

The journey of a father and a son

Business



What is a journey? Why is it important? These questions have been asked by many people. Oftentimes, people define "journey" as an act of travelling from one place to another, but it can also be interpreted as a way or an opportunity for people to undergo a transformation just like the son of the great Odysseus, Telemachus, in the epic *The Odyssey*, as told by Homer. Inspired by Athena, the goddess of wisdom, he plans on a voyage to find his long lost father who left to fight in the Trojan War before he was born. This journey of Telemachus is necessary for him to become the true son of Odysseus by helping him gain confidence that is similar to his father's courage, and also providing an opportunity to emotionally connect with his father. On his journey, Telemachus gains confidence by internalizing the noted similarities between himself and his father, great King Odysseus.

. Before Telemachus left Ithaca, he called an assembly in an attempt to resolve the chaos caused by the suitors which they were trying to wed his mother during his father's long absence, and returned the palace to a state of calm. However, he "burst into tears" and runs away from the assembly (2. 86), thus evincing his lack of confidence in his ability to lead. His journey is what motivates him to adopt a more confident demeanor based on what he has heard about his father's leadership.

When he must give "his first commands" to his crew before sailing off, there is a gradual change in Telemachus's confidence (2. 450). The act of giving commands itself shows that Telemachus has a greater faith in his own authority and capability to lead. The confidence of Telemachus's tone enables him to effectively persuade a crew to follow his leadership. Further along his journey, when Telemachus initially meets the wise old commander Nestor,

he acts like a shy boy starstruck by Nestor's fame. However, Athena inspires him to have courage like his father.

During an enlightened conversation between Nestor and Telemachus, Nestor mentions the similarities between Odysseus and Telemachus. The young prince assumes his father's characteristics by "glistening like a god." Later, he "strode in and sat by the old commander Nestor" (3. 525-526). The image of Telemachus as a godly figure striding towards an authority as an equal suggests that he is gaining confidence along his journey by embodying the hero-like persona of his father.

Also during his journey, Telemachus gains a personal connection to his conception of his father by experiencing parallels between the two of them. This connection leads him to emotionally feel like Odysseus's true son. Since he has never seen his father before setting out on his journey, Telemachus doesn't believe in his identity - psychologically or biologically - as being related to that of Odysseus. When Menelaus, the king of Sparta, mentions Odysseus in remembering all his beloved comrades, he says, "No one, no Achaean, labored hard as Odysseus labored or achieved so much." (2.

124). Menelaus notices that "Tears streamed down his cheeks and wet the ground" when the young prince hears his father's story (4. 128-129).

Telemachus's sadness reveals that he notices the similarity between his situation and his father's, and is beginning to feel a deeper emotional connection. In that moment, Menelaus knows from the degree and unexpectedness of Telemachus's grief that he must be the son of Odysseus.

Just after Menelaus confirms Telemachus's identity, his wife, Helen, appears in the scene and is amazed by "such a likeness neither in man nor woman." She exclaims "to the life he's like the son of great Odysseus"(4. 156-160). The reinforcement of the parallels between Odysseus and Telemachus provides greater fuel for Telemachus's own self conception as truly being related to Odysseus. The growth Telemachus experiences during his journey is significant; he gains confidence and a greater understanding of himself through a personal connection to his father. These changes help him to shed his past identity as someone who timidly sits and watches suitors devour the palace in pursuit of his mother and transforms him into a confident man like his father; a man who is a leader who can command men and who truly trusts in his own identity.

The personal connection that Telemachus feels, together with his growing confidence and his emergence as a leader while on his journey, all allow him to see himself as Odysseus's true son.