

## Charlotte Spirituality Center

### Spiritual Direction Verbatim

**Director:** *Your Name*

**Directee:** *Code Name*

**Date of Session:** *Date*

**Session #** 50?

**Session Location:** *Place*

**Introduction:** *Give a brief description of the life-context and characteristics of the directee – those that particularly contribute to an understanding of the experience upon which you are focusing. e.g. family of origin, current family structure, age, gender, cultural background, career, faith community, energetic presence, grief, theological constructs, etc.*

*The directee is in his late 50's, grew up in a fundamentalist Christian family but joined the PCUSA in his early 30's, and is still a member but attends rarely. He had a hurtful experience in the church a few years ago and finds it painful to be back at church.. The presenting issue was the tragic death of someone he loved.*

Dialogue	Thoughts of Director	Feelings of Director	Body Response in Director	Body Response in Directee	Intuition
SD-1 Oh, hi and good morning!	Bryn did not let me know that he had arrived and I was still hunched over my computer. I wish I had not been engrossed in something else when he arrived.	I feel surprised.	Maybe a little deer in headlights but I think I looked happy to see him because I enjoy our conversations.	Non-plussed, he came right on in and sat down in "his" chair and started pulling on the hems of his pants, like he always does.	He's comfortable.
D 1 - Hi, there. How are ya?		Feeling a bit distracted by the work I was doing when he appeared at my door.	I try to shift gears without seeming distracted. I think I accomplish this.	His affect is not flat but not terrible expressive which is typical.	

SD 2 - I'm doing very well....  
(There's some silence as he settles in and as I settle in.) It's been a while since we last met.

I know that November is a rough month for him and I'm wondering how he's been since we missed a session.

I feel care and concern.

Eye contact and trying to soften my face and keep my body open.

Adjusts his pant legs.

D 2 - Yes, it has, and it's been tough. It's been a tough few weeks.

I'm not surprised and glad he's able to start off with this. There's history as to why this time of year is hard for him, so I don't inquire about why its been tough.

He's making good eye contact with me and his body seems relaxed.

SD 3 - November is a tough month for you and it sounds like this November has been no different.

Trying to use the tone of my voice to express care.

I know better than to rush him along in the conversation. He talks slowly and needs time to

He's grown a lot in being able to talk about his inner life and what's stirring within him.

D 3 - Yep, it sure is. And this year with the election and all, it's been even tougher.

SD 4 - (I'm silent except for a slight nod of my head.)

We've talked about his politics before and know where he stands. I've learned to "step back" and give him space.

I'm still and quiet in a stance of respectful anticipation of what will emerge.

D 4 - I've got a lot of questions. A whole lot of questions. The word "Christian" has been brought into politics. What is a Christian? Am I a Christian? Who is a Christian? What does it mean to be a Christian? I've just got lots of questions.

I can hear emotion in your voice. How does it feel to have all these questions?

D 5 - Well, it's frustrating. I just don't know anymore what to believe. Who's a Christian? Who isn't a Christian? What isn't a Christian? Maybe I've got it all wrong. Maybe the other side has it all right. I just don't know. But I know Donald Trump is not a Christian.

Yikes! Sometimes I'm not always sure that I'm a Christian anymore. Doctrine and creeds don't do anything for me anymore. Stay calm, girl.

Trying to remain open with my body and face. I don't want my words to get in his way. I can have a tendency to speak prematurely, not letting him have the time he needs.

I feel a bit anxious - is he going to ask me to define what a Christian is! I'm also excited for him because there is feeling in his voice and I can tell how moved he is.

He's grounded in his chair. Looks around some but seems grounded.

This is a different conversation from any we've had. This tells me that it's important.

This is important.

SD 6 - You're feeling confused about what it means to be a Christian and even confused about what you believe and don't believe.

We've talked before about his fundamentalist upbringing and about how scary church was to him as a child but he's never directly asked these questions. Feels like some deconstructing may be taking place and this excites me. I need to be careful to allow his process to unfold and to not impose on him my belief on the importance of deconstruction.

I'm feeling cautious, again wanting to allow space for his process to unfold.

I'm aware that he's in a place he's not yet invited me into and it feels important and sacred.

D 6 - Well, I am confused! Maybe I've got it all wrong. Maybe they've got it all right.

I know who "they" are - the other political party.

SD 7 - What would it mean to "have it all wrong?"

This conversation feels sacred to me.

I'm trying to remain open.

D 7 - Well that's just it: I don't know. I've been in church all my life. I don't come much anymore on Sundays. But church has been a part of my whole life and now I don't know what I believe. Am I a Christian? Do I even want to be a Christian? Maybe I need to look into other religions - Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and whatever else there is. No, I really don't want to do that because I've have to read. What makes someone a Christian? Maybe Joe Clifford can tell me.

SD 8 - You can certainly talk with Joe and that might be helpful, but I also think you've got what it takes to discern what you believe and what you don't believe. Maybe a helpful place to start is for you to say what you don't believe.

Geez, Louise. Who am I, chopped liver? I feel a bit defensive that he might feel the need to talk with our Senior Pastor about this, like I'm not qualified. Easy, Alison. You're enough.

I want him to wrestle with this on his own, to trust that he has what it takes to dig deeper within himself.

My heart rate has picked up a bit.

I feel for him. I feel for how much this election has stirred up in him, but I'm also excited that he is willing to "go there," to dig deeply into his faith.

He's remained grounded, his body posture remaining open.

D 9 - I don't believe that Christians hate. Jesus didn't hate, did he? I don't believe that being a Christian means telling women what to do with their bodies. I don't believe that it's Christian to tell people who they can marry or not marry. Christianity is not about judging others. But am I alone in this church? Are there others who believe like I do?

I feel such compassion for him and admiration for him because he's willing to struggle with these questions.

My body is open.

D 9 - You're real clear about what you don't believe.

I'm glad he's able to tease apart and claim what he does not believe.

His face says that he feels relieved.

SD 10 - Yeah, I guess I am but if I look down the row at others, what do they believe? Am I all alone?

D 10 - Say more about your concern that you might be all alone here because that sounds important.

*Reflections: In all my conversations with this individual, he's never raised these kinds of questions about faith. This is new territory. It felt like he and we are beginning a new chapter in our work together. I'm aware of my wanting to not get in his way. I know him well enough to know that he needs space and time to express himself. I wonder if I stayed too much in my head and allowed him to be too much in his head.*

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