

OA Desert Recovery

Promise: We will comprehend the word serenity



I used to cry and complain to HP and anyone else who would listen whenever anything sad, frustrating, maddening, frightening, or just plain chaotic came into my life. After all, I was a “good girl” and an introvert – so wasn’t peace and serenity owed to me in a “fair” and just universe?

In recovery (by that, I mean sobriety, abstinence, and working (and living) the Twelve Steps and Twelve Tradition to the best of my ability) I’ve learned a great many things about serenity and peace.

- If sadness and grief never touched me, I wouldn’t know or appreciate joy;
- If I never experience frustration or anger, I wouldn’t know the relief of letting go and forgiving;
- If I never felt fear, I wouldn’t be motivated to reach out for the comfort and support of HP, my sponsors, family, and friends in recovery;
- If I never experience chaos, I wouldn’t know how to appreciate being silent and experiencing serenity – I might not even recognize them...

But I do recognize and embrace them. I have even learned to be grateful for challenges in my life – sometimes – because they remind me through their working out that I am not alone and the serenity I seek will eventually follow.

It takes time and work to realize the Promises in my life, but they do come when I focus on my recovery and am willing to “live life on life’s terms.” At least, they have for me.

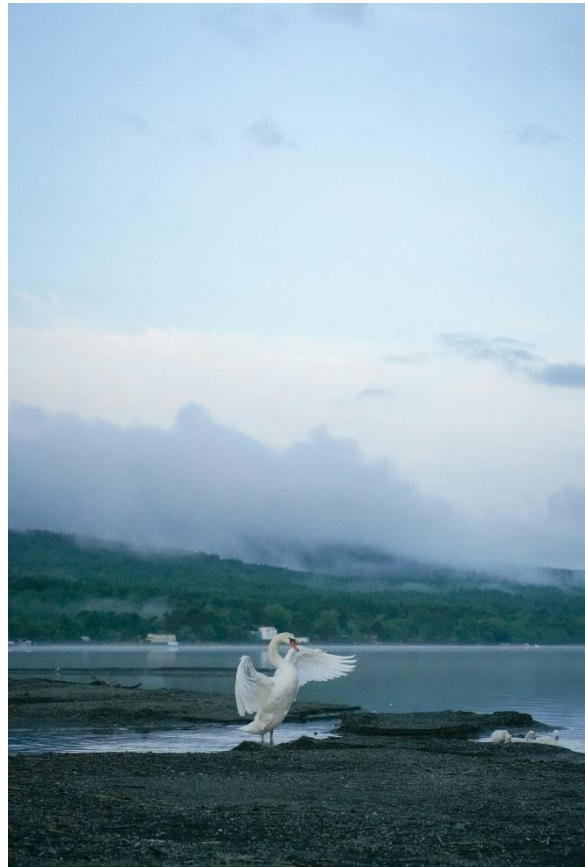
Neva

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Editor: Martha S-Nafeh | newsletter@oasouthernaz.org

Somebody told me that if I wanted to overcome depression, to live in peace, I had to grow up.

Aw, come on. Why can't I have perfect security now, perfect body now, perfect happiness now? Because life is not perfect, Sweetcheeks. Life is up and down. I used to go into deep depression at any downer experience, thinking I would sink further, and I was incapable of pulling myself out. But then I realized that of course I was incapable of making life perfect. My fragile, imperfect self had only managed to hide behind substances when troubled. However, in recovery, I found a strong hand, waiting to grasp mine, to pull me out of any muck and mire. That strength took away terror, gave comfort, and allowed me to live without hiding behind substances. OA gave me a new outlook on life. Waking not with groans but savoring the sunrise. No fear of others, just enjoyment of their uniqueness. OA gave me a way to find peace within myself, for which I am forever grateful.

-Becki B.



I used to think that *serenity* meant silence and someone who just sat there with a meditative smile, eyes half-shut, with an ohmmmm-sound permeating from his soul. Not a current description of me at all. I've learned some new things about this word, though, during these OA years. Not rattled, even when the details are rattling. Not mercurial, even when things go awry. Not quick to judge or argue or complain. It's almost like this program releases the tension, and a person relaxes physically, emotionally, and spiritually. No longer tightly-wound. Just calm. Just kind. Just serene. I've experienced that. It's not an every-day all-day sort of thing, but I know how it feels. I also know when I feel it: God's driving the car, and I'm in the backseat wondering where we're going this time. No matter. I'm seat-belted in and eager for the next adventure. Not only do I know peace, but I feel at peace.

-Joy V'Marie

"Serenity! I find an extra measure of serenity by working one of our tools diligently: my food plan. I follow the 3-0-1 suggestion (three meals a day, nothing in between), *but* take the "0" part especially seriously. Nothing whatsoever passes between my lips between meals other than water or unsweetened tea or coffee: not a healthy apple, not a carrot stick, not tasting to adjust a dish I'm cooking, not a lick or a taste *period!* Each day begins with making a simple 3-0-1 commitment to my HP, with focus on the "0" part, and I feel supported all day long."

--Judy G

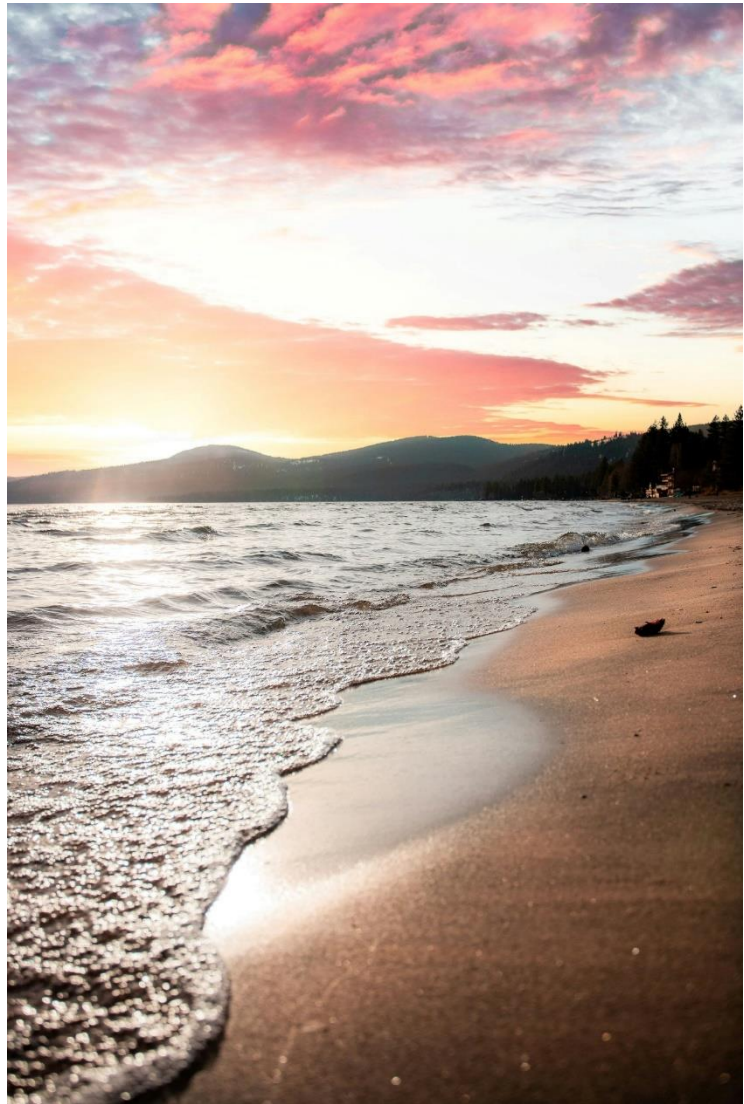
I wish
I wish I could
I wish I could comprehend
I wish I could comprehend the word—

But then a still, small voice:
This is no wish, but a Promise.

So, say I
So, say I, taking a breath
So say I, taking a breath, acting
So say I, taking a breath, acting as if:

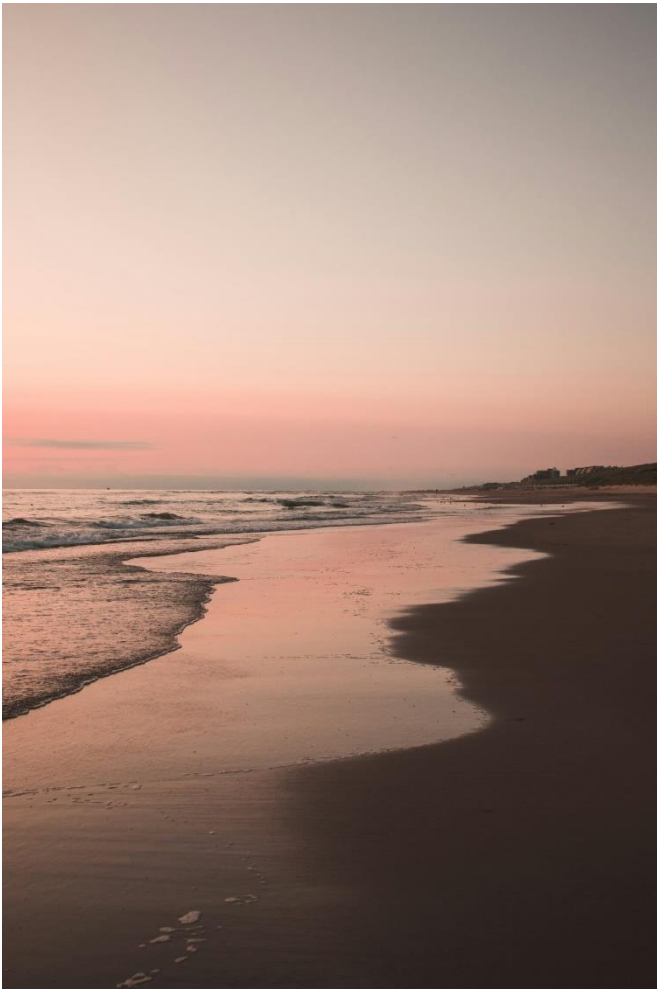
I do indeed
comprehend
the word "Serenity"

Michael A.



Finding serenity has not been an easy process for me. When I initially joined Overeaters Anonymous six years ago, I found astounding relief at being in the rooms with members who all had similar goals - to search for and find a way out of a chaotic lifestyle. While finding this miraculous relief led to the beginnings of serenity, I soon realized that it was not the total sum of the process. As my sponsor reminds me, real change takes time. Practicing the Twelve Steps and the nine tools gives me a solid formula towards having a more complete and loving life. Understanding that I am a human who makes mistakes has given me a real sense of forgiveness of myself (and others), that I have rarely felt before. Conversing with my Higher Power and having a routine of quiet time at some point in the day has become such a benefit to self-care. These practices have all led to a path of acceptance in many life situations. I have learned that true serenity is possible. Thank you, Higher Power and Overeaters Anonymous.

Brenda W



“We will comprehend the word ‘serenity.’” This is an interesting promise. I note that it does not promise that I will have serenity, but that I will comprehend it. Through OA and the grace of a power greater than myself, I do know what serenity feels like. I am serene when I eat to nourish my body rather than to satisfy emotional needs. I am serene when I am not obsessed or acting compulsively. I am serene when I am in gratitude. This feeling of serenity may come and go as people, places, or things in my life cause chaos and I react with stress. My stress is usually based on the fear that things won’t go according to my plan. That’s when I need to let go and let God, having faith that there is a plan, perhaps better than I could envision. The April 3 reading in For Today says, “The true source of serenity, of good feelings, is not getting what I want, but wanting what I’ve got.” Acceptance is a key to serenity. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. . .

Nan B

My morning did not start out as serene. I had a big mess from the dog to clean before my prayer and meditation time. I had also woken up with a bad lower back pain, with pain shooting down my hip and leg, so cleaning up after the dog on was not easy. While cleaning, I started worrying about all that I had on my plate for today and the weekend. By the time I sat down to pray, I was anxious—far from serene.

I knew without a doubt that I needed to let go and hand it all over to God. That is the only way I can find serenity. The more time I spent in prayer and meditation, the more serene I felt. For me, the answer is always God.

Michelle S.