



# **Compass Questions**

64 Questions for those walking the  
Camino De Santiago

**Seth Grotzke**

*For those willing to ask themselves difficult questions.*

# Introduction

It is easy to exist without thinking deeply. But as Socrates said, “...the unexamined life is not worth living...”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps that is why you began this journey. You were unsatisfied with merely existing and wanted to think deeply. Maybe you wanted to find a purpose. Maybe you wanted to change.

Walking gives us the opportunity to let our thoughts clarify and our body to catch up with our heart and mind. But perhaps your thoughts have not fully clarified. Perhaps you are tired of having the same ideas looping through your mind.

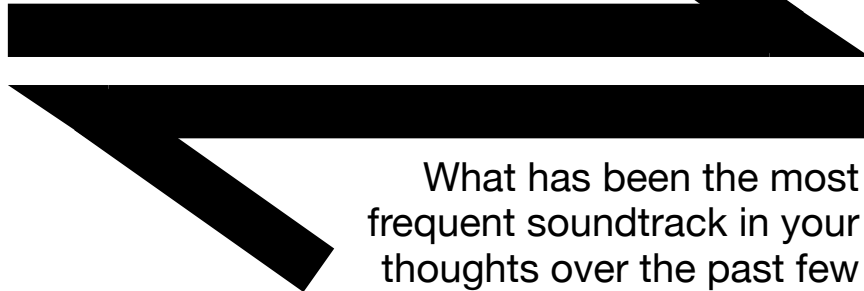
We hope to provide you with some questions which may be familiar or may be completely new. We call them "Compass Questions" because they help us to reevaluate our current direction based upon our understanding of the beginning and end of our journey. In considering these, perhaps you will remember old truths or find new answers as you consider them afresh.

Many of these questions were first formulated alongside those from the Conversational English Group in Ponferrada, Spain: namely Jonathan Templeton, Jodi Harrison, Crystal Grotzke, and many friends who took part in planning, leading, or participating in the yearly hikes on the Camino. Thank you to those who helped us all to think deeply!

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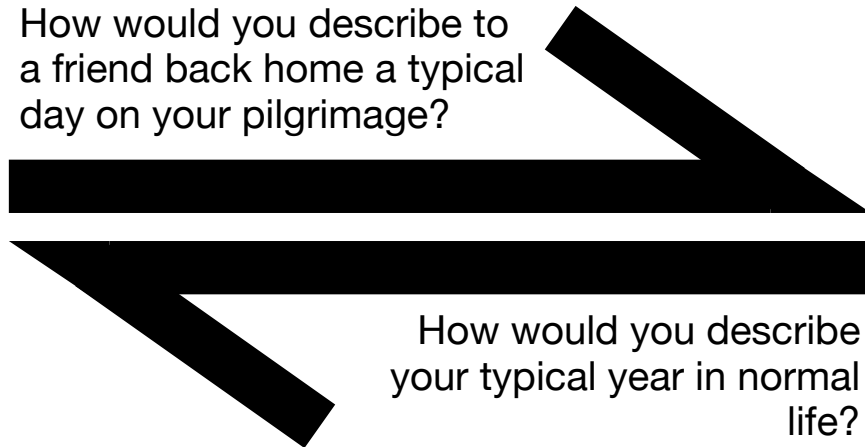
<sup>1</sup>Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes Translated by Harold North Fowler; Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb*, vol. 1 (London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1966)

What do you find yourself thinking about the most while you walk?



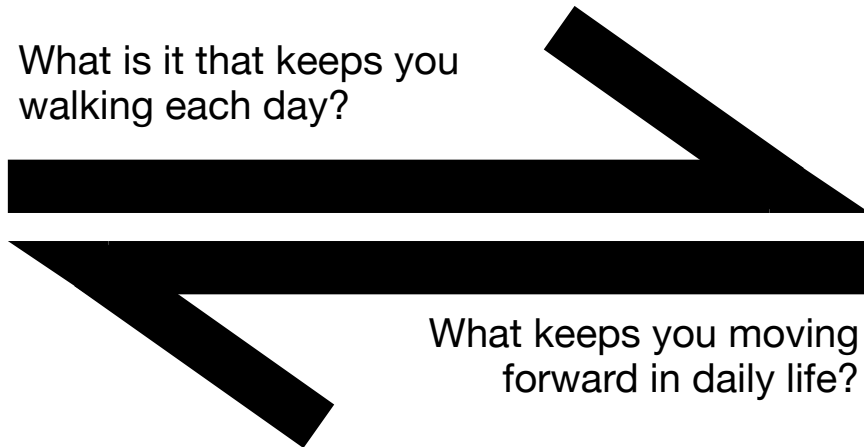
What has been the most frequent soundtrack in your thoughts over the past few years?

How would you describe to  
a friend back home a typical  
day on your pilgrimage?

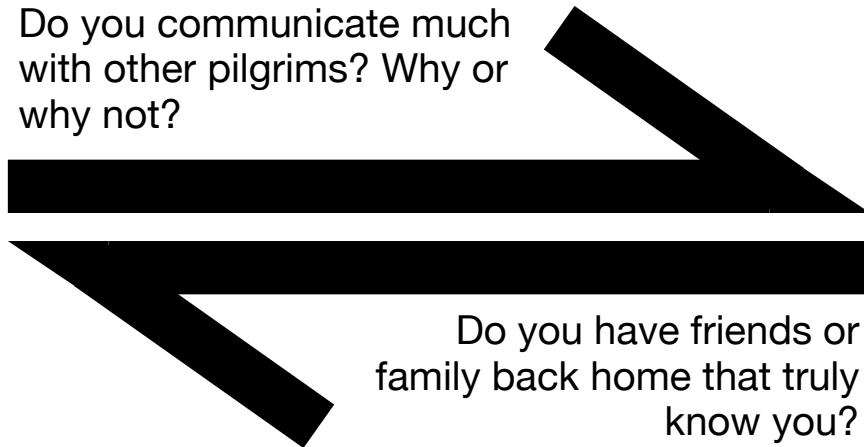


How would you describe  
your typical year in normal  
life?

What is it that keeps you  
walking each day?



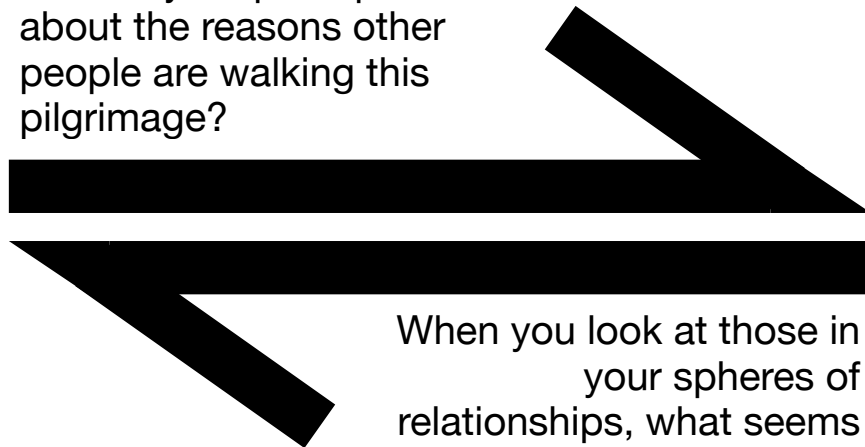
Do you communicate much  
with other pilgrims? Why or  
why not?



Do you have friends or  
family back home that truly  
know you?

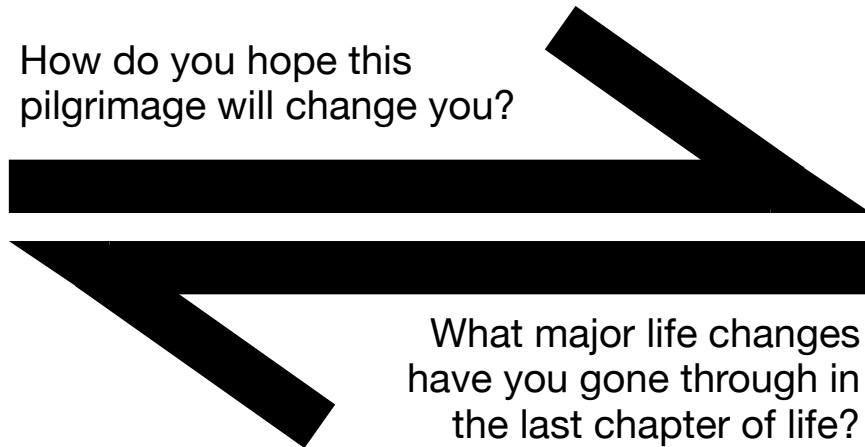


What is your perception about the reasons other people are walking this pilgrimage?



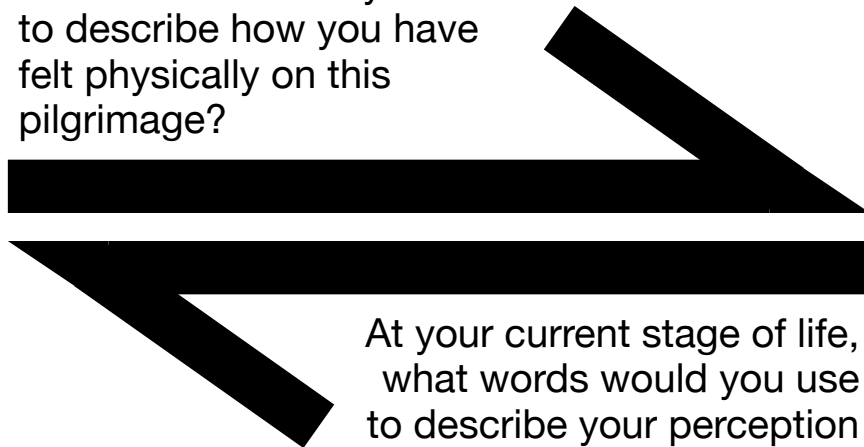
When you look at those in your spheres of relationships, what seems to be the common reasoning for living life the way they do?

How do you hope this pilgrimage will change you?



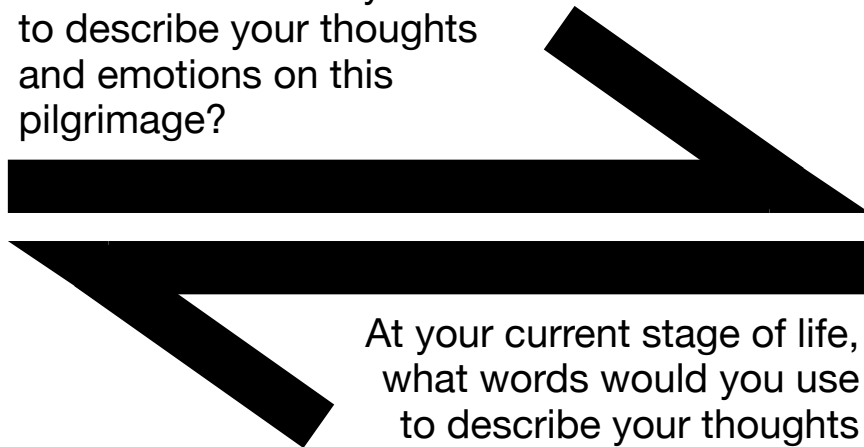
What major life changes have you gone through in the last chapter of life?  
What major changes would you like to make?

What words would you use to describe how you have felt physically on this pilgrimage?



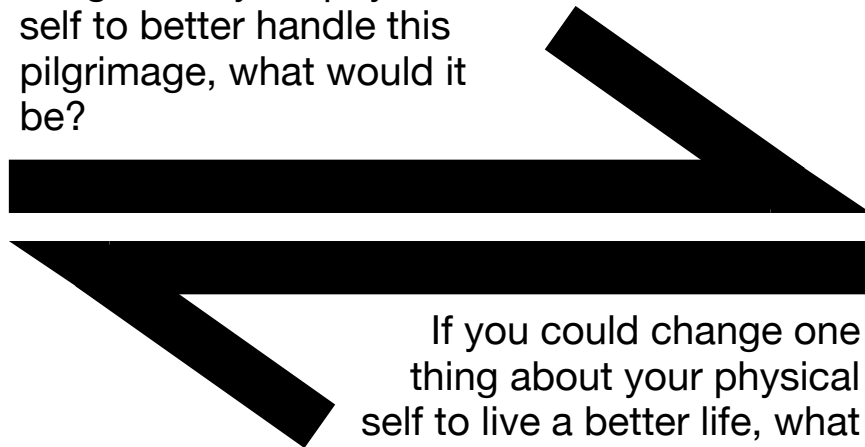
At your current stage of life, what words would you use to describe your perception of your physical self?

What words would you use  
to describe your thoughts  
and emotions on this  
pilgrimage?



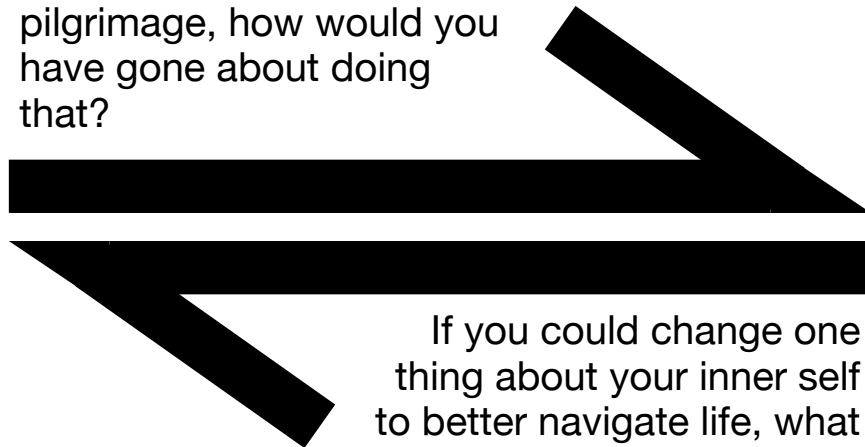
At your current stage of life,  
what words would you use  
to describe your thoughts  
and emotions?

If you could change one thing about your physical self to better handle this pilgrimage, what would it be?



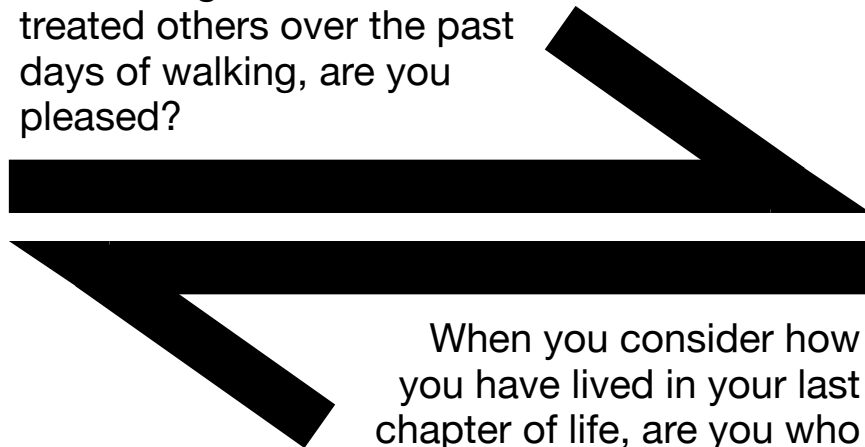
If you could change one thing about your physical self to live a better life, what would it be?

If you could have better prepared intellectually and emotionally for this pilgrimage, how would you have gone about doing that?



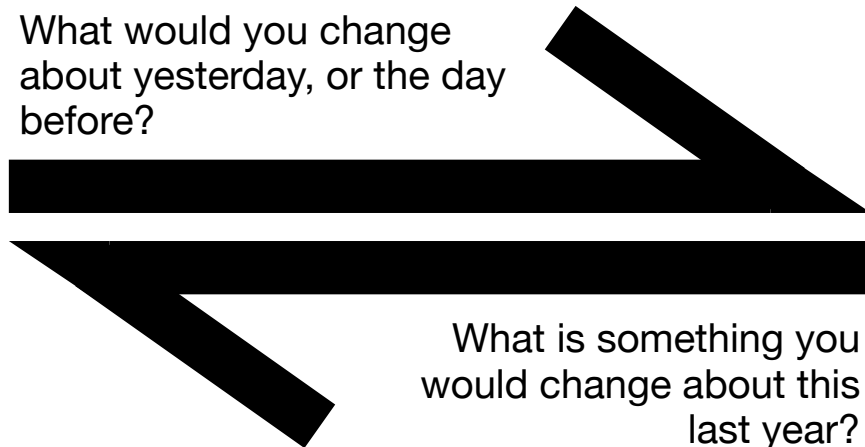
If you could change one thing about your inner self to better navigate life, what would it be?

When you consider how you have thought, acted, and treated others over the past days of walking, are you pleased?



When you consider how you have lived in your last chapter of life, are you who you want to be?

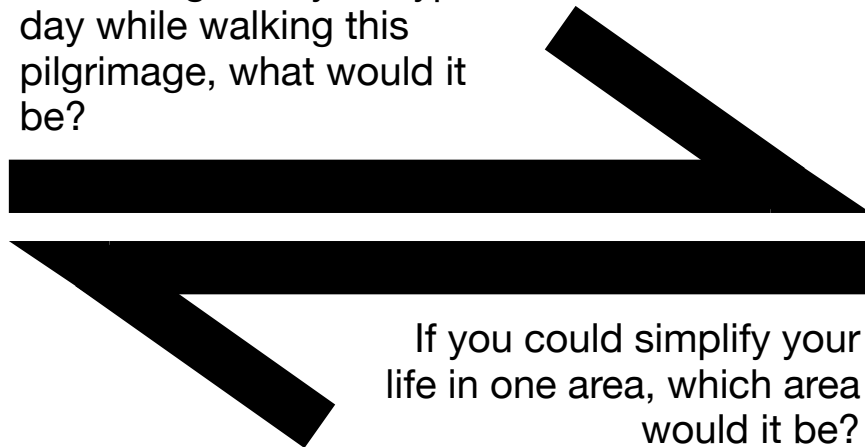
What would you change  
about yesterday, or the day  
before?



What is something you  
would change about this  
last year?

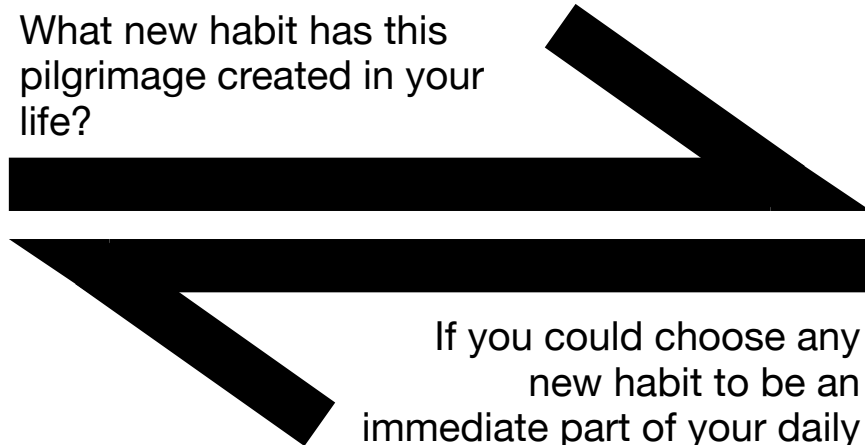


If you could simplify something from your typical day while walking this pilgrimage, what would it be?



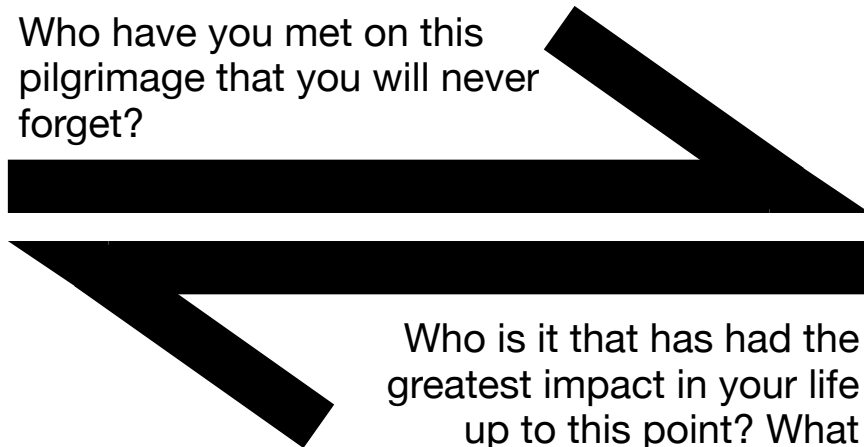
If you could simplify your life in one area, which area would it be?

What new habit has this pilgrimage created in your life?



If you could choose any new habit to be an immediate part of your daily life back home, what habit would you choose?

Who have you met on this pilgrimage that you will never forget?



Who is it that has had the greatest impact in your life up to this point? What about them made such a difference?

What do you find yourself  
worrying about while you are  
walking?



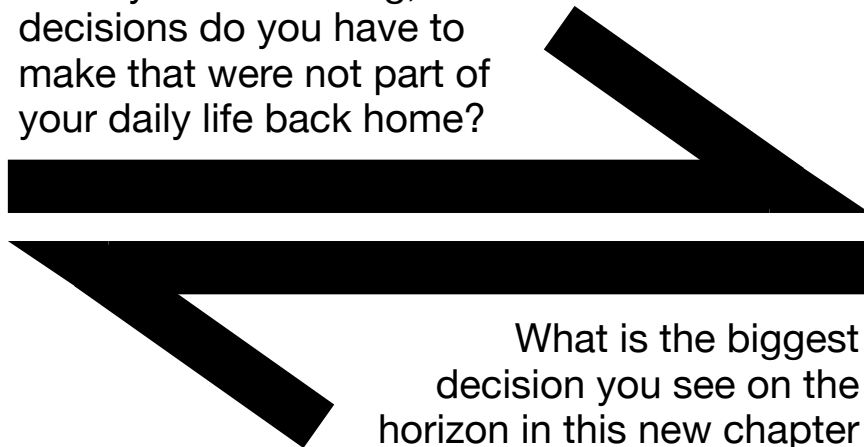
What uncertainty has gotten  
the most of your spare  
mental energy over the past  
years?

Have feelings of guilt arisen  
in your mind as you have  
been on this pilgrimage?



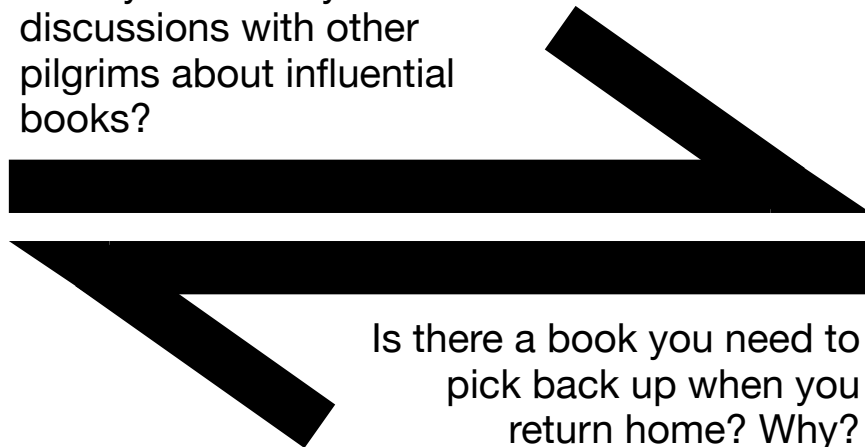
Where do you think guilt  
comes from? How do  
different people deal with  
guilt? How do you deal with  
it?

While you are walking, what decisions do you have to make that were not part of your daily life back home?



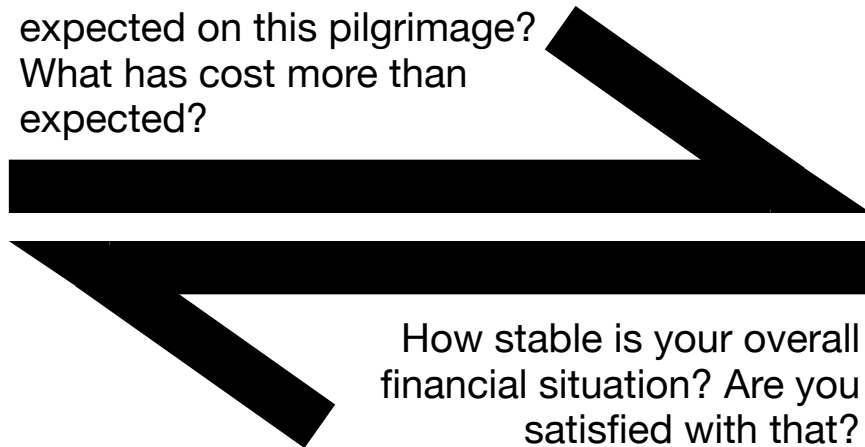
What is the biggest decision you see on the horizon in this new chapter of life?

Have you had any discussions with other pilgrims about influential books?



Is there a book you need to pick back up when you return home? Why?

What has cost less than  
expected on this pilgrimage?  
What has cost more than  
expected?



How stable is your overall  
financial situation? Are you  
satisfied with that?

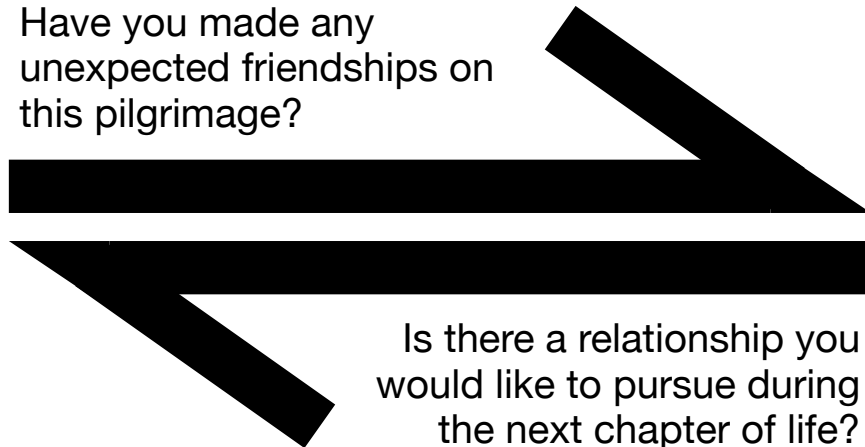


Have you had any conflicts  
with other pilgrims?



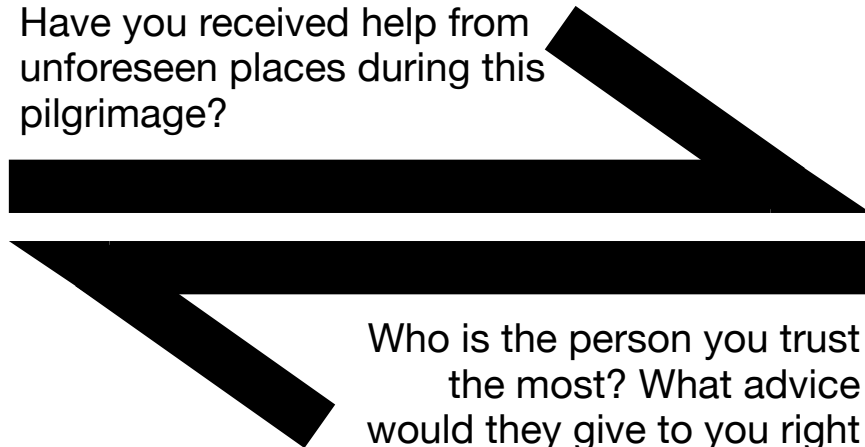
Is there someone in your life  
that you are trying to  
distance yourself from?  
Why?

Have you made any unexpected friendships on this pilgrimage?



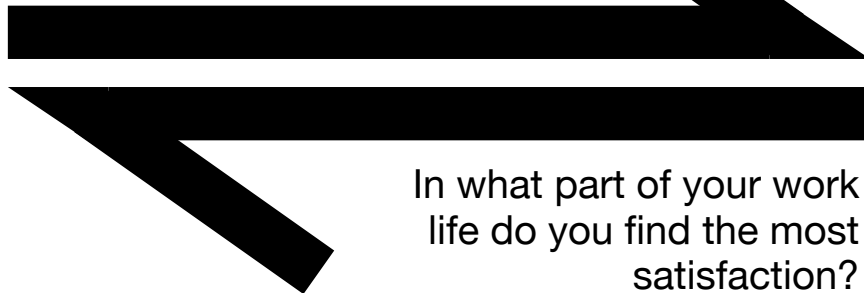
Is there a relationship you would like to pursue during the next chapter of life?  
How would you define a “healthy” relationship?

Have you received help from unforeseen places during this pilgrimage?



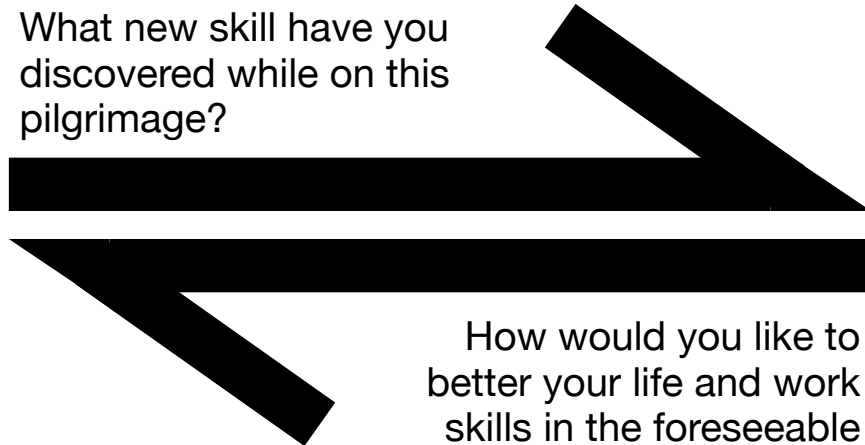
Who is the person you trust the most? What advice would they give to you right now about what you are considering in your upcoming chapter of life?

In what area of your pilgrimage experience are you particularly proud of yourself?



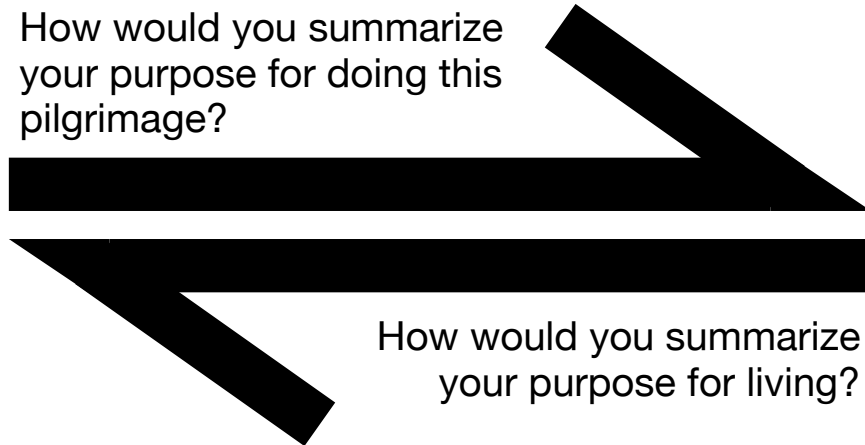
In what part of your work life do you find the most satisfaction?

What new skill have you discovered while on this pilgrimage?



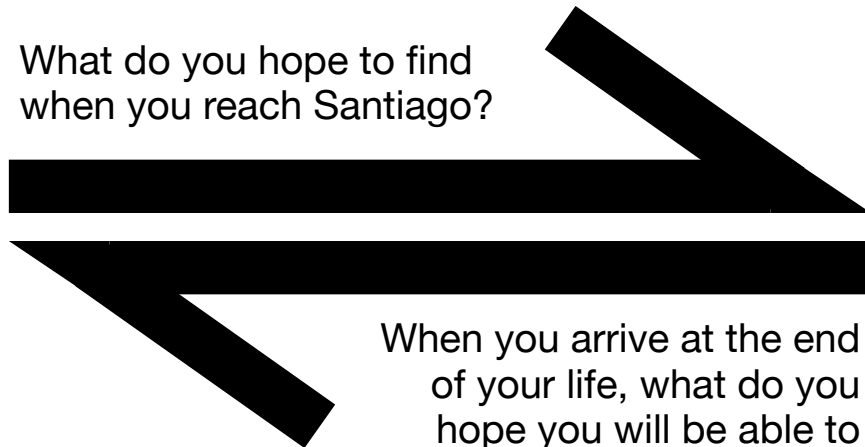
How would you like to better your life and work skills in the foreseeable future?

How would you summarize  
your purpose for doing this  
pilgrimage?



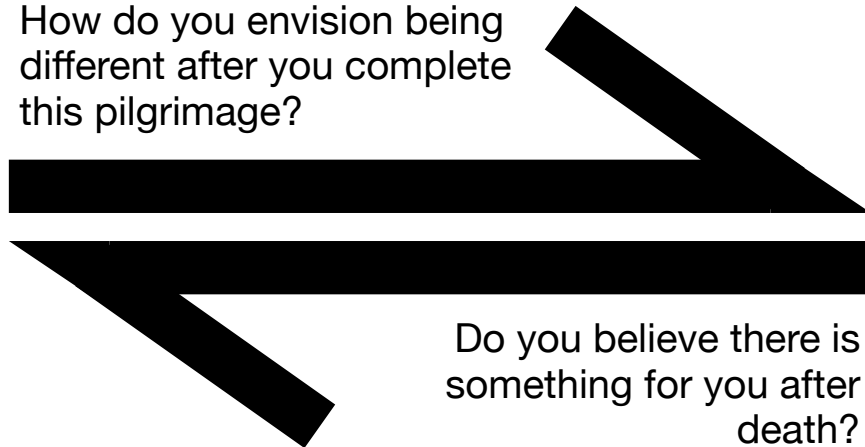
How would you summarize  
your purpose for living?

What do you hope to find  
when you reach Santiago?



When you arrive at the end  
of your life, what do you  
hope you will be able to  
say?

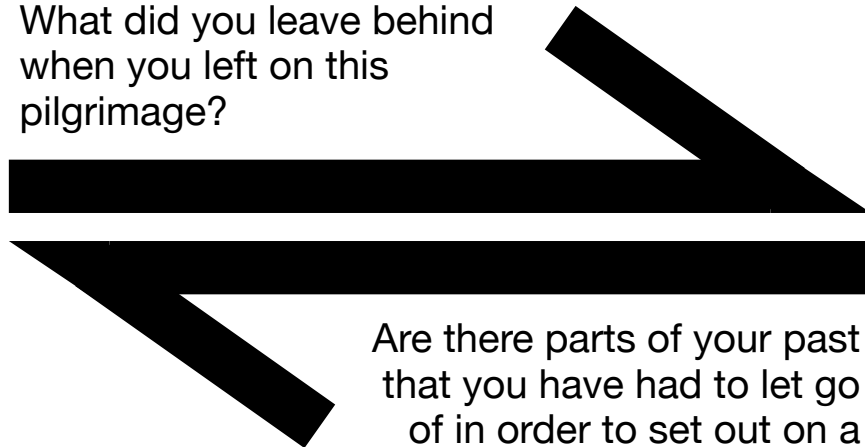
How do you envision being  
different after you complete  
this pilgrimage?



Do you believe there is  
something for you after  
death?

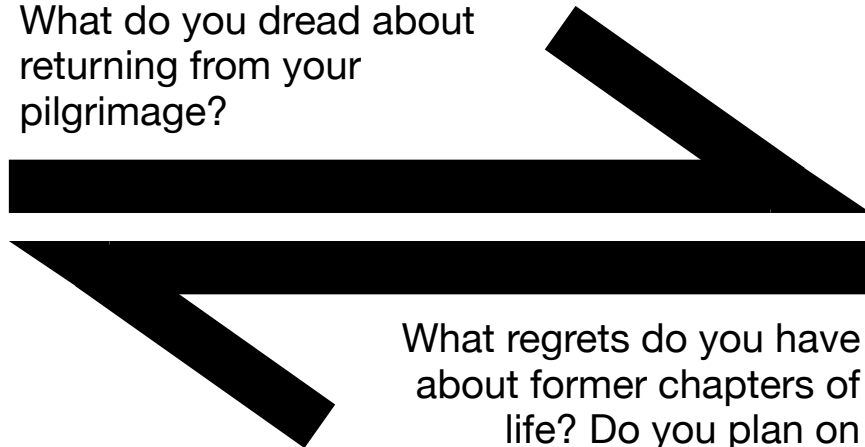


What did you leave behind  
when you left on this  
pilgrimage?



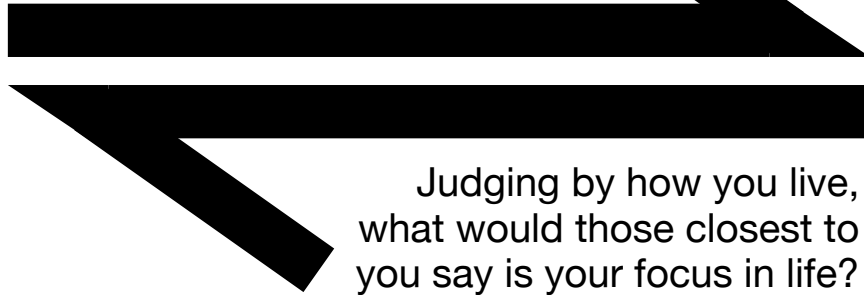
Are there parts of your past  
that you have had to let go  
of in order to set out on a  
different direction in life?

What do you dread about returning from your pilgrimage?



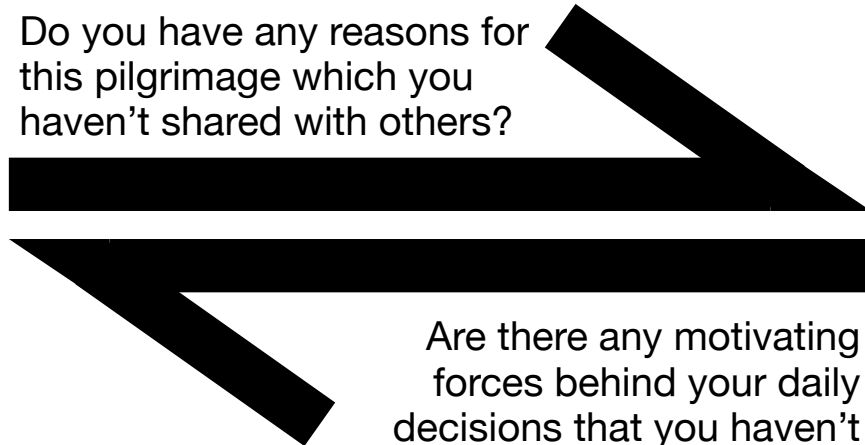
What regrets do you have about former chapters of life? Do you plan on addressing them? If so, how?

What reason for starting this pilgrimage did you give to your friends and family before leaving?



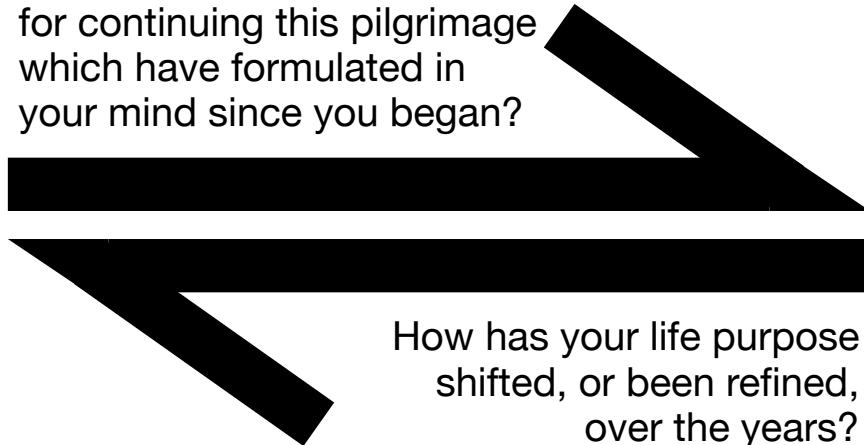
Judging by how you live, what would those closest to you say is your focus in life?

Do you have any reasons for  
this pilgrimage which you  
haven't shared with others?



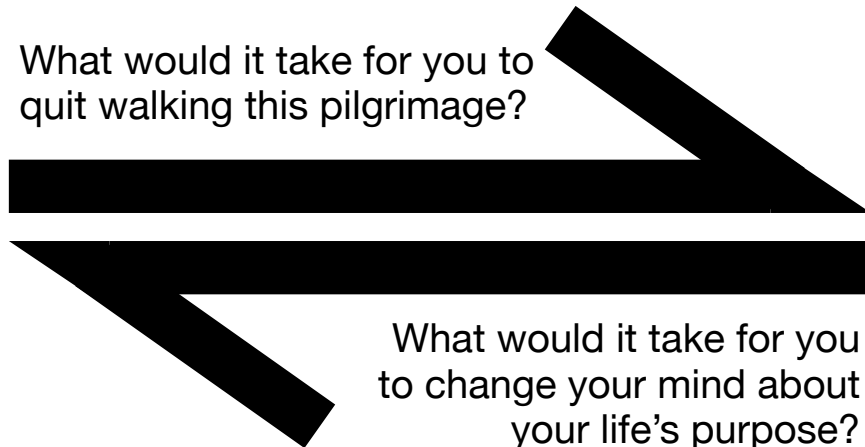
Are there any motivating  
forces behind your daily  
decisions that you haven't  
told anyone else about?

Have there been any reasons  
for continuing this pilgrimage  
which have formulated in  
your mind since you began?



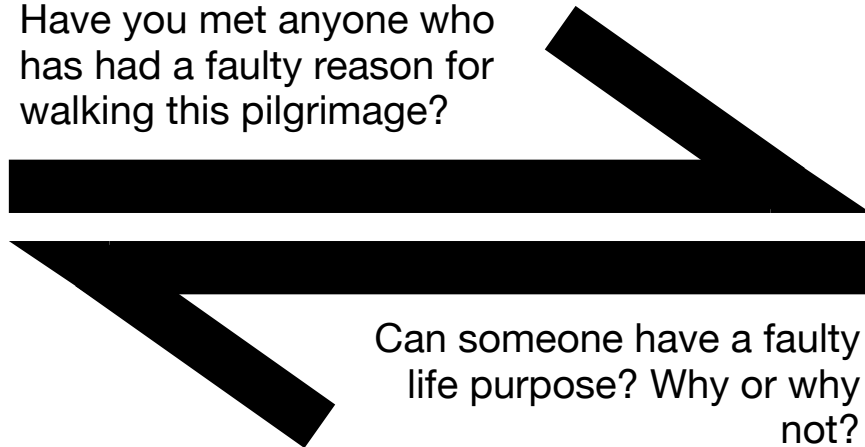
How has your life purpose  
shifted, or been refined,  
over the years?

What would it take for you to  
quit walking this pilgrimage?



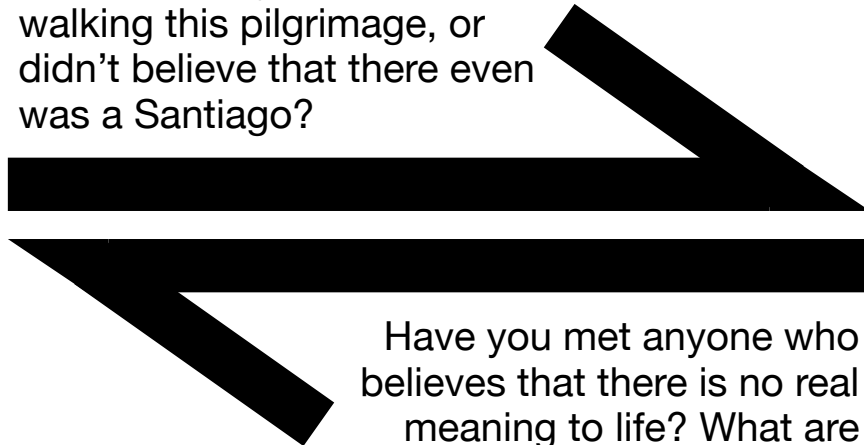
What would it take for you  
to change your mind about  
your life's purpose?

Have you met anyone who has had a faulty reason for walking this pilgrimage?



Can someone have a faulty life purpose? Why or why not?

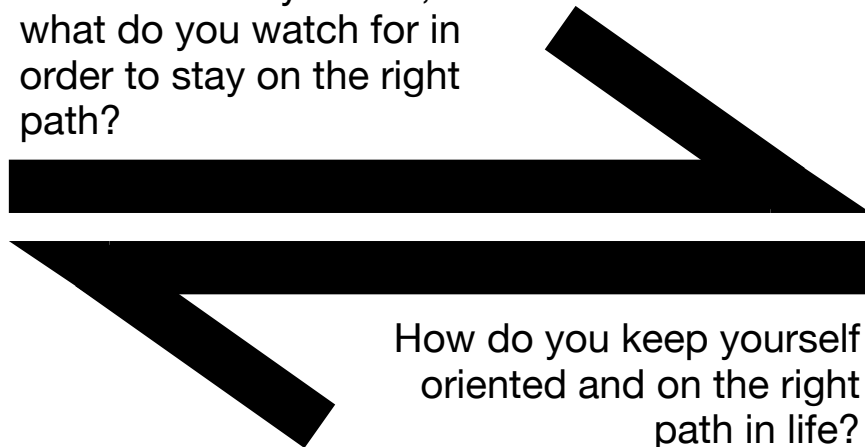
Have you met anyone who has absolutely no reason for walking this pilgrimage, or didn't believe that there even was a Santiago?



Have you met anyone who believes that there is no real meaning to life? What are your thoughts about it?

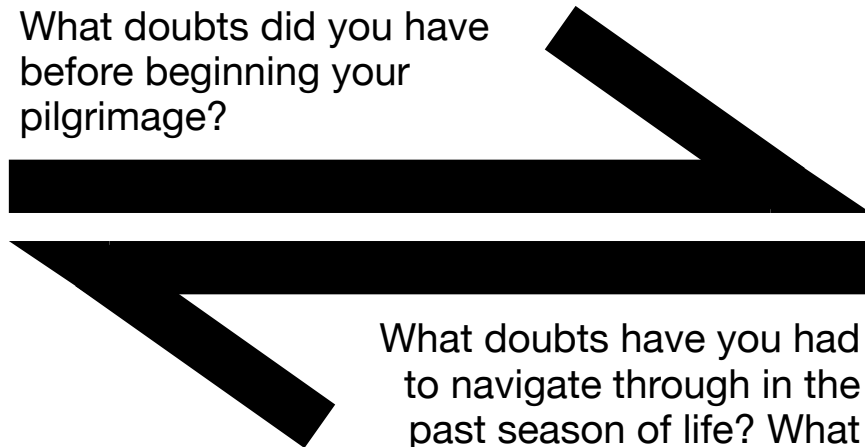


What tools do you use, or  
what do you watch for in  
order to stay on the right  
path?



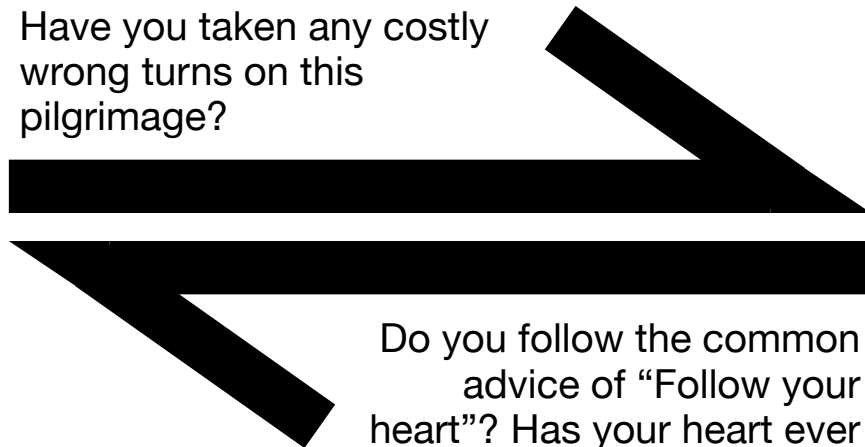
How do you keep yourself  
oriented and on the right  
path in life?

What doubts did you have  
before beginning your  
pilgrimage?



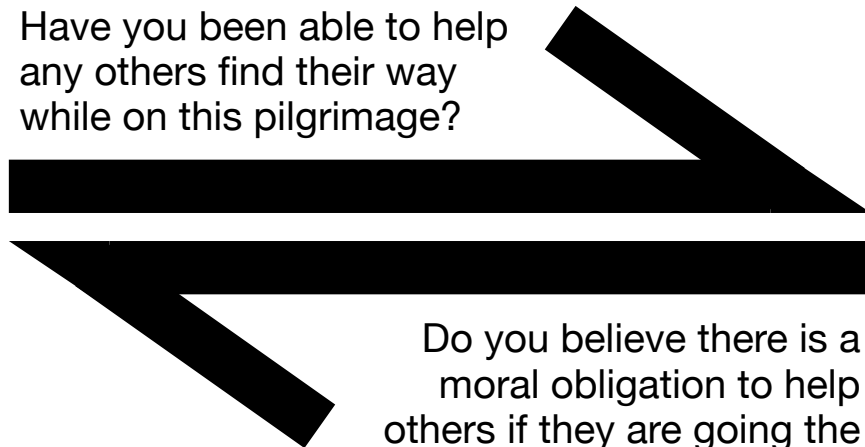
What doubts have you had  
to navigate through in the  
past season of life? What  
doubts are you dealing with  
right now?

Have you taken any costly  
wrong turns on this  
pilgrimage?



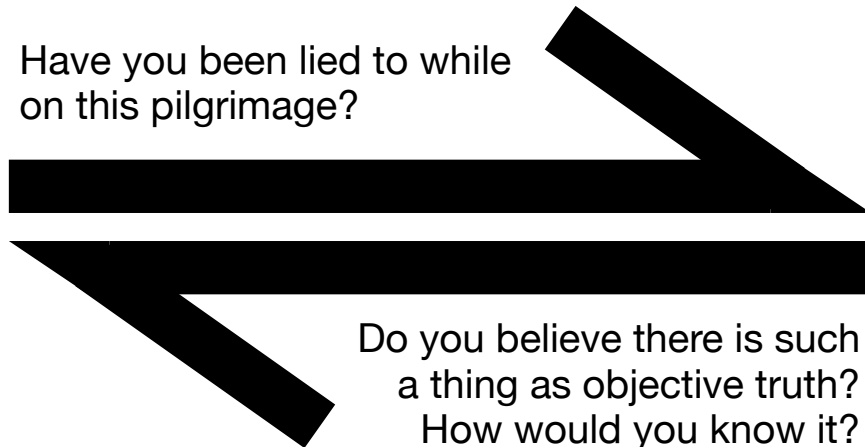
Do you follow the common  
advice of “Follow your  
heart”? Has your heart ever  
lead you astray?

Have you been able to help  
any others find their way  
while on this pilgrimage?



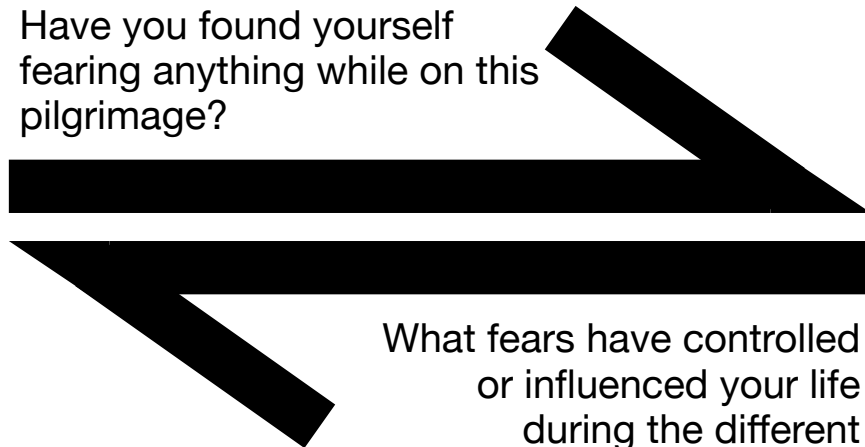
Do you believe there is a  
moral obligation to help  
others if they are going the  
wrong way in life?

Have you been lied to while  
on this pilgrimage?



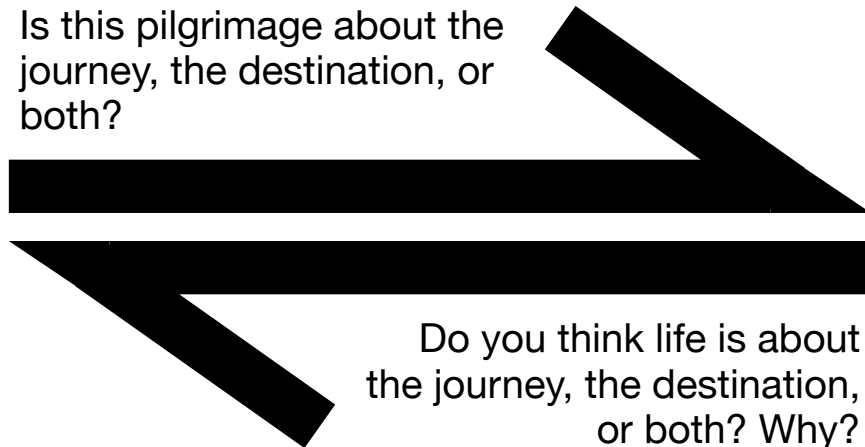
Do you believe there is such  
a thing as objective truth?  
How would you know it?

Have you found yourself  
fearing anything while on this  
pilgrimage?



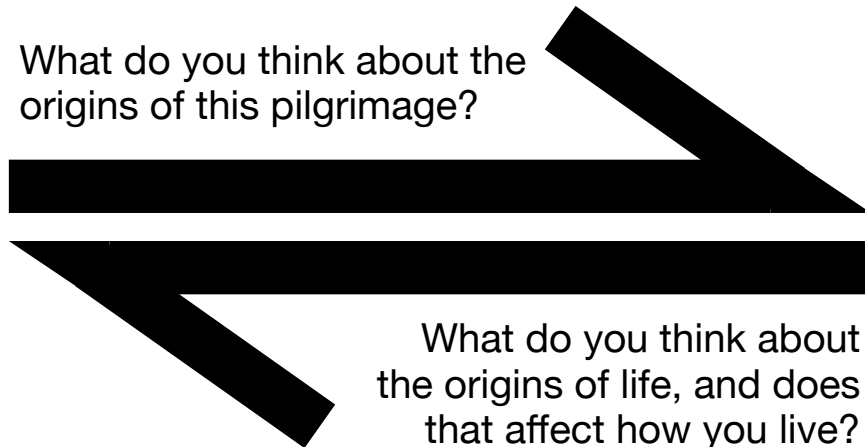
What fears have controlled  
or influenced your life  
during the different  
chapters of your life? Is  
there one that is the most  
frightening? How do you  
deal with those fears?

Is this pilgrimage about the journey, the destination, or both?



Do you think life is about the journey, the destination, or both? Why?

What do you think about the origins of this pilgrimage?

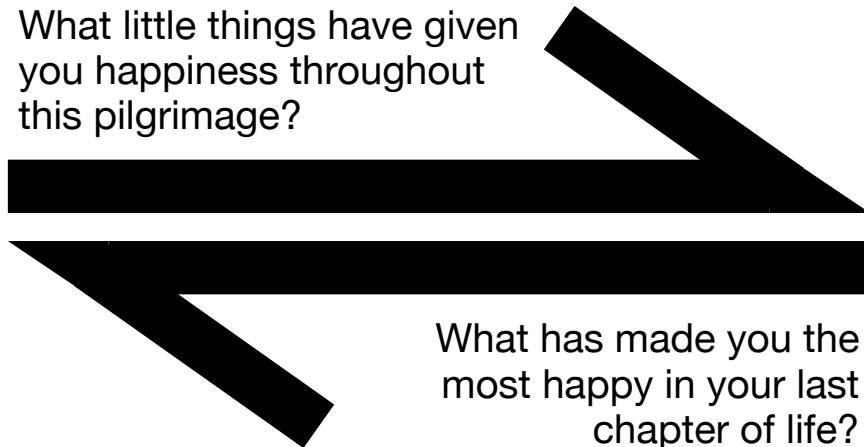


What do you think about the origins of life, and does that affect how you live?

For example: "Since we came from \_\_\_\_\_, we ought to live \_\_\_\_\_."

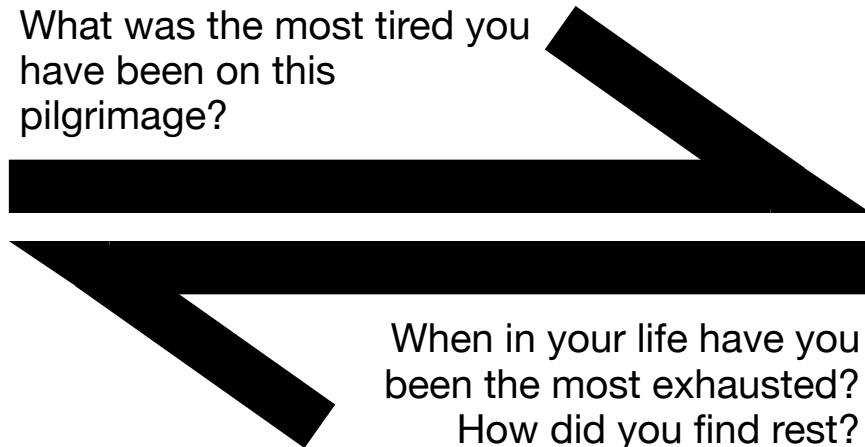


What little things have given  
you happiness throughout  
this pilgrimage?



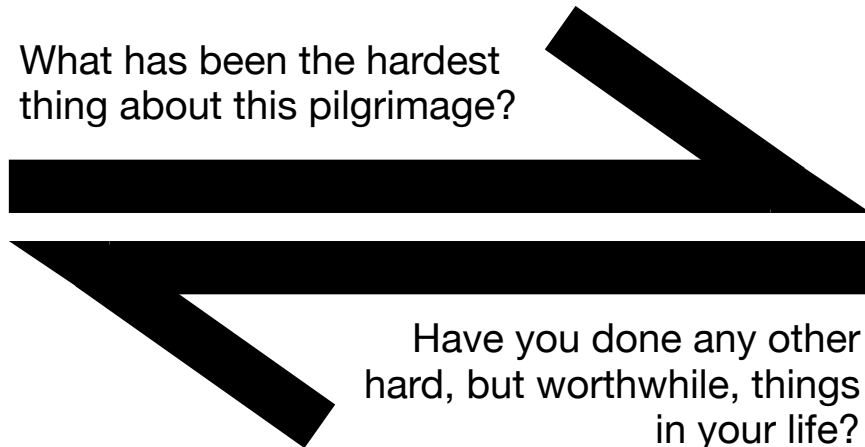
What has made you the  
most happy in your last  
chapter of life?

What was the most tired you  
have been on this  
pilgrimage?



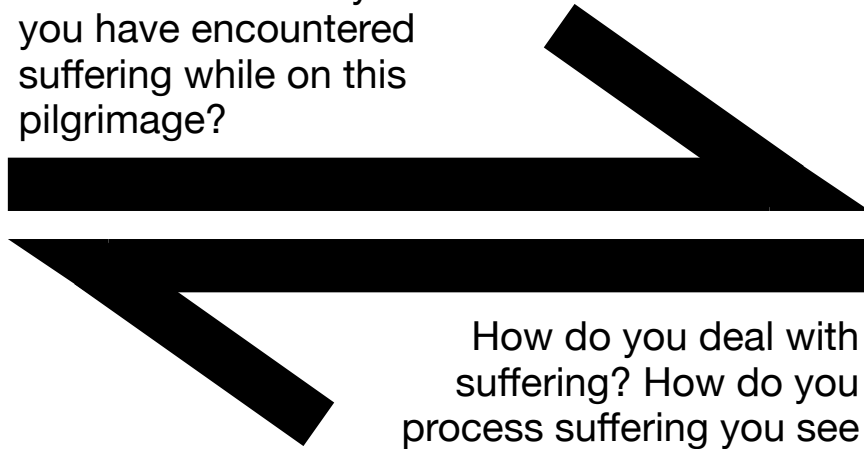
When in your life have you  
been the most exhausted?  
How did you find rest?

What has been the hardest  
thing about this pilgrimage?



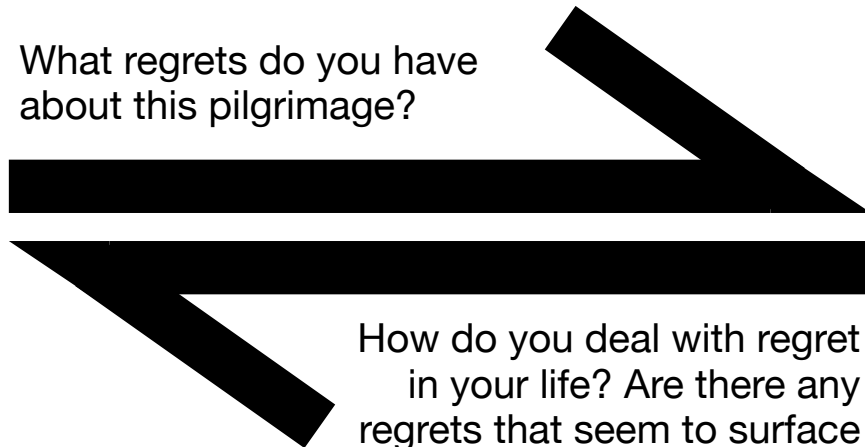
Have you done any other  
hard, but worthwhile, things  
in your life?

What are some ways that you have encountered suffering while on this pilgrimage?



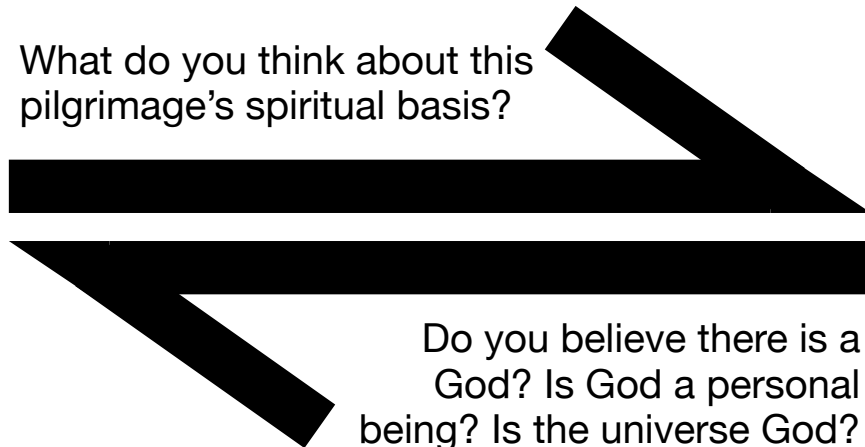
How do you deal with suffering? How do you process suffering you see on a global level?

What regrets do you have  
about this pilgrimage?



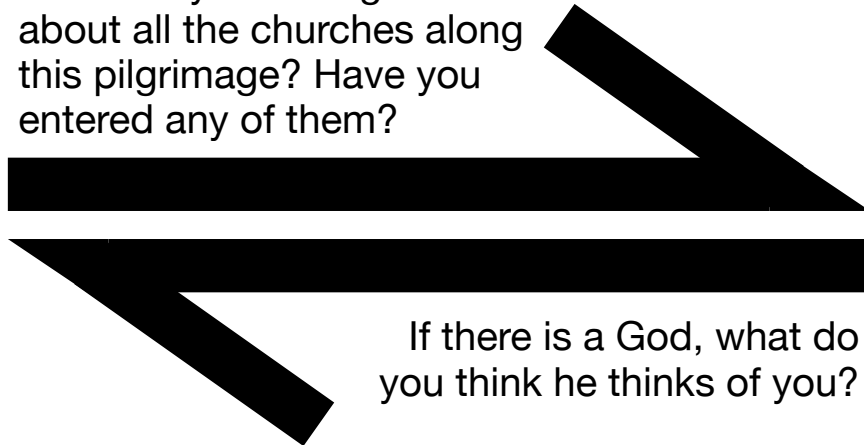
How do you deal with regret  
in your life? Are there any  
regrets that seem to surface  
regularly in your thinking?

What do you think about this pilgrimage's spiritual basis?



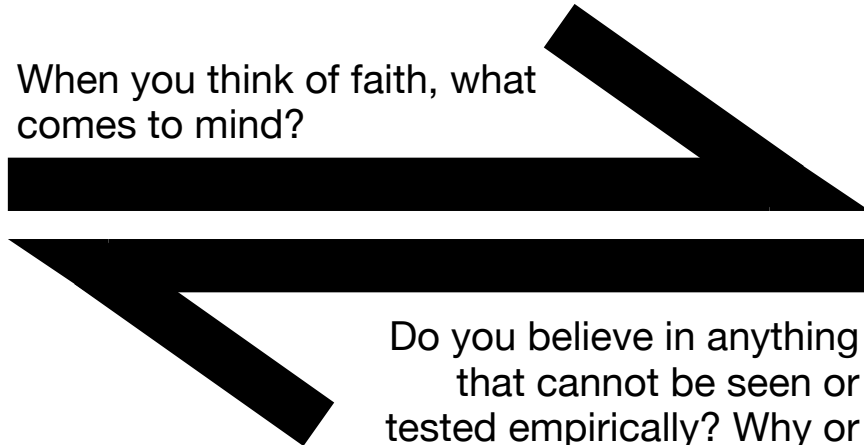
Do you believe there is a God? Is God a personal being? Is the universe God? Is the universe within God? How did you arrive at your conclusions?

What are your thoughts  
about all the churches along  
this pilgrimage? Have you  
entered any of them?



If there is a God, what do  
you think he thinks of you?

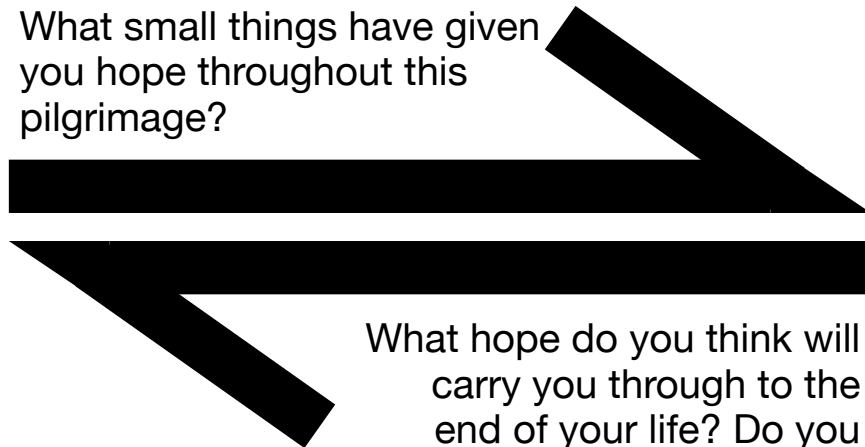
When you think of faith, what comes to mind?



Do you believe in anything that cannot be seen or tested empirically? Why or why not?

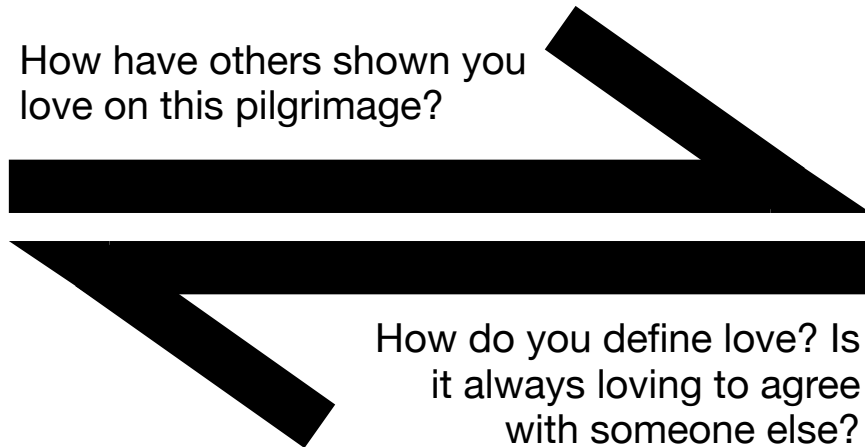


What small things have given you hope throughout this pilgrimage?



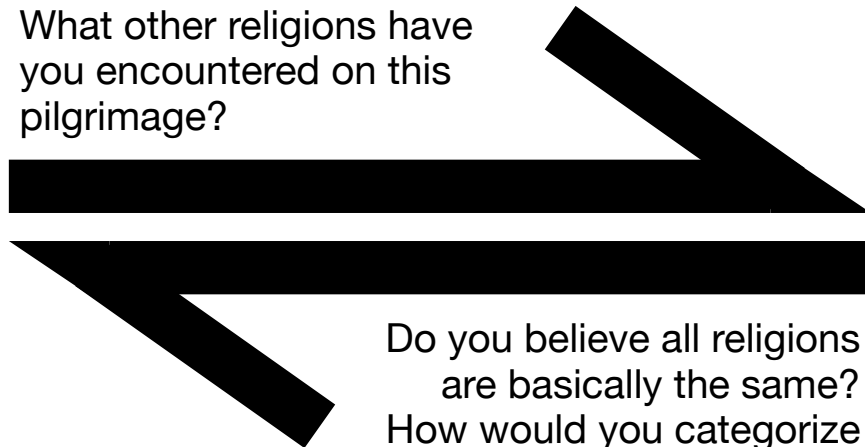
What hope do you think will carry you through to the end of your life? Do you have hope for an afterlife?

How have others shown you  
love on this pilgrimage?



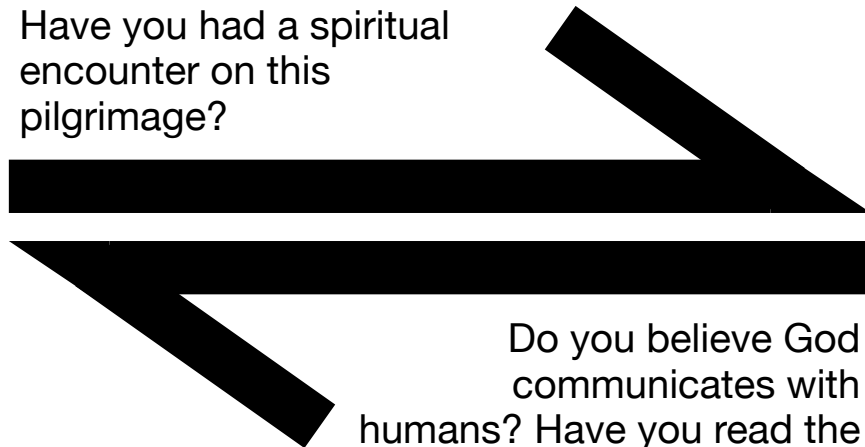
How do you define love? Is  
it always loving to agree  
with someone else?

What other religions have you encountered on this pilgrimage?



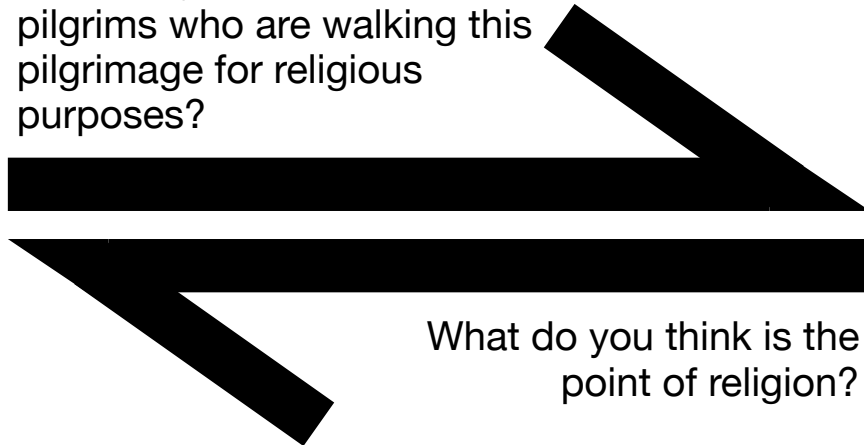
Do you believe all religions are basically the same?  
How would you categorize them?

Have you had a spiritual encounter on this pilgrimage?



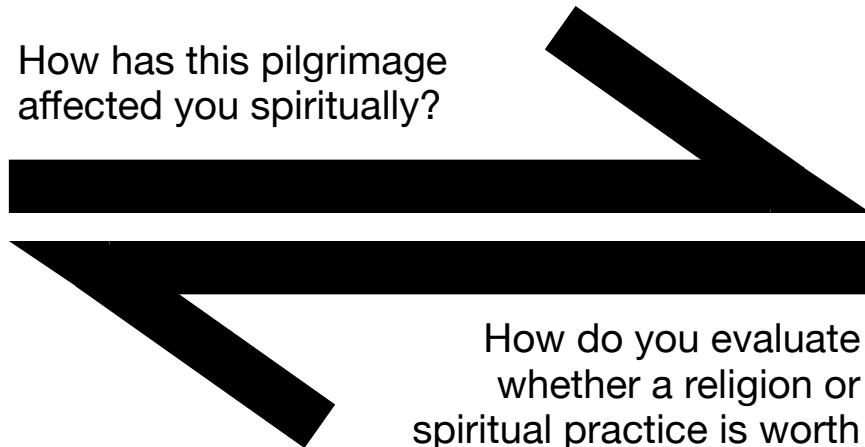
Do you believe God communicates with humans? Have you read the sacred texts of any religions? Why or why not?

What do you think of those pilgrims who are walking this pilgrimage for religious purposes?



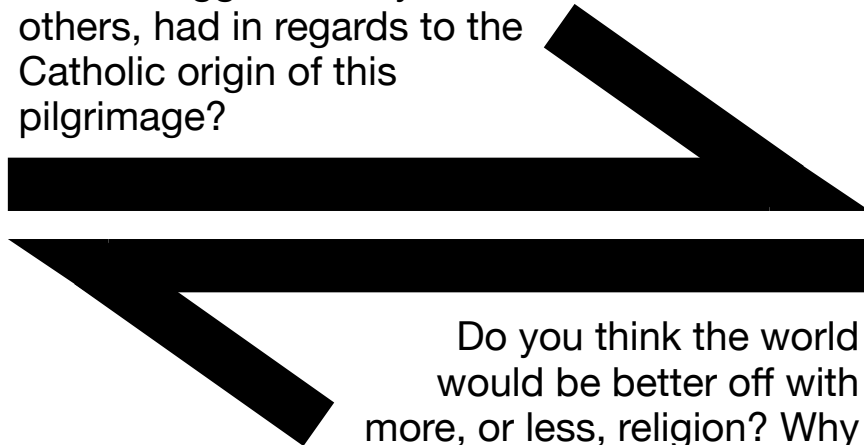
What do you think is the point of religion?

How has this pilgrimage  
affected you spiritually?



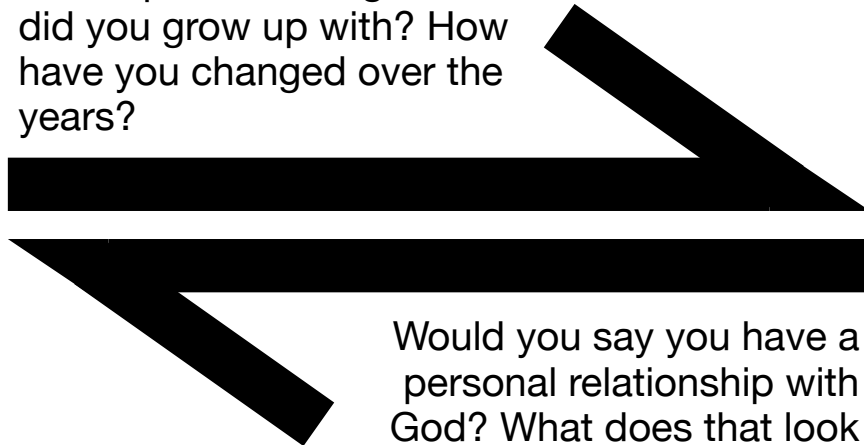
How do you evaluate  
whether a religion or  
spiritual practice is worth  
following or not?

What struggles have you, or others, had in regards to the Catholic origin of this pilgrimage?



Do you think the world would be better off with more, or less, religion? Why would you say that?

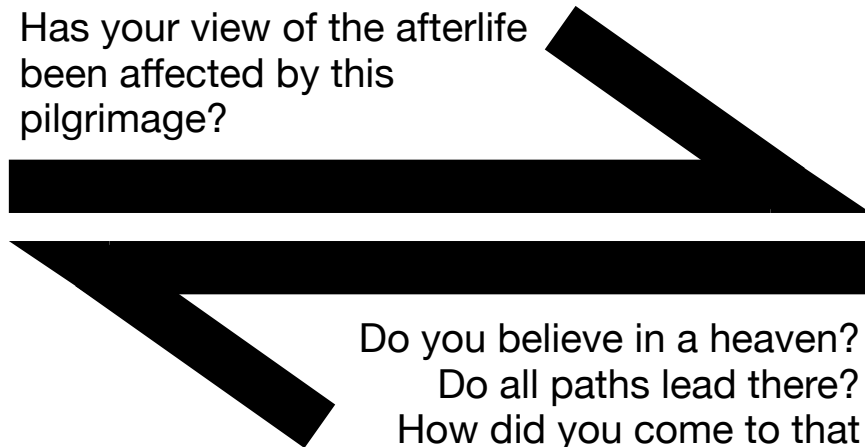
What spiritual background did you grow up with? How have you changed over the years?



Would you say you have a personal relationship with God? What does that look like?

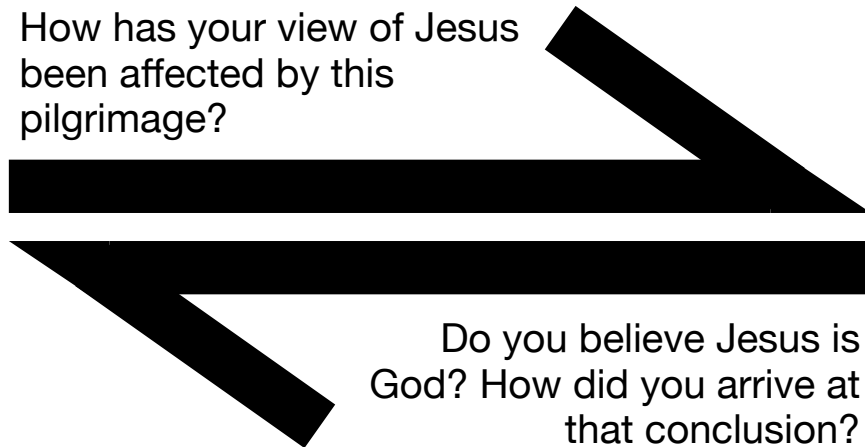


Has your view of the afterlife  
been affected by this  
pilgrimage?



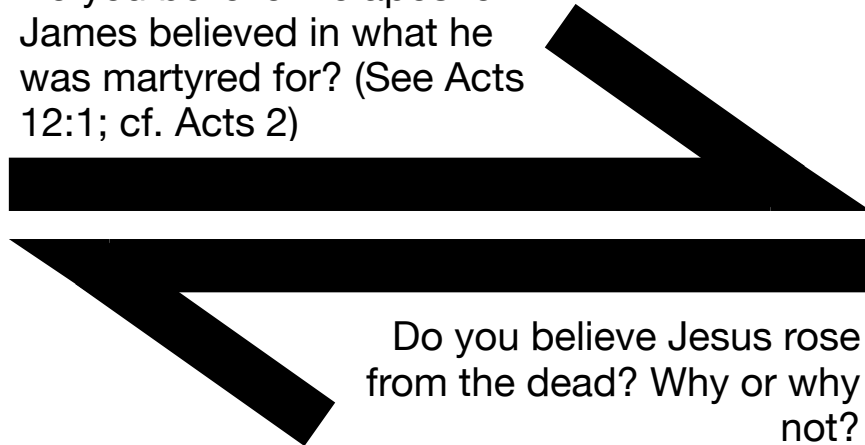
Do you believe in a heaven?  
Do all paths lead there?  
How did you come to that  
conclusion?

How has your view of Jesus  
been affected by this  
pilgrimage?



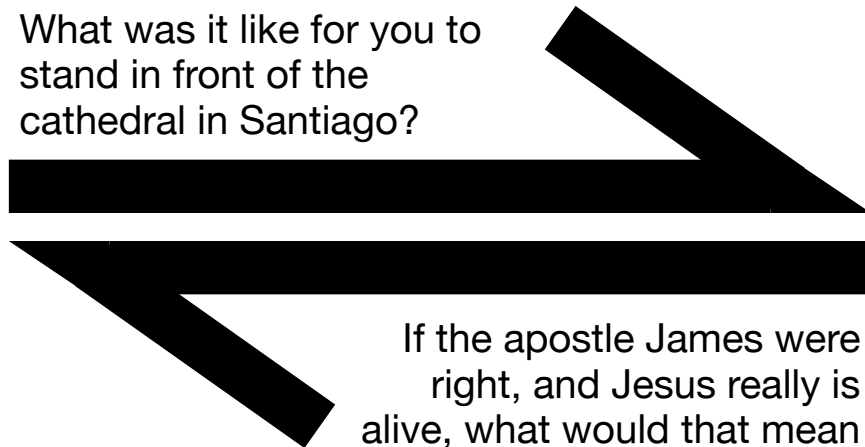
Do you believe Jesus is  
God? How did you arrive at  
that conclusion?

Do you believe the apostle James believed in what he was martyred for? (See Acts 12:1; cf. Acts 2)



Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? Why or why not?

What was it like for you to stand in front of the cathedral in Santiago?



If the apostle James were right, and Jesus really is alive, what would that mean for your life?

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## **About the author**

Seth is a follower of Jesus, husband to Crystal, father to three, and explorer of strange tales. He spends much of his time ministering in church planting and theological education in Spain, reading books, or running trails in search of adventures.

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