



# Help, Thanks, Wow; The Three Essential Prayers

by Anne Lamott



I am now a fan of Lamott, for this book and for her New York Times best-seller, "Some Assembly Required." Both are easy reads and are easy to relate to.

In "Help, Thanks, Wow," she gives permission to herself and the rest of us to pray for anything ... some prayers may seem insignificant to the greater world, but if it is your pain or struggle, go for it. Everyone has to face struggle, pain and loss. It is universal. We live, and hopefully help others along the way, and then die.

Last year I lost two of my sisters, my Nana, a client that I worked with through the end of her life with cancer, and a colleague within a few months. Soon after that my husband lost his younger brother and his father.

Grieving is hard. I related to the passage in the book when Lamott is having a discussion with her grandson, who says, "I am mad at the angels." Lamott responds with "He's mad at death. I am mad at death, too. I've had it. I am existentially sick of death, and I absolutely cannot stand that a couple of friends may lose their children."

Her own willingness to ask for help, later be filled with gratitude and then allow some letting go to see other wow things still left is a wonderful three-step approach to life and loss. I loved her willingness to share her vulnerabilities with us. The very first step to any change is to stop and say, "I have a problem, and I need help, I cannot do this alone." In my office, I have the word "still" on the side of my file cabinet, which is my own reminder to slow down, as we cannot see clearly until we are still.

If you have a history of problems with religion, don't let that stop you from trying to find your own stillness in your life. Pray however you want; it changes us for the better and reminds us that we are not alone. ~ **Dr. Michele Winchester-Vega**



This is a quick, easy read injected with Lamott's very well-known humor. At times she tends to ramble, but it is her humorous injections that keep you turning the pages. The book focuses on three "simple" prayers that she has utilized through her own twists and turns of life: help, asking for assistance from a higher power; thanks, appreciating what we have that is good, and wow, feeling awe at the world around us.

What I enjoyed about the book is her nontraditional, do it anywhere, say anything approach to prayer — have a simple, heartfelt conversation with God, or any higher power, for that matter, as if he were sitting across the table from you. I enjoyed her open, honest, emotional approach to say whatever it is you need to — be it gratitude, appreciation, anger and/or frustration.

Lamott's belief is that there is no correct way to pray ... whatever you choose, "there is something to be said for keeping prayer simple" and, according to Lamott, it is all good. ~ **Suzanne Vizethann**

---



This book is simple, funny and thoughtful. We can ask God or anyone/anything you wish to for help. We all need help at some point in our lives. We can all say thanks for all the wonderful things that happen to us, and the world around us, because somehow these are gifts that shape/change our lives. And we can all say wow to something as simple as double rainbows to as magnificent as the birth of our children.

Three very thoughtful prayers with lots of anecdotes to demonstrate how simple life can be, even in the midst of chaos, if we were to use these. ~ **Nancy Arocho-Mercado**

---



I just loved this memoir on spirituality, life and death. I found it to be a comforting and relaxing nonsectarian spiritual read.

Lamott's voice is relevant to my own growth and development as a parent and grandparent, having to face frustrations, confusions and awe in my life. As I have aged, and have grown spiritual wings, I can so identify with these essential prayers.

As with the author, prayer changes me from being less afraid and more grateful, and less critical and more trusting. I am particularly drawn to take on the breath. Like Lamott, I use breath in my personal life, and in my clinical practice. One might hear me say "now don't forget to breathe" as one leaves my office.

Lamott writes about our needing to take a quiet deep breath after prayer. Please take a moment in your life to practice breathing and read about these three essential prayers. ~ **Diane Light-Spiro**