

Ashley

I believe in embracing mystery and wonder and in not necessarily needing answers. So the notion of a credo creates resistance in me. Therefore, understanding that these are my answers right now, at this moment in my life, and for me alone:

I believe that other than what we create in our minds, there are no fundamental differences between us – we are all connected, along with everything in nature and on earth and in the universe. We are all star dust. The interconnectedness is so much larger than we can know or perceive. And yet we can tap into it at any moment – into the current or flow of all interconnected lives and objects. There is not necessarily mercy, justice or salvation in the flow, or any higher purpose or power that I can discern.

And yet inside this current, one can find stillness and connection...and infinite compassion for everyone else who's along for the ride. Yes, we live in a lonely universe...and we are all doing the best we can with it. This is the “truth” that gives my life perspective and purpose: remembering every day that we are all part of the same current and that we are all doing the best we can. Our lives are ours to live as we choose – for good or evil...but usually somewhere in between and much less dramatic. And yet we all suffer, as the Buddha realized, in our struggle to accept and even embrace our helplessness in the face of constant changing and flowing.

This reflex to resist change (or loss or death) can lead to horrible acts of narrow-mindedness, and yet it also leads to so much of what is beautiful in

life: loving relationships, music, art, scientific discovery, charity, and communities like this one. And so every moment (joyful or painful), every action, is an opportunity to remember and reconnect with the flow. I might even say that there is holiness in every moment...if I choose to see it as such. And so my personal mission is to see the holy...our common struggles that reflect our inherent interconnectedness...as often as I can. And to do what I can to reduce the suffering of others...while realizing at the same time that I am no different than anyone else in my struggle to “let go and go with the flow.”

I am not sure if this credo reflects faith. It feels more empirical to me, in that it reflects my experience of the world. And yet this process of naming my own beliefs has led me to the personal realization that if this worldview is my religion and the degree to which it functions in my life reflects religiousness, then I am a deeply religious person.