

Journey of Illumination

Follow-up process for continued spiritual growth and transformation of Initiated males

Forms of Presence	Forms of Practice
<p>● Show Up and Observe (Centering)</p> <p>Each day challenge yourself to make contact with your true Source.</p> <p><i>“I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Centering Prayer/Meditation <input type="checkbox"/> Fasting* <input type="checkbox"/> Mindful Breathing/Practicing Presence* <input type="checkbox"/> Walking Meditation <input type="checkbox"/> Wandering Retreats* <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga/Body Work
<p>● Show Up and Get Together (Gathering)</p> <p>Regularly look for support and accountability with other serious brothers.</p> <p><i>“Do not absent yourself from the gatherings of the brethren” (Hebrews 10:25)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups <input type="checkbox"/> 12-Step Support Group <input type="checkbox"/> Regional/Local Gatherings of M.A.L.Es <input type="checkbox"/> MROP Home Group Connection*
<p>● Show Up and Share (Connecting)</p> <p>This applies on many levels, and is frankly the core meaning of “re-ligio” (reconnecting). Challenge yourself to find spiritual disciplines that you keep you connected and open-spaced in your mind, your heart, and grounded inside of your own body and emotions.</p> <p><i>“Peter, Peter, you must be sifted like wheat. . . and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen the brothers.” (Luke 22:31-32)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Soul Brother Check-In* <input type="checkbox"/> Elder Check-in* <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-One* <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Director <input type="checkbox"/> Therapist
<p>● Show Up and Let Go (Releasing)</p> <p>Living in the present moment requires us to release the past. Solitude and silence are traditional ways of allowing this to happen</p> <p><i>“Let go of your old way of life, put aside your old self, which gets corrupted by following illusions.” (Ephesians 4:22)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising forgiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Death Lodge Experience* <input type="checkbox"/> Journaling <input type="checkbox"/> Shadow work <input type="checkbox"/> Wandering Retreats*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show Up and Act (Serving) <p>Unless you find some way to give it away, you will not have it for yourself for long, or at any depth. The 12-Steppers call it the 12th and necessary step.</p> <p><i>“I did not come to be served, but to serve.”</i> (Matthew 20:28)</p>	<p>Connecting with some type of service activity-- preferably with men’s work. Should be discerned through work with Mentor, Elder, Soul Brother, small group and/or spiritual director.</p>
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* See Glossary of Terms for support information.

What Does The Journey of Illumination Invite You Into?

1. Choose at least one **PRACTICE** from each of the 5 Forms of **PRESENCE**.
2. Be disciplined about practicing your choices at the following **frequencies**:

- **Centering**
Encouraged Daily.
- **Gathering**
Meet in at least one small group (if a group is not accessible, meet at least with another man.)
Encouraged at least once a month
Emphasis: Honest and Vulnerable
- **Connecting**
Check-in encouraged at least once a month with your Soul Brother/One-on-One.
Check in with your Elder (minimum of 2xs) before FIRMinG.
- **Reflecting** (will involve Daily, Monthly, Bi-annual, and Annual aspects)
Encouraged Daily with journaling and/or spiritual reading, from the following:
 - ~ Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft*;
 - ~ Richard Rohr, *Adam's Return*
 - ~ Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*;
 - ~ James Finley, Merton’s *Palace of Nowhere*;

(1) Wandering Retreats for a **full day** in nature before FIRMinG *Soulcraft*, pp. 68-78.

(2) Death Lodge experience is required. This will be a 24-hour period alone preferably in nature. For more info on death lodge experience, consult Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft*, 105.

- **Serving**

This give-away of yourself should be done in the spirit of this journey and occur if it is discerned with a One-on-One that it is a good thing for you. For some, service can often be a distraction from the other inner-work that is necessary; especially in the early stages. The Service should enhance, not distract or become a substitute.

Note: We encourage you to use the 30th of each month (M.A.L.Es day) for days of fasting, study, prayer, and/or service for yourself and other men.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEATH LODGE – Intentional period of solitude (minimum of 24 hours), preferably occurring in nature. This period of time is to be without distractions of any sort and is a strong occasion to incorporate a day of fasting as well as prayer, solitude, observation, and journaling. For more info on Death Lodge experience, consult Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft*, 105. One Death Lodge is strongly encouraged

ELDER CHECK-IN – You will be assigned an “Elder” with whom you will connect at different stages of the journey to help you discern if you are processing towards participation in FIRMinG. The Elder might be based in your geographic area or could be in another area. Check-ins will occur by phone or in person. Determination of participation in a FIRMinG will be made through discernment with the Elder.

FASTING – Different forms of fasting can be an “opening to the soul.” Fasting can occur with food, spending money, watching television, gossiping/excessive talking, and other types of “stimulants.”

FIRMinG (Fifth Initiation Rite for Men) – A 3-day event designed for men who have experience the Rites of Passage and who have participated in the follow-up process (Journey of Illumination). FIRMinG is an intensive event containing solitude, ritual, and other experientials. FIRMinGs will be scheduled in different regional locations and require an application and acceptance process.

MINDFUL BREATHING/PRACTICING PRESENCE – There are 1,440 minutes in a day, each inviting us into the present moment. Taking an occasion to notice one’s breathing (especially when tense, emotional, grateful, content, etc.) can be quite grounding and revealing to the ego and to the soul. The use of the “Yahweh Prayer” as taught by Richard Rohr is a helpful practice.

MROP HOME GROUP CONNECTION – Home groups are often “safe containers” for men on the Rites of Passage; for connecting, sharing, and growing. A quarterly conference call with participants of one’s home group can be an important support element as well as a means of connecting to one’s Rites.

ONE-ON-ONE – This can be a connection with a Soul Brother and/or with another person who you can be honest with and who also has permission to both affirm and challenge you. Possible one-on-ones include Spiritual Directors, Therapists, or other Mentors.

SOUL BROTHER – This is another man with whom you can connect ~ be real ~ be honest with. He is an accountability partner and is someone who both affirms your journey and challenges you. It can be helpful if he, too, has made the Rites of Passage and is has/or is preparing to make FIRMinG. Connection can be by phone or in person (preferably not by email). Frequency should be a minimum of 1x per month.

SPIRITUAL READING – Four books have been suggested for preparation/reflection. The goal is not to

necessarily complete all four books, however, to truly engage with the text(s). It is recommended that you begin with Bill Plotkin's *Soulcraft*.

WANDERING RETREAT(S) – Intentional solo time in nature; encouraged to be a minimum of a full day. The Wandering Retreat is a strong occasion to incorporate a day of fasting as well as prayer, solitude, observation, and journaling. Two Wandering Retreats are strongly encouraged before making FIRMinG. For more info on the Wandering Archetype and its connection to Wandering Retreats, consult Bill Plotkin, *Soulcraft*, pp. 68-78.