

Remember in the Darkness **by Charles Pyeatte**

There's an issue with weight-loss diets: Do they really last? After you've been on several retreats or spiritual programs, some people wonder if those experiences have any staying power, too. It's a question some men might ask about the Men's Right of Passage. Is it another "born again" trip that generates temporary zeal? Do the experiences of those five days last?

No, of course they don't last. And that's the good news.

Like other men, I was taught to be solid, impenetrable, and immovable. I was the rock in the rushing stream, and the water darn well better flow around me. Naturally, it was slowly eroding my hardness, but I was what my culture said, hard as a rock. Dead as a rock.

After my days of initiation, I find myself in the river. No, it's better said that I AM the river itself. That's why the many of the things that changed for me in 2002 didn't last. What persists is being in right relationship to the flow of life. And it's all flow. In Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication there is a statement that the people who created the very language we use were ignorant of the constant process of life. The words they came up with tend to make things look more like walls when in fact they are more like smoke in the wind. That rock I thought was me isn't all that solid to a physicist.

The MROP isn't a fix, a rescue or a cure-all. I still have a fear that plagues me, like the thorn in St. Paul's side. (2Cor.12:7) But I know that my best response is to look at my fear until I understand its lesson for me. I'm unafraid of my fear.

We humans are not good at discerning whether an event in our lives is good or bad for us. It's only later that we get any perspective on the situation that disrupted our intentions. Still, there are times when I perceive only darkness around me, when I cannot sense the God within me or the God outside. It is in such times that I remember back to my day of initiation.

And recalling that day, a line from Father Rohr comes to mind. Not one of his famous theses, not a title of a book or an article. It was just a something he said that I jotted down at the time, and I've never heard him say it again. He said, "Remember in the darkness what you knew in the light."

In 2003, when we held the first organizing meeting for Arizona M.A.L.Es, one man came down from Winslow to Mesa (over 200 miles) for one-hour evening meeting, returning the next morning. His MROP had been in the 1990's, but it meant so much that he jumped at the first chance to help other men experience initiation.

He knows the darkness, as we all do, but after many years apart from other initiated men, he still remembered what he knew in the light.

My words, his actions - do they tell you if the MROP is a lasting experience?