

From Suffering to Service

The path that led me into psychotherapy, grew out of experiences in nursing, chaplaincy, and theology, and was shaped less by achievement than by years of wrestling with suffering and meaning, and the question of how to be of service to others.

I have lived through situations that seemed meaningless, senseless, and confusing, that were deeply distressing and heartbreaking to move through. As difficult as many of those experiences were, I eventually began to experience them less as dead ends and more as lanterns — helping illuminate paths toward meaning, healing, and service. Facing those struggles eventually opened paths forward during times when I had convinced myself no path existed.



A little about how I got here:

My decision to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing emerged during a deeply painful period of life involving close exposure to addiction and its devastating impact on someone I loved. The pain from trying to navigate that period of my life brought me to ask *How can I serve?* The response that emerged for me was to pursue nursing, and to learn how to take care of people in a tangible way.

Around the same time, I also decided to complete the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, in Spain and Portugal, to physically, mentally, emotionally, and

spiritually process how my life had become so disconnected from alignment with my values.

The people I met on the Camino brought momentum to the inner healing I had been seeking. Coming home from that experience, I chose to make the intentional journey of returning to my faith and reconciling myself with my relationship with God.



I worked as both a geriatric nurse and a forensic mental health nurse - experiences that deepened my understanding of suffering, resilience, and the complexity of people's stories. During this time, I began a Master of Pastoral Studies. Psychotherapy studies complemented my nursing, but more so, it was about me delving deeper into understanding myself and making sense of how to deal with the past that so often clouded my present.

Having gone from being a client in therapy for decades to transitioning into the role of therapist, deeply shaped how I understand the therapeutic relationship. During those studies in psychotherapy, I once again asked, *How can I serve?*

What isn't visible within this brief telling of my story is the fear, emotional pain, confusion, and long periods of internal struggle that accompanied much of it. Over time, I came to better understand the impact chronic traumatic experiences had on my sense of self, emotional life and relationships. I also came to appreciate that many of the patterns we develop begin as attempts to protect ourselves, even if they later leave us feeling stuck, disconnected, or exhausted.

That understanding continues to shape the compassion, patience, and perspective I bring to my work as a therapist. Lived experiences inform my practise - as I am someone who brings authenticity, integrity, and lived understanding to what I communicate, model, and bring into sessions with you.

Completing my third degree, a Master of Divinity, was a response to a call of 25+ years to serve as a church minister. I continue to ask, *How can I serve?* - with the experiences and opportunities life continues to place before me.



Thank you for reading a bit about my life story. If you are seeking support in working toward meaningful change, my hope is that this sharing leaves you with a reminder - *hope is real, and you are worthy of it.*

If what you've read resonates with you, I'd be glad to hear from you.

With a heart for service and care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonio Siracusa'.

Antonio Siracusa, RP