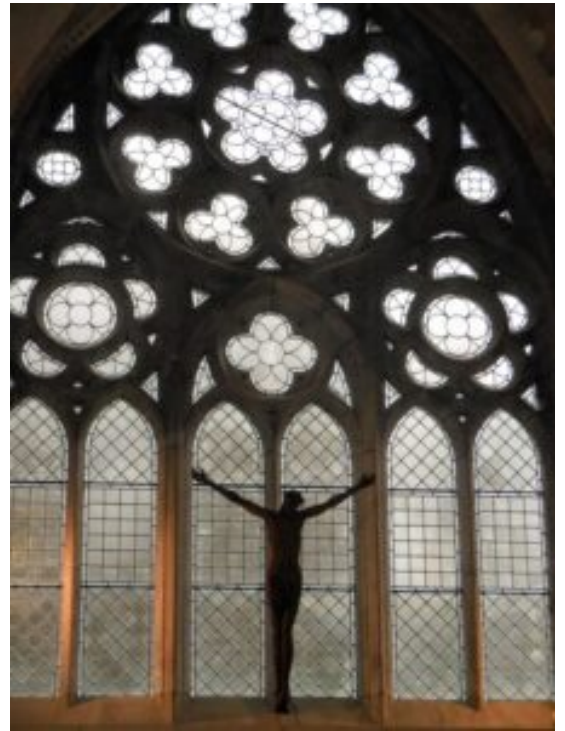


Considering Faith

I am not a person of faith. Or am I? Is there not a bit of spirituality or the longing for something deeper and more meaningful in all of us? But it is safe to say that I am not a religious person. Born in the communist GDR, my parents raised my sister and me as cultural Christians at most. Whilst they were baptised Lutherans themselves, they didn't raise us as such. We only learned about religion from a historic point of view and during the annual visit to Christmas mass.



It was somewhat acceptable to talk about 'fate', or 'things that were meant to be'. But considering a God, who guides us on our path, remained an alien concept to me. As a teenager I even directed my anger over things that were wrong with the world at the church and God, who I didn't believe in. Why wasn't He able to fix everything if this was all true?

Faith vs. Doubt

But wouldn't it be easier to know that there was a path you are meant to follow, and someone you can give your sorrows to rather than resentfully holding on to them yourself? Is it delusional wanting to rely on a Higher Power instead of doing everything by your own strength? What if there was a God you could turn to for hope and guidance? Or to thank for achievements and positive turns in your life?

I have been pondering that a lot lately, looking back on struggles in my life that had me desperate, but were

ultimately for my own good. On things that fell into place effortlessly, and others that were prevented despite my hard trying. Has there been a plan for me all along and the closer I follow it, the happier I am? And the further I stray the more it hurts me?



Believe or not?

An atheist friend of mine once implied that relying on God is a weakness. She says it somehow makes you a bystander to your own life, not taking matters into your own hands. But the more I think about it, the more I disagree. The existence of God doesn't take away from the fact that I followed through with [emigrating to Ireland](#). That I happened to decide for the right apartment where I would soon after meet my future husband. It doesn't diminish my success of moving on to a better paid job within a few months of getting to Ireland. Only because God puts the right players on the board at the right time, doesn't make me a puppet to my fate. I am still the one who sits at the steering wheel.

I am beginning to think I must have some divine intervention considering how well things are going for me in Ireland. And whilst I am not there yet to say I believe in God, I am also starting to doubt it is me alone who makes things add up.

Spiritual Beginner meets devout Catholic



Me considering faith didn't just start out of the blue. Religion slipped into my day-to-day life when I miraculously met my now husband shortly after I moved to Dublin. Or was that part of 'the plan' too? Anyway, he is a devout Catholic and openly practices his faith. We started going to weekly mass together which was more like Sunday school to me, learning the basics of religion.

I envy him for how much he is getting out of his faith. For the strength he draws from it and the peace that comes with it. He on the other hand envies me for my natural spirituality, as he calls it, that has led me up to the point in my life where I am now. It helped me overcome the worst crisis in my life, make life-altering decisions, and trust my instinct during times of little support. I would have called it following my gut feeling, female intuition, listening to my conscience – anything, but God.

Faith doesn't come over night

What started out as spending more time with my husband going to church has become a spiritual journey for me. Being open to

his faith for the sake of our relationship made me query my prejudices towards faith in general. The exposure to religion in such an organic way was what I needed to slowly approach it on my own terms. Away from my preconceived ideas and with a physical distance to the non-religious environment of my upbringing. With each mass comes more clarity, but also many more questions that I yet have to find answers to. It leads my husband and me into a religious discourse every time, leaving both of us spiritually richer than before.



Half way there

[Our wedding](#) took place in a Catholic church. The [Three Patrons Church in Rathgar](#) where my spiritual journey started, so to speak. When we decided to get married, there was no doubt that the ceremony was going to be Catholic. Partly because I knew how important it was to my soon-to-be husband. And partly because my 'gut feeling' told me it was the right thing to do. Maybe I am further along on my spiritual path than I am aware of. And maybe it is time to abandon my old ways of thinking and replace them with new ones. They might turn out to be in line with the Catholic faith. God knows...

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