

Losing My Religion

Deconstructing
Dogmatic Religious
Beliefs

Michael G Love

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by

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Deconstructing Dogmatic Religious Beliefs

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Introduction

When do you know that you have lost your religion? Is it when you stop attending services on a regular basis? Is it when you no longer see yourself as part of a congregation? Have you lost your religion when you feel that the denomination that you were a part of is no longer a major influence in your life? Do their teachings no longer make sense to you? You may no longer participate in their rituals and their dogma may no longer resonate with you, but are you still holding on to some part of that experience?

What about your beliefs? What about your beliefs about who you are and why you are here? What about your beliefs about God and the creation of the world we live in? I suggest that you are not truly free of the control of your former religion until you have replaced those beliefs that you probably learned as a small child with new beliefs that resonate with the person you are today. How can you really feel free if you are still carrying around those old beliefs?

Our beliefs directly influence our emotions. Our senses are constantly feeding data to our brain for interpretation. What separates danger from safety? It is the interpretation we give to the sensory data based on our beliefs. Is a policeman safe or is he dangerous? What is your belief? Are black snakes dangerous or safe? Again, it depends on your belief. When our religion teaches us that we are sinners and we need to be forgiven and saved, it is hard to have high self-esteem.

We often carry unresolved emotions in our physical body, and they can be disruptive to the normal functioning of that particular area of the body. Particularly painful emotions like trauma often require the help of trained professionals to process. Dealing with that level of emotional stress is beyond the scope of this document. If you feel like you need help dealing with religious trauma, then please seek the help of a trained professional.

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The major religions of the world are enshrined in limiting beliefs about who and what we are.

Humans are not broken. We don't need to be fixed. We are not victims of someone's action who lived thousands of years ago. We don't need to be saved. Those were teachings for other times.

You are more than you think you are. Using our human minds, we will never be able to fully understand the reality of our greatness. That's not really a problem. All we need to do is be willing to open our imaginations to believe that we are more than we have been led to believe.

We live in a modern age with tools that are available to answer some of the oldest questions known to mankind. We know more about our planet and how it interacts with our solar system and our galaxy. We understand more about the universe and the energy that is contained in it. And yet there are still some myths that are widely believed. For example, the concept of heaven and hell is pretty well established. But where are they? We have seen above the clouds and heaven is nowhere to be found. The same is true for hell. Who really believes that it is under the ground?

Here is another example of old thinking. Modern medicine often tends to view our bodies as being similar to machines. Parts wear out and break. Disease can strike anyone seemly at any time and without warning. The connection between our minds and our bodies is still not widely recognized. Our bodies are not weak and frail, and they do not let us down. They don't betray us with sickness and disease. On the contrary, it is often we who let down our bodies. Our lifestyle choices are often the direct causes of our illness. But that is not what we have been led to believe.

If you really want to be free from the dogmatic beliefs that modern religions use to control their followers, then you need to embrace new beliefs about who you are and why you are here. You need to embrace new beliefs about the universe, good and evil, heaven and hell, and your fellow man. We are all in this together.

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I have put this short document together to assist those who have kept questioning their religious beliefs to themselves for far too long. You are not alone. Millions of us have done what you are doing right now, and millions are questioning right now just as you are. The problem is that so many think they are alone. You are not alone, and you can find help and support as you move through this part of your journey.

I see life as a journey. Think of all the different stages of your life and the challenges each one has brought. They are really learning experiences that assist you in moving on to the next stage. We start out as infants and grow into inquisitive children. We advance into our teenage years where we really begin to define who we are. Then comes the young adult years when we seek out relationships and careers. As adults we can take on the roles of husband or wife, father or mother. I am going to suggest that there is a stage as an older adult, perhaps somewhere in the late-40s to mid-50s when the kids have left the house, when you have the opportunity to become reacquainted with your spouse. This can be a time of significant change. And then we have the senior years which seems to be an expanding stage since people are living longer.

Each one of these stages of the journey offers unique life experiences. The search for personal religious truths may begin at any age. For me, it began during my teenage years. But then it was put on hold for a long period of time and not taken up again until my older adult stage. Many individuals are good with their beliefs until somewhere in the middle of their journey. Every person has their own timetable. Some never question their religious beliefs and that is fine. Maybe you have put the search for religious answers on hold like I did? This just might provide the incentive you need to get back at it.

Let me share with you some of my personal experiences that led me to lose my religion. I am happy to report that my early childhood religious beliefs have been replaced by spiritual beliefs. I am confident that your journey can result in new spiritual beliefs that resolve your religious doubts. I hope that you find some encouragement in the remainder of this booklet. Feel free to skip over this next part if you have heard similar personal stories before.

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There are many parents who think that raising their children in the religion that they were raised in is a good idea. I am not one of them. I never looked at being raised in my parent's religion as a gift. It was many things, but I never saw it as a blessing. I remember it starting out alright, but things got weird at a pretty early age. I guess I should mention that I was raised Catholic in the 1950s and 1960s. I was done with Catholicism by the time I graduated high school in 1968.

Catholics love ritual. I went to Catholic schools all my life, all the way through to college. When I started grade school, the entire school went to Mass every school day. And it was in Latin. The nuns marched us into and out of church every morning. Then there was Sunday Mass with the family. All of us would pile into the family car and drive to church. During mass we were expected to receive communion. This required going to confession on a regular basis. More ritual. When I was old enough, I became an altar boy just like my two older brothers. This was a chance to see what goes on behind the altar. I think the best part of being an altar boy was being pulled out of class to serve Mass for funerals that were held during the week. There are many more rituals like Christmas, Easter, and Lent that I won't bore you with.

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I attended an all-boys Catholic High School that was founded by the Jesuits. The Jesuits are an interesting order of Priests. The order was founded in 1534 as a missionary order. In modern times, they seem to be more focused on teaching. In my freshman year, my homeroom class was Latin and it was taught by an older priest who most often showed up with a hangover and breath that smelled like alcohol and tobacco. Since this was basically a pre-college school, the Jesuits prided themselves on teaching young men how to think for themselves. I am forever grateful to them for that gift. It turned out to be a double-edged sword, however. By the time I graduated from high school, I had lost my religion.

When I graduated from high school, I was filled with questions about the meaning of life and my purpose for being here in this third dimension. I hoped college would open up a brand new well spring of information for me to tap into. Studying the different philosophers didn't help. Reading about the world's religions didn't provide the answers. Diving into psychology didn't answer my questions about life's purpose and meaning. None of this information resonated with me on a personal level.

In the meantime, life happened. I got married, became a father, took a full-time job, and became a part-time student. No longer having the time and energy to focus on the meaning of life, I put my quest for answers on the back burner. And it stayed there for a long time. As our children were born, we decided not to impose upon them the religion that their parents were raised in. Their mother was also raised as a Catholic. We decided it was best for them to make up their own minds about religion.

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Moving forward a couple of decades, I found myself divorced and working at a new job in a new city. I became good friends with one of my coworkers who was about my same age and also single. When I was in town and not travelling, we would generally have lunch together. One day he revealed that he was a metaphysician. I asked him what the heck that was and he said he studied things that were above physics. When I asked him for an example, he said, "Well like reincarnation. You know you pick your parents before birth." I told him he was wrong, and I set out to prove that he was wrong. We continued the conversation for several months and in the end, I started to agree with him. That job turned out to be my last corporate job.

I was so taken with all this new age thinking, that I opened a wellness center that featured alternative healing modalities as well as seminars and workshops focused on new age thought. Although that facility was only in operation for three years, I became deeply interested in personally learning alternative healing modalities. I moved through several different modalities until I arrived at Craniosacral Therapy.

Somato Emotional Release is a particular focus within Upledger Craniosacral Therapy. Helping individuals release emotions that are trapped in their bodies became a major interest for me. I worked for many years one on one with individuals helping them to connect with the emotions trapped in their bodies and then releasing them. Then covid hit and that work became more difficult.

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More recently, I became aware of the growing trend of individuals describing themselves as non-religious. I began to research this movement away from traditional religion. This is often referred to as Deconstruction and Reconstruction. As I was diving deeper into this trend, I came across the role of a Spiritual Director. A non-religious Spiritual Director accompanies individuals who are deconstructing. We walk beside individuals on their journey to provide encouragement and support. We act as a resource to help individuals find their own way. In September of 2023, I enrolled in an eighteen-month program through Jim Palmer's Center for Non-religious Spirituality to become a certified non-religious Spiritual Director. I'm working one on one with individuals again, but this time it is mostly over Zoom. One of the few benefits of the covid experience was that people became more comfortable with connecting over the internet.

In working with individuals who are deconstructing their own rigid religious beliefs, I often am reminded of the ones that gave me the most trouble when I was younger. I discuss a few of them below.

Those Bothersome Religious Beliefs

Let's begin to examine those religious beliefs that you may still be carrying with you. Even though you may think differently about some of them now, you may still have beliefs that are in conflict with your current thinking and this can lead to some inner turmoil.

Here is a partial list of the issues I had with my religion at the time.

1. Sin. The concept of sin was a big problem for me. It started out with making my first confession at the age of seven. The church taught us what sin was. It was a transgression against the Ten Commandments. As a seven-year-old, I wasn't killing anyone. I wasn't coveting my neighbor's wife. You get the point. I felt like I was making things up in order to be forgiven. Sure, I may have said I didn't do something that I had actually done because I didn't want to get punished, but was that a sin against God? I may have disobeyed my mother and taken a cookie when she told me it was too close to dinner. Again, did I need to be forgiven for being a kid who was hungry? Then when I learned that we all had original sin because of Adam and Eve and we needed to be forgiven because of that, well that made no sense to me.
- 2.
3. Heaven and Hell. Reward or punishment. In either case, it is for all eternity. All eternity is a pretty long time, longer than I can even imagine. I wonder where this notion of one or the other started. The good go to heaven and the bad go to hell. The decision maker is of course God. Most of us are not saints and most of us do not follow the devil. There seems to me to be this really large gray area where you are not sure if you have been good enough. We have all made mistakes, but are they enough to send us the wrong way? I think most people who believe in heaven and hell are afraid of the judgment day.

Everyone knows that securing a place in heaven is better than the alternative. At the same time, does singing the eternal praises of God seem a little too monotonous? Isn't there other stuff to do in heaven? While this may seem to be a very simplistic conceptualization of the afterlife, this is how I remember initially learning about it. From the very beginning of my understanding of heaven and hell, I had some questions about the details. I never received satisfying answers to those questions.

There is also a practical aspect to the question of heaven and hell. Where are they? I suspect that two thousand years ago it was easier to tell people that heaven was above the clouds and hell was in the earth somewhere. But these days? You most likely have personally been above the clouds in an airplane. I have and I didn't see heaven up there. We have even seen pictures of the earth from the moon and there is no sign of heaven. Again, this may be simplistic but if they exist, where are they?

3. Judgment. This is a really big deal. I mentioned it earlier when I discussed the concepts of heaven and hell. Judgement day is a day that I think many believers fear. Does it seem reasonable that the entire remainder of our existence, presumably for all eternity, is determined by a single human lifetime? It is not easy being human. Many of us experience difficult periods during our lifetimes. Many of us are born with extenuating circumstances whether in relation to our physical bodies or in relation to the circumstances of the family and culture that we were born into. How do you resolve the gross inequities of a child born into wealth in a first world country and another born into poverty in a third world country? Or a child born healthy, and another born with a congenital health condition? There are of course many more examples of different levels of adversity that any given individual can experience during their lifetime. If there is only one human experience before our judgment, then how is any of this fair?

One of the most harmful human characteristics that most of us learn is judgment. We judge ourselves and we judgment others. The biggest problem that I have with human judgment is that we never know the full story when it comes to others. We may see a certain individual behaving in a certain way and observe that the behavior is harmful to themselves or perhaps others, but we don't know the whole story. We don't know the motivation behind the actions. I believe we would all be better off if we lost the judgment and instead offered compassion both to ourselves and to others.

4. Reincarnation. Reincarnation is a concept that I personally struggled with for many years.

Some say that reincarnation was part of the early Christian doctrine. They maintain that it was removed somewhere way back when. What I know is that many of the world's major religions subscribe to this concept. Here is what I currently think about reincarnation.

Incarnation means embodied in human form. So, we can agree that all of us living on the planet today are incarnated in human form. If you believe that your life continues in some form after your human death, then the only thing that may be in dispute is how many times do we enter into human form. If we do it more than once, then that is the definition of reincarnation.

The preceding topics of sin, heaven and hell, and judgment are like cracks in the dam for me. When I accepted the validity of reincarnation, the dam burst. There are so many other considerations regarding the belief in reincarnation that come with it. If we incarnate more than once, is there purpose in each incarnation? If there is, how do we find out what that purpose is? What really happens when we die? If our true home is not in heaven or hell, where and what is it? Are we free to do whatever we choose to do including harm ourselves and others without any consequences?

Looking at the short list of concepts that I have mentioned above, I hope you see why I consider the belief in reincarnation similar to bursting the dam or opening the flood gates. There is so much more that is connected to reincarnation. The good news is that not all of these need to be addressed at the same time. You can pace yourself and deal with them in whichever order you choose.

5. Jesus. If you were raised in any of the Christian traditions, Jesus is probably the central figure of your faith. The story of his life contains the fundamental beliefs of the Christian religions. It is not my intention to try to offer my opinion about Jesus. I am simply asking if you still believe in these basic teaching about Jesus. Let's start with the Son of God belief. Do you believe that Jesus is more a part of God than you or I? Do you believe that he rose from the dead? Do you believe that his death redeemed us of our sins? Is he indeed the savior? I am of the opinion that these beliefs are the bedrock of Christianity.

What happens if you start to question any of these beliefs? Does that make you a bad Christian? I don't know. Is it permitted to even question them at all? Some would answer yes, and others would answer no. What do you think? You are the only person who knows your personal beliefs and you are the only person that has to live with those beliefs. I think that we all need beliefs that make sense. We need to own our beliefs. I find life to be much more peaceful when your beliefs are your own.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a short list of religious beliefs that you may be rethinking. There are many more beliefs related to Christianity than I have listed. If you are working through any of the ones I have mentioned, or any other ones that I haven't mentioned, you will probably find yourself dealing with some unforeseen consequences of your search for answers.

Starting the Journey

As you begin to examine your religious beliefs, you might encounter some unforeseen consequences that are a result of your inquiries. Here are some of the things to watch out for.

Loneliness – As you begin to question your religious beliefs, you might find that those closest to you, family and friends, are not comfortable having open discussions about their faith. It may become harder and harder to find someone who is willing to have a serious discussion with you. This can lead to a sense of frustration and loneliness. It is easy to find individuals who follow the crowd, but that is not what you are currently doing. You will probably need to get creative to find others who are on the same type of journey as you. When it is difficult to connect with others who are going through the same thing that you are going through, it is easy to feel that you are the only one doing it. This can even lead you to question if you are doing the right thing. Rest assured, millions of individuals have been down this same road.

Loss of community – This happens when you no longer actively participate in regular religious services. If you decide that going to church on Sunday morning is no longer your thing, then what is the alternative? Many individuals believe that there is some congregation out there that is better suited to them. The trick, of course, is finding that new community. We often receive invitations from friends and loved ones to visit their church because theirs is different only to discover that it really isn't that different.

Loss of community is a real challenge. My first suggestion is to attempt to find community in a non-religious group. Perhaps in a shared hobby like hiking, or sailing, or tennis, or golf. There are so many hobbies that actively promote community. I have been a beekeeper for over ten years now and find beekeepers to be a very active community. We even have our own beekeeping school. Use your imagination. Think outside the box. You can even join online communities.

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Loss of Meaning – If you are leaving a faith-based community that provided you with the source of meaning in your life, something like God has a plan for you, you may find that you have lost that meaning. Fear not. Many other individuals have left their faith-based communities and have found new meaning in their lives. And this new meaning often feels more genuine and more rewarding. As you focus more on yourself, you will find many personal relationships that can provide meaning in your life. As you explore the richness of your own self, you may discover activities that provide special meaning. You may even wind up choosing a different career path that brings more meaning into your life.

Sadness – One of the feelings that you might be experiencing while questioning your religious beliefs is sadness. When we decide to let go of something, for example, beliefs that we have held for so long, we often feel a sense of loss even if they are in some way holding us back or otherwise restricting us. This is understandable. Our beliefs are part of our personal identity. They help to define who we are. That is why it is better to replace old beliefs with new ones rather than just letting go of the old beliefs. The new beliefs help us to create a new and hopefully improved personal identity because they more accurately represent who we are now.

We may also feel a certain sadness with leaving the religion of our parents. It may seem in some way to be disrespectful especially if they still firmly hold those religious beliefs. If there is one message that has been repeated over and over in our current culture it is to thy own self be true. We can't please other people all the time. It is simply impossible, and it also makes no sense. If your parents can't support you in being who you are, then that is their issue and not yours. Still, that feeling of changing your religious beliefs can feel a little bit disrespectful. Respect their beliefs and hopefully they will respect yours.

Religious Trauma – Psychologists are beginning to realize that many individuals have been hurt by toxic religious experiences. When the experiences are frequent and occur over a long period of time, they can lead to religious trauma. Religious trauma is treated as a form of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). Trauma of any kind is very difficult to work through by yourself. If you feel that your religious experiences have led to personal trauma, then seek out professional help from a psychologist or other mental health professional who has experience in treating religious trauma.

Fear of Change – There are those who embrace change. And there are others who resist change. I don't know if it is fair to categorize those who resist change as being afraid of change. I am very sure that fear of change exists. Even those who embrace change can still feel a certain amount of fear of change. So, what is it about change that causes so many of us to have anxiety?

There are few things in this world that don't change. Many of us live in climates that have four seasons. Each season brings change. Individuals change day by day. Perhaps the change is not noticeable to most, but it still happens. How much change does a human body experience during the course of a lifetime? We change our work, our relationships, our residences, our cars, our clothes, etc. What don't we change? And yet there still remains a fear of change. There must be more to this, but I honestly don't know what it is.

When you start to question your religious beliefs, things will change. Friendships will change. Relationships with relatives will change. Spousal relationships could possibly change. Your life goals may change. What you consider to be important in life might change. That is a lot of potential change. Will all these changes make you happier? Will all these changes make you a better human being? Will all of these changes make life more meaningful for you? The potential is there for all of that. Is it worth it to push through any level of fear of change that you may be feeling to achieve any of these goals? Only you can answer that for yourself. My answer is a resounding yes!

New Spiritual Insights

I have discussed some of my early religious beliefs that led me to question the religion that I was raised in. It is a rather short list, but I think it gives a clear indication of the concepts that I was wrestling with at the time. Believe me, there were plenty of other issues. Then I mentioned some of the issues that came up for me while I was going through that questioning. Again, this is a rather short list, but covers some of the bigger issues.

Let's move forward and discuss some of the new insights that you are likely to encounter as you continue your journey. I can't predict the order in which you might encounter these insights. It really depends on what interests you most. The insights that I will present here are spiritual insights. They are not presented as answers to specific religious questions. Each of the major religions has their own dogma and sacred teachings that go along with their rituals. It is not my intention to comment on any of those. I am interested in spiritual issues which I believe are not attached to specific religions.

The opinions that I will present here are just that, opinions. I am not trying to convince you that they are truer than your beliefs. I am simply offering them as food for thought. Some may sound intriguing while others may make no sense at all. Remember, I disputed the entire notion of reincarnation when it was first presented. Now I have a different understanding of it.

Each one of these insights fits together with the others like pieces of a puzzle. Each insight stands on its own, but it also has connections with the others. The big picture may be fuzzy at the beginning, but as you read through each successive insight, the picture becomes that much clearer. You are the artist here. If one of the insights you read here doesn't bring clarity, then feel free to plug in your own insight. This is your work of art.

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Consciousness – The first insight that I would like to offer for your consideration is consciousness. Humans have a very limited understanding of consciousness. We tend to view consciousness through our human lens. We are aware of our human consciousness and do not perceive any other form of consciousness as being as evolved as our own. When I think about consciousness, I think about self-expression. Humans certainly have self-expression, but do our pets, and our plants, and all the other animals have self-expression? I think they do.

I like to define self-expression as the ability to reveal one's true nature. There are different ways in which this identity can be expressed. Humans can express their true nature through a variety of avenues. We have all the arts, music, dance, song, paintings, poetry, etc. We have all the emotions, love, sorrow, joy, etc. We have causes that we can dedicate our careers to. These are just a few of the ways that we express our human nature. Animals express their nature through their actions. We have pets that express emotions. What about a honeybee? Does it express its true nature? I would say absolutely! Bees have a hive mentality, and they gladly support and protect the hive. Is bee consciousness different than human consciousness? Of course, it is. But can it still fit our definition of self-expression? I think it can.

Let's go deeper. Do things that are very small have consciousness? Do molecules and atoms have consciousness? Even more basic than that, does energy itself have consciousness? Let's go in the other direction. Do large objects have consciousness? Does our planet possess consciousness? How about the other planets and the sun? Does a solar system possess consciousness? How about galaxies? There are some scientists who suggest that consciousness permeates the entire universe. Does everything have consciousness? Think about that for a moment. What if everything is connected through consciousness?

If this notion of consciousness as self-expression is new to you, take some time and think about what makes sense to you. Are some parts of this easier to believe than other parts? Use your imagination and see where it takes you. Such an expanded understanding of consciousness leads us to a consideration of connection.

Connection – Believing that everything is connected through consciousness may be too big of a leap for most people. Let's take a step back and start with some simple connections that are perhaps easier to think about. We all have a very personal connection to our human body. Some of us try to ignore that connection and act as if it doesn't exist, but it does. The more we acknowledge that connection, the better it is for all concerned. Ignoring the well-being of our body never turns out well.

You might be surprised to learn that the body has multiple levels of consciousness. I'm sure you will agree that the human body is very complex. There are countless different processes going on all simultaneously. As researchers better understand the processes within a single cell, the complexities of the body become more and more mind -blowing. The body has developed different levels of consciousness to help keep track of all the activity. There are certain alternative healing modalities that actively work with these different levels of consciousness within the body. I am trained in Craniosacral Therapy, and I would often work with different levels of consciousness during a client session. The results can be truly remarkable.

Let's consider our connection to our family, and friends, and significant others. All of these connections are meaningful. Unfortunately, any or all of them could be impacted when you begin to question your religious beliefs. As you embrace new religious beliefs, it is not uncommon for friends to drift away. If you stop attending church, for example, you will no longer see those friends as frequently. Family members may not understand your motivation for changing your religious views. While you will still probably interact with them with the same regularity, your discussion of religious views will most likely be less frequent. The good news is, you will most likely be attracting new friends who have religious beliefs that are similar to your new beliefs. You might find yourself letting go of some old relationships while embracing new ones.

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You might experience a brand-new spiritual relationship, the relationship with that part of your consciousness that resides in that other place. We can refer to that part of your consciousness as your soul level consciousness or perhaps your higher self. I like to refer to it as your whole self. I refer to the place where that part of our consciousness resides as our real home. I believe it exists in another dimension. I don't use a specific label for that dimension. Some refer to it as the 5th dimension. I'm good with just referring to it as another dimension.

Remembering your connection to your whole self can be truly extraordinary. Our whole self has connections that we can only begin to imagine. There is the connection to the greater mind which may be a concept that you are already familiar with. If not, the greater mind is thought to be a level of consciousness that connects all entities in that other dimension. I'm not going to go any deeper into the concept of the greater mind right here. There has already been plenty written about it. Your whole self also has a connection to the Creator. I believe our human minds cannot even begin to comprehend the nature of that connection.

Compassion – Compassion is far better than judgment. I believe the faster we can let go of judgment, the better. I mentioned letting go of judgment already. We never know the whole story when it comes to other people. Sure, we can observe their behavior in the present moment, but we don't know what led up to it. We don't know all the underlying motivations that might be responsible for someone's behavior. We can use judgment to evaluate our own behavior, but the personal values that we use to judge ourselves might really be someone else's values that we are still carrying from an early age. For example, we may be holding ourselves to some impossible standard of perfection. I believe a better response is compassion.

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It takes some practice to let go of judgment. We probably grew up surrounded by individuals who thought nothing wrong of judging others. I believe that type of judgment is harmful. But there are other ways the term judgment is used that are really very beneficial. We have all been advised at one time or another to use our better judgment. Let me suggest that in this case it is more discernment than judgment. When we use our discernment, we are evaluating our situation based upon the things that we know. We make decisions based on what we believe the best outcome might be. Sometimes we use our discernment to make educated guesses. When we use discernment, we look for answers and we don't try to find blame.

Our compassion comes from a knowing that we all come here to experience this reality. We are all in human form and we have these magnificent bodies that we use to experience life. Perfection is an illusion. We all make mistakes. That is how we learn. How many times did we fall as a toddler before we mastered walking? How many times did you fall off your bicycle when you were learning to ride it? What would you have done if the person who was helping you to learn how to ride told you that you are too clumsy and you will never be able to learn how to ride your bike? Most likely you would have given up right then. Hopefully, they showed you compassion. They knew from personal experience that it takes a while to get the hang of it. That is what life is all about. It takes a while to get the hang of it.

We have all heard the expression, "Walk a mile in someone else's shoes". There is great wisdom in that statement. When we walk a mile in someone else's shoes we experience what they are going through. We begin to understand all the challenges they are facing. And although we can never really walk in someone else's shoes, we can begin to imagine that their walk is not like our walk. We begin to feel compassion for what they are going through. We offer support instead of criticism. Doesn't that feel better?

The Journey Continues

Life is a journey. Think of all the different stages of your life and the challenges each one has brought. Each one of these stages of the journey offers unique life experiences. The search for personal religious truths may begin at any age. Many individuals are good with their beliefs until somewhere in the middle of their journey. Every person has their own timetable. Some never question their religious beliefs and that is fine.

I have put this short document together to assist those who have kept questioning their religious beliefs to themselves for far too long. You are not alone. Millions of us have done what you are doing right now, and they are questioning right now just as you are. The problem is that so many think they are alone.

I have shared with you a little bit about my journey. I have discussed the religious beliefs that I found most difficult to believe in. I have pointed out some of the experiences I had along my journey, some of the things to watch out for. In the last section, I shared some new insights that I encountered. Use these insights as a starting point to help you shift your perspective about spirituality.

There is more to the journey that you are on. I hope you now know that you are not alone. There are millions who have gone through what you are now going through. It is becoming easier and easier to connect with those of us you have been through the same thing.

More importantly, those of us who have been through what you are currently experiencing can bring you hope. We can encourage you to persevere because the answers that you are looking for are out there. Perhaps it would be better to say that the answers are in there. You hold the answers you are looking for inside your consciousness. When you connect with your greater consciousness, you have access to perspectives that lead you to your answers. This is really about raising your own energetic level in order to be able to access these new insights.

A New Tool for the Journey

One of the best techniques or tools that is available to do this inner work, to help you go inside and find the answers to your questions about spirituality, is meditation. I, myself, resisted learning meditation for a long time. Who knows what the source of that resistance was. But it was strong in me. I finally overcame the resistance and began discovering the many different types of meditation. The major benefit I received from meditation was to be able to quiet my mind. I constantly seem to have this internal voice talking to me. When I take the time to meditate, that voice takes a break.

Perhaps some of my resistance to meditation came from a fear that I wouldn't do it properly, that I would fail. I think we all have a certain level of fear of failure. I've come to the conclusion that there is no wrong way to meditate. And you don't have to sit with your legs crossed for an hour when you do it. As a matter of fact, when starting out, I suggest that most beginners spend no more than 10 minutes in meditation. There is a normal progression in the length of time that feels comfortable. Meditation is an invaluable tool to use to go inside and let your inner guidance reveal the wisdom that it holds. So don't be shy. Give it a try and you will see the benefit.

Allow me to suggest that that is the next part of your journey. The next part of your journey is finding your spirituality. You do that by releasing the limiting thoughts you have about yourself and embracing a new understanding of who you are and why you are here. There are techniques you can learn, meditation is one of them, to help you shift those old limiting beliefs and discover new insights about your personal reality. I discuss more of these techniques in my next booklet, "Finding Your Spirituality". I invite you to read through it when you are ready.

Until then, thanks for taking the time to read through this booklet. I hope it has been helpful. Be sure to visit my website, www.MichaelGLove.com for current updates.

Losing My Religion

Losing My Religion is a Roadmap

You are not the first one to question their religious beliefs. There are many who have traveled down this same road. I share some of my personal experiences with you.

Inside you will find Support and Encouragement

The reward is a new level of understanding who you are and why you are here. There is help available along the way.

