

Ep #009: The Approach to the Inmost Cave

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With Your Host

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What if you could write your own life story? How would you spend your time? What would your career or business look like? What kind of parent or partner would you be? Welcome to *Storied Life Coaching*, the only podcast that will show you how to stop living life by default, and teach you how to build a thriving business that fuels an amazing life on your terms. I'm Aaron J. Jacobs, and as a master coach and CEO of OMH Creative and Storied Coaching, I've had the privilege and opportunity to learn what it takes first hand to rewrite your own life story. It's never too late for a rewrite.

Hello, my friends. Welcome back. This is number 6 in our Hero's Journey series that we're going through—last week was tests, enemies, and allies and we learned all about some of the things to expect when you're going through any sort of a large sea change in your life, especially if you're going on a purposeful adventure and you want to reinvent yourself, in big or in small ways. And this next phase can sometimes get glossed over or rolled into that phase, but it's actually its own thing. And it's called the approach to the inmost cave, or the approach to the cave.

If you were thinking about this as a metaphor, it might be like the knight approaching the cave where they know where the dragon is or if it was Lord of the Rings, it's when Bilbo Baggins is approaching the cave of Smaug and is about to go inside and find the dragon. It's this big moment to take a breath and take stock of everything that's happened to you up to this point because at this point in the Hero's Journey, in the reinvention of yourself. This is the middle, this is that middle point where the big breath, the big inhalation before you plunge in to the big thing that you know needs to be done in order for you to reinvent yourself and become the future self, the future version that you want to be.

And this is no small thing! And it's really an opportunity for you. And this is usually how it comes up when I'm coaching clients and we're working with people is this is the moment where you might want to pull the ripcord on your parachute. It can be really tempting—your lizard brain might be screaming at you at this point that like it was so much better like maybe

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everything wasn't perfect in the past version of our life, but it was safer, was a known quantity. What are we doing? A lot of the things that might have come up for you right before you started your, your call to adventure where you decided to walk through the threshold and that stage. Some of that stuff might come back up and we can talk about this a little bit, how you can apply this or some examples from your personal and your professional life, and how this might show up for you.

But just know that you are in the middle right now and that you might have thought that tests, enemies and allies phase was going to be the hardest phase. This is probably the hardest phase because this is where you take stock of everything that's happened to you up to this point. And it's really about your internal work. It's about you and the change that you're seeing in yourself. And maybe some of the things that you didn't want to look at in your own personal or professional life that may have been holding you back and that might have been some of the scariest stuff that to address. And you're not alone. This can show up in lots of different ways. If I was talking about how you could apply this in your professional life, let's talk about a universal experience that we've all gone through where the inmost cave might be showing up for you right now.

I know it has for me and for my business as well is when the pandemic happened to all of us, there was, I've heard people refer to it as the before time and now there's now the after time. And we are in a position right now where we're many of us are trying to reconcile who we were before we went on this adventure that we did not ask for. Sometimes the call to adventure is an adventure you were really planning on going on and who you are now and do you want to go back to the way things were and the answer for a lot of us is no. I know with our business, we had a big fancy office in downtown Tacoma and we really liked it and it was neat and we had enjoyed seeing each other. There was no client interactions and things like that and there were some great things about it but there was also the commute and there was also people needing to balance their personal lives in a way that was just normal. But where work life and being physically present maybe outweigh that and once we all had to go away, at least in

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our business, and everyone worked remotely, and found ways to initially get over the hard stuff.

Now, we're not even looking at going back. We love being fully remote. People are living their lives and working in different countries now and they love the way that their life is now, and the potential that they can see how their life could be moving forward that they never thought was possible, ever. Maybe they get to travel this much when they were retired but now they can do it right now and have high paying clients and work with us, and have an amazing work/life balance. That is more on the life side instead of the work side. Now, we like that balance better here with our business and OMH, creative and story teams and we're producing more and better content than ever and serving our customers at a higher level than ever, and coaching people at higher level. It's amazing how that rebalance has happened. So for your organization, they might be looking at like hybrid or going back and you might be taking stock and saying you're at the approach to your inmost cave, and you're taking a hard look at the way things were before and maybe you don't want to go back to the way it was. And that is absolutely without a doubt fueling a lot of what's happening right now with the quote unquote, great resignation, that has so many leaders that I know throwing their hands up in the air like Muppet arms, Muppet arms, and running around because they don't understand why so many people are leaving. It's because the old way wasn't good, it was just what we were used to and we had accepted as normal.

So the inmost cave for a lot of people right now might be you're in the middle, and you're like "I went through all this hard stuff. I'm a different person now. My current self is different than my past self and the version of myself that I want to go towards in my future self is actually more in this direction," it's not going backwards and that's hard because there's safety backwards. There's known quantities backwards,. It can be really tempting. and so some of us are taking a hard look at our lives and whether we want to continue in the same way that we did it: that is that moment in the middle at the inmost cave. What are you going to choose? What are you going to do? And it's the big breath, the big leap before going towards something

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that could be a little bit temporary, scary, but that's a bigger payoff for you in the end or deciding to be safe and like running home.

So that could be something an example for what a lot of us are experiencing in our personal lives and it kind of ties into professional as well, but if you were talking about your personal life and how this could apply there, the inmost cave can pop up with relationships ending as well. If anyone has gone through a divorce or a friendship breakup, or something like that that's happened to them. So a relationship coming to the end. There's stages where you're on an adventure, or you're doing something differently, where you might have anger, you might have different things that you're dealing with, or you think it's everyone's someone else's fault and then you come to a point in the middle of your grieving process through that adventure where you get to the inmost cave. And you're taking stock of maybe everything wasn't as rose colored as you thought it was or maybe there are some things that you contributed or didn't contribute to that relationship. That, painful as it is to acknowledge, contributed to that friendship, or that relationship ending, that it wasn't all the other person, it wasn't all the other, it wasn't just the dragon all along, it was the way that the night was approaching. The way they walk through the world and so the inmost cave, is, that is where you can take stock.

And that's what I would recommend this is when we're working with students. This is what we recommend when you get to the stage where it can seem like you're in the middle and you're like, "Oh, I'm tired the jury has gotten, I've done so much work to this point already and now there's another big thing I need to, like, approach. The big thing I need to do, my reserves of strength feel low," and we often will ask our students, "You know what? Let's, let's catalogue everything you've done up to this point. Let's take a moment to take stock and look at all the amazing things you've acquired on your journey. How are you different right now than when you started and you crossed that first threshold when you decided to go on this adventure of change?" And before long you can start to look at, well, I've made all of these small changes, and they've kind of resonated through my life and these different ways. I am actually different now than I was when I

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started the journey. The change has already started to happen and I'm seeing the benefits of it and seeing those small incremental changes in the positive effect that they've had in your life. Or, the lessening of pain, if it's an end of relationship that's happened, between where it was and where you are now, that can often be the fuel that you're looking for in order to take that collective breath and to move forward into the cave, to face those things that maybe you're reluctant to look at, to move towards that dragon, or that obstacle that may have seemed really, really scary.

But what, it's the scariest part is actually having the courage to walk into the cave. That is the scary part. That's what requires the bravery and you can do that by collecting and reflecting on all of those things that you did, from your past self to your current self right now. And use your current self and where you are right now as that bridge, that connective tissue between where you were in your past self, and where you want to go to your future self, whether it's personally, whether it's professionally—these are all things that are within your power.

So if you find yourself on an adventure right now, or you find yourself in the middle of a big project, or in the middle of chasing something that you want, and you feel like you're in that middle place. Know that that state that's actually part of your Hero's Journey, it's an important part of it. It is that approach to the inmost cave, and honor that you are there right now and all the work that you did to get to that point, all this shit that you went through in order to get to fight to where you are right now. And try to use that as your fuel in order to walk through to this next stage because once you get through this stage and you're able to approach and slay the dragon, whatever it is that you're trying to overcome, that's what you want is right behind that. You've already come so far.

So that is the approach to the inmost cave. You've seen some ways that you can apply this to your own life. We're gonna go forward next time with the next stage in this journey and I can't wait to talk to you then. Goodbye for now, my friends.

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Thanks for listening to *Storied Life Coaching with Aaron J. Jacobs*. If you want more information or resources from the podcast, visit us at storiedcoaching.com.