

1: Don't let them get to you! Coming to terms with your upbringing. : exmormon

Coming To Terms With My Jewish Upbringing B y Tsiporah Grignon August 14, " Information Clearing House " - My story of growing up Jewish in Canada is similar to my peers in America and England, perhaps in other western democracies.

Coming-out in a Catholic family 8 Theme 6: Bearing the sin 5 Open in a separate window Theme 1: Growing in Faith All participants described their religious socialization at home, school, and the Church in great detail. They characterized their families as strongly involved with religion who celebrated important religious holidays e. Sylvester said that wearing special clothes was a way of showing respect. Borys remembered his whole family going for walks after Church and discussing themes raised during the sermon. Parents often checked how carefully children listened to the sermons. Borys also recalled saying prayers with his parents or discussing the Bible with them every evening. Seven participants recalled these childhood experiences associated with religion with positive feelings and two said they missed them. We were all together as a family. At Christmas, there would be 30 of us in a small house in the countryside. I really miss that. Five participants referred to mothers and grandmothers as guardians of the religious tradition, whereas fathers were presented as more reserved or absent. No participants talked about God with their fathers, and described relationships with them as more distant. My mom participated in the Neocatechumenate and was very involved emotionally in faith issues. She really lived her faith. You could see she often thought about God or recalled something the priest had said, or she would say how wonderful the reading was. They treated clergy and religious teachers with great respect. Exposure to intense religious socialization and resulting positive experiences led participants to ascribe special meaning to the spiritual domain. Not only were they baptized at birth, but all later attended their First Holy Communion, followed by Confirmation at the age of Until then, all had regularly gone to confession. Radek and Arthur served as church ministrants and participated in religious youth organizations, trying to embody their faith in everyday life and follow Catholic principles in distinguishing what was right, moral, or sacred, and what was immoral or sinful. They talked about boobs and asses all the time. I felt weird, embarrassed. They were all thinking and talking about girls and I felt different. So I started searching the Internet to understand. As a teenager he decided he ought to have a girlfriend, but found this experience unsatisfactory. Later, he visited gay clubs and dated boys with whom he established intimate relationships. I felt weird in those places [clubs] as it was completely new to me, but week after week I began to get used to that environment. Later on I even began to date guys and have, you know, hanky panky. Interestingly, four of them reported studying the Bible even more in adolescence because they were seeking answers to existential questions or to feel closer to God. Matthew said a befriended priest suggested he might be gay, and Arthur recognized his gay desires when he fell in love with a man. Experiencing a Conflict All participants experienced at different moments of their lives intense conflicts between developing sexual awareness and needs, and their religious beliefs and aspirations. Homosexual inclinations were threatening because they were seen as sinful, disappointing to family, and put them at risk of social discrimination. Spiritual Dilemmas Participants highlighted that although the Catholic Church officially does not condemn homosexuals as people, intimate behavior with same-sex was regarded as a sin against God. Gays were expected to keep sexual abstinence, even when living in a loving relationship with a partner. Internalization of religious principles made participants feel extremely guilty and fear eternal condemnation. On the other hand, being unable to satisfy their needs for love and intimacy evoked frustration and anger toward the doctrine. Those who confessed to having an intimate life with another man often heard it was sinful and immoral. Borys described a confession that he found traumatic. I confessed everything to the priest. When I started to say that I had a partner and we engaged in sex, the priest said I had to stop, because God did not like that. He said this sin was worse than murder. At that point I decided not to go to confession anymore. Sylvester was also angry at one encounter which led to him avoiding discussing his personal life with priests. I had problems with confession especially when I felt bad about something. Once I talked to a priest at the famous Luminous Mount monastery, but he really discouraged me. I left the confessional before getting absolution. The priest

called me a pervert or something. Receiving a sacrament of marriage, conceiving offspring and rearing them according to Catholic norms was highly valued. Fear of disappointing loved ones was often an obstacle against coming-out described in Theme 5. That would destroy their dreams. Both were convinced their mothers would wonder if they could meet in heaven. Participants claim that concerns about the afterlife are crucial for all believers. He was ashamed about disclosing his sexual orientation and anticipated rejection when religious teachers, nuns, or priests made negative comments about gay life during classes or sermons. I felt rejected during religious lessons, even though the catechist was not directing his comments to me. Obviously, no one knew I was gay. I was 13 then, and you know€¦ faggots, dykes, etc. No one would officially admit being homo. When people made jokes about gays it really hurt. Now, when I listen to what priests say about gay people I feel like standing up and shouting that it is not true. Look at me and my boyfriend! He thought people ascribed to the LGBT community all kinds of sinful qualities they would not like to find in themselves. Seeking Peace All participants tried to resolve inner conflicts between their religious values or aspirations, and growing gay identity. Reducing Religious Involvement Participants said they were frustrated and angry, and felt guilty and rejected by the Catholic Church, because its doctrine forbids homosexual love and relationships, treating these as sinful actions. Five participants gradually withdrew from religious practices and attending church, because they felt unwelcome. Radek talked about his disappointment and sadness: We are not openly invited. We feel excluded, like sinners. Matthias maintained that the negative attitudes of the Church toward homosexuality were based on the Old Testament, which he saw as irrelevant in modern times. He was convinced that there were no direct references in the New Testament that would condemn homosexuality as sinful behavior. There are so many things in the Old Testament that are impossible to apply in our Catholic faith. That was a completely different world, so it was also written in a specific way. Adam said he was once verbally attacked and thrown out of confession, but he admitted to teasing the confessor, despite knowing he would not agree with his views. I was angry when I went to see him and tried to challenge his views. I told him I was in love with a married guy and that Jesus also had a special relationship with some of his students. He screamed at me and threw me out. He was convinced they themselves committed sins by engaging in inappropriate sexual relationships. He claimed that one of his confessors was overtly interested in hearing details about his masturbation and intimate contacts and was convinced the priest was aroused by those stories. This disgusted him and he felt they had no right to tell him what behavior was virtuous and what was sinful. This helped him cope with anticipated critique and rejection. It really bothers me to think where that priest has put his hand before touching the holy host. I stopped going to confession. Why should I confess to a stranger who may be a greater sinner than me? Because that does happen. Who is he to tell me how to be a good man? Instead, they found themselves confronted with conflicting needs and desires. Matthias attended group counseling for gay men held by clergy. He said it was a valuable experience because he learned to express emotions and feelings, gained more insight into his behavior, and fell in love with another group member. He thought participation in the group helped him embrace his homosexuality, even though he initially hoped to change it. Adam also came to terms with his homosexuality, but Konrad never managed to accept himself. He often experienced guilt, shame, and self-loathing. He was unable to suppress his sexual drive and engaged in occasional sex and compulsive masturbation after which he became auto-aggressive and sometimes had suicidal thoughts. He also admitted to being homophobic, and strongly attacked in himself a desire for emotional involvement with other men. There are days when I feel depressed and isolated at home. Sometimes I enter a chat room to hook up for a sex date. I help myself [masturbate] to reduce tension but later I feel really bad, dirty. I hate myself for all that. When I have a date it is just for sex, and I never meet the guy twice.

2: Living in Sin? How Gay Catholics Manage Their Conflicting Sexual and Religious Identities

Coming to terms with an abusive cult upbringing Children of God / The Family Saturday November 3, Filmmaker Noah Thomson was raised in the elusive Children of God cult, a Christianity-based communal living society also known as the Family.

We were taught to feel immense pride in Israel. That pride has dissolved for many. In the words of psychologist Dr. And because I live a privileged life, with a warm shelter and enough food and clean water, I am motivated to do something useful with my life. I used to organize community events From a rising awareness of political realities that keep all planetary citizens on edge, I realized it was time for me to stop avoiding my Jewish heritage First to understand is that the focus of this conflict has been two different groups wanting to live on the same piece of real estate. When Israel became a state in , the land was divided, and Palestinians were given specific areas to inhabit - the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. It is eye-opening to see a map of land left for Palestinians. To witness what Palestinians must endure on a daily basis is heartbreaking. It is indeed a nightmare. One can imagine the humiliation Palestinians feel as they wait in long lines at checkpoints on their way to work or school, caged like animals, where any soldier can arbitrarily deny the Palestinian to pass through the checkpoint despite having the correct permit required by Israeli occupation policy. And we can see the anguish of a Palestinian woman desperately clinging to a productive olive tree, in the wild hope of saving it from being destroyed by the IDF. As global food supply becomes increasingly jeopardized due to climate change, I believe that purposeful destruction of a centuries old source of food is as much a criminal act as cruelty to sentient beings. Legal status can also be revoked for any number of bureaucratic reasons. Its extensive bureaucratic system makes it extremely challenging for Palestinians to obtain official status as a Jerusalem citizen. The other Palestinian territory is the square mile Gaza Strip. Severe cuts to electricity have had a devastating impact on medical aid, food and technology. Almost everyone in Gaza depends on water delivered by tanker trucks. Since building materials are prohibited from being allowed into Gaza, valuable infrastructure cannot be rebuilt. Being a fisherman in Gaza is now a very dangerous occupation, for the IDF routinely fires on fishing boats, injuring, arresting and killing fishermen, as well as confiscating and even destroying fishing boats. How might any of us react to such an inhumane blockade? Would we risk our lives to protest? This spring, tens of thousands rose up in mass solidarity, in an unarmed and civilian-led protest. Confronting their jailers has unified the people of Gaza in the hopes of sending a clear message to the international community to demand an end to the blockade. I cannot accept any justification for abusive treatment of human beings. In simple language, it is one group of people treating another group very badly. Why would Jews, a group persecuted for centuries, be so willing to persecute others? Are we to carry hatred in our hearts forever? I am of a generation who are the children of holocaust survivors. We all grew up learning about concentration camps and gas chambers, of the efficiency of Nazi cruelty. My father never spoke about his parents killed by the Nazis, not even of any happy childhood memories - it was too painful, and I think he felt guilty for somehow not being able to save them. The obscenity of the Holocaust for Jews led to the creation of the mantra, Never Again. But a mantra is only as good as our intentions, as noted by American Jewish historian Howard Zinn: To build a wall around the uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust is to abandon the idea that humankind is all one, we are all - of whatever colour, nationality, religion - deserving of equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. My point is not to diminish the experience of the Jewish Holocaust, but to enlarge upon it. For Jews, it means to reclaim the tradition of Jewish universal humanism against an Israel-centred nationalism. Attendance at synagogue was far less important than adherence to the belief that according to the Bible, Israel was the land of the Jews - where any Jew, from anywhere in the world who wanted to live there, would be welcomed. My family observed traditional Jewish life: We children attended classes several times a week after regular school to learn the teachings of Judaism and the Hebrew language. Like Jewish children all over North America, I would collect 10 cent stickers until there were enough that meant a tree would be planted in Israel. During the summer months, many of us attended Zionist summer camps which I did for 9 summers. My favourite activity

involved music - singing Hebrew songs and doing both Israeli and Arab ethnic dances. It was at camp that I first encountered interpretive dance, and what we mainly interpreted was how it felt to be persecuted. Our morning ritual was to gather around the flagpole as the flag of Israel was raised, place our right hand over our hearts, and sing in Hebrew the words that mean: Unlike others at camp, I never felt the call to visit Israel, a place where I knew that hatred of The Other was a big part of life. In , the movie Exodus gave us sexy movie stars portraying heroic Jewish freedom fighters. In reality, they terrorized defenceless Arab women and children to get them to leave their homes. Did this same God then forsake those who lost everything when Israel became a Jewish homeland? Does this God actually choose sides? But in later years, from observing the military industrial complex perpetuating wars, it dawned on me that my choice to sit back and not know was a cop-out. A democracy works best when citizens take part in it beyond voting every few years. I began to relish deep discussions about geopolitics with my politically astute partner. It was dizzying to deal with so much information from the internet. As well, I learned that investigating a news story has to take into account the motivations of every source. I recognized that *cui bono* could also apply to an examination of extreme interpretations of religious beliefs that all too often lead to violent behaviour. But although I appreciated being in the presence of wise elders in that group, after a couple of years I left out of sheer frustration in never ever discussing the shadow side of religion - those fanatic zealots who believe their way is the only way, that others are infidels and unworthy human beings - which somehow in a kind of warped religious zeal justifies horrendous violence against a perceived enemy. Furthermore, if we are willing to look, there are violent messages in certain religious texts themselves. This leads me to ask: Why is it appropriate in modern times, to live according to books written centuries ago? I am aware that for some people, holy books are said to be divinely inspired and imbued with wisdom, which in theory would give them a timeless quality. Some of us are designed to rebel, to question authority. The more I learned about the history of the establishment of the state of Israel, the more I felt betrayed by my early Jewish conditioning. Cheerleading for Israel meant we did not learn about the Nakba, the expulsion by Zionist paramilitary groups of , Palestinians from the land they had lived on for generations. I have often lamented that as a child I did not think to ask what happened to the people who lived on the land that became Israel. Thus, through blind support for Israel, I feel that my generation became complicit in perpetuating the dispossession, persecution and mass murder of an entire people. We also missed out on learning compassion for The Other. A brief primer on Zionism By the mid s, there was a rise of nationalist movements in Germany and Italy. European and Russian Jews were inspired by the idea of establishing their own sovereign state as prophesied in the Bible. This led to the founding of Zionism in by Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian journalist and political activist. This new movement renewed the ancient attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to the historical region of Palestine, where one of the hills of ancient Jerusalem was called Zion. Naturally, Zionism had a powerful appeal for many Jews - having a Jewish homeland meant an end to centuries of religious persecution. However, the Zionist movement also had its detractors. Rabbis and others warned that such an ideology was morally wrong, that it would lead to unending conflict, that it had the potential to become racist in nature. Herzl died before his vision was realized. Chaim Weizmann became the new leader of the World Zionist Organization. Weizmann personally pleaded with the British government to give Jews their own home, however the land Zionists wanted was in the area controlled for about years by the Turks, as part of the Ottoman Empire. This was when the First World War was happening, and such timing led to a surprising development: In this way, Zionists in America were motivated to use their considerable influence to drive Americans into the war, which proved to be the decisive factor in the victory over the Germans and Turks. After the war, Britain did gain control of the biblical land of Israel, then known as Palestine. Even though the British helped the Zionist project survive several Palestinian uprisings, they stalled on giving the land over to a Zionist state. Who would not be emotionally inclined to give Zionists needed political support for its goal of a Jewish state? This support also included money to buy weapons to fight and defeat Arab armies. But there was one more item to deal with - Zionists needed official recognition for the new state of Israel. This task was assigned to the newly created United Nations to be resolved. Its General Assembly had neither the legal nor the legislative powers to impose such a resolution or to convey title of a territory, only to recommend resolutions. Moreover, General

Assembly Resolution , which called for the partition of British-ruled Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, never went to the Security Council for approval. Implementing such an approval would have required military force, for there were 1 million Palestinians in the part of Palestine allocated to Zionists in the partition plan. Despite an attempt by the United States to propose that Palestine be placed under a temporary UN Trusteeship, plans and calls for a ceasefire fell on deaf ears. With the Zionist goal so close, Jewish forces kept up their attacks on Palestinian villages to secure more than their portion of land allocated in the partition plan. The British mandate ended the next day. Palestine was not only partitioned - it was destroyed. Settler Colonialism Before and after the birth of the Jewish state of Israel, Zionist leaders spoke with confidence about the ongoing process of settler colonialism, premised on occupation and the elimination of the native population. Quotes by Zionist leaders do not mince words. From the founder of Revisionist Zionism, Zeev Jabotinsky: We are a generation of settlers, and without the steel helmet and gun barrel, we shall not be able to plant a tree or build a house. There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries – all of them. Not one village, not one tribe, should be left! Such strong statements make it crystal clear that from its beginnings, the leaders of the new state of Israel planned to rid their homeland of Arabs.

3: Globe and Mail: Coming to terms with an abusive cult upbringing - XFamily - Children of God

Coming to terms with my Jewish upbringing. by Tsiporah Grignon. My story of growing up Jewish in Canada is similar to my peers in America and England, perhaps in other western democracies.

The stories are personal, the arguments more general. Their authors have two things in common: Baptist, Catholic, Mormon, Mennonite, and Muslim. Each of them has had to break free, in one way or another, from restraint and oppression. Each has come to a mature view that rejects some or all of the teachings that were imposed upon them as children. Everyone has to come to terms with a few basic conditions: Many people deal with these things in ways accepted uncritically from their cultures of origin and do not consider them exceptionally problematic or stressful. A small minority think seriously about them and come to conclusions at odds with the culture, adopting new ways of life accordingly, and many of these remain on good terms with the unthinkingly orthodox. But some of the orthodox who are fanatically attached to their principles insist on conformity, exacting penalties for thought or behavior outside cultural norms—in some cases extreme penalties, as, for example, death for women who offend the supposed honor of their faith or family by marrying outsiders. Fierce Muslim youth in madrassas and ecstatic Christian youth in Sunday schools and summer Bible study camps help to keep ideological oppositions and their deadly political consequences alive, but we hear less about the independent young people who resist their indoctrination and break away. What enables them to see past the official stories and strike out for understandings of their own? What forms of coercion and rejection are they subjected to—how costly is the freedom they achieve in terms of family affection and social acceptance? It is hard to get good evidence on these points. People do not advertise their histories, so it is not usually obvious which of us have passed this way. The editors of this book did not initially know this about each other. In the course of working together in the Ph. We came respectively from the Exclusive Brethren in England in the s and s, and from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah in the s and s. It was not surprising that the dissertation topic we agreed on should reflect an interest in parental influences on the potential autonomy of their children. When that work was finished and defended, we reopened a discussion that had begun along the way about the possibility of writing a joint article on the specific moral issues that arise when the convictions of one generation have a determining effect on the freedom of the next. But a scholarly article would capture only part of what concerned us; it would not convey a sense of the lived experience of indoctrination and of the work involved in achieving liberation from it. Here already our histories diverged, the details of the religious background and the reaction of the faithful to our apostasy a term fraught with significance for believers being quite different in the two cases. Mormons tend to be inclusive—those who lapse are still considered members and would no doubt be welcomed back at any time. But Exclusives are true to their name, and cut off those who lapse as rapidly and definitively as possible. So the vivid autobiographical parts of each story would not be easy to incorporate smoothly into the same text. The project therefore remained tentative until it occurred to us that since presumably not too many people in the field were aware of our own intellectual origins, there were probably others out there of whose origins we and the rest of the profession were similarly unaware, even though they might have been as difficult and as interesting as ours. The idea of an article therefore metamorphosed into the idea of a book—this book. Our suspicions about others having similar experiences were confirmed by the number of enthusiastic responses we received to our call for papers. There were not just a few people whose interest in philosophy helped them come to terms with their own childhood religious indoctrination, but dozens scattered around the world. And their personal stories differed, at times drastically. We eventually selected what we think to be a good representation of the variety of personal experiences, philosophical analyses, and religious orientations we encountered. Most, though not all, of these histories involved some degree of personal stress. The professional components look at the moral issues that arise when caregivers try to coerce the beliefs of those entrusted to them, particularly when this involves restricting opportunities for personal development, the withholding of love, and so on. The testimonies and reflections collected here are diverse, but their common theme gives them a striking unity. Their importance goes far beyond the bounds of professional philosophy—the fates of

nations hang on the conflicting views with which each new generation of citizens is indoctrinated. If the world is to be really free, the chains of belief that seem to descend inexorably from parents to children, from religious and political leaders to their followers, have to be broken—in our own culture no less than in alien ones. We want to draw attention, through concrete examples, to the moral responsibilities of those who influence the young—responsibilities not only to those who resist, but even more to those who do not. While our examples are drawn from contexts in which there are overt religious agendas, the issues they raise are no less important in education generally, with its burden of unstated ideological and even theological assumptions. While all our authors were brought up in religious familial or community contexts, the reactions of their coreligionists to their apostasies varied. For some, the break was painful and included varying degrees of estrangement from family. Others had the comparative luxury of calmly sorting through what is objectionable about inculcating a belief system and what is not. Their conclusions do not always agree. Is indoctrination necessarily coercive, or can it be benign? But up to what age is it permissible to impose these things without explanation? Limited indoctrination does not necessarily pose a moral problem, provided that children are also taught the skills to critically examine the rules, principles, and beliefs that were indoctrinated and then encouraged to use those skills as soon as they are able to act responsibly on their own. Learning to act responsibly and autonomously has less to do with acquiring a belief system or framework than it has to do with developing the ability to decipher for oneself what one should do. Abuses of parental authority tend to result in diminished space for the child to practice freedom. When the initiative is not eventually handed over to the children, when indoctrination offers no space for them to become free and autonomous, parents are abusing their authority. It is through other people, most often parents, that children are first introduced to the world and are provided with or inhibited from access to it. Children are always born into specific situations, into particular social and cultural contexts with already established moral and value systems, within which they become adults. In coming to terms with their freedom, they need the opportunity to deconstruct these systems and then to reconstruct them in ways they can call their own. For them to have the best chances of developing the self-esteem and confidence required to strike out for an autonomous understanding takes parental recognition and support. Young people who are not offered such recognition and support may find the strength to embark on this voyage alone, but they often bear emotional scars from abandoning internalized systems of belief and coming to terms with rejection from family and community. Several of our contributors fit this description. Their stories reveal that the costs of autonomy are lived both internally and externally—in psychological upheaval, and in estrangement from loved ones and the communities that provided their first introduction to the world. Others, though, while undergoing changes no less radical, went through the process with less overt interference from without. Our first chapter, by Christine Overall, represents such a case. It describes an upbringing in the Anglican Church in Canada—not a setting normally associated with rigidity in doctrine. But as the author points out, indoctrination can happen indirectly, simply from the immersion of an impressionable child in a culture of belief, even belief not especially strongly held by the adult members of the relevant community. It can take hold just as effectively, if the child is serious and thoughtful, as in more coercive cases, and getting free of it may be just as distressing and require just as much work if less family trauma. Blaiklock, an avuncular figure who eventually became an opponent in debate. The Catholic Church had the kind of grip on Damien Dupont that Islam had on Irfan Khawaja, with some psychological complications that make his story compelling in a different way. But Dupont performs a similar deconstruction of the absolutist doctrines of the Church. He concludes that all indoctrination is abusive, particularly of vulnerable children. Indoctrination may occur in nonreligious contexts; this too is contingently abusive, but religious indoctrination is constitutively so. The next three chapters take a gentler approach. She is critical of fundamentalist indoctrination and has rejected its literalism, but that rejection was experienced less as an opening out into freedom than as an introduction to a productive uncertainty, which she treasures. In Chapter 6 Tasia Persson, raised a conservative evangelical, undertakes a careful critique of the moral risks and consequences of indoctrination, and wonders whether evangelical parents might find ways of teaching their children that are not coercive and manipulative. It becomes morally objectionable only when it compromises autonomy or violates trust. The final section of the book comprises four accounts of upbringings in radically

doctrinaire sects. In Chapter 8 Hirst recounts his spare, strict, and affectively bleak life as the child of an all too spiritual father and the opening up of perspective provided, among other things, by an exposure to mathematics and sex. But he was able to find his way to Cambridge and philosophy without making a complete break with his family—his slow, but final departure from belief tracked his career as a professional philosopher. In Chapter 9 Enns describes the constricted life of immigrant fundamentalists, its grip on her—its inculcation of mistrust of the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of human life—but also its inconsistencies and moral flaws, and traces the path that led her to feminism and phenomenology. Jones too, in Chapter 10, comes to feminism, in part as a reaction to the situation of women in the Mormon Church, but helped by the liberating influence of some significant women with whom she was fortunate enough to study as an undergraduate. Finally in Chapter 11 Caws places his main emphasis on the doubly tragic conflict between a son who cannot maintain belief and parents who cannot imagine life or salvation without it. These thumbnail sketches of the chapters that follow stress their diversity, but for the most part overlook an important component that in different forms is present in all. The authors, as remarked at the beginning, are professional philosophers, and each refers in one way or another to his or her intellectual formation, reading, and experiences of the academy. And as professional philosophers most of them engage in serious conceptual and analytical work on the leading topics of the book—indoctrination itself and its moral status, freedom of thought and the human price it sometimes exacts. It can safely be said that none of them would be willing to go back to their points of departure; what they all would wish, we think, is that their experiences might serve as encouragement to others who may have to follow similar personal and philosophical trajectories.

4: The Seeker: Noah Gundersen Is Coming to Terms with the Gray | No Depression

mynameisjessamyn I think my religious upbringing made it difficult for me to understand spirituality. When I began practicing yoga, it was hard for me to comprehend the practice as "spiritual".

Making faith your own? Wrestling with evangelical upbringing August 1, 5: Mid 20s woman other factors below fold who is trying to figure out Christianity and faith after being raised and growing up in it. How exactly do I deal with guilt? There have been quite a few asks about being liberal but evangelical, or asking if there was a bible for liberals, or the most reputable sources for biblical scholars. I do not plan on coming out to my family anytime in the near future. Up until college, I was markedly evangelical, I was against queerness, I had signed a purity pledge, joined the prayer team, etc. But I was constantly bullied at school for being the only person of color and the church my family attended and the one that ran our school preached a lot of "Everyone else is the enemy! You will go to hell if you X! When I got to college, I felt very ready to expand my circle and my point of view. And that I did! You probably know the story, but I was really happy with how I was able to expand my horizons and become friends with people that were outside of my bubble and experiment with my life. I explored other religions but kept coming back to Christianity. I still joined a bible study through a college ministry because I wanted to stay connected to my faith, and because my high school friends and my family encouraged and expected it. College is also where I broke my purity pledge. They kicked me out but would still pray for me and interacted with me. I am still very casual friends with them to this day but I still feel a lot of guilt. Fast forward to today. Racial issues and justice is very near and dear to my heart. I went into public health and equality and equity is near and dear as well. I identify as queer and have many queer friends. I have a partner whom I love and live together with. But I am having panic attacks over my religion. I even brought my most conservative childhood friend to this church and not surprisingly she hated that it had a rainbow flag up front and she questioned if their doctrine was sound. You have to go back to the bible! If I dive into the Bible, how do I even understand it now? Are they all just picking and choosing verses? I think they would tell me to rebuke Satan, pray harder, and be better. In my current church, I meet women who are living peacefully. I cannot be a true believer if I do all these things, my old pastor would say. If you just need the questions: Can I even be in this faith if I continue with this? This is a lot, sorry. Oh, and I am in therapy. Reading the Bible, what has helped me as someone who was alienated in a different way and probably believes different things is to accept that the Bible and the will of God more generally is impossible to flatten into a legible, secular political or social program. It is very weird and while some people are much wronger than others, not only is your old church guilty of simplifying and misreading it to serve its own ends, your new church probably is too, and so is mine. This is, for me, comforting if you or me or my priest, humans bound by human experience, can explain the ramifications of God coming down to earth, dying as a man, and promising a new kingdom and a bodily resurrection. That said, we have access to the Bible and the teachings of the early church, and it is extremely valuable and rewarding to wade into it and allow your brain to be melted by it. I used to believe just about everyone else was going to hell. It was a horrible feeling and a lot of pressure. I still have some conflict but I have a much greater sense of peace now. Go ahead and talk to your pastor. The stuff you are struggling with is not going to bother them and like most ministers they probably have tons of conversations with their congregants about their individual journeys. A couple of things that might help you overcome your fear: Call your minister and schedule a time to talk. Send them this link if you think you will have trouble expressing your situation in person. They should be very equipped to handle this graciously and kindly and should be able to offer you some resources. It really helped me to learn about how the bible as we know it was really put together, how decisions were made about what to put in and leave out. Biblical Criticism is a philosophical approach to the bible that might be of interest to you. Loving people does not mean you have to agree with them. Anthony Pinn is a notable African American atheist - I once had the pleasure of hearing him speak. His talks and writings might be of interest to you. Feel free to memail me. It took some time and a lot of reading and thinking, but I did get through it to a much better place. Have you tried them and not liked them? Pagels argues that Christian orthodoxy grew out of the political considerations

of the day, serving to legitimize and consolidate early church leadership. Her contrast of that developing orthodoxy with Gnostic teachings presents an intriguing trajectory on a world faith as it "might have become. This means not only reading the Bible, which presents its own narrative, but also reading the historical literature about it, which can place that narrative in context. There has always been picking and choosing, and what is chosen and ignored at any given point often evolves in response to social, cultural, and political developments. On preview, I agree with the comments above posted by trig at 6: One thing I felt I had to unlearn was the idea that the Bible was the word of God that had to be taken literally. The book *Christ Actually*, by a former Catholic priest who is still Catholic, was really helpful to me in understanding how the Gospels were written to address the world that existed when they were written, which was, by the way, so long after Jesus died that they could not have been written by people who knew him. People just pick and choose different things. How many Christians do you know who, if someone asks for their coat, hands over their coat and their cloak, as Jesus said to do? People who complain about picking and choosing are usually adhering to the rules about sex. Well, read what Jesus said about money and material things. Anyone who lives anything like a normal American life is not completely following the Bible. These people are, to use the Biblical metaphor, pointing out the speck in your eye while they have beams in their own. The tricky part is trying not to judge them for it - not judging, of course, is another thing Jesus said to do that is routinely ignored. I was lucky because doubt was very much part of my faith tradition. As in any relationship, there are times when you feel disoriented or consider leaving. Avoiding those negative feelings, both in human relationships and in faith, gets in the way of an authentic connection. I felt somehow responsible for God, as if doubt would cause him to stop existing. Letting go of that weight was incredibly freeing. All this is to say that you should absolutely talk to your queer pastor. I guarantee that they have had an experience similar to yours, and hopefully they can help you navigate the really hard parts of this journey your family and friends, and the fear of punishment. I agree with FencingGal about the Bible. I would even go further and ask where Jesus asked people to write the New Testament? I think he expected and if you believe who He was knew that it would be written, but I think he stridently aimed to make clear by his actions and symbols exactly what he wanted his followers to do and where their hearts should be. Granted, easier said than done. You might also find C. I have also been very impressed by this *Reverse Rapture* article by Peter Rollins. Also, for a view from someone closer to your situation, have you read the book *Accidental Saints* by Nadia Bolz-Weber? And yes, I agree with others that it sounds like? May the Spirit of God guide you and may you find the peace He wished for all his followers. I ended up majoring in theology at a Catholic university and then going to grad school for a masters in theological studies at a Southern Protestant divinity school. Contrasted to what scholars try to do, and more honest pastors try to do, which is exegesis -- reading OUT OF the text, approaching the text and trying to engage honestly with it to see what can be learned from it, taking things OUT OF it. Not coming to it with a preconceived notion and reading INTO it. I can recommend a few books to get you started. Spring for the hardback, the paperbacks fall apart with hard reading! Alternatively, I also like the Catholic Study Bible edition of the New American Catholic Bible, a bit better on commentaries I think, a bit less good on translation and translation notes. *Understanding the Bible*, Stephen L. Harris -- really commonly used as a textbook for intro theology classes for majors. Harris himself is an atheist who loves the shit out of the Bible, so very committed to a scholarly approach, and an interesting and entertaining writer. It does a really nice job situating the practice of faith within the historical tradition of the Bible and the modern scholarship of it, and she does a neat super-in-depth reading of a Psalm to show how modern scholarship works. But if not, I recommend starting with Amos and Micah -- both very short, both very resonant with modern progressives -- and with the Gospel of Mark, which is some weird-ass shit and you have to stop at Mark is very strange! And then you should read Mark from And, like, contemplate that fucking ending on Mark!

5: The links between religious upbringing, current religious identity

My (F20) whole life I have been conditioned to believe that one man goes with one woman. Obviously that structure no longer works for me (I %.

If you are a parent that has just found out your son or daughter is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and are now feeling shocked, unsure, isolated or many of the other emotions we parents feel when we first discover our child's sexual orientation or gender identity, that is different to ours then this site will be invaluable to you. We as parents who are heterosexual and have been brought up in a society with a low level of understanding of homosexuality whether because of society in general or perhaps of our religious upbringing often have a very hard time in coming to terms with news that our very courageous and honest children have given us. Most of our children whether they are younger or older when they have come out to us have usually taken years to try and come to terms with their sexuality or gender. Some have a very hard time with this process and some never really come to terms with it themselves. Some find it easier not for you to know at all. But they all have seriously thought it through and have finally wanted to be honest to themselves and their loved ones by coming out. Unfortunately when they come out to us intentionally or otherwise we tend to go straight into that same closet they came out of. Now we have to come to terms with our child's sexuality or change of gender. Just remember we cannot change them, they are who they are as we are who we are and no one can change us or would we want them to. The first thing we, parents of gay children, have to do is acknowledge their sexuality and let them know that no matter what, that we love them. Then we find support for ourselves, and in this I mean several things, it could be in reading material. Read as much as you can because for most of us this is the first real interaction we have knowingly had with a gay or transgender person. There are many, many good books. Talk to your child about their life and what it means to be gay or transgender. This is such a good way to really know your child and we all would want that as parents. It is also a good way of finding out if your child is coping with life. This is where our unconditional love and support comes in to play. This can be hard for some parents of gay children but it is necessary so we can keep the lines of communication open. Find out where the gay communities are, read their papers, go to restaurants etc in the gay community. This will make you realize that gay people are normal people like the rest of us. Find a support group like PFLAG parents and friends of lesbians and gays and speak to other parents of gay children who are going through the same feelings as you. I found this to be a wonderful source of help. Remember you are not alone. You will not only be helped but you will in turn help other parents of gay children along the way. As a mother of 2 sons whom has had to come to terms with both my boys coming out at different stages I would like to share some informative material that will hopefully help you and other parents of gay children survive and enjoy the journey that you are now on.

6: Coming to terms with Jewish upbringing – “Joining Hands for Justice in Palestine & Israel

"Religious Upbringing and the Costs of Freedom is a creative compilation of essays that challenges the boundaries of philosophy by, in effect, initiating a serious dialogue with religion from the standpoint of a mostly secularist community through the medium of philosophical autobiography.

It happens due to the hormonal changes of puberty. These changes involve both the body and the mind –” so just thinking about someone attractive can cause physical arousal. These new feelings can be intense, confusing, sometimes even overwhelming. Teens are beginning to discover what it means to be attracted romantically and physically to others. What Is Sexual Orientation? The term sexual orientation refers to the gender that is, male or female to which a person is attracted. There are several types of sexual orientation that are commonly described: People who are heterosexual are romantically and physically attracted to members of the opposite sex: Heterosexuals are often called "straight. People who are homosexual are romantically and physically attracted to people of the same sex: Homosexuals whether male or female are often called "gay. People who are bisexual are romantically and physically attracted to members of both sexes. Do We Choose Our Orientation? Being straight, gay, or bisexual is not something that a person can choose or choose to change. Gay people are represented in all walks of life, across all nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, and in all social and economic groups. Being gay is also not considered a mental disorder or abnormality. Despite myths and misconceptions, there is no evidence that being gay is caused by early childhood experiences, parenting styles, or the way someone is raised. Efforts to change gay people to straight sometimes called "conversion therapy" have been proven to be ineffective and can be harmful. Some gay teens say they had same-sex crushes in childhood, just as their heterosexual peers had opposite-sex crushes. By middle school, as they enter adolescence, many gay teens already recognize their sexual orientation, whether or not they have revealed it to anyone else. Thinking sexually about both the same sex and the opposite sex is quite common as teens sort through their emerging sexual feelings. Some teens may experiment with sexual experiences, including those with members of the same sex, as they explore their own sexuality. But these experiences, by themselves, do not necessarily mean that a teen is gay or straight. For many teens, these experiences are simply part of the process of sorting through their emerging sexuality. And despite gender stereotypes, masculine and feminine traits do not necessarily predict whether someone is straight or gay. Once aware, some gay teens may be quite comfortable and accept their sexuality, while others might find it confusing or difficult to accept. How Gay Teens Might Feel Like their straight peers, gay teens may stress about school, grades, college, sports, activities, friends, and fitting in. But in addition, gay and lesbian teens often deal with an extra layer of stress –” like whether they have to hide who they are, whether they will be harassed about being gay, or whether they will face stereotypes or judgments if they are honest about who they are. They often feel different from their friends when the heterosexual people around them start talking about romantic feelings, dating, and sex. For them, it can feel like everyone is expected to be straight. They might feel they need to deny who they are or hide an important part of themselves. Many gay teens worry about whether they will be accepted or rejected by their loved ones, or whether people will feel upset, angry, or disappointed in them. It can take time for gay teens to process how they feel and to accept this aspect of their own identity before they reveal their sexual orientation to others. Many decide to tell a few accepting, supportive friends and family members about their sexual orientation. This is called coming out. For most people, coming out takes courage. But many lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens who come out to their friends and families are fully accepted by them and their communities. They feel comfortable and secure about being attracted to people of the same gender. How Parents Might Feel Adolescence is a time of transition not just for teens, but for their parents too. They may feel completely unprepared for this next stage of parenthood. And if their child is gay, it may bring a whole new set of questions and concerns. Some are surprised to learn the truth, always having thought their child was straight. Others wonder whether the news is really true and whether their teen is sure. There is no evidence that being gay is the result of the way that someone was raised. Fortunately, many parents of gay teens understand and are accepting right from the start. They feel they have known all along, even before their

teen came out to them. They often feel glad that their child chose to confide in them, and are proud of their child for having the courage to tell them. They may be concerned or worried about whether their son or daughter will be bullied, mistreated, or marginalized. And they might feel protective, worrying that others might judge or reject their child. Sadly, some react with anger, hostility, or rejection. But many parents find that they just need time to adjust to the news. It can be reassuring for them to learn about openly gay people who lead happy, successful lives.

7: Sexual Orientation

NJ Family Legal Blog. the law generally provides that religious education/upbringing is a matter of joint legal custody (major decisions). coming to terms on.

It was during my time in Rexburg that the end result of a world full of Mormons really hit me. I had always been interested in mind altering plants, even though I had never tried them. I went on a search while I was in my second year at school for a plant that was A. Had some medical benefit and C. I found Salvia after searching through the erowid vaults and started smoking and making teas with it while still going to school. I would sneak out to my car and smoke out of a rudimentary pipe I made. Concurrently, on my own, I had found 5 or 6 amanita muscaria mushroom trip reports that mirrored the first vision point for point. This was the beginning of my doubts. Yet, even though I had made the mental break, I would still wear my garments for two more years until I had sex for the first time. There is no doubt that coming away from the church is like breaking away from a cult. The cards are stacked against you, and the fear is deep and abiding. Many need to resort to anger to really make that break. This is absolutely understandable and effective. There are many things to be angry about for sure. However, I am here to make the case that this is simply a step in making a full break. I recently spent 5 years as an ex-mormon in Salt Lake. I came across many, who despite years away, were still consumed by this anger for the church. I would try to make the case that by allowing this anger to continue, that the church was still influencing their life and emotions. I saw them being eaten up by this rage, and many were extremely depressed on top of being angry. This brings me to the topic at hand thanks for sticking with me to this point. Everyone not just Mormons have both good and bad things in regards to how they were raised. Our challenge then is to embrace to good and leave behind the bad. I would like to take a moment to outline some of what stands in my mind as the good from my Early Journey. First, I would say that I was raised with a solid desire to be my best person. What this meant for me then compared to now is vastly different. However, that deep drive to better myself has remained in my life. Second, I was raised to be a good and kind person. I really appreciate that this was ingrained in me from childhood. Third, and some may argue with me here, but I feel like my upbringing gave me a drive to be a spiritual seeker. Admittedly, when I was young, this seeking was a search for the answers the church and apologists had handed down I have since taken to finding questions rather than answers. And though my spirituality is no longer through organized religion, its something that I can appreciate about my early years. Fourth, I appreciate the stable family environment I grew up in. In my time since leaving the church and associating and connecting with all manner of people, I have realized how lucky I was to have a solid family, and how rare that is in this world nowadays. My Parents, while a bit simple, were definitely well-meaning. Fifth, I want to talk a little about what is called "the spirit" in mormonism. I have since come to the belief that what is dubbed spirit is a combination of intuition and energy chi. I also have a super on point intuition. I often find myself in just the right place at the right time. I learned to trust this intuition deeply during my formative years and this has extended to my post-mormon life. Sixth, I am incredibly grateful for how the church kept me sheltered from adult matters until I was an adult. Having reserved drug and alcohol use until I was matured has been immensely valuable to me. I am very moderate in my drinking. I skipped the binge drinking that seems so prevalent in the rest of my peers during high school and college. As a result, I am perfectly content with a few beers and shots over the course of my night. I have never blacked out, and have only a handful of gray outs. In my drug use, I never had the goal of getting fucked up. I was introduced to mind alterers as a spiritual tool, and that has remained with me through my experiences. As a result, I have taken these substances to new heights. Seventh, I am grateful for they way my upbringing has influenced my sexuality. Before I ever connected in that way with another person, I had read numerous books on tantra and sacred sexuality. I was prepared and informed in a way that those who start early could not imagine. I skipped the blind leading the blind phase of teenaged sexual exploits. As a result, I have experienced sexual connection in a way that not many in this society ever will. Additionally, through my experiences, I really pushed down my sex drive. I see many in this world that have this as a dominating drive in their lives that causes many issues. I am grateful for a healthy relationship

with sexuality that I see as a result of my upbringing. Lastly, as a result of my mission, I am very comfortable approaching strangers and striking up conversation. Additionally, even though I was misguided, I spent two years working in what I understood as love. I think that this time spent was productive even though I no longer believe the doctrines I was preaching. They are numerous and deeply embedded for sure. That being said, I really do think its necessary to look for the good and that will be different for each individual. I am extremely happy with the person I am today, and as a result, I have to be grateful for what brought me to this point today which includes my mormonism. This allows for a healthy and happy mentality in the now, and allows you to move forward.

8: Parents Of Gay Children

I came to terms with my upbringing in my late thirties after working on building a more positive attitude. Therapy and counseling were major contributing factors to resolving some internal conflicts. You never get over the traumas you suffered in childhood completely, but you adapt.

Coming to terms with Jewish upbringing
Coming to terms with my Jewish upbringing by Tsiporah Grignon
My story of growing up Jewish in Canada is similar to my peers in America and England, perhaps in other western democracies. We were taught to feel immense pride in Israel. That pride has dissolved for many. In the words of psychologist Dr. And because I live a privileged life, with a warm shelter and enough food and clean water, I am motivated to do something useful with my life. I used to organize community events – now I organize the community of my thoughts, about the state of our world – and so I write. First to understand is that the focus of this conflict has been two different groups wanting to live on the same piece of real estate. When Israel became a state in 1948, the land was divided, and Palestinians were given specific areas to inhabit – the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. It is eye-opening to see a map of land left for Palestinians. To witness what Palestinians must endure on a daily basis is heartbreaking. It is indeed a nightmare. One can imagine the humiliation Palestinians feel as they wait in long lines at checkpoints on their way to work or school, caged like animals, where any soldier can arbitrarily deny the Palestinian to pass through the checkpoint despite having the correct permit required by Israeli occupation policy. And we can see the anguish of a Palestinian woman desperately clinging to a productive olive tree, in the wild hope of saving it from being destroyed by the IDF. As global food supply becomes increasingly jeopardized due to climate change, I believe that the purposeful destruction of a centuries-old source of food is as much a criminal act as cruelty to sentient beings. Legal status can also be revoked for any number of bureaucratic reasons. The other Palestinian territory is the square mile Gaza Strip. Severe cuts to electricity have had a devastating impact on medical aid, food, and technology. Almost everyone in Gaza depends on water delivered by tanker trucks. Since building materials are prohibited from being allowed into Gaza, valuable infrastructure cannot be rebuilt. Being a fisherman in Gaza is now a very dangerous occupation, for the IDF routinely fires on fishing boats, injuring, arresting and killing fishermen, as well as confiscating and even destroying fishing boats. How might any of us react to such an inhumane blockade? Would we risk our lives to protest? This spring, tens of thousands rose up in mass solidarity, in an unarmed and civilian-led protest. I cannot accept any justification for abusive treatment of human beings. In simple language, it is one group of people treating another group very badly. Why would Jews, a group persecuted for centuries, be so willing to persecute others? Are we to carry hatred in our hearts forever? I am of a generation who are the children of Holocaust survivors. We all grew up learning about concentration camps and gas chambers, of the efficiency of Nazi cruelty. My father never spoke about his parents killed by the Nazis, not even of any happy childhood memories – it was too painful, and I think he felt guilty for somehow not being able to save them. The obscenity of the Holocaust for Jews led to the creation of the mantra, Never Again. But a mantra is only as good as our intentions, as noted by American Jewish historian Howard Zinn: For Jews, it means to reclaim the tradition of Jewish universal humanism against an Israel-centred nationalism. Attendance at the synagogue was far less important than adherence to the belief that according to the Bible, Israel was the land of the Jews – where any Jew, from anywhere in the world who wanted to live there, would be welcomed. My family observed traditional Jewish life: We children attended classes several times a week after regular school to learn the teachings of Judaism and the Hebrew language. Like Jewish children all over North America, I would collect 10 cent stickers until there were enough that meant a tree would be planted in Israel. During the summer months, many of us attended Zionist summer camps which I did for 9 summers. My favorite activity involved music – singing Hebrew songs and doing both Israeli and Arab ethnic dances. Our morning ritual was to gather around the flagpole as the flag of Israel was raised, place our right hand over our hearts, and sing in Hebrew the words that mean: Unlike others at camp, I never felt the call to visit Israel, a place where I knew that hatred of The Other was a big part of life. In 1978, the movie Exodus gave us sexy movie stars portraying heroic Jewish freedom fighters. In reality, they

terrorized defenseless Arab women and children to get them to leave their homes. Did this same God then forsake those who lost everything when Israel became a Jewish homeland? Does this God actually choose sides? But in later years, from observing the military industrial complex perpetuating wars, it dawned on me that my choice to sit back and not know was a cop-out. A democracy works best when citizens take part in it beyond voting every few years. I began to relish deep discussions about geopolitics with my politically astute partner. It was dizzying to deal with so much information from the internet. As well, I learned that investigating a news story has to take into account the motivations of every source. But although I appreciated being in the presence of wise elders in that group, after a couple of years I left out of sheer frustration in never ever discussing the shadow side of religion – those fanatic zealots who believe their way is the only way, that others are infidels and unworthy human beings – which somehow in a kind of warped religious zeal justifies horrendous violence against a perceived enemy. Furthermore, if we are willing to look, there are violent messages in certain religious texts themselves. This leads me to ask: Why is it appropriate in modern times, to live according to books written centuries ago? I am aware that for some people, holy books are said to be divinely inspired and imbued with wisdom, which in theory would give them a timeless quality. Some of us are designed to rebel, to question authority. The more I learned about the history of the establishment of the state of Israel, the more I felt betrayed by my early Jewish conditioning. Cheerleading for Israel meant we did not learn about the Nakba, the expulsion by Zionist paramilitary groups of , Palestinians from the land they had lived on for generations. I have often lamented that as a child I did not think to ask what happened to the people who lived on the land that became Israel. Thus, through blind support for Israel, I feel that my generation became complicit in perpetuating the dispossession, persecution and mass murder of an entire people. We also missed out on learning compassion for The Other. A brief primer on Zionism By the mids, there was a rise of nationalist movements in Germany and Italy. European and Russian Jews were inspired by the idea of establishing their own sovereign state as prophesied in the Bible. This new movement renewed the ancient attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to the historical region of Palestine, where one of the hills of ancient Jerusalem was called Zion. Naturally, Zionism had a powerful appeal for many Jews – having a Jewish homeland meant an end to centuries of religious persecution. However, the Zionist movement also had its detractors. Rabbis and others warned that such an ideology was morally wrong, that it would lead to unending conflict, that it had the potential to become racist in nature. Herzl died before his vision was realized. Chaim Weizmann became the new leader of the World Zionist Organization. Weizmann personally pleaded with the British government to give Jews their own home, however, the land Zionists wanted was in the area controlled for about years by the Turks, as part of the Ottoman Empire. This was when the First World War was happening, and such timing led to a surprising development: In this way, Zionists in America were motivated to use their considerable influence to drive Americans into the war, which proved to be the decisive factor in the victory over the Germans and Turks. After the war, Britain did gain control of the biblical land of Israel, then known as Palestine. Even though the British helped the Zionist project survive several Palestinian uprisings, they stalled on giving the land over to a Zionist state. Who would not be emotionally inclined to give Zionists needed political support for its goal of a Jewish state? This support also included money to buy weapons to fight and defeat Arab armies. But there was one more item to deal with – Zionists needed official recognition for the new state of Israel. This task was assigned to the newly created United Nations to be resolved. Its General Assembly had neither the legal nor the legislative powers to impose such a resolution or to convey title of a territory, only to recommend resolutions. Moreover, General Assembly Resolution , which called for the partition of British-ruled Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, never went to the Security Council for approval. Implementing such an approval would have required military force, for there were 1 million Palestinians in the part of Palestine allocated to Zionists in the partition plan. Despite an attempt by the United States to propose that Palestine be placed under a temporary UN Trusteeship, plans and calls for a ceasefire fell on deaf ears. With the Zionist goal so close, Jewish forces kept up their attacks on Palestinian villages to secure more than their portion of land allocated in the partition plan. The British mandate ended the next day. Palestine was not only partitioned – it was destroyed. Settler Colonialism Before and after the birth of the Jewish state of Israel, Zionist leaders spoke with confidence

about the ongoing process of settler colonialism, premised on occupation and the elimination of the native population. Quotes by Zionist leaders do not mince words. From the founder of Revisionist Zionism, Zeev Jabotinsky: There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighboring countries " all of them. Not one village, not one tribe, should be left! Such strong statements make it crystal clear that from its beginnings, the leaders of the new state of Israel planned to rid their homeland of Arabs. Why I must speak up for Palestinian human rights I cannot in good conscience stay silent about the behavior of a country I was led to believe was the most wonderful thing to happen to Jewish people. This conflict continues, with the continuation of the military occupation of the West Bank, strict enforcement of legal status for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and the blockade of Gaza. For most Israelis, life is good " while only a short distance away, a people long for freedom. Imagine if any of us had to deal with daily serious human rights abuses perpetrated on us, authorized by law, and enforced by year-old soldiers with a gun. Shocking numbers tell the story of Palestinian losses and their daily struggles since the military occupation began in 1948. From British journalist Jonathan Cook living in Bethlehem: In the West Bank, the prison contracts by the day as Jewish settlers and the Israeli army steal more land. When supporters of Israel are willing to take a deeper look at Palestinian life under Israeli occupation, they will discover a variety of organizations that monitor it.

9: Coming To Terms With My Jewish Upbringing

There were times when I felt she was coming around, having a breakthrough, but she continues with the group. For many abuse survivors, talking about the abuse is the first big hurdle to overcoming the shame.

He lives nearby, and suggested the place. Twenty-six and chiseled after our meeting, he headed for a yoga class, Gundersen has completely grown out of any perceivable awkward stage, though a walk through his music catalog will reveal some deep impressions left from his early years. We chat up the barista about pour-over coffee and the Aeropress brew Gundersen orders. These days, Gundersen is an accomplished, hard-working music professional. He could boast of his partnership with the esteemed Nashville-based indie folk label Dulatone, song syncs on shows like *Sons of Anarchy*, various producer credits, a model girlfriend, and industry friends like Carrabba and David Bazan. Instead, he takes our conversation through his decidedly unhip childhood see: *Songs as School Born in Olympia, Washington*, Gundersen is the oldest of five biological and three adopted siblings, in a family that moved to Centralia to homestead when he was five. With his brothers and sisters, on a sprawling rural property that included a milk cow, pygmy goats, and chickens, Noah was homeschooled in a deeply religious but loving household. I felt like that was really helpful in building who they were. I wanted them to have a lot more freedom. His sister Abby, who has become his closest and most constant collaborator, studied piano and violin. The family gathered in the kitchen at night to talk about music and new songs they had learned. Nonetheless, it became something that has informed much of his songwriting and performance. For me, I had the opportunity to play music in the church, I learned how to work the crowd. From 18 on, he was touring constantly, at times living out of his car and couch-surfing with friends, performing whenever and wherever he could. He and Abby started a short-lived indie band called *The Courage*, which broke up in , after Gundersen relocated to Seattle. Things started to pick up when a few songs crossed the desk of Daniel Mendez, a Dallas-based producer. He had acquired a copy of the *Saints and Liars* EP, then a rough recording in need of professional polish. Jesus, Jesus, could you tell me what the problem is With the world and all the people in it? His timeless songs are full of true humanity and longing. Just what the soul doctor ordered. Differences of opinion regarding the project led Mendez and Gundersen to part ways – both speak of this with hints of regret – but the experience inspired Gundersen to pursue a newfound love of production. He eventually embarked on a co-headlining tour with the duo. Just how tight they are, and how sensitive they are to the music, it was impressive. Musically, I can pick up on what I need to play, or what I need to sing. We hear each other out pretty well. Seattle has no lack of plaintive singer-songwriters, and is in fact on the downswing of the genre after a glut of neo-folkies including the *Cave Singers*, the *Head and the Heart*, and *Fleet Foxes* rushed the scene in the mid- to late-aughts. As Gundersen orbited that world, sometimes drawing similar comparisons, he was never fully accepted into it. He recorded with a full band on *Carry the Ghost*, a move that ushered in a more rock-based sound, offering added weight to his words. He has such a range. No one can deny that talent. Because, first of all, you probably have a reason to be, and if this is helping you, then so be it. As gentle waves of reverb emanate from a softly played electric guitar, in a hushed, half-whisper, Gundersen sings: Noah is definitely on his own journey, but there are themes in his music I think can be attributed to his childhood. Gundersen sings in a fluttering whisper: This is all we have This is all we are Blood and bones, no holy ghost Empty from the start One could suspect that such a song might have moved his parents to despair, since they so carefully curated a life for their family beyond the troubles and temptations of the secular world. But their response is unified and supportive. I write what I like to write. While Dylan uses poetry, innuendo, and suggestion, Gundersen is more directly expressive, but the motivation is often the same: He feels a kinship to the tune since he was in Seattle recently to record another Dylan cover with Gundersen: Ramirez has a dust-caked quality to his singing that recalls the back roads of his Texas home. I told Ramirez I found the comments on the video curious, though; everyone seemed to love the rendition, but no one much referenced its origins. Might it be that Gundersen, in his love of Dylan, is introducing new, younger fans to the beloved figures of a bygone time? With a love for the greats and Abby with him at every step, the pair is not unlike fellow road warriors and siblings Bobbie and Willie

Nelson. With his brother Jonny often behind him on drums and sister Lizzy occasionally on backup vocals, there are real intimations of a family band reminiscent of the Carpenters, the Carter Family, Johnny and June Cash, and even the chosen-family vibe of the Civil Wars. Gundersen dislikes the tag. Noah sings about a lot of vulnerable things, and I feel special that I get to be a part. With that comes all the requisite love and support to keep growing, and, in one particular development, a romance to inspire new heights. A warm grin comes over his face.

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