

My Journey

By Don Griffin

Don Griffin is Convener for the Carolinas Region, consisting of North and South Carolina.

How and when were you introduced to male spirituality?

In 2009 my faith started to unravel on me. My worldview fell apart and it was like I was cast into darkness, as every truth that I believed now seemed like a lie. The next few years were a time of deconstruction for me. These years were very hard, a time of loneliness and confusion. I did not know what was happening to me and I just felt lost.

I eventually came to find a few other people who were going through the same process and they introduced me to Richard Rohr. Through his books and teachings, I was introduced to male spirituality, which gave a voice to my journey. I saw that what I was going through was really a journey of illumination, with the eventual glimpses of my true self and the unmasking of my false self. It was all part of my path and necessary for my growth. It was the recognition and fall of my false self.

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

My participation with Illuman today has encouraged me to be brave, step out, and follow my passions, including being involved in men's work. Stepping out and helping to start an Illuman group in the Carolinas is a big part of this. I have a passion for service, to see others find their true selves and rest in the love of God within them. Illuman has given me an avenue to help other men who are going through the same process as I am, to be that friend who nudges another man to take that step into the journey, and to pay forward what was given to me through the experience of MROP.

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

A friend of mine told me about MROP and, after a couple years of gently nudging me to do it, I finally went. I did my MROP in April of 2015 in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. It was a life-changing event that gave me some tools to do my inner work, a process that still continues to this day. It also connected me with brothers who have become very close friends of mine and who have been a support for me on my journey.

MROP gave me a sacred space, a liminal space, which allowed me to be open, vulnerable, and authentic, without any shame or guilt. By facing the darkness in my life, a great light started to arise in my heart.

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

Develop a contemplative discipline in your life and connect with other men who are on the journey. Illuman is a place where you can do this.

What's the best thing about doing this work?

The relationships that are built and the growth that I have experienced in my life.

Concluding thoughts?

The path to well-being and purpose is a life that is lived out of love and service to your neighbor. Before you can love another, you must first love and accept yourself and have a genuine encounter with this love. Illuman helps to give men these tools to do the inner work that is necessary to come to know, and live out of, this love.