

The Serenity Prayer – long (full) version

**“GOD, give me grace to accept with serenity the things
that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things which should be changed,
And the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.**

**Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,**

**Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,**

**Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,**

**So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
*Amen.***

-Reinhold Niebuhr

During the 2024 Peace Retreat, we followed the same format as 2023. Each session started with the entire group assembled in the Black Bear Conference Room, with a 10 to 15 minute introduction to the topic provided by a facilitator; then we split out into small groups for men to discuss the topic in greater detail.

The notes from each facilitator’s intro, and questions for the small group leaders, are provided on the following pages. We hope this is useful, perhaps one-on-one with a newcomer, or individually as you study and meditate on your own. There’s a lot to unpack in the full version of the Serenity Prayer! We wish you peace and serenity on your journey, and hope you’ll be able to join us in person in the future.

Discussion topic #1: The first part of the Serenity Prayer

Main Group Speaker: ZACK R.

Points covered.

- 1) Three parts – acceptance, courage, wisdom
- 2) For an alcoholic and for an addict, the mantra of hope
- 3) Why are those things in that order?

Questions for discussion.

- A) How did you first learn about the Serenity Prayer?
 - B) How do you use it? Daily? In what situations?
 - C) Has your view on (or understanding of) the Serenity Prayer changed over time?
 - D) How do you explain it to newcomers?
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Discussion topic #2: Living one day at a time

Main Group Speaker: BILL Z.

Points covered.

- 1) What that meant in early sobriety
- 2) What it means after 43 years of ODAAT
- 3) Happy, joyous and free VERSUS peace
- 4) Peace comes from living in God
- 5) The Big Book is a guide, not a Bible – it's all about getting us to a relationship with God

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) What do you think is meant by “peace” in sobriety?
 - B) Has “ODAAT” changed for you as you get sober?
 - C) What is “long term sobriety” to you?
 - D) Are there times when you don't “ENJOY” sobriety? What then?
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Discussion topic #3: Hardship as the pathway to peace

Main Group Speaker: KC H.

Points covered.

- 1) How can hardship be the pathway to peace?
- 2) Who is “He”?
- 3) Explaining the notion of a “sinful world”
- 4) As it is
- 5) Not as I would have it?

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) What are your examples of hardship? (We all have them.)
 - B) Does the term “sinful world” bother you?
 - C) How would you have it? What if you ran the world?
 - D) What does this mean to your sobriety?
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Discussion topic #4: Trusting He will make things right

Main Group Speaker: PAT H.

Points covered.

- 1) Recognizing our selfish and self-centered nature is timeless
- 2) John 3:17. “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”
- 3) God’s purpose and plan extends farther back into the past, and onward into the future, then we can see.
- 4) I don’t have to like it – but surrender of my will is crucial to my sobriety, and peace in it.

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) Why is it so hard for alcoholics to trust?
 - B) What happens if we only surrender selectively?
 - C) Do you struggle with the concept of God’s judgement?
 - D) What if God’s version of making things right doesn’t match what I want? How do I deal with that?
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Discussion topic #5: So that I may be reasonably happy

Main Group Speaker: BILL Z. and KC H.

Points covered.

- 1) Here versus there. (This world and the next.)
- 2) The difference between “happy” and “peace”.
- 3) The concept of eternity is hard to hold in our minds

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) Do I believe in something after this world? What does that look like?
- B) Can an alcoholic ever accept “reasonable happiness”?
- C) Is it possible to have lasting peace in sobriety, without God?
- D) What has your journey in sobriety shown you about happiness?