

File: IAdmitYouToMITC

Criss: “Olga Averino’s swami said, ‘True power is to ask for things for other people.’”

21 June 2022

Here is a story about Jerrold Zacharias (“Zach”), an MIT Institute Professor, who brought me to MIT to help write a new generation of physics textbooks.

An influential friend brought a potential freshman to see Zach. Zach interviewed the candidate, then sent him off to visit a professor in another department.

Immediately after the candidate left his office, Zach called his professor friend and said, “I am sending to you a boy that I believe should be admitted to MIT as a freshman. The minute he leaves your office, please call to tell me what you think.”

Half an hour later Zach’s phone rang and his friend said that, indeed, the candidate seemed to be fully qualified. When the potential freshman entered his office, Zach told him, “I have just admitted you as a freshman to MIT.”

Then Zach called MIT Admissions: “I have just admitted XYZ to MIT as a freshman.” MIT Admissions gulped, looked into it, and agreed to let Zach’s admission stand.

Zach ended the story by reporting that the admitted student “did not embarrass me” during his undergraduate career.