

Why Have Rites of Passage?

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My journey to the Men's Rites of Passage was driven by my eldest son beginning his journey into adolescence. His two elder sisters entered adolescence with the guidance of their mother but I knew it was my responsibility as a male to lead my son into manhood. I read what I could find and, with the help of five other men in the same situation, created a rite of passage to help our boys become teens. In creating this experience I stumbled across the teachings of Richard Rohr. In his book *Wild Man to Wise Man*, Richard was clear on the need for a rite of passage.

After marking the end of childhood for my first son, I realized that I really did not know much about this work, so I attended a men's conference in New Mexico with Richard Rohr and Richard Grove. Richard Grove captivated me as he and his grandson told the story of the grandson's vision quest. I knew I needed to experience the Men's Rite of Passage for myself. Off I went to Ghost Ranch and five miraculous days of bone-shattering transformation. I now had a vision for my life and a new purpose for my second half of life. I had found a circle of elders and grandfathers who could teach me and lead me into manhood and elderhood.

Every boy needs to know that he is a beloved son and that he has what it takes to be a man. In order to receive these gifts from his father, his father needs to possess them for himself. This is why the work of Illuman is so vital in our world today. We are creating a circle of wise elders and grandfathers who can guide our boys and young men into mature manhood. Creating rites of passage to mark the many transitions in a man's life is necessary work. In Bill Plotkin's *Nature and the Human Soul*, he sets out nine transitions:

1. Birth—into early childhood
2. Naming—into middle childhood
3. Puberty—into early adolescence
4. Confirmation—into late adolescence
5. Soul Initiation—into early adulthood
6. Induction—into late adulthood
7. Crowning—into early elderhood
8. Surrender—into late elderhood
9. Death—into Mystery

I believe we are invited to create meaningful rites of passage for each of these transitions. The first need is to recreate the circle of elders and grandfathers that will lead boys and young men on the journey of illumination. These elders can then collaboratively craft rites of passage which meet the needs of each transition.