

## **The Serenity Prayer -- Striking a balance between acceptance and change**

*God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can, and  
Wisdom to know the difference.*

Despite its brevity, the Serenity Prayer encapsulates the principles of the first 3 steps, expresses the central problem of addiction and prescribes the solution. The principles of surrender and acceptance in step 1 are illustrated in the first line: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change." "The courage to change the things I can" is part of the second step: doing things differently to change the outcome from insanity to sanity. In the third step we acquire discernment: "the wisdom to know the difference." In this step, we become convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. We seek to act with maturity and responsibility and trust God rather than our self-centered will. When we realize the connection between the Serenity Prayer and the first three steps, it becomes a powerful tool for recovery in our lives.

### **WRITTEN INVENTORY**

Write down your definition of each word in the prayer. Then look up each word individually in the dictionary and write down what you learn about the difference between what you thought it meant and the dictionary says it means.

Define:

Grant

Serenity

Accept

Change

Courage

Wisdom

***God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change***

What does this phrase mean to me?

What areas in my life would I like to change but know I cannot?

***Courage to change the things I can, and***

What does this phrase mean to me?

What in my life can I change, even if it would be difficult?

What CAN I really control?

***Wisdom to know the difference***

What does this phrase mean to me?

What is an example of “the wisdom to know the difference?”

**Wrap up questions**

What affects serenity?

Do you know anyone who has serenity?

Why/how do you think she achieved this goal?

Does serenity come from situations outside us or from somewhere inside ourselves?

Are there differences between serenity and happiness?

**The Serenity Prayer Explained**  
**Adapted From “Alcoholism & Spirituality”**

GOD: Saying this word, am I admitting the existence of a consciousness or of a Higher Power which is greater than I am?

GRANT: Saying this second word, am I admitting that this Consciousness or High Power is able to provide and give to me and others?

ME THE: I am asking for myself so that others will be helped.

SERENITY: I am asking for calmness, composure and inner peace in my life which will enable me to transcend my ego, and conduct myself with integrity, honesty and love.

TO ACCEPT: I am resigning myself to conditions as they are right now. I am living in the now, the present moment.

THE THINGS: I accept without judgment the conditions and the circumstances of my life as they are.

I CANNOT CHANGE: I cannot control or change what happens to me or to others.

COURAGE: A quality which enables me to deal with the problems and the realities of life without reliance on my substance of choice. I am willing to practice faith, humility and honesty.

TO CHANGE: I take responsibility to take an active part in changing what I would like to be different in my life and which can be changed.

THE THINGS I CAN: I am asking for help to make the right decisions. I am asking for the courage to see reality as it is and not how I want it to be. I seek progress not perfection to grow along spiritual lines.

AND WISDOM: I am asking for the ability to rise above my ego and seek guidance from myself, others and a High Power.

TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: I seek knowledge and wisdom to see things differently: to become God Centered rather than self-centered.