

# IS SERENITY BETTER THAN SEX?

By Jerome B. Williams, DVM

In a smoke filled room near the five point's south area of Birmingham, Alabama, I heard this icon of spiritual knowledge and wisdom state with clarity and confidence; "serenity is better than sex." The simple but profound statement did not go unchallenged by me or other meeting members. My interest was piqued at his analogy; so much so that during one of our subsequent early A.M. coffee meetings, I questioned him at great length....I needed to understand his view of serenity as something better than sex.

He began to recount those years of misery and pain through stories that those of us with obsessive compulsive diseases like drug addiction and alcoholism could completely understand. Reflections of those all-too-familiar topics resonated through his words: Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration and Despair. Like those endless nights accompanied with unwelcomed visitation from the "four hideous horsemen talked about by recovering alcoholics," his story rang hauntingly familiar. Many painful memories began to resurface and I remembered how it once was.

In the midst of this inner spiritual battle, you are in a place of pain and misery. There sincerely seems to be no way out. One can yearn for serenity, attempt to pray for it, would bargain away anything for it-- but it does not come. Such desperation can give the impression that life has no true value; absolutely no meaning. One despairing conclusion could be that life is merely passing along, leaving nothing but shattered hopes and broken dreams. Such appearances of doom reduce you to a seemingly hopeless state of mind, body, and spirit. Sometimes the mental and emotional pain is so severe all options for relief are considered, including suicide. During these times, serenity is such a foreign concept!

Even as I daily repeated the words of the serenity prayer commonly attributed to St. Francis, peace did not come quickly and the early times were emotional and perplexing.

***"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."***

Strangely enough, I discovered through working with others who had found a way out of these seemingly hopeless dilemmas, there was hope for me. I was ultimately granted a new lease on life. It was at that point that I could comprehend the word "serenity" and to the core of my being began feeling peaceful at last. It was also at that point that I knew peace and subsequently no longer felt pressure to bear life's burdens. They were given to a power greater than myself, God of the universe.

Over the years I have encountered a number of individuals who were at that critical jumping off point. These individuals had begun to spiral down an abysmal descent of hopelessness due to a variety of life challenges. These challenges often included; alcoholism, drug addiction, illness, depression, anxiety, fear, gambling, sex, food, divorce and loss. During these times of the dark night of the soul, there is an emptiness, a deep knowing that something vital is missing. This equates to the feeling of a hole in one's soul.

Most of us have tried many things to get help. They include family, friends, self-help forays, religion and will power. These almost always fail unless one gets help from a professional or from enlightened individuals who have recovered from that seemingly hopeless state of mind. These individuals have the tools and know the steps required to effect a change.

By learning to trust and receive help from those individuals who understand the nature of our diseases, hope is restored and we are reborn. As we grew strength to stand up with dignity, we became willing to lead others into a world of true spiritual freedom. Trust is not easy. In fact, it can be scary, but to cultivate it is absolutely essential. The key is to take things step by step; even if those steps resemble a baby's beginning stride. The most important thing to remember is to persevere, regardless of the pace.

Knowledgeable, trustworthy individuals and professionals are waiting to help. It was extremely difficult for me to acknowledge that I needed help. Besides, who wants to admit that their way has failed? Especially a licensed, medical professional! Once I finally did, however, there were more than enough hands and arms to support me through the process of reclaiming my sanity.

Today, there are many more hands and arms waiting to embrace you; to lift you out of your misery and guide you towards a place of peace and serenity. While that might seem unreal and practically impossible at the moment, it really can and is being done!

If you, a loved one, or a fellow colleague needs help, please don't hesitate to reach out and grasp it. Help is ready, waiting and eager to begin the healing process with you.

If you are able to help others, we implore you to remember our colleagues and extend a hand to them. We are a profession of individuals who are very prideful, sometimes to our detriment. Please do not allow pride or perceived weakness to hinder you in reaching out to give or receive help.

The icon of spiritual wisdom and knowledge who spoke so eloquently to my soul that night, "Happy Jack," was an inspirational figure in my personal battle with drug addiction and alcoholism and my guide through 15 years of pain and growth.

Through his illumined consciousness, Jack, and many like him, helped countless others go on to learn about living a life free from the captivity of one's own ego; a true freedom from the bondage of selfishness. It is from those lessons that our gratitude keeps us going strong, and our desire to serve allows us to continue the message of true peace and serenity.

After years of embracing the path to serenity (and one who also happens to really enjoy sex and count it as one of the greatest pleasures in life), I must fully agree with my late spiritual advisor and friend, Jack ....

**"Serenity is better than sex!"**

**Note:** Dr. Williams has been a practicing veterinarian for 38 years and is currently serving as chairman of the Alabama Veterinary Professionals Wellness Committee. He is actively involved in recovery and wellness at all levels, and is available to speak to community and recovery groups upon request. He can be reached at Red Mountain animal clinic, 2148 Greensprings Highway, Birmingham, Alabama 35205, 205-326-8080, website [www.redmountainanimalclinic.com](http://www.redmountainanimalclinic.com). or [jbw12@prodigy.net](mailto:jbw12@prodigy.net)

