

# Serenity (patience) prayer

*Where do we go when we flunk prayer 101?*

by Judy Squier

I've never liked crowds. Actually, I hate crowds. Probably it's a post-traumatic-stress-disorder (PTSD) from childhood when my dwarf-size stature strained unsuccessfully to see the action along a parade route. 'Isn't there a reserved front seat for the shortest of the short?' I'd ask my fairy godmother.

Knowing that crowds can bring out the worst in me plus knowing that our family of six would be amongst 2800 passengers on an Alaskan cruise this summer, I prayed: Dear Lord, keep me serene and courteous, particularly when dealing with the crowded elevators and restrooms aboard the ship.

Daughter Emily encouraged me to memorize, then recite, the Serenity Prayer as I encountered the ship's elevators packed with strong legs attached to insensitive people and during extended waits outside wheelchair stalls.



*O Lord, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference.*



I gave it my all, honestly I did, but the truth is my recitation of the Serenity Prayer worked for only the first ten minutes of the twelve days at sea after which I LOST IT! Quickly my modus operandi went ballistic. When the elevator doors opened, my wheelchair and I would charge forward like a bull driving a bulldozer, bellowing, “Make way. I’m coming in.”

Miraculously, the sea of healthy legs would part and in I’d go. Occasionally a genius in the crowd would come up with the brilliant idea, “I’ll take the stairs.”

Obviously my elevator etiquette earned me no kudos and I’m sad to report Judy’s serenity was nowhere to be found in the restrooms. Why do physically-able people gravitate to the only stall that will accommodate a wheelchair user?

With plenty of think time outside of locked doors my strategy for future cruises was born. I’ll fill my suitcase to the gills with guilt-provoking signs to post on the inside of all wheelchair accessible stalls: “Attention Able-Bodied Passengers: Pray for the disabled person waiting outside who is praying that your strong legs will exit SOON!”

All in all my resolve for serenity for myself and for courtesy toward others fizzled. Descending the gangplank in our home port, my spirit sank

as reality hit: I just flunked the Serenity Prayer.

What do we do when we flunk the Serenity Prayer? Contritely, I talked to God about it. His perspective surprised me. First of all, He wasn’t surprised, nor was He critical.

He designed humanity to need Him and our failed attempts escort us to the conclusion, “We can’t do life on our own.” As self-effort gasps its final breath, we are ready to open His love letter: “Give Me your frustration, mate. You need serenity? I’ve got enough for the whole world. I’m on board to set you free of guilt and free to love. Love, Jesus.”

The good news is that the Son of God doesn’t flunk the serenity prayer. He never has; He never will. He promises to calm our every storm. Even the winds and waves obey Him, you know.

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