

Module 18, Part 2: Companionship Spiritual Independents

Welcome to Module 18!

This is the second part of our module exploring the research and findings of Elizabeth Drescher in *Choosing Our Religion*. Your REs will be praxis based. We will explore in depth how we can best understand and support (and offer spiritual guidance to) individuals she identifies as Somes, Nones, and everything in-between who represent the changing American spiritual/religious landscape.

I. Theory and Deepening Understanding

Read:

- pp. 381-384 in Mabry (Spiritual Guidance across Religions) on “Spiritual Eclectics”
 - Part II from Jan’s (soon-to-be-published article), “Serving Spiritual Independents: Companionship without Bias”
- View it here: <http://www.awakenedliving.com/SGTI/Lundy2.pdf>

Reflection Question :

According to both Mabry and Lundy, what are the special needs of Spiritual Independents when it comes to the kind of support/guidance you can provide as an SG?

Watch :

This YouTube video : (16 min.)

“My Failed Mission to Find God (and What I Found Instead”)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgmiPXAwiLg>

Reflection Questions :

- What strikes you the most about Kumar’s transparent (and humorous) approach to her spiritual journey?
- How can holding Kumar’s story as sacred help you be compassionately present to individuals with similar journeys?
- Transparently notice and compassionately respond to any opinions or judgments that arose in you about her spiritual narrative.

Read:

Chap. 3 (“Companions on the Journey”) in *Choosing Our Religion*

RQ: Drescher writes, “As I spoke with Nones about who and what inspired them through their spiritual lives, what emerged were influences across local, distributed, and digitally integrated social networks and communities that could be characterized as a form of unaffiliated affiliation. These networks function as social contexts for spiritual enrichment, growth, support and identity formation.” She also speaks of how Nones use varied spiritual resources to shape “loose affiliations that function something like spiritual community.”

Reflect on your experience with this personally (within the context of your own spiritual life) or with seekers. Do you concur with Drescher’s findings in this chapter?

Read:

Chap. 4 (“Being None”) in Drescher

RQ: Your personal understanding of what it is actually like to “**Be None**” (or “Some” or Spiritual Independent) is key these days as you will likely companion individuals who fit this description more than other religious seekers we have studied. Review the qualities that tend to distinguish practices understood as “spiritual” or “spiritually meaningful” as described by Nones (pg. 119). Reflect on these, again, based on your own experience.

Read:

Chap. 5 (“Praying Between the Lines”) in Drescher

RQ: What is important for you to know regarding how Nones (Somes or Spiritual Independents) view and/or prayer?

Read:

Conclusion of *Choosing Our Religion*

Reflection Question:

How has your understanding of Spiritual Independents changed during this module?
How has your ability to be compassionately present to SIs changed?

Listen:

-America’s Religious Identity Experiences Major Shifts (May 10, 2018) (30 mins)
<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/381444253/pri-the-takeaway>

Optional Reading:

Chapters 6 and 7 in Drescher.

Optional Resources:

1. Watch the new Netflix film release: “Come Sunday” starring Chiwetel Umeadi Ejiofor

Internationally-renowned pastor Carlton Pearson risks his church, family and future when he questions church doctrine and finds himself branded a heretic.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Sunday_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Sunday_(film))

After watching the film, visit Carlton Pearson’s website to learn more about what he is doing today and where he finds himself spiritually. <http://www.bishoppearson.com>

2. A helpful book to use with some Spiritual Independents might be:

Belonging Here: A Guide for the Spiritually Sensitive Person by Judith Blackstone, PhD

II. Reflective Expression (RE):

Using Mabry, Drescher and Lundy, develop a “spiritual care plan” for a Spiritual Independent. Include what you would do and would not do, keeping in mind the narrative, healing path, current views, etc. of the SI person. You may also personalize this in terms of the person you interviewed in Module 17.

- Focus on the SI’s needs and how you might be supportive in helping them become aware of these needs; begin to flesh out how they can meet these needs themselves.
- What do you feel inclined to bear witness to/provide, etc. in light of this person’s spiritual journey?
- Be sure to reflect on how this process feels to you and what you are learning from it.

Due May 28, 3:00 p.m.

Please send your RE to our e-mail address:

spiritualguidancetraining@gmail.com