

THE TWELVE STEPS

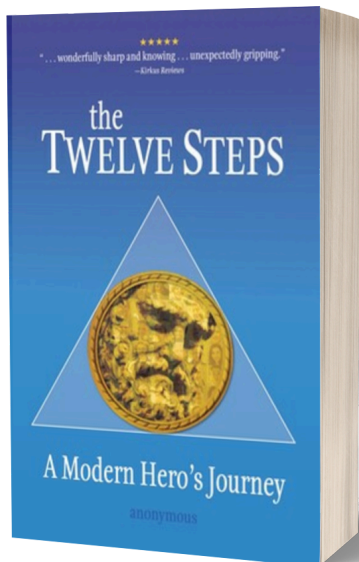
A Modern Hero's Journey

"... wonderfully sharp and knowing ... unexpectedly gripping."

— Kirkus Reviews

Nominated for the 2025 Kirkus Literary Prize in Nonfiction

In this inventive and profound exploration of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, an old-timer of the program reveals the recovery journey for what it truly is: a modern retelling of the classic hero's journey of transformation that frees spiritual energy trapped by addiction, pouring it back into the world, thus healing both the individual and the society.



The Twelve Step journey of recovery is, at its core, the modern retelling of the age-old archetype of the Hero's Journey. This powerful pattern of transformation is revealed in three stages: separation, initiation, and return. These stages perfectly describe the journey of recovery as well, and when further broken down into their individual steps—such as answering the call, getting a mentor, and, most important of all, having that mentor introduce the hero to a Power greater than himself—the true meaning and purpose of the recovery journey comes alive. *The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey* deepens and inspires all those on their own journey of recovery, regardless of the type of program they are in. The treasures awaiting those bold enough to venture into the adventure will heal not only themselves, but all of humanity as well.

Classic tales from mythology, such as *The Odyssey* and the adventure of Hercules, as well as modern stories from popular literature and film, such as Luke Skywalker's in the Star Wars series and Harry Potter's journey through Hogwarts, plus many more, illuminate the Twelve Step journey, and offer a deeper and more reverent understanding of this sacred pattern of transformation. *The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey* entertains, informs, and delights

readers with a profound new understanding of the journey they are on, a journey countless of heroes before him or her have taken since the beginning of time.



2025 Literary Titan Gold Book Award: Nonfiction

The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey

September 2, 2025 from Health Communications, Inc.

[Simon & Schuster](#), [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Bookshop.org](#), [Books-a-Million](#),
and wherever fine books are sold.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, in adherence to Twelve Step traditions, has published this work anonymously. He has a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and has twenty-nine years in recovery. The author has navigated the Twelve Step journey many times, as well as guided others through it. Over years of direct experience and intensive study, the author recognizes the journey of recovery as the modern interpretation of the age-old journey of transformation that is the hero's journey. By applying this journey pattern to the modern program of recovery, he helps others deepen their experience and more fully realize the gifts from each stage of their spiritual journeys.

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- You are the hero of your own journey: Rewriting classic archetypes to fit your modern-day life
 - The three stages of transformation: separation, initiation, and return
 - The true meaning and purpose of the recovery journey
 - Luke Skywalker and Harry Potter on their own Twelve Step journeys
 - The author's own 29 year journey through recovery
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PRAISE FOR *THE TWELVE STEPS*

"And although the author's underlying assertion that the recovery process is itself heroic, which is certainly true, the book's main attraction throughout is the wonderfully sharp and knowing reflections on the nature of addiction and recovery writ more broadly."

— **Kirkus Reviews**

"The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey offers a fresh and engaging perspective on recovery, even for those with decades of experience in the field or in personal recovery. The author provides a valuable service by using heroes from familiar myths and stories to illuminate the milestones, processes, and mechanisms of the recovery journey—insights that even seasoned professionals may overlook. Highly recommended for those seeking a fresh and intriguing perspective on the journey of recovery."

— **Jason Schwartz, LMSW**, director of Social Work and Spiritual Care at Michigan Medicine

"The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey offers great insight into the twelve-step journey, and it does so with unusual scope, enchanting detail, and breathtaking clarity. Academics, clinical addiction professionals, researchers, and the lay public will all be drawn into this book. Its stories and its revelations, and its elegant, real, and compelling handling of our shared and ancient all-too-human nature will surely win many readers over. Highly recommended!"

— **Brian Coon**, chief clinical officer, Pavillon Addiction Treatment Center

"In The Twelve Steps, A Modern Hero's Journey, the author intertwines the time-tested Twelve Steps with the hero's journey developed by Joseph Campbell. Wonderfully illustrated with examples from Harry Potter, Star Wars, The Wizard of Oz, and more, the author reveals and interprets the complex layers of the recovery journey. We are reminded that transformation is the ultimate goal of both journeys, and that it cannot happen in isolation. We gain a deepened appreciation for the role of a mentor/sponsor, the collective wisdom of community and, in turn, the necessity to give back to others. As a result, the hero savors hope, expansiveness, and a newfound territory of true belonging."

— **Andrew Susskind, LCSW, SEP, CGP**, author, *It's Not About the Sex: Moving from Isolation to Intimacy after Sexual Addiction*

"This amazing book combines all the skills I use as both a mental health counselor and certified addictions professional, particularly integrating the original concepts of recovery with the well-known hero's journey as shown in movies and modern storytelling. Fascinating and inspiring, I highly recommend this book to all those who are searching for ways to both deepen

and expand their understanding of the recovery journey and move closer to the person they were always meant to be.”

— **Jill Haire, LMHC, CAP, NCC**, Free Flow Counseling, author

“The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey, guides the reader through the transformative path of the Twelve Step journey of recovery in a thrilling and inventive new way. Using examples drawn from modern and ancient stories alike, the author illustrates the variety of pathways offered throughout cultures and across the millennia that have been navigated by heroes to achieve both redemption and self-actualization. This book's relevance extends beyond those with substance use disorders and offers hope, direction, and encouragement to individuals at any stage in their lives and with their own hero's journey. It is an important addition to both the recovery literature and self-help genres.”

— **Chris Budnick**, executive director, Healing Transitions

“In The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey, the author reframes addiction recovery as a heroic transformation, drawing from Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Like every mythic hero, those in recovery face a call to change, go through trials, and rely on the help of mentors, ultimately emerging from their journey transformed. While the author beautifully ties recovery to universal storytelling, the book draws many of its references from A.A. Those who travel the Twelve Step journey through other fellowships, however, will find it inspiring and validating as well. Its message of growth and renewal is universal, reminding us that true recovery is about more than just abstinence—it's about transformation, purpose, and finding a new way to live. Highly recommended for all those on a spiritual path.

— **Lesley Pregenzer**, CEO, FAVOR Upstate

“The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey transforms the ancient archetype of the hero's journey into an insightful interpretation of the Twelve Steps. This contemporary telling unveils the practical magic of recovery amulets like sobriety chips and the Serenity Prayer, while doubling as a masterclass in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and the origin of the Twelve Steps. The familiar recovery structure—'what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now'—is reimagined as Joseph Campbell's monomyth: the recovering hero moves from a state of separation into initiation and then returns, ready to be of service to the community. Secular examples, too, thread through the discussion: Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, Luke Skywalker, and an exploration of improbable heroism in Groundhog Day serve as examples that make the hero's journey accessible. Readers, whether in recovery or not, will feel the pull inward, called to reflect on their own mythic path toward transfiguration. These pages recount an age-old adventure that promises to edify all, while validating those modern heroes who tread the Twelve Steps today. A worthy, enlightening read.”

— **Quincy Gray McMichael**, poet, adventurer, and director, Healing Appalachia

"The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey is a vital contribution to the recovery literature. Over the decades, critics of the Twelve Step process have sometimes called it 'simplistic.' This book offers a deeper look at recovery by interpreting it through the lens of the transformational process of the spiritual journey as revealed by the age-old pattern of the hero's journey. This new understanding of recovery is a gift to us all. Thank you!"

— **Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW**, author of *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps*, *Helping Women Recover*, *Helping Men Recover*, *Healing Trauma+*, and *Exploring Trauma+*

"The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey takes us on an exhilarating tour of the recovery process through the lens of Jungian mythology and the quest through the long dark night of the soul and into the light of a renewed life. This is a fascinating read and an important interpretation of the journey of recovery."

— **Bill Stauffer**, executive director, Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (Pro-A)

"The Twelve Steps: A Modern Hero's Journey creatively, clearly, and intelligently deepens our understanding of the twelve-step path of recovery and enhances our journey, whether we're currently engaged in this path or any other. I wholeheartedly recommend this wonderful book—for the novice and the experienced alike."

— **Phillip Stephen Mitchell, M.A., MFT, MAC**, psychotherapist (Ret.), author