



A collaboration of Nuos Formation, Meditation in Motion, and Inventional

Research Proposal:

Understanding the **deconstruction moment**
with respect to **spiritual formation**

Narrative

Deconstructing one's faith has been trending for at least the last four years. The pandemic has intensified the psycho-spiritual dynamics that contribute to individuals' readiness to unmoor themselves from assumed givens. Compounding that, the loss of grounding structures afforded by shared spaces such as the church in the first year and a half of the pandemic has left people to make meaning of things on their own while occluding the ability of those who would seek to understand from being able to observe the nuances of what is actually happening when someone is in the process of deconstructing their faith.

The response of the church to date has been ineffective and inadequate. We believe a research project informed by deep expertise in both human-centered design and spiritual formation best serves the needs of those who desire to support people in faith deconstruction experiences. Both disciplines, at their core, are practices of discernment that will help us understand essential needs and truths to illuminate complex issues.

Thus, "deconstruction" has become a catch-all term for crises of faith happening in the individual, the church and the culture at large. This broad abstraction is in need of more precise examination: how might we understand the key forces shaping the current moment? How might we discern amidst the swirl of ambiguity which are fleeting distractions, versus where the Spirit is and has always been at work?

Faith deconstruction is a disorienting experience, but is also an experience ripe with potential for increased awareness of God, trust in God, and possibility for the flourishing of the fruit of the Spirit. Qualitative research investigates the deep unmet needs of these individuals. We will be listening for the moments of opportunity to meet people in those deep unmet needs and offer resources to help others journey well with them.

Qualitative research is necessary to better equip the faith community to serve these people. We offer qualitative research informed by a deep understanding of developmental spirituality.

Our team consists of individuals with extensive expertise in human centered design as well as over 20 years combined experience as spiritual formation practitioners.

Project Outline

Part 1: Secondary Research

We will begin by seeking to understand meta trends to understand the context of what is happening at large. What are the trend lines, forces, and drivers that are shaping the moment we are in? This will include a literature review as well as interviews with experts who are positioned to have insight on this topic.

Part 2: Making Hypotheses and Clarifying Our Process

From here, we will identify our research questions by identifying hypotheses— X, Y, and Z are what we think are driving this phenomenon. This will clarify who and how many people we need to interview to validate our hypotheses. The sample might be narrowed by age, geography, gender, and other factors we find relevant to our research and will range from 12-16 participants. These interviews will allow us to uncover the latent needs and desires of people experiencing faith deconstruction as well as the contextual specificities that are contributing to the experience. While the number of interviews is not statistically significant, it is significant enough to give us confidence in the trends we observe and the ability to map them back to the big picture trends learned from the literature review.

Part 3: Analysis and Synthesis

Here we will look for the patterns in what we are hearing from people, surface insights into peoples process, and finally, offer implications for those who love and serve this demographic. This would include the distillation of key ways to support which could include relevant language, questions, ways to be alongside and sojourn, as well as nuanced language to support those interested in designing experiences that serve those who find themselves in a faith deconstruction experience. Supporters of this project will receive a report with our findings.

If you'd like to make a donation to this project, click [here](#).