I left my grandpa, knowing that it was the last time I would ever see him.

I still feel guilty about it. In truth, I sacrificed the last days spent with my grandpa so that I could save my own life. I'm sure he would have wanted it that way. But the memory of the last time I saw him is burned into my mind.

I see it over and over again.

What must it have felt like for him? What was he thinking? Knowing that this was the last time he would ever see his first born grandson?

He said "I love you." it was more like a whisper. A build up of strength to gasp the words loud enough so that I could make out what he was saying.

I said "I love you too Gramps," and then I walked out of the room. I went down the elevator, and I got on a plane.

**The Moments Before**

I had just gotten out of rehab.

The first few days out of rehab were hard. At first, I felt so excited to be out, but quickly, everything turned very dark very quickly.

I remember walking up and down Germantown Avenue. It was October and it was raining. My mom lived on Gowen Ave right off of Germantown Avenue, and across the street there was a small cemetery.

I walked through the cemetery in the rain. I didn't know where else to go.

I didn't want to be there. I knew if I stayed in Philly, I would relapse. Finally, I spoke to my cousin and he invited me to live with him in Florida for a few days until I could figure out my next move.

I said "okay."

We were all at the hospital. It was hopeless. Everyone was waiting for my gramps to die. The group of us went into the kitchen. It was more like a small breakroom, with a fridge and a microwave and a table and booth with no cushions.

My uncle frank was sitting in front of me. He is the oldest. In many ways, he is the most like my grandfather in that his heart is never filled with hate.

We were playing dots. It's a game where you take a piece of paper and created ten rows of ten dots. During your turn, you draw a line from one dot to another. When you draw the line that completes a square, you put your first initial in the square. When all the lines are filled, the person who has the most squares wins. It's a game we play on airplanes and restaurants.

I won the game. He was crying. He told me he thought I was doing the right thing.

Then on the piece of paper, he started writing a word up side down, so that it was right side up for me.

He wrote one word. The word was “adventure.”

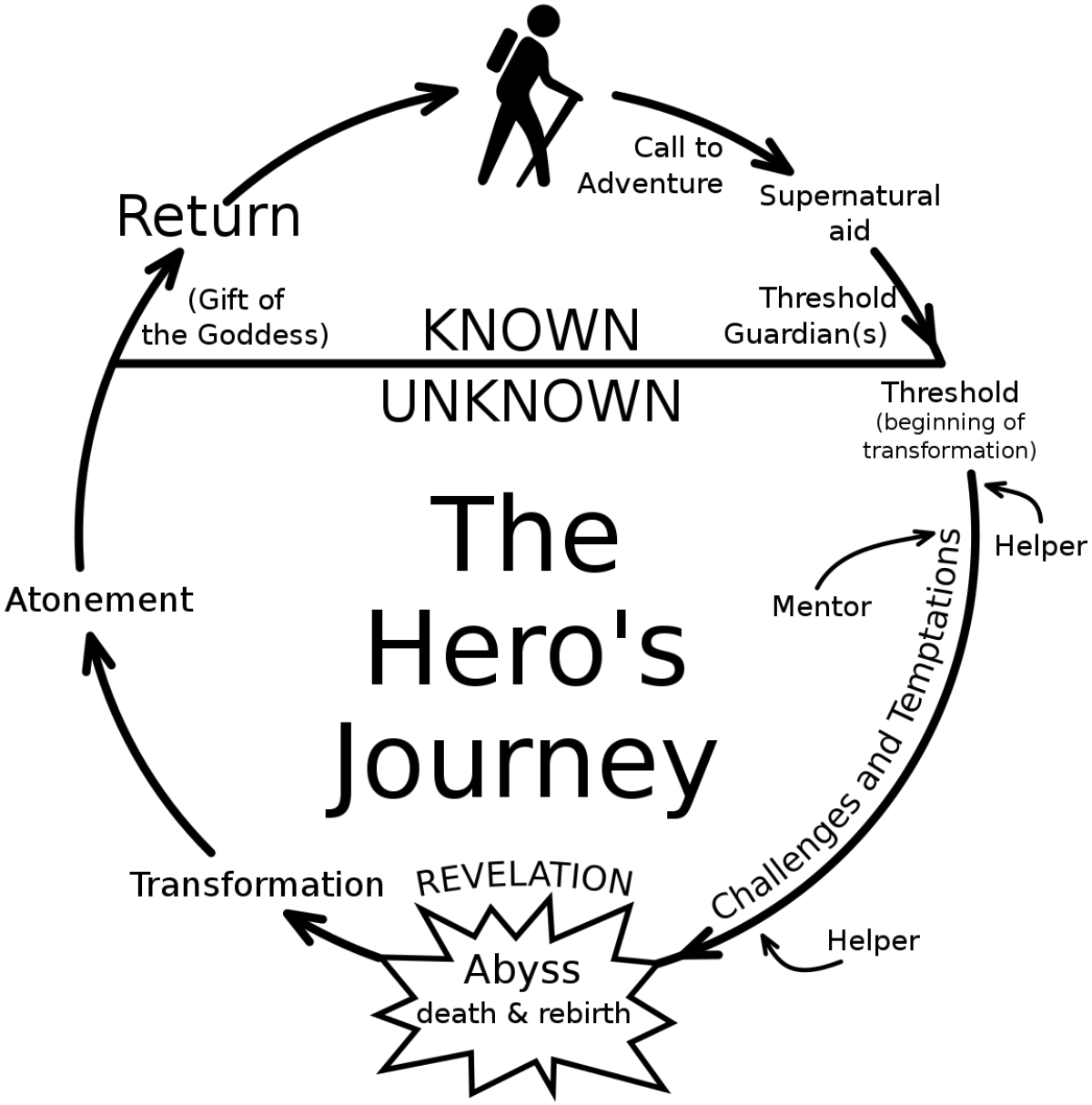
Then he wiped his tears and stood up to go back into my grand pops room.

I still have the paper. I still have the card he gave me. It was in that moment that I allowed myself to be rid of guilt. I had to save my own life and I knew it’s what my grandpa would have wanted.

# Crossing The Chasm

***Note to self* - (This is actually how I am ending the chapter, at first I thought I needed to begin with the concept, but I realize as the timeline comes together that this is the end of the chapter and technically the end of “act 1 in the unofficial heroes story of the book.)***

Every story you read and every movie you watch follows the same framework. It’s called “the hero's journey”, and it’s a road map to highlight the human condition. In short, it looks like this …




When you find the hero, he is living his boring life. Think Luke Skywalker on Tatooine or Neo in his apartment.

Next, there is a sudden call to adventure. For Luke, the message of princess Leia, for Neo “follow the white rabbit.”

There is a refusal of the call. Luke says ““I can’t go to Alderaan,” and Neo hangs out the window of the skyrise office building, too afraid to traverse the ledge and escape the agents who are coming to detain him.

Up next is the supernatural aid. If you remember, Luke finds his aunt and his uncle killed and his home destroyed. While Neo is attacked by agent smith who puts the tracking robot inside his belly button.

And finally, there is “crossing the chasm.” This is where Luke and Obi one take the first step out of the desert and where Neo gets rescued by Morpheus and the crew of the Nebuchadnezzar.

Crossing the chasm is the step from the known world to the unknown world. In many ways, it’s where the hero's journey starts, it’s the most important first step. The step where our hero says goodbye to the only life he’s ever known, and embarks upon a journey of self discovery, where he slays the dragon from within and then returns home with a gift from the goddess.

So here we are. I stepped into that elevator. The doors closed behind me, and I left my grandpa and I left home. The chasm had been crossed and my adventure had begun.

**Note to self* - I need to explain my last name to explain what my gramps said to me before he died.**

**Where My Last Name Comes From**

- Talk about the name “Stoddart”
- Talk about how my ancestors were horse breeders
- Talk about how my gramps was in and out of a lucidness and how he said “in a perfect world, you and I would be riding horses and Alex would be swimming in the lake.”

Courage

After that, talk about the quote he gave me and how I got it tattooed on my arm.

The finish with crossing the chasm. Finish with the moment I was landing on the plane, looking out the window at Ft. Lauderdale, and the woman next to me said.

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