

**Post Traumatic Stress:
PTS Disorder
to
PTS Growth**

Auburn University
Center for Governmental Services

November 3 - 4, 2011
Mobile, Alabama

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**Trauma:
The Hero's Journey**

Faculty

Melissa Bradley, MS, NCC, BCETS, FAAETS
The Omnibus Center
Huntsville, Alabama

**“Saints and madmen swim in the same
water, what drowns one, transforms
the other.”**

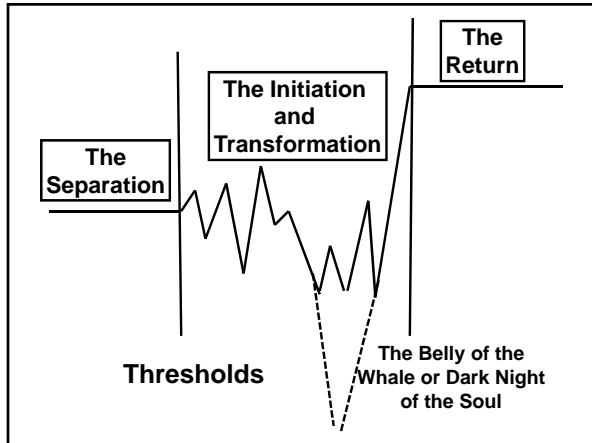
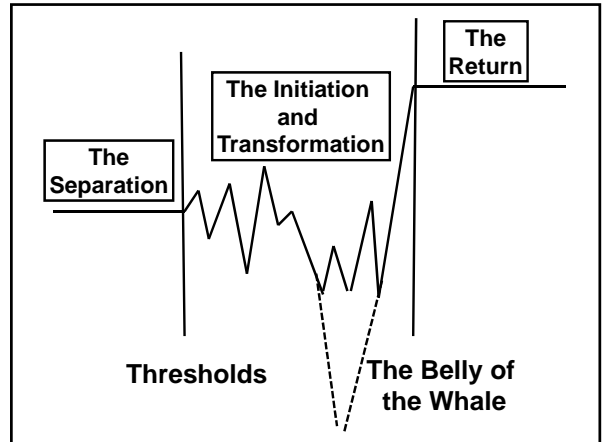
– Joseph Campbell

Vision Quests

- **Severance or separation**
 - “Die to the old life”
- **Threshold**
 - “The time-between world”
 - Shed old skin, not yet reborn
- **Incorporation**
 - Integrating the lessons learned,
return to camp

“To journey without being changed is to be a nomad. To change without journeying is to be a chameleon. To journey and to be transformed by the journey is to be a pilgrim.”

– Mark Nepo



The Initiation

“A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner.”

– English Proverb

Trauma Processing and Integration

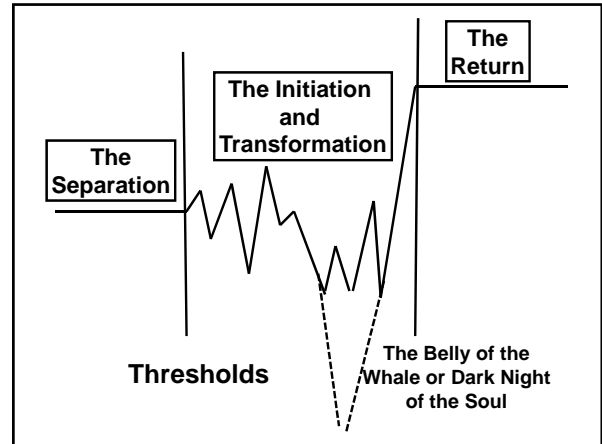
- Safety, stabilization, appropriate empowerment, education, basic skills and therapeutic alliance
- Identify or implement the “heroic framework” within the context of their beliefs

Trauma Processing and Integration

- Hold the sacred space as they mourn the losses caused by the trauma
- Dismantle the ritualized “trauma imprint”
 - Somatic, emotional, cognitive, external details

Trauma Processing and Integration

- Recognition of “who am I now?”
- Recognition of the “fruit” of the initiation



“I was forced to enter the basement of my Soul, to look directly at what was hidden there and to choose, in the face of it all, not death but life.”

– Henri Nouwen

The Return

- Applying the Boon or lessons
- Paying it forward
- May be harder on others

“Within the sorrow, there is grace. When we come close to those things that break us down, we also touch the things that also break us open. And in that breaking open, we uncover our true nature.”

– Wayne Muller

“Among several Plains tribes, such as the Lakota, there was a cleansing and healing ceremony for fighting men. Those who had participated in battle, or battles, were placed outside the circle of the community; a dance arbor represented that circle as the people stood within it. Songs were sung to honor the fighting men, and prayers were offered for their souls so that they be cleansed of the terrible things they had to do to defend the people. Then the men walked quietly back into the circle, back into the community, because the people allowed them to return so they could be healed...”

Joseph M. Marshall, III, author of *Walking with Grandfather: The Wisdom of Lakota Elders*

**“In surrender so complete there is no
coherent thought, no real pain,
no feeling, just exhaustion,
just waiting, there is something else.
Warmth/light/softness.
Acceptance, by me, of me. Rest.
After a while, some strength.
Enough, for now.”**

- Terry Anderson, author of Den of Lions;
Survivor of 2,454 days in captivity
in West Beirut (1985)