Inner Work That Makes a Difference in the World
Combined Council Member Responses
Futuring Council, March 2020

Bob Juarez
For me inner work that makes a difference in the world is work that calls for the paradigm of my life, including the practice of religion and politics, the use of money and social practices, to reflect a response to be about the other. As a celibate, who bases love on inclusivity, vs. exclusivity in terms of particular relationships, I realize that I may have a different set of priorities than a man who is not celibate. Nonetheless, what I think or feel about me and my life's reality needs to evolve into a **life reality that is inclusive of others, the environment, and all that lives. This requires that the fruit of my inner work names and transforms all that impedes great freedom, deep gratitude and broad generosity.**

Brad Kuluris
I feel love, presence, awareness, compassion, humility and gratitude. I know in my heart these are the fruits of inner work.
I am teaching these through my own inner work and the way I know I am being helpful is when I see others model what I attempt to model.

Brad Pickel
The first thoughts are of a vastness of opportunity and an abundant feeling that as we do our inner work, opportunities arise through us to be the difference in the world. I think of the opportunity to sit with other men who are seeking a different way to show up to their life and not "preach" about the value of a deeper spirituality, but through my presence and other intitiated men we invite our Brothers into a **new beingness where they are at home in the more than human world and take on a solemn vow to live with creation instead of being in dominion over it.** I see Illuman developing containers through in-person and virtual programming **where communities are formed that are based on our five touchstones.** I also feel trepidation that we don't try to be all things to all peoples and a need to continue our deeper listening in council to discern what is ours to do.

Joe Gabaeff
What comes to mind is 'heal yourself, heal the world.' The interconnectedness and collective nature of our wounds, that our inner work is outer work as a result of such interconnection. It also brings a sense of motivation for inner work as not being something selfish or navel gaze-y, but vital work for the benefit of all. My spiritual teachers teaches that to truly help others, we must be beyond help ourselves, which I interpret as we (our egos) need to get out of the way to
truly show up for others; that to help effectively, we should not be entering situations where others are in need of assistance with needs of our own that must be met through that helping (sorry, that's the 2 in me : ). Lastly, my teacher teaches that we do not exist in the world, the world exists in us, and that it is a quality of this Universe that when one thing changes, everything changes, hence our great power to change the world/Universe by changing ourselves.

John Ball
Journey of Illumination
Self-Reflection
Soul Work
Hard Work
Connecting With, Embracing & Learning from our Woundedness
Discernment
Deepening
Openness
Wisdom
Transformation
Growing
Commitment
Sharing
Relationship Building
Networking
Resourcing
Mentoring
Becoming Safe Holding Places for Ourselves & Others
Loving Ourselves & Others & All Creation
Compassion
Selflessness
Gratitude
Generosity
Surrender to the Gift of the Present Moment
Faithfulness
Peace
Claiming Our Divine Nature & Place in the World as Beloved Sons/Daughters of God
Made in God's Image & Likeness
John Lew
I have images of: ritual, ceremony, teaching, small group council work, mirroring, dreamwork, imagination, intimate relationship with nature, nature itself, self-reflection, self awareness, solitude, and tears. Feelings of power and peace, groundedness, wholeness, healing. New awareness of the largeness and depth of life. Excitement for new purpose and a deep calling in life. More authentic presence to the people around us, deep love, gratitude, compassion, acceptance, and deep appreciation for our people and the world. I have images of the wilderness communing with the two leggeds and being in love with us! Images of MROP, Animas practices, GERI workshops and exercises.

Mike Anderer
a line from Rumi:
"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.
Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

Or the line from the Emerald Tablet,
"That which is above (or outside) is like that which is below (or inside)
and that which is below (inside) is like that which is above (outside)
to do the miracles of only one thing."

More practically, the variety of maps we use to guide us on the journey
-the Hero's Journey of the MROP
-Order, Disorder, Reorder of Rohr
-Wake Up, Grow Up, Clean Up, and Show Up of Wilbur and Rohr
-Plotkin's Ecocentric Wheel and Map of the Self

Or the practices that form the center of the daily churn of transformation
-centering & meditation
-reading & study
-time in nature
-gathering and sitting in council with other men
-gathering, listening, and walking with a soul/sage brother

And what of the difference in the world?
an attitude and intention to "be of service" to life (no fixing, no judging)
to strive, in the churn of life, to not cause suffering
to strive to bear or alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters, and all life in the more than human world
-to hold lightly to the outcome of our strivings, as life has taught us that we see only through a mirror dimly

**Steve Hicken**  
Difference in the World.  
In five years:  
1) Major News agencies, academics and relevant publications turn to Illuman as a reference point for healthy masculinity.  
2) Every Illuman man committing to do his work through the JOI has declared his area of service (fifth touchstone) with his Chapter, Region or other primary Illuman connection. Area of service can fall into private sphere (personal, family, friends) or public sphere (work, neighborhood, faith community, political / organizing). Illuman has created a simple registry of these service commitments, which in the aggregate (not by name) can be publicly shared to substantiate our men's work to make a difference in the world.

**Tom Reid**  
Inner work encompasses engagement of the whole person in the way of individuation, whole person development. It is the Journey of Illumination, growing in healthy relationship with the many dimensions of any human person.

The fruit of healthy inner work results in the person being in right relationship with self, others, especially those one lives and works with, the whole community of life and the more than human world.

**Combined Wisdom Elders Responses**  
**March, 2020**

**Kevin Anderson**  
Inner work means for me to (daily) attend to:  
Good sleep,  
Good exercise.  
Good prayer.  
With those in place (daily) I am "more of the man God calls me to be" and grace can more readily flow through me to make a change in the world.
Mike Bennett
Inner work in my life has meant facing my shadow and allowing him(or her) to reveal the dark and mysterious canyons that life has carved, both conscientiously and unconscientiously, deep within me that prevent me from being who I really am. Inner work is a life long journey that is only bearable in relationship with others.

Joel Blunk
When I hear the words *inner work that makes a difference in the world*, thoughts, feelings or images that come to mind for me are…

...important, relevant, maturity, growth, evolution, depth, discomfort, challenge, self-discovery, shame, grief, shadow, darkness, fear, humility, sub-personalities, integration, wholeness...

I think I'm just beginning to understand what inner work entails. Thanks in large part to Illuman, I'm learning to do it. I find myself more committed to it these days and more aware of not only what it takes, but why it matters.

I recently participated in an Animas Sweet Darkness shadow retreat. It was intense. It brought up all kinds of things that I'd rather not admit to. Still, what's been and being brought to light - while I don't fully understand it cognitively - is life-giving and critical to my continued growth and becoming. The result, I believe, is a benefit not only to me but to others.

While it is hard for me to accept parts of myself that I've packed away for years for reasons I thought were called for, the renewed energy, complimentary qualities, and even giftedness that shadow work uncovers, has uncovered vitality and energy needed at this time in my life. I can't rely on the old motivations, my tired ambitions. Inner work is transformative, remaking me for what's ahead. So it's not for my own sake that it's done, but to get me out of myself so I'm more grounded in who I'm not. I sense myself more willing to surrender who I thought I was in order to more fully be who I am in service (or solidarity) with all else. With God's help, I'm made more generative, more able to see myself as connected to, rather than separate from, the world around me. I'm more capable of feeling the pain of world without being consumed by it, and more willing to participate in the healing of it.

The past 4 years I've been living in Christian intentional community with a number of African Americans. Together, racial reconciliation is a primary focus of our work. It's immensely difficult most of the time. I'm only beginning to understand the generational trauma of race and my complicit role in it. I can no longer deny racism exists, or ignore it or avoid it out of convenience. Nor can I fix it alone. I can, though, take responsibility for recognizing how I've benefited from white privilege over the course of my life and commit myself now to using my privilege to make a difference and to work for change. Choosing to live here now is a start.

Inner work is helping me to come to terms with anger too. While denying I had it for years, I now see it's a place in my life. It's akin to justice. It's needed to speak out for and work toward
prophetic ends. Issues of intimacy, self-doubt, and the fear of my own incompetence are also coming to light. Surprisingly, facing and accepting these things isn't doing me in. I'm still here, still alive! In my better moments, I'm even invigorated by the exposure, more engaged, empowered to live beyond myself.

Inner Work for me includes shadow work, dream work, deep imagery, the welcoming home of my loyal soldiers, and the risking of my reputation. I'm learning that humility is a primary source of compassion, forgiveness and unconditional love. I've got to love myself if I'm going to love anyone/anything else. I'm not very good at these things, but I'm trying. My intentions are sincere even if my willingness to stay with it day after day wanes. On occasion, though, I can see the growth, I can feel the difference, and I even catch a glimpse of something bigger going on. Inner work breeds courage, compassion, acceptance and perspective. If I can bring those things to the world it will make a difference.

**Jim Clarke**

For me, inner work is about how I show up and face whatever reality presents to me/us. In my best times, it is with compassion; in my worst times, it usually is with fear or anxiety.

I find it necessary to daily practice these methods to assist me in the process of “waking up” to reality.

- Meditation using the Jesus prayer
- Exercise in one way or another
- Spiritual reading
- Play/leisure
- Service to the greater good
- Gratitude list

**Steve Conroy**

I tend to think of Inner Work as me working on myself alone. Contemplation, meditation, prayer, journaling etc

But maybe it's more about what happens in community.... "Making a difference in the world".

Someone sent this quote today. "The more support we have for our Inner Work, the easier our process will be. We can seek out others who give encouragement and act as witnesses for our growth. We can find groups, attend workshops, and put ourselves in situations that foster our real development."
Maybe its like the butterfly effect of getting together and lifting each other up, taking small steps together, as other men join and do the same and on and on. It would affect not just the men in groups but their families and friends.

"As iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another" - Get a group of men together and who knows what could happen!

Stephen Gambill
My hope is that continuing inner work helps me to see the process of living more lucidly, to understand myself more clearly as who I really am, not as who I'd like to see or would like others to see, and helps me understand others as who they really are, not as what my prejudgements perceive. The more of us who learn to practice that kind of vision, the more this world of individuals, cultural and ethnic groups, races and nations, will heal. For some years, space has been a fertile idea to me on several levels, and I believe inner work gradually, for most of us, opens a spaciousness in us that allows vital room for our real, honest selves to unfold from the cramped quarters of our egoic fears, distortions, and misconceptions; allows us to expand, and become the fullness of ourselves. And then we can give that gift of spaciousness to others, just by our presence.

In one of Richard's Daily Meds recently I read a passage from the unknown author of The Cloud of Unknowing. Richard recommended it for anyone undergoing the "Hour of the Wolf", that dark time of sleeplessness in the middle of the night, a time I've been forced to befriend. A couple of sentences from it:

"Be encouraged, and offer up your simple naked being to the joyful being of God . . . Hold the soft, warm compress of these loving words against your bodily self. Bypass the mind and even the affections of the heart, and forego any analysis of what you are, or are not. Simply that you are!"

I believe this committed effort of inner work, of letting go of our perceived selves into the miracle of "simply that we are", can gradually manifest in us the being we truly are, and why we're in the world.
Steve Hicken
Difference in the World.
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Belden Lane
Bob Juarez, God bless him, is riding our asses as “emeritus wisdom elders” to respond to how our inner work makes a difference in the world. (Smile) Well I’m reporting in, especially since this is a question I’m coming back to as I try to fall asleep every night now. With the world on lockdown, insomnia is bothering a lot of us.

I have a set of Muslim prayer beads that I bought from a man on the streets of the old city of Jerusalem thirty years ago. It has 99 beads for the 99 names of God and I use it a lot. These days I find myself employing a number of different “mantras” as I lie in bed, thumbing my way through the beads. Since Richard has taught us to pray “in all the holy names of God,” I thought
it might be a good idea to join the others who use different names from what I do—praying their own prayers along with them. Especially since we're all physically separated now. Besides, what we may not be able to confess together in creed, we certainly can pray together in need.

Muslims put special emphasis on the first two of the 99 names, for example, praying “in the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful.” (Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem) So I’ll begin with that phrase, saying it over and over to myself—honoring the most important things that can be said about God in the Islamic tradition. Then I’ll move on to the holy Shema used by Jews as they pray each day: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.”(Sh’mah, Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ehad.) From my own Christian tradition, I then turn to the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.” (Kyrie, iesou Christe, eleison me, in Greek).

These simple phrases have become more important to me than ever, since I was in southern Spain in January before the coronavirus hit—praying each of these prayers in every mosque, cathedral, and synagogue I entered. What better thing to do when the world hurts together as it does now—when we have a greater opportunity than ever to reach out to each other in compassion and solidarity—than to say our prayers together? We might even add Sri Ramakrishna’s prayer, “O Mother, I throw myself on thy mercy,” among many others.

All these are prayers that call on God to be who God already is: Most merciful and Compassionate. When we utter them in the night—joining with others all over the earth—of course, it makes a difference. Does it allay the virus? I have no idea. But does it bind us into a more closely-knit human family? Absolutely! And that’s more important than ever in these days. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.

**Joe Lonergan**

Inner work is a contemplative stance, an intentional time to remove myself from the status quo or routine of my life and take a long, loving look at myself and everyone/everything around me, allowing it all to speak to me. I find that if I put aside time for this practice, I am able to see the things I need to change, experience gratitude for all that comes my way, recognize the unique and inherent beauty and dignity of others and hold and respond more compassionately to the pain of the world. My hope is that my practice becomes more a way of life.
Combined Convener Responses
March, 2020

Ned Abenroth
When I hear "inner work that makes a difference in the world", my personal preference would be
to focus on the "inner work" part in the context of a small group of dear friends, living my life in
peace, and making a difference in some local manner. But what the world is begging for right
now, is that we make a noticeable impact on the scale of in the world. To me this calls for
thinking Big..."Our playing it small won't serve the world" to quote Marianne Williamson...

Dominick Bencivenga
- It's the only way
- Takes commitment
- Facing the truth
- Difference Makers
- Feels right
- Work of the Spirit

Seth Burgess
Inner work does NOT make a difference in the world unless it translates to action/service. It is
quite possible to do lots of inner work and have it make no difference to the world at all. The
MROP is designed to teach us how to start the inner journey. It does a great job of that, but it is
just an initiation. What happens next and where it is all headed is very poorly articulated in our
organization. Richard has been very clear on why we need the MROP, but not so clear on
exactly how our work ultimately changes the world.

Thoughts
1. Being led to powerlessness prevents the abuse of power
2. Self-knowledge increases empathy
3. Understanding ego excess leads to humility

Feelings
1. Uncertainty
2. Powerlessness
3. Indecisiveness

So where do we go from here?
**Terry Frisbie**
To me Inner Work means freedom. Freedom from selfish delusions allows new space for others in the entire Earth Community. Inner work that does not allow this spaciousness could be called something else but it is not Inner Work.

**Bob Harbuck**
My mind immediately creates a dualism with inner and outer work. ... being and doing, action and contemplation, etc. I just returned from you JOI where 34 men were together over the weekend. During those hours we gathered in circles, saged, drummed, sat in silence, checked in, did group rituals, wandered in nature, practiced way of council, listened to teaching, shared meals, laughed, cried, danced, told our stories, listened to stories, read poems, etc.

Upon returning I wrote, "this environment allowed each man to do his own inner work." outer leads to inner, doing leads to being, action leads to contemplation, and the reverse is true., inner leads to outer, being leads to doing, contemplation leads to action....... and in the process, adjustments are being made to how we see ourselves and the world. After a while, for me, it's hard to know what is inner and what is outer. The cause and effect link is often difficult to establish.

"makes a difference in the world"
I like to think my being here makes a difference in the world. Only a human being would ponder such a notion. How would I know such a thing?

**feelings**
excitement
confusion
wonder
peace
doubt

**images**
men together
men alone
circles
containers
men working
men doing nothing
Scott Klaverkamp
Inner work to me is automatically going to make a difference in the world even if that is not the intention of the individual. If you look at scripture and, especially the gospels (in my limited knowledge) it seems to me Jesus always did inner work before doing his ministry. It was always to balance of solitude then public ministry. In my own life journey of my work in the 12 steps and therapy (my alcoholism and PTSD) doing my inner work is critical because it sets my mental and emotional state on how I deal with others, situations, and the world in general. In Rohr's podcasts, "Another Name for Everything" this season he has mentioned several times about the energy that is being used when addressing people and issues. That inner work that examines the core wound, identifies the false self, and questions one's own attitudes and behaviors is in my experience the place really change comes from. I cannot think of one example in history of people who have performed real change in society and healing who have not started with inner work first, (Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Rohr and his training as a Franciscan, Francis, ect...). In a culture fixated and hell bent on blaming others and avoidance of responsibility, I feel inner work is the primary place to start to bring change to the world.

T. Michael Rock
Inner Work takes many forms. It is necessary work. It is spiritual work. It is what we do. We are not producing anything, but our work is productive. We are not creating anything physical, but our work is creative and physical (embodied). Let it deepen.

Michael Whitman
It seems to me that authentic inner work demands personal change/transformation. Because it is real work, it awakens one to the interconnections found inwardly and how they affect the world outside. I think this is where a cross roads is met and action is called for. Thus a decision is needed. Will I transform - no matter how gradual this might be or how painful. And if the answer is yes, a difference will begin to be seen in immediate relationships, on a communal level, and and in the non-human & non-sentient worlds as well.

As has been noted already, the MROP was one of those Liminal moments that created a threshold - an invitation. It could not be the driving force for change and yet was the beginning for many of us. Or even, a continuation of what may have been already happening but raised to a new level of awareness and action. The driving force is the "yes" that makes the difference.

I think Illuman does a great job of reminding us about this "yes" with Sularize and the support given to the chapters. The grass roots work is in the chapters. They are the stokers that help to keep the "edges hot".
Glenn Siegel
When I hear the words, “inner work that makes a difference in the world,” I am immediately encouraged and grateful to be invited to reflect upon this essential interplay. Two related areas come to mind right away: Core Wound and Shadow. For me, much of the course of my life has been driven by these two powerful determinants of my level of consciousness, actions, behaviors, and the quality of my relationships.

I believe that one’s Core Wound is enduring and actually provides the energy source for seeking greater awakening. As each level of awareness or wholeness is achieved, the Core Wound is revisited from that expanded perspective and can then offer greater capacities for contribution of unique gifts to the larger community (human and other than human). This “makes a difference in the world.”

What is hidden in Shadow orchestrates projection and distortion of the humanity in others. This is dangerous. It is therefore crucial, in my view, that inner work also be devoted to following clues, often apparent first in dreams, to help bring unintegrated Shadow elements into consciousness. For me, this integration not only invigorates and vitalizes me as the energy used to maintain internal prisons is liberated, but also helps me truly see others more cleanly and compassionately. That also “makes a difference in the world.”

Peter Zellner
I would propose inner work is not inner work unless it translates to action—even if that action is 'non action' by transforming the pain and shadow one normally projects into the world.

MROP led to much shadow work for me. It was at times painful, and truly work. I studied it in order to learn what actions needed to be taken to identify my shadow and then integrate it.

Inner work activities included:

- Connection and vulnerable sharing with Illuman men (via virtual council mostly, but more locally lately)
- Dream work
- Active Imagination
- Projection work
- Contemplative prayer (lots of it)
- Ritual
- Journaling
- Dance
Archetype studies
- 12-step work
- **Creative expression.** In fact, creative expression along with centering prayer has been an essential **non-negotiable** component of my inner work.

The outputs of this work have been a slow reduction in resentment, anger and apathy to my family and the community. This has freed me up to be more present with my family and fellow Illuman members and to serve my local community with more joy.

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**Combined Virtual Council Leadership Responses**

**March, 2020**

**Warren Hyer**

My initial reaction to the topic and prompt is one of confusion.

As I understand it, inner work is done to help you to find your true self and to identify more clearly your unique gifts that can be used to make a difference in the world.

I think to start with making a difference in the world is getting the whole process backwards. Rather we start by discovering the unique gifts we have been given by God and then begin to look at where they can be used to make a difference in the world. Inner work is listening to who I am. Action is what I want to do with it. If we trust God, we can believe that if we do our inner work it will eventually lead us to how we can make a difference in the world.

What I am saying has been said better:

“Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am.”

(Italics added.)

— Parker J. Palmer,
Let Your Life Speak:
Listening for the Voice of Vocation.

**Dave Llewellyn**

Developing greater awareness of my emotional experience, with the ability to differentiate and identify my emotions.
Developing the ability to calm myself using my connection to the earth, to Spirit, and to others as necessary and appropriate.

Developing the ability to sit quietly, resting peacefully in the present moment.

Developing the ability to observe my inner and outer environments in relationship with each other without judgement.

Developing the ability to occupy multiple perspectives simultaneously, maintaining awareness of each, and connection with each, as I do so. Growing capacity for empathy.

Confronting and challenging my entrenched patterns of defensiveness.

Forgiving and blessing others' entrenched patterns of defensiveness.

Inviting Spirit/God to direct my thoughts & actions, and practicing willingness to follow that direction. Prayer and Meditation.

Participating in Council & virtual council.

Written reflection / journaling / drawing.

Creative acts (drumming, singing, playing instruments, collage, dance/movement, painting, drawing, writing, sculpting, designing, inventing, etc.)

Communing in/with Natural Environments.

Play with/as (a) child(ren).

Tell the truth.

Listen deeply.

Practicing Gratitude.

**Dave Macquarrie**

So much of the inner journey is the searching through the ashes to find the gold, which can then be brought to action in the world.
Anthony Monticchio
Three items come to mind.
1- Richard's often quoted phrase... 'Unless we transform our pain, we'll transmit it'
To me, 'inner work' begins the journey of awakening to our pain and transforming it.
2- James Finley in Divine Ambush quotes Merton on knowing if you truly are beginning
to transform your pain.... by asking yourself... are you more open, more compassionate,
more kind, more forgiving.... to others and yourself... if not.. maybe you need to take a second
look.

3- I would change the phrase slightly to... 'all inner work makes a difference in the world'
To me even ego based, first half of life inner work makes a difference.. in other words even 'bad'
inner work is good as it often is the precursor to deeper more authentic inner work.

Scott Wehner
When I hear the words "inner work that makes a difference in the world", I nod in fervent
agreement. My personal experience with true inner work has propelled me farther than all of my
previous counseling efforts and pharmaceuticals. Peace and a sense of humble accomplishment
coupled with wonder are now a permanent way of life for me. My brothers, I have observed,
seem to have similar experiences when they become fully engaged. I see contentment, peace, and
a path to unlimited growth.