



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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Power > Me Ben R.

I have often wondered if I could ever really know what it means to be humble. As a Leo and a lead singer let's just say being humble wasn't always the most natural of traits to begin with, and anyway, what else besides my ego would ever point it out? I think Golda Meir explained how I felt best when she said "Don't be so humble; you're not that great."

But just as when things are good I don't want to take all the credit, when things are bad I don't want to give myself all the blame. The truth is I am happier when I don't worry about why things worked out the way they did, what or who was responsible, or "what could have been done better" (just about the most useless statement of all time). What matters to me is clarity. Clarity as to where I am, as to what I am feeling, and as to what is the next thing that needs to be done. My sponsor likes to say, "It doesn't matter what you think, it matters what you do."

What a relief it has been to stop trying to teach myself the lessons of my past. I find a lot of arrogance in that way of thinking today. It actually seems like a ruse to justify beating myself up in the name of self-searching honesty. What I can change is right now. Where I learn is right now and if I make

a mistake, the action that may be able to remedy the situation can only happen right now.

When reasons why take a backseat to what I am doing and what I am feeling, the lessons I learn are much deeper and more profound than any method I have used of trying to figure it all out. One way gives me the "aha!" of

**"Ben + Action
=
Something>Ben"**

revelation. The other leaves me sorting through many postulates and theorems regarding the scattered and strewn pieces of my life, hyper-analyzed into almost utter meaninglessness. But it sure helps keep me occupied!

All but this moment, myself and that which holds me is only a dream.

The efforts I make are more towards the things I can change in my life, not spinning about either what is already done or in anticipation of a future fantasy that may never come to be. Not that I stay completely in the moment, or anything even close to that.

That's like trying to stay in front of a speeding car without touching it or moving away from it, but just the recognition that "now is where it's at" as far as what can be done. God (as I understand God) is nothing more than this moment plus whatever action I am taking Ben+Action=Something>Ben, Voila! A power greater than me! It really can be that simple.

For myself, the spiritual principles in the 12 steps are completely transformative if I focus on my personal responsibility and accountability and "give freely of what I find", and by that I mean being honest about what is going on in my life. If I pick and choose what I am going to let my sponsor and my closest friends (my God Squad) know, I am beginning the process of letting my ego take back the reins.

So, God is doing for me what I cannot do for myself, but God will not do for me what I can do for myself. I have to let go, God won't surrender for me.

This way of looking at life is something that has evolved in me since I started my journey in sobriety over 2 1/2 years ago. Or perhaps it began 15 years ago when I first walked into an MA meeting, and I have only finally acknowledged (continued on page 2)

a new leaf

The purpose of A New Leaf is to carry the message of recovery from marijuana addiction. It is through the written experiences of recovering addicts and their stories that we may find experience, strength, & hope.

Articles submitted should reflect recovery, unity, and service.

The articles contained in A New Leaf are the sole opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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Power > Myself (continued)

over the last few years its benefits to my life. Regardless, since returning to the program on June 1, 2006 I have been willing put one foot in front of the other, remaining teachable, or at least returning to a state of teachability, regardless of my perceptions of results. It is by far the longest time that I have ever followed a path without abandoning it due to my impatience or mistrust, and the rewards of such sustained willingness are undeniable, even to me.

I am learning to see the assets in my life not as accomplishments, but as gifts. Perhaps because so much has changed inside of me that I had no concept of how to change. Perhaps because of how reliant I have become on my connections in life: Connections to friends and family, to feelings and actions, to my environment and my community.

But if you were to ask me what exactly I am talking about, what specific things have changed, I don't know that I could fully tell you. Perhaps those closest to me have a better idea than I myself do. All I can say right now with much assurance is that I feel the benefit of living far more than ever, and that I feel better. I feel joy better, sadness better, insecurity better, usefulness better...

From a life of seemingly professional Zerrissenheit (a German

concept of a state of tearing oneself to pieces), to this calmer, quieter awareness, the one thing I certainly feel better is gratitude. Because it is this universe and the people that have graced me with their care, their love, their mirrors, their experience, triumphs, foibles and wisdom that have made this all possible in my life. And it is within this ever-growing, daily gratitude, that I begin to understand what it means to be humble -- from the Latin humilis, literally "on the ground" and humus "earth" -- and I understand that the only pride I want to feel is the pride of being a part of something greater than myself, a participant in and of this earth, to be able to give and receive of its abundance.

They say that this is a "We" program. Indeed the first word of the first step is We, and the first concept is "We admitted we were powerless". In my mind, it is of fundamental importance that this is in the past tense. I do not believe that we are powerless, as long as we, as individuals are a part of We, the group. But I can separate myself from the group and experience the powerlessness of my ego any time I choose. Me + the Group (equaling a power greater than myself) can restore me to sanity. Why the simplest lessons are the hardest to learn, I may never know. But what a gift that simplicity is when I begin to understand it. ▲

February Roving Reporter Question:

For many, the first "Power greater than self" is the group in the meeting. Relay your experience with your home group or favorite meeting as it relates to your sobriety.



Marijuana Anonymous 15th Annual World Convention

February 13-15, 2009
Seattle, Washington, USA

*Hosted by:
MA District 4, Western Washington*

	cost	amount due
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24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

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For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

I'm Starting Over by Anonymous

I just quit a week ago, I smoked multiple times daily; a bowl or two in the morning and two joints after work. I even had a stash in my car just in case I would have an anxiety attack at work. It's been a part of me for years. Seven years I smoked, only quitting to get a job, always starting again to celebrate my success, ha. I used to say it was a social thing. Always with friends, having fun. Not true, I smoke alone most of the time. The moment I noticed my need for it was three days after I hadn't had a single hit, I blacked out. I was driving back from Target. I was fine, sober, rocking out, next I'm lost. I don't remember how I got there, what I was doing, or anything. About 40 minutes had passed, 40 min I can't recall. I can remember all my drunken moments, the times I was coked out, tweaked, tripping on mushrooms; to not remember 40

minutes of my life, is fucking scary. I had to stop at a liquor store, acting like some lost traveler looking for the freeway, to get back on track. In the light I noticed that my hand was bleeding. Not a lot, just a little on the knuckles. I can't remember nor imagine how I got hurt. I don't know if I want to know. NA would laugh their fucking heads off if they knew I couldn't handle quitting marijuana. I dropped coke, cigarettes, and even TV and video games with way less effort or problems. Before I was a loner stoner, with nothing to lose, life sucked. Now I'm a loner quitter with everything to lose, life still sucks. For seven years I wasted my time, ignored my friends, abandoned all my hopes, dreams, and goals to inhale a dead plant. I deserve to suffer a little, if it was easier to quit, if it made me feel better, I'd probably start again to because

some pain and discomfort that is owed to me, by me. I rely on my pain. It keeps me grounded. When I'm done beating myself up, when I can drop this weight off my shoulders, then I'll fly, clean. Until then I'm here, at ground-zero, zero self respect, zero friends, zero dreams, ZERO EVERYTHING. I can now "zero in" on reality, and I don't like my reality, and I'm going to change that. Not my perspective on it, it itself. I'm scheduled to start school, I have a good job, and there's a girl I'm crazy about. If one of these things goes wrong, I will be hurt, and I will use that pain as well, to do even better. I am an addict. I need things, I need people, I need to need things. That's who I am. What things I need, who I need and what I need to need is my choice, my choice. I choose. I'm done, I quit. I'm starting over - again. ▲

birthdays

District 1

Brian S.	1/13/09	2 yrs.
Lewis B.	1/20/09	2 yrs.

District 5

Melody C.	1/16/89	20 yrs.
Tony R.	1/1/03	6 yrs.
Jersey John S.	1/5/07	2 yrs.
Heavy Metal Jon C.	1/7/07	2 yrs.

District 15

Michael	1/3/07	2 yrs.
Dominic	1/3/07	2 yrs.