

The Serenity Prayer

*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.*



To keep my serenity,
I do not:

- Counsel
- Coach
- Convince
- Comment
- Critique
- Coerce

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Way & Pace is produced by and for the members of the 23rd Al-Anon District, which serves Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. It is distributed on the third Saturday of every other month to coincide with the District meeting. Your stories and Al-Anon related announcements are gratefully accepted.

Please submit via email: Petra (Editor) at district23wayandpace@gmail.com

Articles published at discretion of editors. Articles may be edited to fit the space.

NOTE: This is a local newsletter, not Al-Anon conference approved literature. We invite all members to submit material for publication. The opinions within do not necessarily reflect those of Al-Anon or District 23.

You don't have to drink to suffer from alcoholism. There is help for you in Al-Anon and Alateen.

To find a meeting or information about Al-anon go to: ncwsa.org/d23

Al-anon Answering Service
(831) 462-1818

**Bookmark quote "To keep my serenity..."
contributed by Nancy N., Santa Cruz**



Way & Pace

Al-Anon District 23 | Newsletter

A changed perspective led me to serenity

Last fall, I decided to visit my family for Thanksgiving. My decision thrilled my mother since I had declined the invitation numerous times in years past. This time, it felt like the right thing to do. I was ready.

I went home with an open, grateful heart—with no expectations and no lingering resentments. My visit was wonderful. I truly had a great time.

To welcome the New Year, I called both my adult siblings. I wanted to express how nice it was to see them and spend time with them and their families. After our conversation, it was hard to believe that we were all under the same roof during that visit. Why was their reaction so different than mine? Then I thought about perspective—my perspective.

I'd set out on that trip intending to enjoy myself, free from the past, determined to keep things in the present. The only thing I can conclude is that something has changed. I've changed. I'm not better than they are. I'm just different. I am no longer seeking out the negative, holding onto past hurts and resentments.

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I let go – and my husband's temper cooled off

My husband moved back into our home following an 18-month separation. We are slowly mending our marriage.

For the most part, we attend our respective meetings and socialize with our respective friends, but we do very little together. I have refused to travel with my alcoholic husband because I was not able to tolerate his abusive language.

We are planning a week-long trip together this coming summer to celebrate my father's 90th birthday, so I decided to begin with short trips, to practice detachment. We headed to a town that was about an 80-minute drive from home, to do some antique shopping.

For the first 15 minutes in the car, I noticed that my husband was driving 10 miles under the speed limit, fidgeting nervously, and making critical remarks about other drivers. I found myself staring at the speedometer and thinking, "I'll be a nervous wreck if I don't stop focusing on him!"

I forced myself to watch the scenery, and began to talk briefly about pleasant things, allowing silences, if he wanted to respond. If he didn't respond, I mentally quoted a slogan or recalled a bit of a Step or Tradition and allowed my mind to quiet. I ran through some repetitions of the Serenity Prayer, and found that I

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I let go ... continued

was relaxing, feeling connected to my Higher Power and so was my husband. He even joined in with some humorous conversation, which was rare for him.

When we got to our destination, we walked around and looked. I talked to some of the antique dealers about their merchandise. At first, my husband waited outside—disinterested. However, when I took time to listen to his recollections about an old toy or car, he began to engage in the spirit of the day, maybe finding a treasure.

The town was dotted with small cafes and diners; we stopped at one and ordered lunch. When the food came to our table, it was the wrong order. “Oh, boy! Here it comes,” I thought. But because of the relaxed atmosphere and nice time we were having, my husband didn’t fly into a rage. He suggested that if we tried the food we had been served; we might like it! On the drive home, he was even more talkative about the town, the food, and what a great day we had.

Before Al-Anon, a day like this was impossible. I felt I had to monitor my husband’s driving, make sure he went the right speed, turned at the right place, etc.—ad nauseam. I got upset if we didn’t have conversation. I got upset if we did have conversation that was not pleasant. I had so many rules in my mind about what constituted a “good time” that a good time was impossible.

I’ve thanked my husband many times for the lovely day we had, and he just about burst with happiness. I suspect that, over the years, he has wanted to give me many lovely days—but couldn’t, because I wouldn’t let him. I’m going to keep practicing detachment, stay in my own hula hoop, and maybe—just maybe—we can have a nice vacation together this summer. This is why I keep coming back to meetings—you all teaching me how to work this wonderful program. Thank you. I have my treasure.

By Paula C., Florida

The Forum, August 2011

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AL-ANON NEWS

Alanon from your Desktop:

World Service Office: www.al-anon.alateen.org/

Northern California Area: www.ncwsa.org/

District 23’s own webpage: www.ncwsa.org/d23

Online Meetings: www.ola-is.org/

and so many more – if you google Alanon, you’ll find lots of us.

Next District 23 Speaker Meeting

Friday, June 15, 2012

5:30 Potluck Dinner, 6:30–7:45 Speaker Meeting with

AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen Speakers

Quaker Meeting House, 225 Rooney St., Santa Cruz

A changed perspective ... continued

Today, I navigate in a new way. Just for today, I am willing to work from where I am. I feel more comfortable in my own skin; more accepting of people, places, things, events, and family dynamics for who and what we are. I try to keep the focus on myself and my perceptions. I work at asserting reasonable, healthy boundaries, taking with me a deliberate attitude of gratitude during visits home or when making those phone calls. I take what I like and leave the rest.

I’m so grateful to Al-Anon for having shown me a lighter, better way. The best part—I no longer seek to argue my perspective with others. I am better able to accept and appreciate others exactly where they are. I respect their individual points of view. After all, “How Important Is It?”

By Kimberley M., Michigan

The Forum, November 2011

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July/August topic:

Detachment



Share your experience, strength and hope or any Al-anon related news to: Petra (Editor) at district23wayandpace@gmail.com

