

Neil Malek, MCT-ACI-CTT+
Founder and Principal, Knack Training
neil@knacktraining.com
<http://knacktraining.com>

AUDIENCE WORKBOOK

PROFILING & BUILDING THE HERO'S JOURNEY

SELF-PROFILING

One of the most difficult parts of communicating with others is seeing your own limitations, biases, and faults. Take a moment to honestly reflect on these questions before starting to build your message:

BIASES TOWARD THIS AUDIENCE:

What do I know about this audience? What do I think I know about them - how they react to different types of information? Have I felt uncomfortable talking with this audience or one like it? What led to these problems?

BIASES TOWARD THIS MESSAGE:

Do I wholeheartedly believe everything I'm trying to communicate? Have I see others' perspective on how these ideas work in their world? Do I fully understand each idea?

THE CURSE OF KNOWLEDGE:

What background information do I have that they lack? Am I thoroughly explaining the information, or do I gloss over certain ideas? Do I use words like 'obviously' that cut down on questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER PROFILE

To get a better understanding of a person before meeting them, combine *demographics*, *psychographics*, and research into the major tasks that make up their day.

DESCRIBE THEIR DAY

From work to home, what are the demands placed on them? What is their schedule like? What have they sacrificed to be here? How can you demonstrate respect for their time?

WHAT ARE THEIR PRIORITIES?

We often get caught up with price being the most important factor, but we usually make our decisions based on the gut, emotional reaction we have to something, then use the numbers in the pitch to back it up. Is their major priority time, prestige, simplicity?

WHAT ARE THEIR BIASES?

What do people like this usually use to push back? What platitudes have they heard a million times? What is going to pull their attention away during the presentation?

UNDERSTANDING THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The Hero's Journey is often called the *monomyth* - the one story that's told over and over again, in movies, literature, and every other medium. Let's describe the major parts of the story we're familiar with:

ACT ONE: INTRODUCTION

[Part One: Set the Scene] We learn about The Hero's *Ordinary World*, and we often are introduced to the problem they will ultimately need to resolve.

[Part Two: The Call] The Hero either gets an external call (damsel in distress, etc.) or they are finally aware of a problem that's been in their mind all along (Neo in *The Matrix*). The Hero often *Refuses the Call* at first.

[Part Three: The Mentor] The Hero meets someone who can give them advice, training, resources, or other forms of aid, and it helps them *Cross the Threshold* into the *New World*.

ACT TWO: ADVENTURE

[Part Four: The Road of Trials] As The Hero embarks on the Adventure, they face various tasks, challenges, and other problems. There is often an *Apotheosis*, where The Hero faces death, or *their greatest fear*.

[Part Five: The Great Reward] The Hero accomplishes the ultimate goal and receives the *Great Reward*, often after facing their *Apotheosis*.

ACT THREE: RETURN

[Part Six: The Return Home] The Hero returns to the *Ordinary World* with their *Great Reward*, and it changes The Hero and their *Ordinary World* in some way.

INTERNALIZING THE HERO'S JOURNEY

If you've got your head in a presentation right now, you can probably fit these stages directly to the message you need to deliver:

ACT ONE: INTRODUCTION

[Part One: Set the Scene] Describe the world your audience is currently inhabiting. It's been said that if you can describe *the problem* well enough to your audience, they'll automatically assume you have *the solution* to the problem. What element of their world do you want to bring their attention to?

[Part Two: The Call] This is your pitch. If The Hero (your audience) goes along with it, they will achieve great things, and improve their ordinary world.

[Part Three: The Mentor] Even though this might seem scary, you (as The Mentor) are there to provide answers, resources, and insight to help them. How can you convince them you are a trustworthy expert?

ACT TWO: ADVENTURE

[Part Four: The Road of Trials] Answer all the questions they face. Know their world well enough that you can foresee the problems (you are The Mentor, after all) and provide solutions.

[Part Five: The Great Reward] This is why you asked the *demographic* and *psychographic* questions on page 3 - so that you understand your audience's *priorities*. If you offer them your *great reward*, and it's not particularly appealing, they wonder why they would go through all the trials to get it.

ACT THREE: RETURN

[Part Six: The Return Home] This is often *the most critical part* of the presentation, because if you give them the resources, answers, and *great reward* to return to their *ordinary world* with, they should be able to defeat any naysayers when they're not in the same room with you. These are your takeaways - the motivation of the pitch often diminishes after they leave the room, so they need more from you.
