**Individuation**

(Latin: primum individuationis)
The goal and process whereby the undifferentiated trends to become individual and the differentiated components become integrated into stable wholes.

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**NOT individualisation**

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**Agency, Communion & Peer Clustering**

In ninth grade, I felt that having a lot of friends and being accepted were the most important things. I even conformed to their desires and dyed my hair pink, dressed somewhat punkish, and went to parties with rock music, smoking, and other activities. After a while, I realized that this was not me. It wasn’t until eleventh grade that I broke away from that destructive group of friends and chose to hang out with others. My group of friends wasn’t as big, but at least they were more like me (Clark 2011, p67).

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**Differentiation and Agency**

A definition of uniqueness and distinctiveness of self.

Identifying one’s unique skills, ability, personality and potential contributions.

Results in competence, independence, resourcefulness and responsibility.

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**Connection & Communion**

Desire to closely relate, engage and seek intimacy with others.

Engages in acts of vulnerability, compassion and altruism.

Seeks belonging and attachment.

Experiences fulfillment through relationships, openness and belonging.

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**Individuation**

Process of constructing the self.
Much of present-day stress and psychological disruption is developmental, in the sense that it is related to the processes of growth, change and transition (Kegan, Evolving Self, 261).

Identity formation takes place when an evolving sense of distinctiveness (agency) is combined with key experiences of integration (communion) (Erikson 1968, e.g. pp. 128,135).

Equally, education, mastery and skill acquisition (agency) in conjunction with social capital (communion) provides the opportunity for career and vocation (Clark 2007, pp.152ff).

Further, ideological commitments (agency) integrated with intra and inter-personal relationships (communion) fosters interdependence from family systems (Arnett 2004, pp.47f).

The emerging adolescent, embarking on a new journey in development, seeks to assert his or her distinctiveness and move toward an internal locus of control, while at the same time remaining relationally connected as an ongoing member of the family system and the community. While there is no standardized definition of the term, individuation has, for many, become the central issue of the adolescent process and therefore the overall motivating task of adolescence (Chap Clark, Hurt, 2011:10-11).
...although some limited attention has been directed toward relational self-differentiation within the faith community context (Cloud & Townsend, 1992; Friedman, 1985) with various models constructed to understand the stages of faith (Fonlert, 1983) and moral development (Balswick et al., 2005; Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1984; Pope, 1994). no theory has explicitly related differentiation and integration to spiritual growth.


Uncharted Territory

GOD
Personal Spirituality

Individuating Faith
(Differentiating and Connecting with …)

THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS
Personal Worldview

THE FAITH COMMUNITY
Religious Faith

What is the goal of youth discipleship?

To transform the world by drawing young people into a passionate personal relationship with Jesus

I grew up in the church for literally my whole life. For years, I was afraid of doubt or even asking questions, assuming it was a sin (because it was implicitly taught to be so).
The biggest issue for me is that surely we can’t expect people to arbitrarily and immediately believe the dogma that they’re taught, and surely they should be allowed and encouraged to ask questions.
God and I are at peace with this as long as I keep genuinely seeking Him, because as I now realize, He knows it’s a journey, I don’t have to fool him and He’s not angry.
But to be too open about this with some of the “religious people” in my life would bring a lot of flak because of their fear and insecurity, which sadly is rife in church circles in this part of the world.
INDIVIDUATING FAITH

Differentiating and Connecting with

GOD

I can’t be loved. Everyone else has demonstrated that I have to earn their love. My parents will love me if I do well academically. My sister will love me if I have (unpaid) and drive for her. My friends will love me if I spend time with them. How can God possibly love me unconditionally? As for being forgiven and redeemed, I have no trouble believing that others have been forgiven and redeemed, but at times I struggle to believe that same statement is true for myself. Surely by now I’ve crossed the line of how much sin God will forgive? I constantly find myself thinking that God made a mistake in putting me here. How can small, shy, broken, insignificant me do anything remotely useful here on earth? How can I make disciples of all nations when I can’t even do that with my immediate family?

Differentiating and Connecting with

GOD

The above verses challenge me to stop thinking so negatively about myself. Psalm 139:18 is my favourite verse there. To think that God has that many thoughts towards me, and that they’re not the kind of thoughts that I have towards myself, it challenges me to start thinking about myself the way God does, as well as acting in a way that shows I believe it. I know I need to start reading things like that as if they’re written to me and not everyone who ever has, or will walk on this earth with the exception of me.

Differentiating and Connecting with

THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

INDIVIDUATING FAITH

One way to think about this core developmental dimension (spirituality) is to focus on the human capacity (and inclination) to create a narrative about who one is in the context of space and time.

Persons are active participants in creating this narrative, working with “source” material that comes from and is handed down by family and social groups, but superimposing on this material a great deal that emerges from personal experience and personal history. This process of constructing the self in social and historical context is universal, transhistorical, and transcultural.

(Rodholm-partain; Benson, King and Wageman. Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence, 2006: p5.)
**Individuating Belief:**

The diagram illustrates the process of individuating belief, with stages such as dissociation, re-integration, and connection, accompanied by the values of high and low self-agency and passivity.

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**Creed**

I believe that before the beginning there was none.
And that love was being - one, but not one - infinite, perfect, complete.
I believe that the living whispered a call onto the wind
So the wind took shape and form, echoing the call in her heart, and became the Temple.
Then the call was breathed onto the dust
And upon their mingling was born a living being. I believe this being was placed as a steward in the Temple, and God called her humanity.
Then He clothed her in a skin made of tone, spun from the essence of His bones, knowing she would shed it upon her first opportunity for autonomy, thinking herself chained.
I believe this act of utmost distinction in the temple
And what was always meant to be complete, was fractured and isolated.
And so the world remained...
Until the Hong put on the skin of humanity and wondered the earth, to him's end to find, to suffer and to die, and to rise again with the promise of new life.
I believe the scriptures are a record of this story.
Writers and scribes that saw parts in its completion, until justice and key flow down like rain, and the sovereignty of God is realized on this earth, as it is in heaven.

*Kayla (Female, 18, 2011)*

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**Spiritual Development**

Spiritual development is a dimension of human life and experience as significant as cognitive development, emotional development, or social development.

All of these dimensions of development are interrelated [however] it is the spiritual dimension that is most involved in a person’s effort to integrate the many aspects of development.

As a core process of development involving the creation of a life narrative (in which the self is connected to larger constructs of values, tradition, space, and/or time), spiritual development cannot be reduced to merely human need or desire.


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**Reflecting on the Process**

I can’t really put into words how helpful writing my creed was. I felt a lot of apprehension to begin with, because I was afraid that in allowing myself to explore and question I was going to lose the faith that I had. And I did lose it, in a way. When I started ‘Year in the Son’, I had reached the point where my faith just wasn’t big enough to meet the depth and complexity and mystery of life anymore. But I couldn’t have any grasp on it, because those random collections of inherited beliefs and half-explained experiences was all I had ever known.

Writing my creed gave me the courage to let it go. I drew confidence from the life, theology and ideas of some great contemporary and historical thinkers (and believers), who gave me a much broader perspective on God, the world, and the ways in which they could be understood. The journey of questioning may have broken down a lot of what I had held to be true, but it made space for a new faith to form - or perhaps space for the old faith to grow into something different. There was definitely a degree of consolidating and starting to own some of my beliefs, but I think more importantly, I was able to explore my questions long enough to grow content to simply sit with them, allowing them room to grow into answers somewhere down the track.

*Kayla (Female, 18, 2011)*

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**It seems that the dominant popular understanding of faith is believing whether or not God exists, rather than how to progress in any kind of search for God, or living based on who or what God is and how we relate to him/her/it/etc.**

But, assuming I don’t have to convince anyone other than myself, I actually do have a revelation beyond doubt that God exists (and is good).

I need to live this stuff out by staying honest, staying humble, acutely aware that I don’t know everything, and continuing to question or “hunt down” truth.

And I’m more than a little sure that God welcomes and is pleased with my honesty, and that I’ll continue to move forward on the journey from doubt to revelation.

*Q (Male, 19 years old, 2011)*