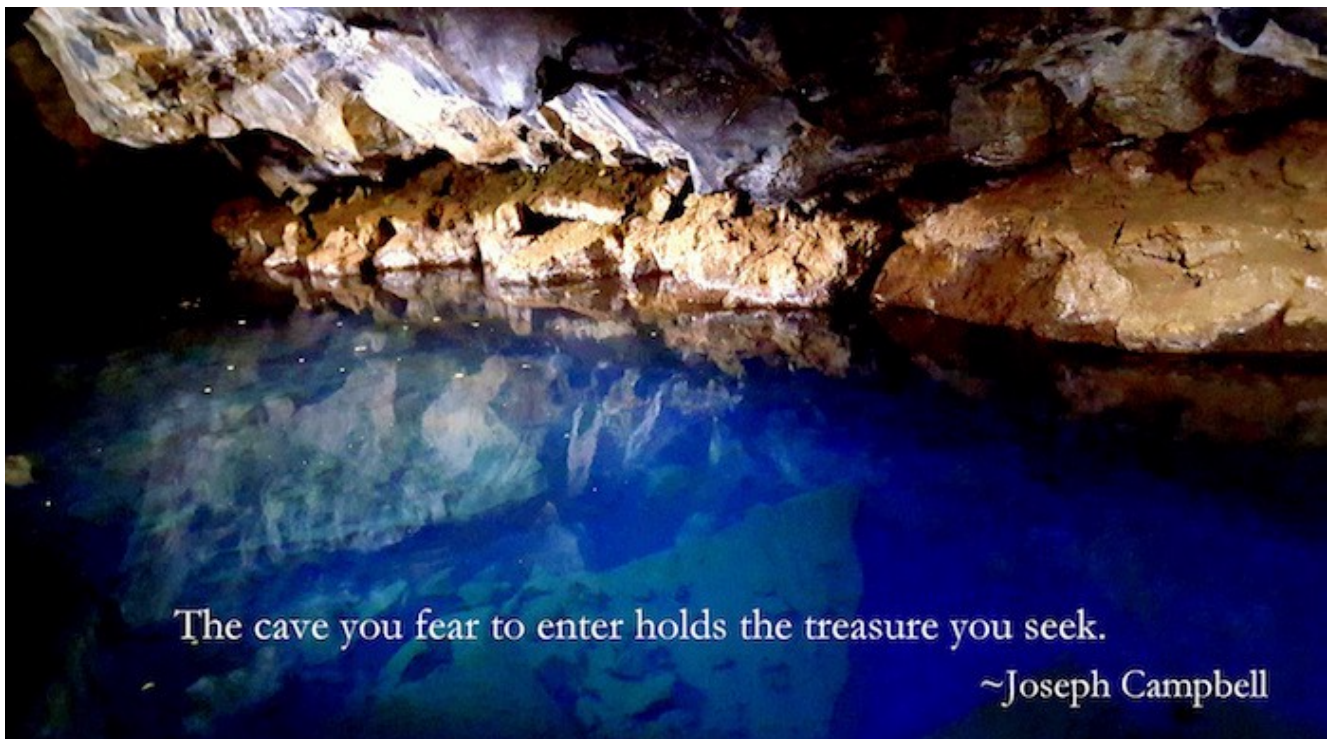


"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek"

[Scott Myers](#)

Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, and story as psychological journey.



I'm an acolyte of Joseph Campbell, having studied him first when I was an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, then later at Yale, and eventually when I came to Hollywood and discovered he was all the rage in story development circles due to the influence of [Christopher Vogler](#).

Campbell has influenced my writing and my thoughts about writing enormously. Beyond his scholarly research and contribution of *The Hero's Journey* to the discussion about

story, Campbell also holds a special place in my intellectual, spiritual, and creative life because of this: His work introduced me to Carl Jung.

As it turns out, Jung had a massive impact on Campbell. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine Campbell's ideas evolving anywhere near what they became without the underlying observations and philosophy of Carl Jung.

The quote above is a perfect example: "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek." That is classic Jung. The process of *individuation*, a fundamental life-process by which a person integrates disparate parts of their self into a whole, acknowledges the fact that the individual must engage all aspects of their psyche, even those which they fear.

Here are some Jung quotes that echo this sensibility:

"A man who has not passed through the inferno of his passions has never overcome them."

"Man's task is to become conscious of the contents that press upward from the unconscious."

"Our heart glows, and secret unrest gnaws at the root of our being. Dealing with the unconscious has become a question of life for us."

"There is no coming to consciousness without pain."

"To confront a person with their own shadow is to show

them their own light."

"One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious."

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

Why this post? Two reasons:

- Almost without exception, the stories we write involve a character or characters who, along with whatever else happens to them along the way, experience a **psychological journey**. It is that interweaving of what transpires in the Plotline and how that impacts the attitudes of a character in their Internal World, reflected in their metamorphosis (Themeline), that gives our stories richness, depth, and meaning. It makes dramas, comedies, thrillers, action movies and all the rest better stories.
- We ourselves as writers go on our own psychological journey in the telling of our tales. And oftentimes in order to dig up diamonds in our imagination, we must plumb the depths of our own souls and enter our deepest, darkest caves, for it is there where we will find our treasure.

'I am not what happened to me,
I am what I choose to become.'

So much of what we are told about screenwriting has a tendency to reduce creativity to filling in blanks on this template or that paradigm. As helpful as that may be in wrangling a plot, where is the life in that? Where is the heart, soul, and humanity? It is only through giving ourselves completely over to our stories and creative self — and yes, sometimes going into Dark Places — and engaging the process as an organic one where we discover magic, mystery, and treasure.

For more on Joseph Campbell, go [here](#).

For more on Carl Jung, go [here](#).