The Serenity Prayer

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.

Traditional. Usually credited to Reinhold Niebuhr.

What it means, line by line

- “God, grant me”: you start by asking. Serenity isn't something you force. It's a gift you ask God for.
- “The serenity to accept the things I cannot change”: other people, the past, the weather, a diagnosis. Accepting isn't approving. It means you stop fighting what isn't yours to fix and hand it to God.
- “Courage to change the things I can”: your own actions, your attitude, an honest apology, a phone call you've been putting off. This takes nerve, and God gives it.
- “And wisdom to know the difference”: most of us get this backward, trying to control people while dodging our own part. Ask God, Scripture and honest friends to help you sort it out.

There's also a longer prayer that continues past these four lines. It's attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, an American theologian. The short form printed here is the one most people know and say together.

Sorting it out

Think of what's weighing on you today. Write each thing in one column. Then pray the prayer over both lists: hand God the left column, and ask Him for courage to act on the right one.

What I can't change (I'll accept it and hand it to God)	What I can change (my next right step)
My brother is still angry with me.	*Call him Sunday and apologize for my part, without asking for anything back.*

WALLET CARDS

Cut on the dashed lines. Print on cardstock if you can.

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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.

stepsandscripture.com

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SCRIPTURE

> *"do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*
>
> **PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 · ESV**

> *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."*
>
> **JAMES 1:5 · ESV**

> *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."*
>
> **JOHN 14:27 · ESV**

> *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."*
>
> **ISAIAH 26:3 · ESV**