

A Hero/Heroine's Journey: Preparing for your Journey (Self-Assessment)

To begin, you must first assess your *status quo*: yourself and the world as you see it. You must make a quick yet honest overview of your life. Don't bother yourself with details. Digging too much into a negative memory can be overwhelming. You'll deal with your most impacting memories during your journey.

The questions below are a proposed framework for your self-reflection process. Answer the questions the best you can. Start with the easy ones for you. You can use the blank spaces for your answers. However, it's preferable that you get into the good habit of journaling every day. James Pennebaker wrote a [landmark study](#) on expressive writing in 1997. Since then, over 20 research studies have confirmed that expressive writing done for at least 15 minutes every day produces measurable improvements in the immune system and psychology of an individual.

Journaling will also help you see and measure your progress. It'll become your best ally and a source of wisdom as you get to know yourself better and better. But perhaps journaling isn't something you have done before, or you tried it for a while and lost interest. If that's the case, reading Matthew Tull's short online article [How Journaling Can Help with PTSD](#) will get you the structure and spark of inspiration you need.

Pick up a notebook and a pen then and start writing your Hero/Heroine's Journey.

Where do I come from? – think about your childhood

1. My home environment was... _____
2. Positive relationships/presence (caring others, role models)... _____
3. Negative relationships/presence (neglecting, abusing)... _____
4. Positive/happy memories:
 - When you felt safe and protected... _____

- When you felt welcomed, supported, accepted... _____
- When you felt loved and cared... _____
- 5. Traumatic events (adverse circumstances)... _____

How do I relate to others?

During childhood:

- Parent(s) or caregiver(s)... _____
- Friends, neighbors, classmates... _____
- Teachers, tutors, clergy, other adults in trusting roles... _____

As an adult:

- Parent(s) or caregiver(s)... _____
- Peers, supervisors, people in positions of authority:
 - Do you need their approval to feel better about yourself? _____
- Friends, neighbors, classmates:
 - Are you afraid of losing them? _____
- Intimate partners:
 - Do you trust them? _____
 - Have you ever been told you that you are too needy or too detached/dismissive? _____

What are my beliefs and values?

Family... _____

Culture... _____

Faith/Spirituality... _____

Community... _____

Society... _____

World... _____

How do I see myself?

Self-worth... _____

Self-image... _____

Self-concept... _____

Competence... _____

Positive/negative traits... _____

Sexuality... _____

Transcendence... _____

What do you need to do to feel worthy (empowered) and loved? _____

What happened to me? – traumatic events in your adult life

How did they impact your life? _____

How did you cope? _____

What are my current circumstances? – what are you going through right now

How do you cope/adapt to your current circumstances? _____

Do you self-medicate, how? _____

What is the mean (talking, yelling, crying, writing, art) you find easier to express your deepest feelings and emotions? _____

Do you have a support network? _____

Take your time. Don't overwhelm yourself with unnecessary details. This exercise is just a simple yet honest overview of your life. Be easy on yourself practicing self-compassion and mindfulness exercises that you'll learn in each session. And share with the group if you feel *stuck* or have experienced a breakthrough in your self-awareness.