

Praying to Pray

Category: Prayer

written by David Coulter | October 1, 2016

I was 25 years old, a fourth-year medical student, and suffering from a severe depression. I was getting cognitive behavioral therapy (which was then fairly new) from a psychiatry resident at my medical school. I was a good patient and kept a journal describing my therapy. About a week after thinking seriously about suicide, I wrote this prayer in my journal:

“This is a prayer. I ask that mysterious Power, whose existence I have affirmed and whose manifestations I have sought with the deepest and strongest powers of my soul, to guide me in the right path, to show me a way to open up the gates of my soul, my true strength, so that I may give to those I love all that I am and not lose, by giving, the strength to give that love. Ground my strength in love and let my love shine through the affirmation of who I am, so that I may be forgiven and may more willingly forgive. For all my strength derives from the love I feel in that Power to whom I pray and the love I can give to those around me. Help me to pray again.”

I realized many years later that this prayer was, in fact, based on the Lord's Prayer, which I had recited many times in my life but never before fully understood. My prayer was answered, since I recovered from my depression and have remained well ever since. I learned to love my patients and their families and have received so much from them in return. So in some ways, my career has been one long prayer of love and gratitude.

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