﻿What's your name?

Tyler.

I'm Anthony.

Hi.

Hey. Nice to meet you.

Nice to meet you too.

So, you don't believe?

I don't believe in God, no.

Did you ever?

Umm... At one point I did, but then I realized it was just my security blanket, I guess.

Hmm. Yeah. Okay.

Um..I think that religion is for people who are insecure, who need guidance. Um…If you don't have guidance, I guess you can...

You feel like it's like a comfort..blanket [Yeah], like a comforter? Or something like that? Yeah.

I do. [Yeah] I think that people use it..to make themselves feel better. Like if someone dies, they pray to God. [Yeah] If..um..they..it gets as ridiculous as, "I need help with test answers!" [@@@] Like.. I pray to God He's give me the strength to..ah..pass this test!" But I think it's just..something that they believe in to get through the day.

Do you think it's an illusion?

I do. I do think religion is [Yeah] an illusion.

Why do you think people..I guess..yeah..Why do you think people made it up? Just ‘cuz it makes them feel good? [Yeah.]

It makes them feel better... Yeah. about everything that happens. Us as humans, we need something to explain everything, and if we don't have that explanation, we're just going to make something up. Is what I think.

Yeah, you're awesome. Um,was it difficult for you to discard? Did you believe at some point, like when you were a kid?

No, actually um one of my friends was in a bad car accident and she had died.

I'm sorry to hear that.

It's OK. We all got together and, um..it..we all started praying, and at that time it just felt right, but then I realized it was really just, like a, a comfort kind of thing, you know, like? After that, I was like, "Who was I even talking to?"

Now, a lot of believers that maybe will listen to this, or were walking by they'd say, "Well, Tyler. You're just mistaken, you know." "You're lashing out at God because your friend died." What would you say?..I’m just.. have you ever heard that?

No.

No?

No, I haven't heard that, I just...

If a believer said, you know, "One of the reasons why you, you've discarded your belief in God is because of your friend's passing." What would you think or say about it?

Umm... I would say that's not true. Like I don’t..I just don't believe. I don't think it’s done anything for me. Even if I did believe, it..I think things would still be going as they are. I believe in Karma. [Hmm.] And I believe in things like, it just happens for a reason, but I don't need an explanation for that.

Do you really..you really..So I want to understand..you believe that if you do something good, it will inevitably come back and...[Yeah.] That's sort of my understanding of Karma.

Yeah.

Really.[yeah] Hmm..[yeah]

And if you do something bad, chances are something bad is going to happen to you.

How would you know that, that actually is happening?

Umm... I mean like, personal experience. You know, if you...Ahm..Let's think.

Can you maybe think of an example where you've, you’ve...

I'm trying; I’m trying.

Um, You hold the door open for someone...[Gotcha.]and then later on, someone holds a door open for you. I dunno.

And right [just little stuff like that] then and there, you believe that, ah, the previous action, was a re-[it has something] necessitated the subsequent one.

Yeah. [Okay.] I think if people see you doing something good, they'll be more..open to doing something good too.

I think that there's a little truth to that. Like, yeah, if someone was to observe you being nice, then they might do something nice in return. [Yeah.]But in, in the example you gave, you opening a door for somebody, and then immediately seeing the reward of that...

Maybe not immediately seeing the reward for that [Okay, yeah], but maybe sometime later on. I don't know. I think it's just like a...continuous cycle.

Really?...Is there something governing that "cosmic justice", so that people that open doors for others [@@@] get rewarded?

Mmm..No. I don't think it... I think it's just... It's just Karma. It's just the..notion of Karma.

What would you accept, Tyler, to get you to...Um, excuse me for a sec. What would you accept to get you to..get rid of your understanding or acceptance of Karma? Have you ever considered that?

Umm...

What would have to happen?

….Well, it's not that I... like, I believe in Karma, but I know that bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. So... I don't know.

Is, is there, is there..Is there nothing that you would accept to get you to..be convinced that your belief in Karma was..mistaken in some way?

No.

Really?

It just happens.

If something is not falsifiable, like my, I don’t know, my acceptance of evolution, right?...

Right.

If that wasn't falsifiable, I'd get rid of my understanding of it. [Yeah.] But if I would say there is nothing I would ever accept to change my view on it, I might go the rest of my life thinking something is true when it's not.

Right.

Is it likely or possible that your, your acceptance of Karma could fall in that same category, where if you're not open to identifying what you would accept to change your position on it...

…I don't think that there is any way to..falsify Karma. I don't think there is any way to falsify..anything that has to do with, like religion, or some beliefs, I think just, no one has the answers. I don't think there is an answer. I don't think there is any way to say [Yeah.], "No, that's not real." "That doesn't exist."

If something is not falsifiable, is it worth maintaining the belief in it?

Um, I guess to each #is their own. Like, like religion, I guess Karma keeps me, keeps me going, you know.

Is Karma a blanket for you? Do you feel like you need to have Karma in your life, like a, like a Muslim might need Islam, or a Christian [I think]...

I think Karma... in some ways, like religion, keeps me from..doing bad things, I guess, like, as like as a sin. But then again, I think it, I don't know, I think it's different, too.

Do you, do you... this is fascinating..um..[@@@] Just maybe one more minute. Do you feel like Karma is keeping you in check; and making you..ah..keeping you from becoming a bad person?

I mean, every now and then, yeah, I think. Having the belief of Karma in the back of my head keeps me from doing some stuff that I probably wouldn't normally do.

Wow… This is really interesting, it’s really interesting. Did you develop the Karma to replace the belief in the God?

No, I think I always..had a belief of Karma. Like, my Mom had taught me that, what comes around goes around, since I was very little, so..um..She is a religious person, and she always tried to, like, make me go to church, but I never really caught onto it, so I guess it didn't really replace it, it just was there.

If you had a friend that was, like, walking in one of the doors back here, and there was a really slow-moving pregnant woman, and he just cuts her off, right? he doesn't open the door for her because he's late for a class, and then later that evening, let’s say, he was, say, involved in a terrible car accident, and passes away. Would you? What would you do? Would you try to assign a meaning to that? To your previous observation, or would you think that there is no relationship?

Umm... I definitely don't think that death and not holding a door open for someone...

There's some balance?

I mean, yeah. I don't think you're going to die if you don't hold the door open for someone, I definitely don't think, ah...

Let's scale it down, let's say that, later that evening he trips and stubs his toe.

Yeah. I mean, I think that has some relation. How would you say you know that is what happened? That Karma interceded and made sure that he was punished in that manner?

Well I don't know. No one knows that Karma did that. But my belief and understanding of Karma is that, ah, what comes around goes around.

You believe it.

I do believe that.

Yet there is nothing you would accept to get rid of that belief.

No.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

I really appreciate it.

No problem.

Take care.