



Willingness and Continued Growth in Recovery

A recurring theme in the recent stages of my growth in recovery has been the need for continued and increased levels of willingness. It has been described as an 'indispensable' ingredient of recovery. Willingness was necessary to get me in the door of my first meeting. It was essential for me to work the steps and achieve the vital spiritual awakening that led me to be free from the grips of marijuana addiction. I'm finding it has and continues to grow in importance and demand as I try to navigate the events and circumstances of my life successfully today.

I came in the door of an MA meeting after 15 years of smoking pot. I had damaged one of the most important relationships in my life beyond repair. Despite intuitively knowing that I had a problem for most of those 15 years, I was unwilling to be honest about it with myself and with others. When the rug was pulled out from under my life in the way of a divorce, I had to face the fact that I had chosen marijuana over everything else. I saw my desire and need to get high every day wasn't working anymore. My willingness to look for solutions came after failure, humiliation, and a feeling like I was at my lowest point. I felt alone, unlovable, and as if there was nothing I could do to change my past. Unable to see beyond my circumstances, I kept smoking, but I knew I needed to do something different.

Late one night, I sat in an armchair in my living room where, other than working, eating, drinking, and smoking weed, I had spent most of my waking hours over the past few weeks sitting in and watching

TV. I searched for the answer to a question, "How do I know if I have a problem with marijuana?" The Twelve Questions of Marijuana Anonymous appeared before me on my computer screen. One by one, I answered "Yes" to every single one of them. It said you only needed to answer yes to one or more to consider whether or not you might have a problem.

As I went outside to smoke a bowl that night, I broke down in tears as I tried to light it. I had the realization that, despite thinking I would use this life event as an opportunity to grow, I was the same person I was 15 years ago. I was still doing the exact same thing I was doing as a teenager. I had not changed a bit. I couldn't stand the idea of living into the future trajectory my life was headed or bear to repeat the past.

I went back inside and started to dive into the literature on the Marijuana Anonymous website. As I read through each step that night, my willingness to face my addiction grew. I could see myself in the words of the founding members, and I believed that this program of recovery, the Twelve Steps, could be a solution to everything I was dealing with. My willingness to work the rest of the MA program was built on this idea. I was moved by the possibility of a life free of guilt, shame, and remorse.

Step one asks us to accept our powerlessness over marijuana and acknowledge the unmanageability of our lives. It was pretty easy for me to find the willingness at this point because I saw no other path forward. My own ideas were suicide or a move

across the country to be with family in a state with legal marijuana so I could smoke all I wanted. But I had hit enough pain. I was ready to surrender to gain that freedom and work the MA program like my life depended on it because it did. I was an emotional and mental wreck.

The next day, I smoked the last of my stash and threw away my paraphernalia. I was determined this time would be different than all the other times I had done the exact same thing. With Marijuana Anonymous, I felt that I would have the knowledge, tools, and support I needed. I had no idea how accurate that concept was at the time and the unimaginable degree to which the fellowship would fulfill that promise.

I found myself at an MA meeting a few days later. After that, what was asked of me felt pretty easy; get a sponsor, attend meetings, reach out to other members, do service, do step work. These things gave my life the direction and purpose I was desperately seeking. They also supported me in dealing with the challenging emotional highs and lows in the first 30-90 days and beyond.

As I continued through the steps, I developed confidence and self-esteem. I started to feel worthy of love and forgiveness. Each step required yet another degree of willingness. In Step Two, I had to let go of what I thought I knew about spirituality and religion and seek and find new meaning. Step Three asked that I become willing to turn my life over to something I did not fully understand.

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

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Willingness and Continued Growth in Recovery

Then it came to my inventory. No normal person would submit themselves to this kind of exercise. Still, I was ready to try because I wanted the freedom assured in *Life with Hope*. In Step Four, I had to let go of who I thought I was so I could see myself objectively for who I am, who I am not, and who I am capable of becoming. I had to let go of fear-driven and self-limiting beliefs to begin the process of stepping into my true self, the person that my Higher Power would have me be. And, in reflection after sharing my inventory in Step Five, the idea that I can't and don't do anything without other people's help cracked my hardened exterior with an overwhelming sense of connection and gratitude.

Having done a great deal of self-analysis and self-reflection, I now have a keen awareness of the parts of my character that cause me and those around me harm. Willingness allows me to "give it up" when trying situations arise. I try to check my motives and not act on my selfish thoughts and desires. Instead of cutting my partner or loved ones down with harsh words, I try to pause and speak from my heart. When a friend makes a sarcastic comment at my expense, I try to hold my tongue and smile. I try to say "Thank you!" and not react when my parents tell me 'what's good for me' or 'what I should do' with my life. I say I try because I don't always do it perfectly. And I'm not always willing.

Feeling like I have a renewed purpose and a better understanding

of my character, I can exist beyond the haze of my need to smoke marijuana every day. I now seek ways to contribute to my family, friends, community, and society. My life has not gotten easier. The simple fact is that my growth in recovery has come with greater responsibility as I find my rightful place in the world. I have been presented with challenges and opportunities that I would have never even dreamed of if not for recovery. My life is full. I have a Higher Power and a fellowship to rely on who help me face challenges with my head high. I am grateful for the growth recovery has afforded me.

Each day I aim to continue my growth in recovery, my Higher Power asks for a greater level of willingness from me. I must be willing to continue my spiritual growth and improve my conscious contact with my Higher Power to maintain my recovery. When things in my life don't go the way I think they should, willingness is the key. Accepting life on life's terms urges me to surrender more and more.

They say that acceptance is the answer, but I have to be willing to accept things. Otherwise, my acceptance is shaky at best. I have to become willing to trust that life is unfolding how it's supposed to unfold, that my Higher Power has everything handled. I just need to keep moving my feet. That's been proven throughout my experience in MA and continues to be true today.

by Kyle C



The "MA Speaker Tapes" podcast is a collection of recorded leads from Marijuana Anonymous World Phone Meetings (MAWPM) speaker shares, MA Conventions keynote speakers, workshops, and more.

Listen to MA meetings on Podcasts!
Go to: www.ma-phone.org/speaker-tapes

Meditation

I love the saying: “Our own best thinking brought us to our bottom.” When we try to manipulate others and situations to get our way, we are again resorting to our own best thinking. We figure if we can steer the bus in just the right way, we will get what we want and be happy and relieved of suffering.

However, when our actions are based on self-will and ego gratification, even if we initially achieve what we want, the outcomes are often hollow and may have negative unintended consequences that become clear over time. Our desires alone, and the means we use to get those desires fulfilled, if not aligned with the will of our higher power, can lead to suffering for ourselves and others.

The beautiful thing about recovery is that it provides us with basic principles that, much like a map, when followed lead to elegant, robust, and long-lasting positive outcomes.

When we make the principles of recovery our focus and act based on those, we no longer have to suffer from obstacles generated by our own best thinking.

The principles of Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Love, Discipline, Perseverance, Spiritual Awareness, and Service as learned and practiced through the twelve steps are the keys. With these keys we align ourselves with the help and support of a power greater than ourselves.

So when you are troubled and don't know what to do, pause, take a breath, and check in to see if you are being willful or trying to manipulate people and situations. Then smile and turn the situation over to your Higher Power. Ask God to reveal to you the recovery principle you need to focus on to get back to serenity.

For many of us, coming to believe in a Higher Power is not a sudden spiritual awakening but a slow process of trust and change, at times trial and error. I struggled in early sobriety with praying, wondering what or who I was praying to and what to expect in the form of answers.

What helped was something I heard on the radio from the late musician-talk show host-writer Steve Allen. He said,

I believe there is one prayer that, if said sincerely by a person, will receive an instantaneous answer, whether a person believes in a god or not. That prayer is “God, make me a more spiritual person.”

If a person with an open mind says that prayer and truly means it, I believe that the prayer, in and of itself, will be immediately answered and will make that person more spiritual.

Great Service Opportunity with ANLP!

Volunteer Publishing Editor Help Wanted!

A New Leaf Publications (ANLP), the publishing arm of MA World Services, is actively searching for a volunteer Publishing Editor.

The Publishing Editor's primary role involves working with ANLP's Managing Editor as a lead to publish creative renditions of the monthly *A New Leaf* newsletter, and infrequent assistance with updates to Conference-approved MA literature.

An applicant for this position should have 2+ years sobriety, and Adobe In-Design experience is helpful. The commitment for this position is one year at approximately 4–6 hours per month.

If interested, please contact ANLP at, or send a cover letter and resume to, office@anewleafpublications.org



Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

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			PHONE	MA Phone Meetings www.ma-phone.org	

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon MA unity.

Celebrating 211 Years of Sobriety!

District 2			Colin	12/3/2011	10 yrs
Jack H.	12/4/2019	2 yrs	Gary R.	12/10/1990	31 yrs
Louise	12/3/2000	21 yrs	Laura R.	12/15/2018	3 yrs
Steven E.	12/6/2020	1 yr	Lisa S.	12/7/1993	28 yrs
District 4			Mike McK.	12/19/2001	20 yrs
Thor H.	12/6/2000	21 yrs	Russell T.	12/7/2019	2 yrs
District 5			District 8		
Amanda	12/17/2014	7 yrs	John M.	12/14/1994	27 yrs
Andrew S.	12/13/2015	6 yrs	District 25		
Bill G.	12/7/1993	28 yrs	Josh F.	11/30/2017	4 yrs

See your sobriety date here!



If your sobriety date has occurred, has not been published, and is not older than 45 days, please submit it in the format you see on the left. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liason, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org