

Charlotte Spirituality Center
Spiritual Direction Verbatim

Director: Dale Hathaway

Directee: Karen

Date of Session: Feb.

Session # _2

Session Location: Anderson Park, Tarpon Springs, FL

Introduction: *K is a member of our parish for the past few years (about the same time we have been there). We opened with this reading from Thomas Merton:*

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following Your Will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

As we were walking to the table beside the water, I talked about how I had experienced the space at the park as a peaceful and reflective place to talk.

Dialogue	Thoughts of Director	Feelings of Director	Body Response in Director	Body Response in Directee	Intuition
D 1 - That does hit home for me. You know my anxiety has quieted down, even as the world around us has got absurdly worse.	She seemed quick to let me know that she had "moved on" from out last session when she was particular anxious and asking things like, "Should you move out of the country?"			She sort of leaned into the conversation, seemingly eager to talk about what was going on within her.	
SD 1 - How are you today?					
D 1 - You know, I've found some kind of calm about what I am supposed to be doing right now. I have accepted that certain things are possible now that didn't used to be.	Both a practical observation, as well as a recognition of the web of connections that she has.				We had left the last session with her asking the question about what she should do in response to the political/cultural milieu.

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SD 2 - How did you get there?					
D 2 - I bought the house with my daughter; so I don't have the disposable income I used to have. Her two boys require time. The older one [in middle school] is pretty independent, but the younger one [toddler] requires me to be there when my daughter has to work.	Much of this she has shared before, as if she was rehearsing it for herself, to keep it in focus.				
SD 3 - Children require a lot of our attention, no question.					
D 3 - I realize that I'm not free to move out of the country the way I used to be. And the places that I know, Ecuador, Canada, England, are going through their own transitions. It's not the same any more. But then I just can't shake the image of the people that our government flew to India in shackles. In shackles!				She had tears in her eyes and had trouble speaking for a few moments.	
SD 4 - It's horrible, isn't it.					
D 4 - I realize that we need to do something about so many illegals in the country, but we have to be able to do it in a more humane way.					

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SD 5 - You used the word "illegal", but I know you're aware that they aren't illegal. They are just people. They may be undocumented, and that may be technically illegal.			Throughout our session I felt the surrounding area to be conducive to trust and good conversation.	Throughout she seemed glad to be there, but kind of energized to "get somewhere" with it.	She is clearly a delightful "directee", being broadly experienced, traveled, educated, and compassionate.
D 5 - You're so right. It's really a minor thing and our response is to send them as prisoners to Guantanamo.					
SD 6 - You have said that since our last conversation you have made progress in accepting what you can and can't do -- at least to be responsible to the people that you care about. In the past I have found it helpful when I am faced with making decisions to put my options down on paper. It's as if the writing down leads to clarification about who would be impacted and what feels like the right thing to do.	In our training we had recently talked about Ignatian Discernment and I was wracking my brain to think of what we had talked about in our training and about how to apply it in this circumstance.	Wondering whether I was being too directive.			She seemed interested and receptive to the suggestions for seeking clarity for herself.

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D 6 - Yes, that's right. I have done that too. That's a good idea. My older grandson is so tall, but he's also so gentle and considerate. I can talk to him about what's going on in the country. The toddler, well, he'll just accept whatever I model for him.					
SD 7 - Just being honest with them is something important. Remember when you used the word "illegal" earlier. Just to be careful with our language is a significant act.				This is where she seemed startled and thoughtful, absorbing the possibilities of what was just said.	
D 7 - I really resonate with the whole language idea we've talked about. I don't think I've told you that my major in college was "Rhetoric."	I was pleased that she responded positively, but a little surprised at the same time.			She seemed to relax and appeared reflective as she was thinking about the possibility of language-use being part of "the resistance."	

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SD 8 - Little things can have such a big impact. Keeping confidences, for example. It breeds trust and that can be healing. (I told her about how as a priest I had made a solemn promise to myself to try to be radically honest, not speaking in platitudes or saying things that I didn't really believe.)	This felt like an insight for myself as well as possibly something important to K.				
D 8 - I have really moved from trying to understand and figure things out inwardly to trying to figure out what to do. I am moving from knowing to doing. I'm really going to think about what you've said about language.	As we closed our time together we agreed that moving from "knowing" to "doing" was where she was at this moment				

Reflections:

Within a few days I forwarded K. an email from the parish priest titled "New source of encouragement". There was a link to a video titled "How to win the battle of ideas." My message to her was:

Peter just sent this to Mary Pat and me. Apart from its apparent value -- which seems considerable to me -- I was struck by how it dovetailed with the core of our conversation today -- having to do with language and rhetoric. In effect it seems to rephrase some of what we concluded with to something like, "Every Time we tell the truth -- "model truth-telling" -- in the face of an offensive culture of lying -- we are striking a blow against that oppressive culture. Thought you would appreciate it. Shalom.

She responded back, writing:

Dialogue

Thoughts of Director

Feelings of Director

**Body Response
in Director**

**Body Response
in Directee**

Intuition

Dale, I listened to this and started thinking blog or podcast or vlog. . . When I was paged from the bath to run interference from the 3 year old while daughter cooks dinner. I do need to free up my time and space. . .