

# My Journey

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**By Richard S. Gibson**

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

The sacred seed was planted while reading Robert Bly's *Iron John: A Book About Men*. I was fascinated by the new possibilities, threatened by the new inner work I was now called to do, and felt quite alone. I put the book back on my bookshelf. That was 15 years ago. The germination of the seed came in October 2013, when I attended my first Indiana/Michigan M.A.L.Es weekend retreat on "The Sage Archetype." I had never imagined being with such a wonderful group of men—so unlike the male-asshole stereotype. Thank God, I was no longer alone among men.

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

I now know how important it is for me, my Soul, and those I meet and work with, to be conscious of balancing "head" and "heart" energies...and choosing my heart energy more frequently. An increased sense of vulnerability is a given. I now also really appreciate and value the range of my own "healthy" and "unhealthy" behaviors as an Enneagram Type One. My leadership gifts are generally (and quite imperfectly) driven less from my ego or "false self" and more by Who I Am in God. I am constantly encouraged in our men's work to practice using my gifts and exploring my yet-unused and undervalued gifts.

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

Indiana/Michigan M.A.L.Es held a "Rewilding" Retreat in June 2016. Our focus was on connecting to Earth and all of Creation. We spent most of the time outside. Prior to attending this retreat, I had always struggled with guilt and shame over (a) my lack of conservation sensitivity and commitment and (b) paying lip service to caring for all of Creation. All of this welled up at the retreat and I felt terribly torn and vulnerable. Fortunately, I have some wonderful Brothers who listened with great sensitivity and love as I unburdened myself with a

load of tears. Healing began, and continues. These men loved me in ways I had not yet been able to love myself.

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

Practice H.O.W. every day: Honesty, Openness, and Willingness. If the willingness is slow to come, or does not come, pray for the "willingness to be willing." That always takes me deeper. H.O.W. That's HOW for our part; all else will follow in God's good time.

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

The joy of authentic, deep, and loving male companionship. We can acknowledge and laugh at our never-ending ego-driven needs and our imperfections, and be more patient with our own selves and each other.