

HOW I DISCOVERED SERENITY

WHEN I FIRST WALKED INTO THE ROOMS, I WAS CONFUSED, angry, depressed—and still using crystal meth. Like many addicts who walk in, I did not “get” the program. Sure, I understood that it could help me put down the meth, but what would I get in return? Following a suggestion, I read about the Promises. Being in early sobriety, even seeing those promises fulfilled in the lives of recovering addicts did not convince me that the same radical changes could happen in own my life. I just did not see the purpose in working the Steps.

Though I kept relapsing, I also kept coming back. I kept calling my sponsor, and I did work the Steps, taking suggestions even though I didn't want to. I just took my life in sobriety one day at a time and, eventually, I got nearly six months of continuous clean time. After finishing the Fourth and Fifth Steps, I went home and followed the suggestion in the "Big Book": I took some time to think about each of the first five Steps, to examine whether the foundation of my program was stable enough to continue on.

What I discovered seemed nothing short of miraculous. I realized I had the ability to forgive and to let go of resentments. First, I forgave myself. Immediately, I felt a sense of inner peace, and for the first time in my program, I comprehended the word *serenity*.

A couple of days passed after this realization, and my mind felt clearer and more open than it had in years. I was writing about my experiences with the Steps when it occurred to me what the goal of my program was: to learn humility and live in a state of grace. Not only was I able to define my purpose, but I was able to define the concepts of humility and grace in a way that resonated within me. Humility for me was being in a state of grace, so I no longer felt compelled to prove myself to others. Instead, my actions would speak for themselves. In other words, by doing service and performing esteemable acts, I would learn humility and display that to those around me. Being in a state of grace meant that I would live in a way that my ego would no longer control how I reacted when faced with reality, good or bad. I also realized that the polar opposite of ego was self-worth. The less self-worth I felt, the more my ego would control me and the more powerless I would become, leading back to a life of unmanageability. Therefore, by having enough self-worth to put my sobriety at the top of my priorities, I have the ability to live a life beyond my wildest dreams, full of grace and gratitude.

My program's purpose was revealed to me, even though I didn't have faith in the beginning that it would be. I believe that as a program needs to fit the individual, each program's purpose is different. Even though the purpose may not be apparent at first, if we work the Steps thoroughly and take the next right action, this goal will become clear. The Promises are self-fulfilling. —*David H.*