

Charlotte Spirituality Center
Spiritual Direction Verbatim

Director: *Cherrie Barton Henry*
Directee: *Cindy Lou Who*
Date of Session: *November 21, 204* **Session #** ____
Session Location: *In person / In my head!*

Introduction: While reading the first paragraph found on p. 31 of the article “Shame: A primary root of resistance” by James M. Bowler and in particular the sentence: Much of the experience in the spiritual direction process is an attempt to avoid encounters with the faces of shame. But each person has to own the way he or she avoids what is really underneath the behavior.” I made a note to myself in the margin of the article, “Could I write a verbatim to illustrate this?”

I then thought back to a real conversation I had with a college friend that has stuck with me for almost 52 years now. (Ut oh . . . I think I know what my next SD will be about!) That conversation became the basis of this verbatim where I imagined myself as a Spiritual Director and my friend as my Directee.

Dialogue	Thoughts of Director	Feelings of Director	Body Response in Director	Body Response in Directee	Intuition
SD 1 - Hi, Cindy. Good to see you!	I've prepared myself with prayer. Be open. Let go. Is "good to see you" neutral enough?	Nervous	Keeping my body open.	Little Nervous too, but seems happy to be here	We'll get through this just fine.
D 1 - Good to see you too.	Is she only mirroring what I said or is she genuinely "good."	She seems fine	Keep my body and face open	Her legs are crossed, but her arms are open and her face seems ready. Her hands are gently clasping one another.	I think she thinks I know what I'm doing. She's just not sure where this is going to go.

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SD 2 - What if we start with a short prayer and then have a bit of silence. You can break the silence when you are ready speak. Sound good?	This person is Christian and in early conversations said she'd like to begin our Sessions with prayer. Because we are still early in our relationship together, I want to be clear about how the silence is broken. (My first director never explained this to me and I didn't understand what was suppose to happen. - SO am I projecting this onto Cindy?)	Pretty competent despite all			
D 2 - That would be good.	Whew! Well, at least she understood me.	Feeling better about this.			

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SD 3 - Come, Spirit! Be with Cindy and me as we spend time together just being with whatever is. Amen.	Taking some words from 11/14 class thinking this reminds both of us what we are about. Used Spirit rather than God because it seems to carry less assumptions around gender and other things. I'm still getting to know the way Cindy addresses God.	I really want to feel and trust the Spirit to show up.	Head bowed. Hands open on knees, both feet on floor.	Mimics mine	The Spirit really is in this place with us.

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<p>D 3 - Well, I have this question that's been in my mind for a while: When we love someone, do we love them the way they want to be loved, or the way we would like to be loved.</p> <p>You know that scripture? Love your neighbor as yourself, right?</p> <p>Well, that where I'm coming from.</p> <p>Do you love your neighbor like yourself or like themselves . . . I'm not sure that's proper English, but you understand.</p>	<p>That is an interesting question.</p>	<p>This is kinda fun.</p>	<p>Sinking into more comfortable pose - keeping my face interested, my arms open.</p>	<p>Gesticulating a bit as she asks the questions. She got a twinkle in her eye!</p>	<p>There's a reason this question has come up.</p>
<p>SD 4 - Hmm. . . well, I'm very interested, what's your answer to that question Cindy?!</p>	<p>This is interesting. I better be careful or I'll start talking theology to her like she's a friend. This is her time, not mine.</p>	<p>Careful!</p>	<p>Can't help but smile</p> <p>Okay now I'm using my hands to talk too.</p>	<p>She's smiling a bit too.</p>	

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D 4 - Well, I think, of course, that when you love someone you do a bit of both. But also think that when you start out you mostly do things you think you would like because you don't know them very well and so you project a bit. But! As you get to know them better you start to do more things that you know they would like (within reason, of course) because you love them, you know?	Makes sense to me.				
When I think about me and Robert though, I feel confused about it. If I only do what makes him happy and then he turns around does those same things back to me because maybe he thinks they are the the things I like, but, they aren't necessarily the things that I find most loving; well how will he ever know what I find is loving. I mean we kind of are telling each other what we like when we do something for each other. At least that is how I read it when he does things for me. I think "that's something he likes" so I'll mirror it back to him.	Here's the why she's asking. It's about what's going on with her relationship with Robert - her boyfriend of 2 years. DON'T problem-solve!!				Something is not going well from Cindy's perspective

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SD 5 - How to love another person and be loved back is confusing. So what is the real source of the confusion do you think?	What's really underneath all this chaos? (Is she a 4?)				
D 5 - I guess I just don't know if Robert really understands me. I work so hard at reading him. Sometimes, I'm not sure if he even really notices me and what makes me happy. It feels like I keep him so content, he just assumes I'm happy too.	Have they talked about this? Why would it be hard to talk about this? Is Cindy advocating for herself in this relationship? Is the giving mutual in this relationship?	A bit protective of Cindy.		Looking down more. Not making eye contact.	This happens a lot for women.
SD 6 - Sometimes you feel unnoticed.	I put the sometimes in there to keep her from getting too scared.	Sad.			She loves Robert deeply. She's doing a lot to keep him happy, but is losing some of her own happiness in it.
D 6 - I do.	That's a big admission.			Nods. Voice is quiet.	
SD 7 - Want to talk about those times?	Be gentle with this one!				This is close to the nerve of something.

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D 7 - Well, like last week, it's really important to me that we check in with each other before going to bed. Robert told me he'd call, but he didn't until I was already asleep. He knows I go to bed at 10 p.m. but he didn't call until 10:30. He woke me up. I mean he met the letter of the request but he certainly didn't factor me into the equation.	She's choosing an easy example maybe? That's okay. Maybe it really is this easy. Maybe not. Ready for whatever.				
SD 8 - You didn't get factored into Robert's love equation. Have you had experiences before of being loved in this way?	I'm wondering if this thing has roots. Let's look into the past!				

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D 8 - Good question. My parents are divorced. I mostly lived with my mom and it often felt like my dad would show up and want “his time” with me regardless of what was happening in my life. He wouldn’t call ahead and check or anything. It was like I was supposed to be at his disposal.	This does have roots!	Sad	Concern on my face.		We could talk about this for a while as she remembers.
Now that I think of it, I have some friends who can be like that too.	And more roots . . .				
I mean sometimes it’s okay, you know, but sometimes I just wish they’d ask before they assume.	Humans aren’t perfect readers of one another.				
I hope I don’t do that to others.	We’re all guilty of this.				

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SD 9 - That's a big thing you've noticed, Cindy . . . about your dad and friends and even about yourself. Would you like to take some time silent time to listen to what the Spirit might be saying to us about	(I'm thinking I'm much better at this on paper in a "fake verbatim" than I would be in person!. . .) There are a lot of ways this could go. Some quite might let the Spirit help us choose a direction.				
D 9 - Okay.					
SD 10 - You tell me when you're ready to start again.	Where will this go?	Uncertain	Prayer posture as before.	As before	This could put God back in the picture . . . or not.
D 10 - Do you think God loves us the way we want to be loved or the way he wants to love us?	Well this is starting to get somewhere! (Fun to write my own ending! 😊)				

Reflections: I really like this exercise. It allowed me to try my hand at being my best Spiritual Director self based on what I've learned up to this point. I'm an imaginative person and so this helps me see how I might imagine the lessons we've learned thus far going. (I do similar imaginative exercises in preparing for worship.) Realistically, at this point, I don't think I could trust myself to be half this good in real life yet. And I'm definitely nervous about the mistakes the class will find I've made even within this "best case scenario" where I had so much control. It's vulnerable. BUT here's to leaning in and learning more!