A hero is a person of distinguished courage and ability, admired for his deeds and noble qualities. In The Odyssey, Odysseus is a character well known for his heroism. A very controversial question is whether or not Odysseus is depicted as a hero? The true meaning and qualities a heroic person has are love for what he or she does, endurance, and can learn from valuable lessons. Qualities that do not make a person heroic are being unfair, pompous, or greedy. Odysseus can be seen as an arrogant person; however, his true objective was to return to Ithaka to see his family.

Love for his family and country is what drives Odysseus to return on a long journey home. The motivation was clear from the beginning that he wanted to come back to his love Penelope. The obstacles he encountered like being detained by Calypso, in Book I determined that he would keep trying. Odysseus refuses to be married to Calypso or any other goddess, so he would be able to continue on his homecoming.

Through out the very eventful journey home, Odysseus was clever enough to surpass unpleasant situations. Athene always praised him for being cunning and one step ahead of everything. From the victory of Troy to being liberated from lands of goddesses, Odysseus remained strong. He was able to get through all the major circumstances in his journey.

In Book XXII, Odysseus killed all of the suitors not sparing any of their lives. He punished them all for entering his house, and taking advantage of no superiority. The suitors disrespected his home, his wife Penelope, his son Telemachos, and they took advantage of the servants. The nasty suitors were just the last straw in regaining his authority in Ithaka. To defend his honor and home he had to kill them, along with his son Telemachos.

Odysseus said to Penelope when she saw the battle scene afterwards how the suitors deserved it. “These were destroyed by the doom of the gods and their own hard actions…” (XXII, 413-415). He was explaining to her that these men deserved to die. They were reckless and lived by their own rules therefore; they needed to pay for that.

Heroes are persons that can also learn from their mistakes. Odysseus learned that he should be careful with his actions. In Book IX, for instance, he was boasting to the Cyclops about who he was, leading to Poseidon wanting to punish him for blinding his son. For future reference, Odysseus had to have realized that this was a mistake because if he had stayed quiet about his real name, the Cyclops would not have known who he was.

The qualities that do not make a person heroic are simply being arrogant and unfair. There are people that try their best to do good deeds because they want to be known, famous, or popular. This isn’t the true meaning of what a hero is. Helping others comes from the heart and Odysseus did everything in his power to gain his life and family back.

It’s the intention that counts. That’s what I’ve always been told. Odysseus did meet the heroic standards, in my opinion. There is proof that he was a strong and brave man. He did the impossible to try and get his family back. Family equals love to most heroes and he wasn’t any exception. From the fight of Troy to his journey home, Odysseus had many characteristics of a true hero.

Odysseus can definitely be named a hero for being able to arrive home to his family. Even with grand obstacles in his way he overcame them by the love, endurance, and ability to learn from mistakes.