

'The Flash' and The Hero's Journey (Infographic)

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One of my first pieces for Geeks of Doom 2 years ago was something for May the 4th called [Luke Skywalker and the Hero's Journey](#), tracing the *Star Wars* character's path from the call to the return. Based on Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Luke was a textbook hero, with all the possible pitfalls along the way. Always looking for Campbell in modern heroes for teaching or for fun, I recently came across this awesome infographic from Venngage that breaks down the hero's journey for 6 key characters in pop culture in a brightly colored, easy to follow swirl – Simba, Harry Potter, Frodo, Luke Skywalker, Neo, and Peter Parker.

I think this works for television heroes as well, and makes it so simple. Let's try it on Barry Allen (Grant Gustin). I know he's a comic book character, but I want to stick with The CW's **The Flash**. Continue reading for more and to see the infographic.

Sara McGuire from Venngage says:

"The monomyth has since been adapted and condensed into twelve stages by Hollywood executive Christopher Vogler. Vogler developed his version of the monomyth while working at Disney, and once you recognize the pattern, you'll be able to identify it in some capacity in almost any film. He's the one who popularized calling it the 'Hero's Journey,' and his version focuses specifically on movie narratives."

Now let's apply Vogler's version to The Flash.

Vogler's Journey:

1. The Ordinary World: Barry Allen IS a lab geek for the Central City police department, working with his adopted dad, Joe West.

2. The Call to Adventure: The particle accelerator explodes, he gets struck by lightning, and doused with lab chemicals. When he awakens from his 9-month coma, he has super speed.

3. Refusal of the Call: Barry does not really refuse the call to heroism. He already helps solve crimes with the CCPD. Now with this speed, he throws himself headfirst into danger, and it often backfires, until his team helps him solve the problems together.

4. Meeting with the Mentor: Evil Dr. Wells (Tom Cavanagh) guides Barry through his powers.

5. Crossing the First Threshold: Clyde Mardon, a metahuman who can control the weather, was Barry's first real foe as a speedster.

6. Tests, Allies and Enemies: Barry is tested time and again with each metahuman that appears. But the biggest test is when he goes back in time the first time, and decides to let the past be the past. That time he "passed." At the end of season 2, he fails that test. His team of allies is a tight one – Cisco, Caitlin, Iris, Joe, Eddie, Oliver Queen, Felicity Smoak (Carlos Valdes, Danielle Panabaker, Candice Patton, Jesse L. Martin, Rick Cosnett, Stephen Amell, Emily Bett Rickards) – the list goes on. His enemies' list is of course, longer... beginning with Eobard Thawne aka evil Dr. Wells, Zoom, Danton Black, Mark Mardon, Brie Larvan, Roy Bivolo, Trixter – that list goes on too.

7. Approach to the Innermost Cave: I really feel like Barry's innermost cave was the speed force, although Barry going back to the past in season 1 can also be part of his first cycle.

8. The Ordeal: In the cave, Barry is forced to confront the one thing holding him back – himself. He gets wise advice from both his dads and his mom (really the speed force in disguise), but only he can save himself from himself.

9. The Reward: Barry comes back from the speed force via Iris's guidance and Cisco's vibing. He comes back overconfident, that nothing can touch him, and also gets the girl. He and Iris admit their feelings.

10. The Road Back: Although Barry was able to get his powers back by accepting his mother's death (he did not!), he still needed to stop Zoom and his evil meta-minions. The team disagreed and trapped him in a cell. Wally West (Keiynan Lonsdale) freed him. Barry prevails over Zoom.

11. The Resurrection Barry is a changed man because of Zoom. His mother is dead. His father, Henry, is now dead at Zoom's hands. And he is not ready to let himself be happy with Iris.

12. Return with the Elixir: Here is where the team think everything is wonderful... and over. Zoom is gone. They are all together. And Iris promises to wait of Barry. This is where Barry, who cannot let himself be happy, presses reset and goes back in time to save his mother from Reverse Flash, thereby resetting the timeline and setting him on a new journey.

Being a television series with many successful years ahead, *The Flash* will likely see Barry restart this cycle a few times. Hell, he already tried to start again at the end of Season 2 by literally erasing most of his life as he knew it. He went back in time and saved his mother's life.

The Flash returns October 4th on The CW. You can find the full blog that goes with this infographic at [Venngage](http://Venngage.com).

Image



