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Have you ever come to a point...?

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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Have you ever come to a point in your life when you realized you should reexamine your life as a whole? I have often wondered what it is like to go through a "mid-life crisis". I have recently turned 31 and although I may be considered too young to be going through such a crisis, I have definitely reached a crossroad. My crisis revolves around a recent turn of events that have swayed my beliefs and shifted my emotions. I am currently separated from my husband of almost seven years. Our marriage did not end on good terms and to make a long story short, we now have a sea of legalities between us ranging from a custody battle to felony charges for harassment and stalking, making it even harder to co-parent our three-year old son, Kristopher. You see, I thought that by this stage in my life I would be completely settled, with my career underway and a happy-secure marriage under my belt. Was I ever wrong!"



Karen Delgado

Have you ever come to a point...?

Have you ever come to a point in your life when you realized you should reexamine your life as a whole? I have often wondered what it is like to go through a “mid-life crisis”. I have recently turned 31 and although I may be considered too young to be going through such a crisis, I have definitely reached a crossroad. My crisis revolves around a recent turn of events that have swayed my beliefs and shifted my emotions. I am currently separated from my husband of almost seven years. Our marriage did not end on good terms and to make a long story short, we now have a sea of legalities between us ranging from a custody battle to felony charges for harassment and stalking, making it even harder to co-parent our three-year old son, Kristopher. You see, I thought that by this stage in my life I would be completely settled, with my career underway and a happy-secure marriage under my belt. Was I ever wrong!

Before we wed, there were signs everywhere telling me to turn back; to run the other way. I felt in my heart God’s hand was the one holding up all of the signs, but I chose to ignorantly disobey. For the last year of our marriage I cried and prayed the most for things to change. I prayed for him to treat me like a human being and not his emotional punching bag. I prayed that God would change him, and that the kids (I have three), could see us being happy as a family. Seven years later, I have come to realize that even the turmoil in my life today is a sign I need to follow. I took a step in the right direction and decided to leave him. It was obvious things between us would never work out and I could not let my kids live that way any longer. I was tired of letting them see me cry; I had to make a change for them, for me, for us! I then prayed for God to help me find happiness, whether on my own, and or eventually with someone

who appreciated life so that we could all grow together as a tight-knit and (even though it sounds cliché), happy family.

Interestingly, in the midst of the turmoil, I came across an old friend of the family I had not seen in years. My mother, being the Good Samaritan she is, had given him a place to stay almost fifteen years prior. At the time I was married to my first husband, with whom I was also extremely unhappy. Little did I know many years down the road, we would make quite the couple. My mother being a Good Samaritan comes into play here because the entire notion of this internal debate lies within the values she instilled in her children.

My siblings and I grew up learning about God, our creator, and that if you lived by His word, you would be rewarded with eternal salvation. We grew up with the notion that history books were wrong and science too, had erroneous views on how we came to flourish as people on this Earth. We were taught to hold reverence as we were instructed in school, but to be cautious of the things we actually archived into our minds. We were taken to church, and taught to steer clear from selfishness, and hate. We were taught that Jesus had died for our sins and that one day He would return to take His faithful followers to dwell in the heavens alongside Him. I grew up believing that although you have to work hard and put forth your best effort, without prayer you would not get very far, and that the Devil is lurking at every corner, just waiting to take you down. Please do not misinterpret me. I still do believe in all of these things.

If you are wondering what my past marriages, my current relationship and religion have to do with each other, please bear with me. My current significant other is the reason why I am writing this today. Due to his radical beliefs and conspiracy theories, he has in a sense pushed me to analyze a different perspective when it comes to life. I should note that his beliefs have undoubtedly been influenced in part by a troubled childhood and a rocky life. He has lost his life on more than one occasion; coming back only after God spared him through a miracle! He believes in (as I do) the end of the world and its rapid impending approach. The difference is that he is obsessed with deciphering the *truth* about who government officials are, for example, and just how society is being controlled giving way to the New World Order. These are just some of the examples I could give to demonstrate his conviction.

Of his beliefs, the one most pertinent to my personal shift in perspective is that there is no God! He believes in a *creator* separate to *God*, but not necessarily that God exists or that He is everything. He does not believe in prayer because he says it has not worked for him or others.

This I find utterly interesting because I have asked if he clamored to God as he lay on the ground with a gunshot wound to his femoral artery. To my surprise (or not), he confessed he had in fact prayed. He explained to me he prayed to God to allow him to live so that he could once again see his only son. Here begin our efforts to convince one another that prayer is real and *truly* is effective, which is my stance. He also thinks miracles are, for the most part, glorified random events, and believes it impossible that Mary could be a virgin-mother. He instead chooses to believe that beings out of this world, as depicted in so much of early paintings, were actually a part of the evolution of humans. In all, he really does not believe in the notion of religion. Although different, his beliefs are really not that outlandish to me, especially since I also believe there are beings other than humans somewhere in the universe. Also, we have all been taught that “religion is the opiate of the masses”.

The typical conversation at our dinner table on evolution and creation mirrors that of a steaming debate between a monogenist and a polygenist back in Darwinian times. What has really made me question my beliefs has to do with prayer, and evolution as a whole. I have to be honest and say it really scares me when he expresses his disbelief in prayer. I find it almost disrespectful that anyone would think that way. I should not be a hypocrite, though. I have often argued that although I cannot deny my prayers have always been answered one way or another, that maybe it is nothing but wishful thinking; a self-fulfilling prophecy or coping mechanism if you will. Here too, we can find entwined the laces of that opiate that is religion. What *if* “answered” prayers were a product of over-active imagination and powerful will? Is it not a possibility that prayers thought to have been an answer from God, have simply been a mere coincidence? My questions tend to bring me more questions rather than answers. When I think along these lines, I wonder if I am headed straight to the pits of hell for insubordination.

I find myself asking how much I really know about religion, and life as a whole. I question whether it will ever be the same after having been exposed to such beliefs or whether it is late once I have been tainted. I question just how “strong-willed” or “strong-minded” I am if someone is able to change or shift my perspective on what it means to believe in religion or be “enlightened” with truth. Everyone is exposed to different versions of the same story. My problem is that this opposing view I have been offered comes into my life at a point in time that demands *much* dedication to prayer and belief in something bigger than all of us. If I do not rely on God, how else will I get through this difficult time.

I find myself pondering the question, “Where do I go from here?” I wonder, am I still *me*? Have I really been *changed* or *altered*? What does this mean for me as an individual? We have stimulating conversations revolving around religion all of the time. He shares his views and I compare them to mine. I keep wondering what it is that makes me, *me*? Are my questions alone ethical, or am I offending *the* one to whom I owe my very existence? If I cannot answer these questions for myself, how am I to teach my children? How can I expect my children to do what I cannot ask of myself? I know I am not as strong as others have always thought of me, and I see that with every passing day. This scares me because I want my children to be valiant and confident in themselves. I want for them to stand up for their beliefs and not be afraid to respond if their values are being debated. I am not saying I have been swayed in a manner that is grossly inconsistent with society’s norms. There are plenty of people who do not believe in the Lord or religion in general. It may seem quite ironic, or perhaps even cynical, but the truth is that although I still believe there is a God, I have come to think more and more that religion is simply a notion; a tool effective at controlling society or at least to aid in maintaining sanity as the new wave of norms comes to be. Is it possible that God and religion could be dependent of one another? My intention is not to sound hypocritical. In reality, I have armed myself with the possibility of developing a novel ideation of religion at what I feel to be a late point in my life.

My story may be non-traditional but the moral is universal. We should all be aware of who we are, what we believe in and what we can do to change, if need be. I am coming to terms with the fact that change in life (and death for that matter), is inevitable and that there is nothing wrong with reexamining one’s self. Although I have been through many hardships in my personal life, I believe that running into an old friend who has shown me a different perspective on life and religion is God’s way of letting me know He has not given up on me. He has brought me to the fork in the road where I am now to reexamine all that I have believed until this day and decide which way to take. God knows my heart, and knows I fear Him; so in reality I know that I will always believe in *Him*, even if it means spending the rest of my life trying to convince someone that He is real!