

# My Journey

---

**By Tony Murray**

Tony Murray is Convener and Secretary for Illuman of Louisiana.

*How and when were you introduced to male spirituality?*

My introduction to male spirituality was through Joe Hebert. We had known each other professionally for several years.

In October of 2010, I received an email from Joe with the subject, "Are You Interested?????" He wanted to know if there was interest in meeting quarterly with other men, in nature, and reading books by authors I had never before encountered (Plotkin, Rohr, and May). The timing couldn't have been better. I had spent the last fourteen years climbing the "ladder," only to find that it was against the wrong wall. I was spiritually dry and emotionally unavailable to my wife, my kids, and family. My identity was solely what I did for a living and as a resource provider.

Very guarded, but with more curiosity than anything, I told Joe I was interested. That one email, and my quick response, changed my life forever. MESS, or Men Entering Sacred Space, was formed and the fifteen of us have gathered quarterly for the last five years. These men have become my brothers for life.

In April of 2014, I completed my MROP at Aravaipa. It was in Aravaipa that I realized the magnitude of the Journey of Illumination and also how many men are out there seeking these same things.

Late that July, Joe reached out to a group of us to lead our thirteen- to fifteen-year-old sons and grandsons on a Youth Rites of Passage under the guidance of Bruce Clay in Colorado. It was while watching my fourteen-year-old son, Bailey, go through his Rites that I realized I was being called to men's work.

*How has your participation in Illuman/M.A.L.Es fostered the use and development of your gifts?*

Participation in this work has definitely helped me develop my listening skills; listening without judgment, so I can give the gift of "hearing" others. My biggest revelation has been how we as human beings just need to be heard.

*Describe a recent Illuman/M.A.L.Es event you attended. What was the impact on you?*

This past October, we hosted "Healing the Male Soul" with Jim Clarke. It solidified for me the importance of ritual in my life. It was an

extraordinary healing event for me that finally helped me turn my painful 2013 divorce into a sacred wound.

*What's one thing you'd recommend to a man starting on the spiritual journey?*

You can only do so much alone. Find a group of men and practice the Way of Council. Sharing your story and holding space for other men's stories is transformative, mystical, and the path to the Divine.

*What's the best thing about doing this work?*

Meeting other men on their journey. Holding space for their stories. Realizing I am not alone. Learning to be grateful for not being in control.

*Concluding thoughts?*

If you are thinking about attending an MROP, Soularize, or another men's retreat...just do it. There is no dogma here, no religious credo; just other men trying to make it on the Third Rock from the Sun.