

I don't want to be like this anymore

*God, I don't care what I sound like,
or look like,
who my partners are,
or where I live.
I just don't want to be like this anymore.
On your terms,
in your time,
please remake me as you will.
Thank you.*

My sponsee and I were reading some 12-Step literature the other day and we came across a great prayer. I told her to say the prayer for thirty days to help her stay away from her qualifier and move toward acceptance of the disease. She started saying it every day. But the next time we met she said, "I've been saying that prayer every night, but I don't understand it." So we opened up our book and took it line by line.

"God, I don't care what I sound like." I turned to my sponsee, "Do you care if people think your ideas are bad or

if people think you're crazy?" I said. "People know I'm crazy," she said.

"From what I see, it seems like you are a highly intelligent, capable person except when in your disease, and you don't let people know when you're in your disease," I said. "So it seems to me that you care very much about what you sound like," I said.

"And that hinders your recovery because you can't get the help that you need when you're in crisis."

"Maybe," she said. "Yeah, I don't ever share what's going on with me."

"I suggest you raise your hand in a meeting and share honestly. You can't

save your face and your ass at the same time," I said.

We moved on to the next line of the prayer: "Or look like."

"I know you care what you look like," I said to my sponsee. "You always wear the coolest clothes and you watch your weight."

"Yes," she said. "I almost didn't go to the meeting this morning because of these bags under my eyes." She dabbed her face with a tissue as she said this. "But, I realized that's just craziness and I wouldn't get the recovery that I need," she added.

"Yes, we're both getting older and that's a fact of life," I said. "Write a fear inventory on that and read it to me. I need to pray for acceptance on that one, too!"

Then I read the next line of the prayer: "Who my partners are."

"That's a big one," I said. "Of course I should care about who my partners are. As a sex and love addict, I care very much who my partners are."

"But the point of this one is that should choose who my partners are and I need to let God take that decision. My choice of partners was my married qualifier. "We were going to run away together and become gurus of SLAA. We were going to throw SLAA parties and have all SLAA literature on our bookshelves. I saw a rainbow once

when we were together and I thought that meant God chose him for me.

But our relationship was complete delusion and pure insanity.

"When I had a spiritual experience, got sober, went through the Steps again and cut off all contact with him, God sent me a better partner. Someone at my level in every way (intellect, financial, etc.) and someone I was willing to communicate honestly with and a partner in recovery who was willing to walk this road with me.

"Can you say that you can let God choose your partners for you or do you still need control? Do you feel like God is trustworthy enough for that?"

"I don't know," she said. "I admit that my choices have always been wrong. But God doesn't always give me the best choices, or notice me, or protect me," she said. "It was usually you who didn't protect you," I replied, a little saddened because I knew this was one of my major character defects also.

"When you practice conscious contact and self-care you notice that your Higher Power has been there all along. You've been carried far, even through dangerous behaviour, hospitalizations, attempted suicide, drug addiction and much more.

"You were never abandoned until you abandoned yourself. It's time to care about yourself and lean on your

Higher Power and program instead of the guy who is human and spiritually sick like you.

“He will fail you because he’s not available. Your Higher Power is available all the time,” I said with confidence, knowing I truly believed what I was saying.

“Let’s take the next part of the prayer,” I said, “—or where I live.”

“In the time I’ve known you, you’ve moved to New York and back twice,” I said.

“I’ve always wanted to live somewhere else,” she said, nodding in agreement. “I always think my life will be so much better there,” she said. I know you always take yourself with you, though. I end up doing the same things and making the new place miserable. I guess if I could get sober it wouldn’t matter where I lived.”

“Yes, I think that’s the point about this line of the prayer.”

“So the next line — I just don’t want to be like this anymore,” I said.

“Yes, I agree with that totally,” she said. “I am powerless over my sex and love addiction and I don’t want to trash my life or go through one more crazy scene with some self-centered guy who treats me like shit ever again.

“I know I will kill myself over this disease when I let it get bad enough.

This has landed me in the psych hospital and I don’t want to go back there or worse!”

“I agree. You’re such an amazing person and the world would have much less light in it without you. When you’re sober and working a program, you help so many people and are so fun to be around.

“People gravitate toward you. You have a lot of people who love you, including me!”

“Anyway,” I said, blushing, “let’s continue,” I read the next line of the prayer, “On your terms.”

“That’s a tough one,” I said.

“I want my terms. I want to be able to arrange the players and set the stage. I want my life to follow the movie in my head.

“Sometimes your Higher Power’s terms can be painful or difficult. Are you willing to do God’s will even if you have to practice patience and tolerance?”

“Those are two bad words for addicts. We’re immature and want to throw a tantrum instead,” I said.

“Yeah,” my sponsee replied. “Most of the time I say my Higher Power’s terms are too hard. Fuck it, I’m going to call him. It’s much easier to numb out and do what I know I’m going to do eventually because I’m an addict,” she said.

“Yeah,” I said. “It’s hard to fight the addict voice that wants to keep us sick and weak. The harder choice is Higher Power’s way and responsibility.”

“But the easier softer way usually puts us in a world of hurt or worse,” I said.

“Okay. Let’s move on to the next line.

“In your time,” I said.

“God can be really slow sometimes! It just depends on what we need,” I said.

“I feel like I’m getting too old to wait on my Higher Power’s time,” my sponsee said. “I let so many opportunities for the life I want pass me by and now I feel like it’s too late. And I don’t trust that God will do anything for me in any amount of time.”

“Yes,” I said, nodding my head in agreement. “I was 40 before I got married for the first time. I had to clear out the wreckage of my past and that didn’t happen overnight so it won’t clear out overnight.

“And it usually takes a long time for me to understand and see what I’m supposed to see.

“When the voice pops into your head that God isn’t doing it right or fast enough, that’s when you know you’re playing God. Just be willing to let go and let God.”

“Okay. Let’s keep going,” I said. “Please remake me as you will.

“What if God wants to remake me by putting an eyeball in the middle of my forehead so I can see better?” I said. “Would I be OK with him remaking me in a way that I think makes me look like a freak?”

“I have to be willing to say that no matter what, I will stay sober and keep up conscious contact. I’m not perfect with that,” I said.

“I resent God quite often and think he’s wrong. But I write a resentment inventory and look for ways to be of service and pray and meditate anyway. And the feeling passes.

“And I eventually see that everything happens the way it’s supposed to.”

“And now the very last line of the prayer and probably most important,” I said.

“Thank you.”

“We have to remember to be grateful for what we have,” I said. “Gratitude lists at night help me with that even if it’s just ‘Thank you that I’m still alive.’”

— Anonymous
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