Living the Serenity Prayer

se-ren-i-ty – the state or quality of being serene, calm, or tranquil; sereneness

The Serenity Prayer is a beautiful way of asking God to bring peace, calmness and serenity into your life. Recovering addicts and their families often recite this prayer and many live their lives by it. It is such a powerful way of life and seems a shame others don’t also apply this simple and basic principle to their lives.

In this hectic world, simple and basic principles that will help you obtain peace and serenity appeals to many. However, even a basic and very simple principle does not mean a quick and easy fix. You must reflect on your life, your actions, reactions, your strong points and your weak points no matter how painful and how troubling this process becomes. You must truly want to make changes to live a different style of life.

Begin by familiarizing yourself with The Serenity Prayer (short version). Break it down into three sections and review each one. Study the sections to determine their meanings. It is important to make a list of factors in your life that apply to each section.

You may find yourself repeating one or all of the steps for a specific factor. That’s okay. It shows you are serious about making a change and repeating a step will reinforce its meaning. You will gain a deeper understanding and likely become aware of more ways to apply it in your life.

Step 1: Understand the Meaning

Begin by reading The Serenity Prayer (short version) and consider what a person saying this prayer is asking God to grant him. Break it down into three sections and study each one. Ask yourself how each section applies to you and the benefit of pursuing its meaning. It is important to make a list of these factors as you review each section.

a) God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

b) Courage to change the things I can, and

c) Wisdom to know the difference.

Step 2: Admit and Accept Powerlessness

Select an item from your list or ask yourself what you are trying to change that you have no control over. Read the examples below and then read the first section of The Serenity Prayer again inserting an item from your list. The examples below will be used in all steps.

· God, grant me the serenity to accept I cannot make my spouse stop drinking,

· God, grant me the serenity to accept I am powerless to stop smoking,

· God, grant me the serenity to accept I cannot run my grown children’s lives,

· God, grant me the serenity to ___________ from your list ________________
This beginning step may be very difficult, especially if you do not realize your actions are self-destructing and efforts are fruitless. You may even see others as needing to change but do not believe you do. It may be easier to admit powerlessness before you are able to accept it.

On the other hand, you may feel relieved by admitting you cannot control or fix everything. There are so many more things you have no control over than there are things you do. Don’t fight a battle you cannot win. Give those things to God and ask for his guidance and help finding acceptance and peace.

Step 3: Find Courage and Confidence

Continue reading the next section of The Serenity Prayer in the same manner as Step 2 inserting the same selection from your list.

- Courage to set boundaries for my safety,
- Courage to alter my actions that trigger a desire to smoke,
- Courage to ask my children for their opinions and listen to their answers,
- Courage to _____ from your list__________________________

It takes courage to make personal changes. Perhaps there is peer pressure or a loved one may feel insecure with changes you make and try to influence your actions. They may become very angry if they feel insecure and not able to control the changes in the “dance” you have been doing together. If you know there is a positive change you have control to make, ask God for the courage and strength to follow through. If you cannot think of any positive changes you have the control to make, ask God to reveal them to you.

Step 3: Ask for Wisdom

Read the next section of The Serenity Prayer and insert your selection.

- Wisdom to recognize what my spouse must take responsibility for and what I have control over.
- Wisdom to know when I need to take control and when I need to give it to God.
- Wisdom to recognize when I am trying to control my children’s lives.
- Wisdom to _____ from your list__________________________

It can be very confusing to determine what you have control over and what you need to leave to God, especially if you have been in the “fixer”/controlling role for an extended period of time or if you are modeling a parent’s behavior from childhood which is now an ingrained behavior. Following is an exercise to help with this step.

Ask yourself the following:

a) Is my motive to manipulate? If yes, stop. You are trying to control the other person.

b) Am I trying to get even with someone else? If yes, stop. You are trying to control that person.

c) Am I demanding another to change? If yes, stop. Asking is okay but demanding is controlling.
d) Am I doing this to protect myself? If yes, continue. Your safety is top priority.

e) Am I setting a boundary? If yes, continue. Boundaries are a way of protecting yourself.

Step 4: Practice

Repeat the above steps for more items on your list. If you are having trouble maintaining a step, repeat it as often as needed to feel comfortable. You may find yourself repeating a step weeks or even months later. That’s okay and normal.

Anytime you are faced with challenges, insecurities, or feel angry recite The Serenity Prayer and apply it to your current situation. It will soon become a natural way of life. Your life will become calm, peaceful and serene.

Tips:

1. Use the short version of The Serenity Prayer.

2. Separate the prayer into three sections and methodically review each section for content and meaning. Don’t rush this process!

3. It is important to make a list of items in your life that fit in each of the three sections.

4. Practice inserting one of the items on your list into The Serenity Prayer

5. When you find yourself stressed, angry or depressed, recite the Serenity Prayer and ask yourself if you are trying to control something you have no control over.

6. Keep referring to the Serenity Prayer for day-to-day issues, challenges and insecurities and it will soon become a natural way of thinking and living.

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Serenity Now! How the Serenity Prayer Can Make You Happier (With or Without God)

Sean Morrow

Pick out a sadness; one of those things in your mind – usually a result of something outside your mind – causing you to be less happy. Look at that sadness, whatever it is, and think about what causes it, what external struggle is manifesting itself as sadness in your mind.

Think: Can you change it? I mean that question in two ways and I mean ‘it’ in two ways: Can you change the external thing making you sad? And can you change your sadness with regard to that thing?

How to Practice the Serenity Prayer

Cloaked in uncertain origins, but usually attributed to Christian theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, the Serenity Prayer can help provide direction for individuals who find themselves baffled by life’s more troubling circumstances. It is the guiding principle of Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step recovery programs, but anyone can practice the Serenity Prayer. Practicing the Serenity Prayer means applying the principles revealed in the prayer’s three simple verses: serenity and acceptance, courage and change, and wisdom and knowledge.
Instructions

Recite with prayerful attention the Serenity Prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Examine any troubling issues in your life. Begin with the first verse. The first word, "God," means that you are looking outside of your own perceptions for divine guidance. Realize that you may be puzzled by the answers. Believe that you are on a path to freedom and peace of mind.

Apply the principle of the first verse to your problem. Determine what you cannot change. If you have received a negative health report, for example, the answer may be that you cannot change, in the present moment that you are ill. Wishing and praying cannot change that, but you should look for a way to go forward and not get lost in your troubles and fears. When you accept that you are ill, you can begin to take action toward wellness.

Identify the aspects of your problem that are within your power to change. Perhaps you have an outstanding bill. Instead of avoiding the phone and the mailbox, gather your courage and call the company. Set up payment arrangements. You cannot change that you have the debt, but you can change how you handle it. The relief you will feel is serenity.

Find the wisdom to "know the difference." Often, confusion about what you can change and what is beyond your power is a source of frustration and irritation. Think about a time when you tried to get someone to do something he would not do. You did not have the power to force the person to do what you wanted. That does not mean you were helpless in the situation. You did have the option--the power--to change your attitude. Sometimes, peace of mind comes from just moving on with your life, knowing that beating your head against a stone wall only leaves you bloody, metaphorically speaking. "The wisdom to know the difference" liberates you from useless endeavors.

Read more: http://www.ehow.com/how_5960420_practice-serenity-prayer.html#ixzz2gu1BX6tz

How to use the serenity prayer in everyday life

"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference".

Start with the identification of what problems you are experiencing.

Categorize problem(s) into "Things I can change" and "Things I cannot change"

Accept the things I cannot change: There are many things we cannot change, such as past behaviors or decisions. Accepting them for what they are may be difficult but necessary. Ex. If you made a bad decision, you cannot go back in time to change it, you will have to accept it.

Accepting it means you acknowledge the mistake and take responsibility for that action. Then you accept that it is done and cannot change the action but can try to move past this error by correcting the consequences that are occurring now or will occur. Or simply work on being better for that day.

Note: If it does relate to addiction, as in the 12 step program, it is an acceptance that using caused significant problems and the acceptance of the consequences that occurred because of the use.
Courage to change the things I can (change): You may not be able to change the past, but you can change what you do in the future. ex. If you over spent on an item or an activity-you cannot go back and change this decision, but you can budget to compensate or take on an extra shift, etc.

Courage to change helps to redirect energy onto what to do with your situation, instead of worrying on what happened. Many people become consumed with negative feelings and feel helpless with their situation. This statement asks for strength to make the necessary changes.

In order to make changes, identify what can be changed and create a plan on how you will make this change. Plan needs to be very specific in action and time frame. (you can always go back and edit plan if necessary)

Courage to know the difference: This is the key. Do not waste time over the things that are already done. You can be sad, sorry, make amends, but focus your energy on what you want to change and how you are going to complete that task.

Read more: http://www.ehow.com/how_4446582_use-serenity-prayer-everyday-life.html#ixzz2gu1tQTSM

How to Use the Words of the Serenity Prayer

By Ellis Martin, eHow Contributor

Instructions

Speak the words out loud. Simply thinking about the prayer will not be as effective as speaking the words of the serenity prayer. Speaking requires a higher degree of mental activity and focus; this simple process has been shown to induce a higher level of absorption and understanding.

Say the prayer not just in times of struggle, but in times of relative calm. Speak the words every day when you wake up and before you go to sleep. Through daily reminders and frequent utterances, the meaning of a prayer can become thoroughly embedded in our consciousness.

Apply the prayer to your life by replacing its words with difficult elements in your life. If, for instance, you are struggling with alcoholism, use that challenge in your prayer. "Being an alcoholic is something that I cannot change," you might say. "Grant me the serenity to accept my disease." This will add focus to your prayer and allow you to apply its power to your struggles. Achieving this serenity is difficult, of course, but accepting its incontrovertible nature is the first step.

Find the things in your life that you can change and use those elements in your prayer. For instance, you might say, "I have the power to stop drinking. Grant me the courage to change this behavior." Now that you have focused on a challenge you are able to overcome, you can begin to find ways to change the behavior. Reach out to peer groups, receive counseling, and find a new new hobby; when you set your mind to it, you can turn your life around for the better.

Separate in your mind the things you can change and the things you cannot. This is the final phrase of the prayer, where you develop the wisdom to know the difference between unchangeable forces and achievable goals. Acquiring this wisdom and clarity of thought is challenging, but it is an essential aspect of the serenity prayer. Brainstorm ways you can tackle a problem; if you can think of no solutions, or your only solutions involve drastically altering the behavior of another individual, this challenge may be something you cannot change. If you can self-identify behaviors that have led to your challenge, you have likely found a struggle you can overcome.

Read more: http://www.ehow.com/how_5709149_use-words-serenity-prayer.html#ixzz2gu2as04o