



Deconstructing Your Faith without Losing Yourself

Angela J. Herrington

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Feb 20, 2024)

Softcover \$19.99 (200pp)

978-0-8028-8328-5

Faith coach Angela J. Herrington delivers a reassuring, practical guide for people who are questioning their commitments to Christianity or who are looking to trade “toxic, man-made religion” for something healthier.

Here, deconstruction is an uncomfortable personal journey, often sparked by a new understanding of one’s sexuality or by awakening to the ways in which Christianity aligned itself with harmful movements, from slavery to the Trump presidency. While churches often discourage doubt, the book aims to create “a sacred space for the vulnerable exploration of what you believe”—a vital first step in reevaluating the fundamentals of faith and differentiating them from damaging cultural accretion. Four “buckets” are offered to categorize one’s beliefs into: those to revisit, ones to keep, what is still surrounded by uncertainty, and those to release. Openhandedness allows for jettisoning what is no longer helpful.

Lest the very term “deconstruction” pose a roadblock, Herrington pairs a brief explanation of philosopher Jacques Derrida’s ideology with clear definitions of key terms. She skirts the theoretical, instead relying on storytelling. Foremost is her own experience of leaving churches and a marriage. This she supplements with pseudonymized stories from clients whom she’s counseled. The perspective is inclusive: nonbinary pronouns are applied to God, and the expanded acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ is used to refer to “Two Spirit” Indigenous people persecuted for their gender nonconformity. There are recommendations to rethink the narratives that social media feeds reinforce, lower one’s defenses, and mother oneself through acts of self-compassion—but also some clichés, like “Trust the process,” that impede its otherwise fresh ideas and language. One of the central themes is “embodied curiosity”—connecting the body and mind rather than, as in some Christian teachings, subjugating the physical realm.

Deconstructing Your Faith without Losing Yourself is an empathetic, realistic self-help companion for those on painful but necessary spiritual quests.

REBECCA FOSTER (January / February 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255.