

# My Journey

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## By Chris de Lastic

Chris de Lastic is the incoming Treasurer on the Illuman Board of Directors and state contact for Georgia.

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

I was high-achieving in school and quickly climbed the New York finance ladder. However, in my late twenties, I experienced a growing inability to deal with failure at work and in other aspects of my life. Additionally, my spiritual tradition was not providing the traction I needed to navigate this new terrain. I started searching for anything that might help. On a retreat at a monastery, I was introduced to Rohr's writings on the male spiritual journey. These framed my own journey and gave me a vision for moving forward, encouraging me to not resist the descent, but press into it, even if I didn't understand it (maybe *because* I didn't understand it).

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

Illuman helped show me that my core gift flows out of who I am, not what I do, produce, or accomplish. For most of my life, I believed my central gift was dependent on constant self-improvement. Who I was, was simply not enough. It was lonely and exhausting.

I have begun to see that, even when I feel inadequate and unready, who I am, in this moment now, *is* my gift to my family, my work, and the world. I have never not been ready for my life.

### **Describe a recent Illuman/M.A.L.Es event you attended.**

#### **What was the impact on you?**

I attended Soularize last November. It is said, "more is caught than taught," and, every time I am around Illuman men, I catch something. I feel I am touching on mystery here: There is a generativity among my brothers that calls forth my own generativity. After these gatherings, I re-enter my life more centered, clear-sighted, and able to engage.

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

The reality of your life is the raw material for your journey. Whatever practices help you engage more authentically with your own soul, God, and others, create space for them and do them! If

you want ideas for practices, the ones suggested as part of the JOI are excellent; find ones that resonate with you, where you are now.

Also, keep paying attention to your life as it unfolds, so you can adjust accordingly. (I sometimes find myself asking, "What good is my spiritual practice if, by overdoing it, I cut myself off from the present moment and loving myself and others?")

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

It's easy for me to see life as a challenge to be endured instead of a gift to be enjoyed. Slowly I am learning to not always fight my limitations and circumstances but to accept them and even to find my gold in them. In Rumi's words, "Your boundaries are your quest," and this work has helped me experience that. I feel more at peace with myself, more connected to the world around me, and more aware of and grateful for my life.

### **Concluding thoughts?**

Thich Nhat Hanh said that the real miracle is to walk on the earth. I am grateful for my brothers in Illuman who have shown me how to walk on the earth through their own authenticity and presence. I am honored to be able to give back by serving as Treasurer.