The Hero's Journey Workshop

What: Full Day impro workshop focussing on The Hero's Journey narrative structure and character archetypes.

When: Saturday 5th December 2009 OR Sunday 6th December 2009
Fully booked for Saturday 5th but still spaces left on the extra date Sunday 6th December.

Time: 10:30am - 6pm. You will need to be able to attend the full day.

Cost: £20. Places must be booked in advance by contacting Steve Roe on 0797 697 5348, roezone@hotmail.com.

Where:

The Bedford (The Tavistock Room, 2nd floor)
77 Bedford Hill
Balham
London
SW12 9HD

Workshop Details:

The workshop will be based on adapting Christopher's book 'The Writer's Journey' to use as a basic Narrative Structure with Character Archetypes when improvising long scenes and stories.

We'll start with some fun warm ups to get everyone working well together. Then we'll do some back to basic essential impro games so we’re all alert and listening and accepting and building on each other's offers. After this we'll be playing some narrative games to get the basics of improvised narrative across like platform building, free association and reincorporation.

After this we'll discuss 'The Hero's Journey' narrative structure and archetypes and apply these to some longer improvised scenes and stories. We'll then have loads and loads of time to play with them endlessly, until we're calmly improvising compelling storylines with vibrant characters.

The workshop has come about because Steve has been dying to try this out more and even see it's potential to work as a show, but has always run out of time when trying to do it properly on a Thursday evening.

Before the Workshop:

It would be helpful if you could read the background information on this web page, and have a read of the links below. It would also be good to watch either the first Star Wars Film or The Wizard of Oz as these very closely follow the structure we'll be working on. I also recommend buying the book "The Writer's Journey" by Christopher Vogler as it's incredibly helpful for anyone improvising or writing stories.

Writer's Journey on Wikipedia

Christopher Vogler's Website

The Writer's Journey book on Amazon
About the Book:

The Writer's Journey is a popular screenwriting textbook by writer Christopher Vogler. Vogler based this work upon the writings of mythologist Joseph Campbell, particularly The Hero with a Thousand Faces, and holds that all successful films innately adhere to its principles. In fact George Lucas worked very closely with Joseph Campbell when creating the early Star Wars Films, which might explain their somewhat mythical status.

Christopher Vogler initially summed up his findings in a 7 page memo, that passed around Hollywood Screenwriters like wildfire, until he decided to turn it into a book. I've put extracts of this memo below, but full details are in the book or on his website.

The Hero's Journey Outline:

The Hero's Journey is a pattern of narrative identified by the American scholar Joseph Campbell and used by screenwriter Christopher Vogler that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual, and psychological development. It describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization.

Its stages are:

1. THE ORDINARY WORLD. The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.

2. THE CALL TO ADVENTURE. Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.

3. REFUSAL OF THE CALL. The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.

4. MEETING WITH THE MENTOR. The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

5. CROSSING THE THRESHOLD. At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

6. TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES. The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

7. APPROACH. The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.

8. THE ORDEAL. Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

9. THE REWARD. The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.
10. THE ROAD BACK. About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

11. THE RESURRECTION. At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero’s action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

12. RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR. The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

**The Archetypes**

Archetypes are recurring patterns of human behavior, symbolized by standard types of characters in movies and stories.

**HEROES**

Central figures in stories. Everyone is the hero of his or her own myth.

**SHADOWS**

Villains and enemies, perhaps the enemy within. The dark side of the Force, the repressed possibilities of the hero, his or her potential for evil. Can be other kinds of repression, such as repressed grief, anger, frustration or creativity that is dangerous if it doesn’t have an outlet.

**MENTORS**

The hero’s guide or guiding principles. Yoda, Merlin, a great coach or teacher.

**HERALD**

One who brings the Call to Adventure. Could be a person or an event.

**THRESHOLD GUARDIANS**

The forces that stand in the way at important turning points, including jealous enemies, professional gatekeepers, or your own fears and doubts.

**SHAPESHIFTERS**

In stories, creatures like vampires or werewolves who change shape. In life, the shapeshifter represents change. The way other people (or our perceptions of them) keep changing. The opposite sex, the way people can be two-faced.

**TRICKSTERS**

Clowns and mischief-makers, Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy. Our own mischievous subconscious, urging us to change.

**ALLIES**

Characters who help the hero through the change. Sidekicks, buddies, girlfriends who advise the hero through the transitions of life.
Opening Chat

It's not THE Narrative Structure, it's A Narrative Structure

Not about getting it wrong or right.

Team for a day.

What going to do.

Getting it into our heads, then forgetting about it.

Write out archetypal names and circle structure.

Listen/Be Altered, Yes And, Commit

General Impro

General Warm Ups

Three Line Scenes

Word at a Time

Offers

Where who what

Steve Roe, roezone@hotmail.com, 0797 697 5348, www.HooplaImpro.com

Please note most of this document is from Christopher Vogler’s book The Writer’s Journey so please buy it, these notes are supporting a drama workshop only. Hoopla don’t claim any credit for The Writer’s Journey!
**Narrative**

What happens Next Pairs

What happens Next Groups, write down offers to start positive

**Hero’s Journey**

Hero’s Journey discussion

Hero’s Journey What Happens Next using map at each point lead by directors, others and none

Archetype station discussion

Creating each archetype mask and character traits, seeing each one

Put the archetypes on points of journey and play out in mask.

Characters having one line at each stage.

Do without masks, just labels.

Do without labels, endowments.

Do on stage, enter left, exit right to continue journey.