

WORKSHEET 5.3 BELLY OF THE WHALE: YOUR OWN PERSONAL KATABASIS PAGE 1 OF 4

Name _____ Date _____

Katabasis is Greek for "to go down" or "to descend." To be in the Belly of the Whale is to engage in your own personal katabasis. It is what the poet Robert Bly referred to as "*spending time in the ashes.*" When our old ways of being in the world burn down around us, we cannot go on anymore the way things were. We must start over by finding a new path. The way to escape the Belly of the Whale is by reversing this process of katabasis. To explore one possible way of doing this, complete the exercises on this worksheet.

What is your own personal katabasis? What past thoughts, feelings, words and deeds have led you to descend into the ashes? What sameness can you not allow to continue for the rest of your life?

As of this very moment, what is your own true nature?

As you spend ashes time in the Belly of the Whale, what are you casting aside about the way your life has been in the past?

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What new thoughts, words, deeds, and feelings would you need to embrace in order to live more fully according to your own true nature in the future?

What about your currently reality needs to change in order to live according to your own true nature?

For the questions that follow on the next page, use the definitions below to formulate your answers:

Assumptions – Guesses we make, often without supporting evidence, about the way the world works

Perceptions – The “filter” through which we view the world, based on our assumptions about how the world works

Intentions – What we are trying to accomplish with our lives

Motivations – What we hope to be rewarded with if we accomplish our intentions

Name _____ Date _____

What assumptions about the way the world works would you have to change in order to re-create your present reality so you may live according to your own true nature?

What perceptions about the way the world works would you have to change in order to re-create your present reality so you may live according to your own true nature?

What intentions would you have to change in order to re-create your present reality so you may live according to your own true nature?

What motivations would you have to change in order to re-create your present reality so you may live according to your own true nature?
