

## Charlotte Spirituality Center

### Spiritual Direction Verbatim

Director: *Nina*

Directee: *CJ*

Date of Session: *10-1-2024*

Session # *2*

Session Location: *Clergy Office*

**Introduction:** CJ is a 29 year old, white woman who is divorced and shares custody of her five year old daughter with her ex-husband. CJ's daughter will be referred to as May and her ex-husband will be referred to as J. CJ was married for almost two years before she became pregnant but divorced before the baby was born. CJ claims Christianity but is not particularly religious and was not raised in a religious family so her divorce was not viewed as a moral failure as much as just the way things work out. Her husband had been unfaithful in the relationship, even before the marriage. CJ thought once married J would change his "ways", but even after she became pregnant and nothing changed she gave up hope that J would finally commit to a faithful marriage and raising a family together. CJ initiated the divorce.

CJ is a teacher at a local elementary school, teaching a combined Kindergarten/First grade class. Her mother is also a teacher and her father owns his own building company. She loves her job feels very committed to the vocation of educating the next generation. CJ finds great joy working with "her" children and thinks of her work as her legacy. The following is a portion of our conversation about her thirtieth birthday.

Dialogue	Thoughts of Director	Feelings of Director	Body Response in Director	Body Response in Traveler	Intuition
SD 1 - Your birthday is this coming Friday, is that right?	This may be a significant birthday	Curious about her birthday.	Relaxed	Energized	There's excitement or energy here.
D 1 - Yes, this Friday I'll be the big three zero.	Interesting label			Huge smile	30th must mean something.
SD 2 - Thirty, well happy birthday.	Just a customary response.		Smile	Smiles and relaxes a bit.	Maybe this is an opening.
D 2 - Thank you. I can't say I'm really looking forward to it. I don't have any plans to really celebrate.	Interested in the negative response	curious	Raise of eyebrow as if asking a question	Loss of smile and shoulders slump forward	There is something unpleasant about this birthday.
SD 3 - Oh, why is that?	Curious				

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D 3 - It's my weekend to have May, so I won't be alone but, when May comes to stay I like to have quality time together, just the two of us.			Interest		Nod my head to indicate that I am listening	Looks down at the floor.	Doesn't want eye contact may mean some negative feelings (shame, remorse...)
SD 4 - Quality time?	Looking for specifics	Curious		"		"	"
D 4 - Well, yes, just time at my place, the two of us doing something special to make sure she feels that my place is her home. Ya, know, like making her favorite cookies, working on a craft, painting a picture that she can place in her room.	Admire CJ for her special attention to her daughter's emotional needs	Compassion		"		"	A lot of energy is being given to bond with her daughter.
SD 5 - That sounds lovely, but not really a celebration, is that right?	Be careful not to put words in her mouth	Still curious		"		"	Wondering if the "celebration" is the right path to explore.
D 5 - Right, but I wouldn't want to spend the day any other way.	Hoping I didn't insult her.	"		Slightly leaning forward as I ask.	Still no eye contact	"	
SD 6- Okay, but if you could plan the perfect celebration, what would it look like?	Wondering if this is a helpful path	Uncertain		Still leaning in.	Looks up, a little teary eyed.		There she is.
D 6 - Don't get me wrong, any time May and I get to have time together it really is a celebration. I love being her mother and if I could have a dozen more Mays I would.	Interested in the tears	Compassion for the pain I see in her face.		Sit up and nod my head	Eyes begin to well with tears.		There's some pain around her daughter, or having children.
SD 7 - A dozen?							

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D 7 - Okay, not a dozen, but I always wanted a big family. I 'm one of five. I have two older brothers, an older sister, then there is me followed by a younger sister. I grew up with all that noise and activity, people coming and going. A birthday was always celebrated with a cake and friends coming over for a party. There was always something interesting happening. Mom, was so good at keeping us engaged and busy that we honestly didn't have time to get into trouble, or serious trouble anyway. I really had the perfect childhood.	Family is very important	Objectively listening	Relaxed and engaged		Smiles, but there is still a bit of tears/sadness in the eyes	Let's see where this goes.	
SD 8 -That sounds wonderful, but I'm a little confused. You said that you always wanted a large family, but you seem to already have a pretty large family.	Need clarification	Confused	Relaxed		"	Keep going.	
D 8 - Oh, yes. I mean I guess I do. It's hard to keep count of all the nieces and nephews, and who has one on the way. But I mean my family. Ya know? I always thought I would have more than just one baby.	Is this the point of pain, regret?	Sadness	Nodding in assurance that I heard her.		Beginning to cry	There is deep pain here.	

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SD 9 - Let's take a moment, and take a breath together...	This may be too painful to keeping going.	Deep sorrow	Hand CJ a box of tissue.		Accepts tissue and continues to cry.	Give her time.	
D 9 - Crying	"	"				"	
SD 10 - The tears... can you say what the tears are about?	I feel sad, but maybe her tears are about something else.	Curious	Lean in a little		Crying but making eye contact	Touching real emotions. But what?	
D 10 - May... I guess. Really she is all I've got...and that's not even full-time. You know, it's like I'm a mom, but only a part-time mom with a part-time child.	Seems like regret.	Curious	"		"	Let her go on.	
SD 11- What do you mean by part-time?	Part-time sounds dismissive	"	Sitting back, relaxed		"	"	
SD 11- That sounds so silly, of course May is my child 24/7, now and forever. It's just I have to share her with her father. She gets shuffled back and forth each week between our houses. I should be grateful we live close enough to do that, but I'm not. I hate it. I hate that I can't give my daughter the kind of life I wanted for her. A stable family with brothers and sisters and cousins and all the things that mean so much.	Seems like regret for not having the life she wants and not being able to provide for her daughter.	Sadness	Nodding to let her know I'm listening.		No longer crying. Sitting straight and making strong eye contact while telling her story.	The emotion of hate/ resentment/ regret are possible points to be explored at our next visit.	

Dialogue      Thoughts of Director      Feelings of Director      Body Response      in Director      Body Response      in **Traveler**      **Intuition**

*Reflections: Upon reflection, I wish I had picked a real story to share.*