From Churchgoer to Moderate Believer

It may sound a bit corny, but I consider myself a believer—even though I'm no longer a regular churchgoer. For a significant period in my life, I attended church almost every week and was an active member of a Protestant congregation in Antwerp. However, my journey of faith took some complicated turns, leading me to where I stand now.

In the early stages, my relationship with faith became almost obsessive. I expected far too much from religious practices and rituals. I started searching for miracles—divine interventions that defy the natural order. Despite knowing that miracles like turning water into wine were unrealistic, I still longed for divine proof.

Eventually, I realized that this approach was unsustainable and fundamentally flawed. My anticipation for miracles overshadowed the true essence of faith. I came to understand that faith isn't about bending reality, but about finding strength and meaning in the life we already lead.

Redefining Belief: Beyond the Church Walls

Recognizing my misplaced expectations, I made the conscious decision to step back from regular churchgoing. It wasn't a rejection of faith, but a redefinition of it. I focused on integrating faith into my daily life—using it as a source of reflection and strength, rather than a tool for divine intervention.

This shift—from structured worship to personal belief—reconnected me with the core values of spirituality, without the burden of ritualistic compulsion.

Today, although I no longer attend services regularly, my belief remains firm—evolved into a form that nurtures personal growth and inner peace. It's an unconventional path, but one that has deepened my connection with faith.

The Turning Point: Leaving the Church Behind

The decision to leave the church wasn't easy. It was the result of years of internal reflection and external challenges. For a long time, I believed in divine intervention as the guiding force behind life's events. But over time, the gap between personal experience and spiritual doctrine became impossible to ignore.

I faced inner conflict—my devotion clashed with growing skepticism. Questions about theological concepts grew louder. Witnessing suffering and injustice added to the unrest, pushing me toward a reckoning.

The emotional toll was heavy. Guilt, doubt, and fear of losing community haunted me. Yet, the realization that waiting for divine solutions was not sustainable eventually gave me the strength to change course.

This was a crucial turning point—moving from passive faith to active responsibility. Breaking free

from the illusion of divine control allowed me to reclaim my agency and begin a new chapter grounded in reality.

Self-Reliance: Taking Control of Your Life

Embracing self-reliance marked a pivotal step in my growth. I began to understand that I alone was responsible for the direction of my life. This awareness didn't come overnight—it emerged through experiences that demanded personal action rather than passive hope.

Self-reliance is rooted in personal responsibility. Instead of waiting for things to change, I had to set goals and work actively toward them. I stopped blaming external factors and focused on how I could overcome challenges on my own terms.

Human intelligence and persuasion played a key role. Using these tools, I built stronger relationships and influenced my surroundings in ways that aligned with my goals.

One important lesson: growth is a continuous process. Setting goals is just the beginning; maintaining focus and measuring progress is what drives real transformation.

Self-reliance isn't just about independence—it's about shaping your life with intention, and refusing to remain stagnant. In doing so, we not only transform ourselves but also inspire others to do the same.

The Illusion of Religion Versus Reality

For many, religion provides comfort—a promise of divine control and ultimate justice. But these assurances can sometimes lead to passivity, where people wait for miracles instead of taking action.

The metaphor of smelling fresh bread but remaining hungry captures this well. The scent is comforting, but it doesn't satisfy hunger—just as religious promises may offer hope but not practical solutions.

Patience and prayer have their place, but they must be balanced with real-world effort. For example, someone praying for a better job may miss opportunities by not actively improving skills or networking.

Spiritual beliefs can offer emotional support, but they shouldn't replace proactive living. Achievements come from initiative, strategy, and perseverance—not hope alone.

By engaging with the world, setting realistic goals, and taking consistent action, we bridge the gap between dreams and reality. Human agency is the true force behind meaningful change.