

My Journey

By Chuck Rihm

Chuck Rihm is the Convener for Ohio and lives outside Cleveland.

How and when were you introduced to male spirituality? I was introduced to men's work in 1995 when I began attending a dads' group at an early intervention center when my daughter was five. Later, in 2006, the leader of that group returned from an MROP in New York and told me that he thought of me while on the rites. I strongly trusted this man and attended my MROP in New York in 2008, even though I had never heard of Richard Rohr or M.A.L.Es at that time.

How has participation in male spirituality impacted your life? I have come into my manhood as a result of this work. Before I thought of myself as a "guy" but was uncomfortable with the term "man." As a result of the MROP, I now know that I am a beloved son of God and a man. I am learning to take responsibility for my own emotions. I stopped relying on my spouse to feel and process my emotions.

How has your participation in Illuman/M.A.L.Es fostered the use and development of your gifts? Being involved in Illuman has developed my leadership skills. When I returned from my MROP in the fall of 2008, I wanted to continue the work at home that I had begun in New York but there were no M.A.L.Es groups in Ohio. When I researched how to best establish the format, it was a little intimidating and I resisted. Over time, I have learned that I really do not need to do much of anything but provide the space, project a video or webcast from the extensive CAC library, and follow it up with "What do you think or feel?" or "What struck you about this presentation?" and we're off and running. I am not in control, nor do I need to be. I just provide a safe container for men to gather, reflect, and share.

Describe a recent Illuman/M.A.L.Es event you attended. What was the impact on you? I recently attended our local monthly Illuman gathering for a replay of Richard Rohr's *Are You Eager to Love?* webcast. I find Rohr's teaching to be like water in the desert. He gives me encouragement to continue on this counter-cultural journey. I also found the community of men gathered together a real inspiration. These men share of themselves from deep and vulnerable places. The discussion of our relationships with our fathers was very impactful.

Is there a book about male spirituality you can recommend? Why?

In Search of Stones: A Pilgrimage of Faith, Reason, and Discovery by Scott Peck. This book is not necessarily a male spirituality book, but it came at a time of need in my life. I picked this book up in a used book store around the same time that I was in the dads' group. It really helped bring me onto a spiritual path. I was struck most by his explanation of Carl Jung's comparative religious studies. This book led to many others.

What's one thing you'd recommend to a man starting on the spiritual journey? I would strongly recommend attending an Illuman Men's Rites of Passage. This single commitment has had the greatest and longest-lasting impact on my life. It has led to a continuing journey of self-growth and exploration. It told me that I am OK just as I am.