



Intraspectus Learning Series ::: June 2005
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Serenity Is Not Just For Addicts

The Serenity Prayer is a mainstay of twelve step programs and has a brilliance for all, even for atheists: "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." --*Reinhold Niebuhr*

A Personal Anthem

The brilliance is in the reminder. We can all benefit from a personal anthem to remind us of the goals we are working on, at any point in our lives. These goals should and will change and evolve as we do. Change making is hard work and a gentle reminder can make a difference. Find a quote you can memorize and use it to remind yourself on an ongoing basis.

Qualities For Your Anthem

"Food is Fuel" can be your reminder if you tend to eat to relieve stress, depression or anxiety. Be careful your reminder isn't harsh and critical – i.e., "Food **is** fuel, *you idiot*" -- thereby increasing your anxiety and stress. That approach will guarantee you eat another slice of chocolate double orgasm cake (or whatever naming convention they use to get us to order).

Anthems should be short enough to memorize or fit on a small piece of paper for your pocket, monitor, desk, dashboard, toolbox or whatever. Anthems should be posted with a thought to your level of privacy – putting a pin on your shirt that says "Don't let me eat this cake" will let everyone know about your cake addiction. By keeping 'masturbate **only** three times a day' on your home computer on the other hand (no pun intended) will obviously afford you a little more privacy.

Be Pragmatic

Your anthem doesn't have to be perfect. Not all of us got 5 months to think things over (sorry Martha). Act now. *Just Do It*. You can find your anthem anywhere and can change it any time. Starting now is most important. If you will forget this article as soon as you put it down, print it out. Be pragmatic and remember change is hard work and requires effort, patience, and practice.

Practice Makes Almost Perfect

Being patient with ourselves is truly a difficult thing, particularly in this world of now, now, now. Behavioral change usually takes time, so be prepared to work on this goal for a number of weeks or months. Mastering something can take years but you can start to make change right now. Every second is a fresh opportunity to do things differently – every second, and this one, and this one, and this one.

Get Professional Help

Some changes are more significant and require professional guidance. If what you need to change significantly interferes with your life, the help of a professional may make the difference between suffering and feeling better. A professional can be helpful if your issue interferes with your ability to function in your major roles such as at work, home or school.