



## Step One: Where I Was At, and Where I'm At Now

**“W**e admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.”  
*Life with Hope*, Step One.

For me the first step was somewhat scary, and when I get scared I go into battle mode. In my mind I resisted and fought like hell with this idea. I didn't want to admit anything. My addict conjured up this image of me sitting in an interrogation room under the bright light of a naked lightbulb with two detectives pounding their fists on the table shouting, “ADMIT IT!”

The truth is no one was really accusing me of anything. I had come into the rooms of MA looking for help. But there was certainly a part of me that was skeptical and questioned the words. Powerless was such an absolute. Was I really powerless? I mean, what if you put a gun to my head and said don't smoke? I'm sure I wouldn't smoke.

But even I could see how ridiculous this argument was. Okay then, how about unmanageability? Was my life really unmanageable? I'd never been incarcerated, never lost a job, I housed and clothed myself. I was feeding myself and I'm still breathing, right? So aren't I managing?

Ahh, but what if my life were a store and I was the manager? Would the windows be clean and the floors mopped and swept regularly? Would the stock be faced and the books balanced? Going back and forth like this was starting to muddy the waters and I realized I needed help.

In the same way I sought help by coming into the rooms of MA, I sought help with the words of this step in the pages of my dictionary. If I was going work this step with my sponsor, I was going to have to get over these blockades around these words. Breaking up the words into 5 or 6 word definitions was going to be the water to help me swallow this jagged little pill. So I gave it a shot. Could I concede as a truth that I am devoid of strength and lacking in the capacity to act on my dope smoking, that my life is such that I am not doing what I want to do and doing what I don't want to do? Yes. Yes, indeed!

*The animal is in the cage but the cage remains unlocked. There exists a false equivalency that time means safety from a relapse.*

So that was a beginning, but where am I now. If I make it into March of 2020 I'll celebrate my 16th year. But what about my first step? After all that was a long time ago. Well, I still get to go to meetings regularly and, if I'm lucky, I'll hear from a newcomer and get reminded what it was like. I work with sponsees and

try to hammer home the importance of doing a solid first step. I use the analogy of a building and the importance of the foundation.

We can't use too much sand when mixing the concrete. And while concrete is great under compression it needs steel for tensile strength. This step is going to support the rest of the step work and it can't get glossed over.

I get used to seeing people in these meetings and I'm always impressed by their insights and honesty. I even get to know them sometimes through some fellowship after the meetings when we go for tea or coffee and share a conversation. When it happens that they go back out I'm always shocked and surprised. Even though this isn't uncommon, it still always catches me off guard. Don't they remember what it was like using? Why would anyone go back out?

But I shouldn't be surprised because I know it's easy to forget. After my first year clean I got pissed off at something someone said at a meeting and seriously entertained the idea of not going to meetings anymore. My addict had long ago given up on trying to get me to smoke but was now trying a new tact.

Do you really need to go to anymore meetings? You just went a year without smoking and it really wasn't that hard. I sincerely believed that the year I had gone without smoking had been easy and there really wasn't much to it.

## ANL's Purpose

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 and 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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole. MA is not affiliated with—and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

We are reaching out to districts to update the ANLP Liaisons and birthday lists. Additionally, district/group service representatives, including but not limited to those serving as ANLP Liaisons, are encouraged to stay in touch: [chiefs@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:chiefs@anewleafpublications.org)

### ANLP Staff

Chairperson: Rick V.  
Treasurer: John L.  
Secretary: Maurice R.  
ANLP Admin: Thor H.  
Managing Editor: Thor H.  
Publishing Editor: Ron H.

### Contact ANLP

Send articles/stories:  
[stories@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:stories@anewleafpublications.org)

Other inquiries and correspondence:  
[info@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:info@anewleafpublications.org)

## Step One: Where I Was At, and Where I'm At Now continued

Somehow the multiple meetings I had attended every week for the last year disappeared from my radar. It was as if I had no memory of them because of this voice inside my head that was telling me I did it all on my own.

All the service work I had done and step work with my sponsor were temporarily erased from my mind. Fortunately for me it was temporary and instead of buying into this idea that I didn't need MA anymore I continued to go to meetings, do service, and work the steps.

This was a good lesson for me. I do have the capacity to forget. I need to remind myself and remember what it was like. The animal is in the cage but the cage remains unlocked. There exists a false equivalency that time means safety from a relapse.

If I start humping the calendar and get complacent I might end up surprising and shocking other meeting goers with a relapse of my own. While statistically this might make me normal and be par for the course in addiction, I know in my heart I don't want to be normal. I want to be healthy and free to live my life and do what I want to do.

Thinking I'm safe because of all this time and space I have between me and the last time I used would be a mistake. It's a mistake to think that time by itself is enough to act as a buffer between me living clean and me relapsing. I need to stay active in recovery if I'm going to have a chance. So I do my best to remember what it was like.

I revisit my first step. To continue with the foundation analogy I need to inspect for cracks in the concrete or any exposed steel for rust. If I have to re-engineer my first step I will. I'll continue to do the work because lives are at stake. At least mine is and it's a good life.

I'll end with these thoughts: The first step is a beautiful step. I had smoked for 21 years and I knew how to be high. I was comfortable in my routine and uncomfortable with anything outside of its narrow parameters.

Coming to MA meetings and getting honest about my addiction for the first time was not easy. Many aspects of working the first step were uncomfortable and I regularly felt unsteady. But you who show up to meetings were there for me. Just like, I can imagine, another first step I took much earlier in my life, my mother had been there for me. I had been crawling around for a long time—sometimes, I'm sure, with a loaded diaper. At a certain point, with her standing a few feet in front of me with outstretched arms and an encouraging smile, I was getting ready to take my first step.



I was probably somewhat okay standing there with my two feet planted and had some practice falling back to plop down back on my bum. I imagine the step of lifting one of my feet up and giving up that balance and comfort for imbalance and the prospect of landing on my face was scary. But this was what came with taking my first step. I needed first to feel this unsteadiness and discomfort and fear. And I did it. You were there in front of me with open arms and an encouraging smile.

Thanks MA. ▲

~ by Anonymous

## The Wall

There is a wall  
Between realizing my true nature  
And how I perceive the truth  
How do I break down  
What's getting in my way?

Step aside, watch and listen  
The wall will crumble on its own  
With inner awareness  
Leaving the pieces in a pile of  
self-compassion

Open up and allow  
My heart will melt the wall away  
Slowly allowing vulnerability  
Releasing my self-will  
Offering me strength without fear

Look directly into the wall  
Which is tall, thick and strong  
Know the wall seeks  
To keep me separate from myself  
And G-d

Speak up and speak out  
To the wall that stands in defiance  
The wall that justifies its existence  
And keeps me in the pain of the past

Be present in mind and body  
Giving Master Teacher  
A clear and clean path  
Acknowledging my courage to ask  
How do I break down  
What's getting in my way?

~ by *Sandra J*

**Editors' Note:** This poem was originally printed November 2019 with improper formatting that may have affected the intended meaning of the work. Our sincere apologies to the author.

## I Got a New Life

I'm Rob and I am a marijuana addict. I grew up with both of my parents in the Army. One of them was an alcoholic and the other was an enabler. I always said I'd never use drugs and alcohol.

I've always struggled to find a community to belong in; and, I've always been a loner. When I was 16, and my dog who I grew up with died in May 2013, I said screw it, picked up the pipe and started using marijuana. A year later when my significant other left me, I started using even more and doing other things besides just marijuana.

In high school, I struggled my junior and senior years and, I almost was never in school. But, I did a lot of service work for non-profits in my community. I even started a conference to help connect other youth that had family in the military. I started to struggle with life and the way I looked.

When I was 19, my uncle in Indiana died of an overdose. At that point I lost it. I began to do much harder drugs. Within a year of that happening I was sitting in a jail cell.

The last six months of my using career was the worst. I had no friends, barely went to my college classes, and I was suicidal. The day I got arrested I was not in the best place mentally, I wanted my life to be over. My parents called 911 because they were so worried. I ended up not telling the officers I wanted to commit suicide, but because I was violent before my parents called them, the police arrested me.

After being in jail for 3 days, I came home and immediately started using again. About 2 or 3 weeks later I was in rehab at the behest of my lawyer, parents, counselor, and doctor. About a week into rehab I said I'll give this a shot. After rehab I only lasted 3 days before I used again.

My sober date is August 13th, 2017. I decided that day "I can't keep doing this; I'll listen to everyone and I don't wanna go back to jail." I got a plea deal and had to stay sober for 1 year. A couple days before my court date I went to a meeting and got a sponsor, we talked after the meeting for an hour. We worked the first 3 steps very quickly,

I stalled on the fourth for a while. But, I started to realize I didn't wanna go back to using drugs. When it comes to the three things that make the program work for me, I know they are service, fellowship and recovery. I know I'm really good with service—I started off being a coffee maker and now I do lots of district level service. When it comes to fellowship, that's what made me realize I had found my people—I had found a place I was connected on a good level. This program has given me a second chance. It has helped me realize who I am supposed to be.

Today I have way too many friends. I pray almost every day. I stopped a cross addiction to gambling after only 2 months. I'm going to a university I wanted to go to. This program has given me so many gifts, but the most important to me is a new life of peace and love. ▲

~ by *Rob K. District 4*

## 2020 MA CONVENTION

A Vision For Us

February 14th - 16th 2020  
30th Anniversary of MA

Airtel Plaza Hotel  
7277 Valjean Ave. Van Nuys, CA 91406  
[www.mawsconvention.org](http://www.mawsconvention.org)



## JOIN US!

President's Day  
Weekend

See back page for  
more information.

# Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit  
[WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG](http://WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG)

## MA World Services

340 S LEMON AVE # 9420, WALNUT, CA 91789-2706 - +1.800.766.6779  
[WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG](http://WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG) - [INFO@MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG](mailto:INFO@MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG)

<b>DIST. 2 San Francisco &amp; East Bay</b>	+1.510.957.8390	<b>DIST. 14 London, England</b>	+44.300.124.0373
<a href="http://www.madistrict2.org">www.madistrict2.org</a>		<a href="http://www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk">www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk</a>	
<b>DIST. 3 South SF Bay Area</b>	+1.408.450.0796	<b>DIST. 15 Long Island, NY</b>	+1.631.647.0768
<a href="http://www.madistrict3.org">www.madistrict3.org</a>		<a href="http://www.ma-longisland.org">www.ma-longisland.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 4 Western Washington</b>	+1.206.414.9270	<b>DIST. 16 Melbourne, Australia</b>	+61.403.945.083
<a href="http://www.madistrict4.org">www.madistrict4.org</a>		<a href="http://www.marijuana-anonymous.com">www.marijuana-anonymous.com</a>	
<b>DIST. 5 Orange County</b>	+1.714.999.9409	<b>DIST. 17 Denmark</b>	
<a href="http://www.madistrict5.org">www.madistrict5.org</a>		<a href="http://www.ma-danmark.dk">www.ma-danmark.dk</a>	
<b>DIST. 6 LA County North</b>	+1.818.759.9194	<b>DIST. 18 Sacramento, CA</b>	+1.916.341.9469
<a href="http://www.madistrict6.org">www.madistrict6.org</a>		<a href="http://www.sacramentoma.org">www.sacramentoma.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 7 LA County South</b>	+1.310.494.0189	<b>DIST. 19 Toronto, ON, Canada</b>	+1.647.201.9161/+1.416.999.2244
<a href="http://www.madistrict7.org">www.madistrict7.org</a>		<a href="http://www.matoronto.org">www.matoronto.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 8 New York</b>		<b>DIST. 20 San Diego, CA</b>	
<a href="http://www.ma-newyork.org">www.ma-newyork.org</a>		<a href="http://www.ma-sandiego.org">www.ma-sandiego.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 11 Oregon</b>	+1.503.567.9892	<b>DIST. 21 Colorado</b>	+1.303.607.7516
<a href="http://www.madistrict11.org">www.madistrict11.org</a>		<a href="http://www.ma-colorado.org">www.ma-colorado.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 12 North Bay, CA</b>	+1.415.419.3555/+1.707.583.2326	<b>DIST. 22 New England</b>	
<a href="http://www.madistrict12.org">www.madistrict12.org</a>		<a href="http://www.newenglandma.org">www.newenglandma.org</a>	
<b>DIST. 13 MA Online</b>		<b>DIST. 24 Vancouver, BC, Canada</b>	+1.778.554.8997
<a href="http://www.ma-online.org">www.ma-online.org</a>		<b>PHONE MA Phone Meetings</b>	
		<a href="http://www.ma-phone.org">www.ma-phone.org</a>	

## 2020 MA CONVENTION

### A Vision For Us

#### REGISTRATION:

Registration, payment and hotel reservations can be made through our website:

[www.mawsconvention.org](http://www.mawsconvention.org)

#### Downloadable PDF at:

[www.mawsconvention.org/flyer](http://www.mawsconvention.org/flyer)

#### HOTEL:

Airtel Plaza Hotel - Van Nuys, CA  
 (Discounted rate Feb 11-18)  
 Must book hotel by Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>  
 Code = "MA Convention"

#### Questions?

Email: [ma2020reg@gmail.com](mailto:ma2020reg@gmail.com) or  
 call Felicia F. (310) 714-3361



## Celebrating 220 Years of Sobriety!

### District 2

John L. 12/15/1984 35 yrs.

### District 4

Bryan C. 12/8/2016 3 yrs.  
 Chad H. 12/15/2017 2 yrs.  
**Josh W. 12/14/2018 1 yr.**  
 Thor H. 12/6/2000 19 yrs.

### District 5

Amanda 12/17/2014 5 yrs.  
 Andrew S. 12/13/2015 4 yrs.  
 Colin 12/3/2011 9 yrs.  
 Gary R. 12/10/1990 29 yrs.

Joe W. 11/19/2011 8 yrs.  
 Larry C. 11/28/1999 20 yrs.  
**Laura R. 12/15/2018 1 yr.**  
 Lisa S. 12/7/1993 26 yrs.  
 Ray M. 11/19/2013 6 yrs.

### District 11

Bethany D. 12/14/2016 3 yrs.  
 Lisa N. 12/24/2017 2 yrs.  
 Louise 12/3/1998 21 yrs.  
 Mike D. 12/15/1997 22 yrs.

### MA Phone Groups

Molly M. 12/12/2015 4 yrs.

**See your sobriety date here.**



Allow us to publish your anniversary to celebrate!  
 Provide your sobriety date to your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to:  
[chiefs@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:chiefs@anewleafpublications.org)