



# A NEW LEAF

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## Changing With the Higher Power in All of Us

by Lynn W.

I went to a meeting the other night and listened to people sharing on the topic of change. I knew I was right where I needed to be because my life seems to be changing at a tremendous rate; and it's overwhelming; it's exciting; and it's a little bit scary. But you know what? It's all because I'm clean and sober and have a Higher Power.

These changes I'm making are all about growth and recovery and becoming and having what I want out of my life. Anything is possible to achieve as long as I believe in myself and don't run away.

When I was younger I would always move to another area when my life got so bad that I couldn't stand it — or me. So I would pick up, go to another state, or another county, or another city, and I would start all over again. That to me was change.

But I kept doing all the things that made me unhappy (the drugs, the food, the men), and after awhile the only change I had made was my venue.

All my unhappiness and self-hatred would catch up with me and it usually kicked me in the butt. So, of course, I would have to change again.

I would come back to L.A. and start over here again until it got very bad one more time. Then I would move somewhere else. But I always followed me. It's amazing how

that works. I thought I could escape me, but I wasn't changing the inside — only the outside.

Today I work on my inside, and my changes are real and, for the most part, wonderful. I like myself today and I have a healthy relationship with a man I love very much. I never believed I deserved that in my life but today I believe I'm very deserving of it, and I thank God for it. (We're moving in together and that's just another wonderful change.)

I'm also losing weight because I'm not getting into my other drug of choice, which is sugar. I'm ready to let go of the wall that's kept me hidden for most of my life.

I want to face myself and walk through

whatever I need to walk through to get to the other side and keep growing. I hid all my life and that didn't work.

I'm also starting a new business because I don't like the job I have and I don't want anything in my life that doesn't make me happy. I have sunk everything into this (which isn't that much, but all I have) and I'm setting goals and I'm taking the action and doing the footwork.

I am all I have in this lifetime — and it's up to me whether I choose to be happy or to just survive. It's amazing the power we all have inside of us to have and do anything we want.

I want the best for me because that's what I deserve; and I thank the fellowship and my Higher Power for helping me to find me. △

*"It's amazing the power we all have inside of us to have and do anything we want."*

## What Do They Mean by the Word Serenity?

by Mike H.

The word "serenity" conjures up many different meanings to different people. What exactly is it? Webster's defines serenity as the state of being serene. Serene has several definitions including:

Marked by utter calm and unruffled repose or quietude; clear and free of storms or unpleasant change.

*"My interpretation of serenity is accepting yourself as you are..."*

How does this apply to the serenity we speak of in recovery? Clearly our lives ordinarily consist of many storms and tons of unpleasant change. Therefore, is serenity the absence of problems or the ability to remain calm in the midst of them?

In the Serenity Prayer we ask God to grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change. We don't ask for the ability, or the inclination, we ask for the serenity. My interpretation of serenity is accepting yourself as you are and that your life is unfolding

exactly as it's supposed to.

In the next verse of the prayer are the words: "Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting even hardship as a pathway to peace." These words

center me on a daily basis.

I process life today through the entire serenity prayer and the

program. I try to live my life in a sobriety-centered serenity and act in accordance with spiritual values. I'm not always successful, but I don't let that destroy me or deter me from my goal as I would have in the past. My addict mind functions in an all or nothing mentality, and this is, and has been, often self-defeating.

Today, I know I'll be okay if I seek progress not perfection, I let go and let God, and I keep coming back. And that makes me feel serene. △

### Help Us Carry the Message to You!

If copies of *A NEW LEAF* are hard to find at the meetings you attend, ask your District Service Committee representative to provide more.



## 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 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 necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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## A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

This month's question: *What is a good share?*

**George B. — 6 years**

From newcomers — pain, fear and helplessness. The emotions they feel coming in. This is where they're at. People with time need to be reminded of this. From those of us with a little more time — experience, strength and hope — so newcomers will know that there is recovery from marijuana addiction.

**Heather K. — 2 yrs. 4 mos.**

One that comes from the heart and not the head. Sometimes I don't share because I feel like I don't know what I want to say, but maybe that's good. It's progress, not perfection, right? Now you can see why I don't share too much.

**Chris E. — 10 months**

When I hear someone that shares the truth, without hesitation, and they say things that everyone can relate to. That lets the group know that we are all related through a common bond through all that life has given us to share with each other. Also, by demonstrating that recovery is possible through simple steps. Everyone has something to share, and it's hard to judge what someone says as good or bad — it all has some value and is worth hearing.

**Joni W. — 6 months**

Honesty, recovery, spirituality, experience, feelings, willingness and strength.

**Brian A. — 2 yrs. 4 mos.**

Not trying to sound good or impressive, but rather, honest and from the heart. Speaking of your feelings and thoughts as best you can qualifies as an excellent share!

**Steve G. — 2 years**

A share that is the truth of the heart is a good share. When we speak to the group and admit one more time our absolute powerlessness over so many parts of life. I also think when we share about some tool that helps our recovery, that's a good share.

**John H. — 3 yrs. 8 mos.**

Speaking to recovery and change as achieved through the 12 Steps. Sharing positive elements of the new life achieved in sobriety, and addressing the spiritual experience in adversity and personal growth.

**Grady S. — 1,028 days**

Complete and total focus on ME. Plenty of recognition and empathy for ME. All of my emotionalism and dramatic ability focussed on making you hurt along with ME. Plenty of rehearsal and rewriting of my lines to maximize my chances of you liking ME and wanting ME in your life. In that same regard, don't share a word that might give anyone the impression that I want YOU to tell ME what I don't want to hear. And for God's sake, don't share anger because you will guarantee a poor social acceptance!



## Thought of the Month

*"In MA, we know what it is like to lose control over marijuana and not be able to stop using, despite pledges, pleas and promises. Our only qualifications for helping others is that we have stopped using ourselves. If we can do it, you can do it too! It is the support that MA members offer that is the backbone of the program's success." - For the Newcomer, published by MA World Services*

## It's All About One Word — Action!

**E**asy does it — but do it! That slogan caught my eye at another 12 Step meeting. I saw it on the coffee cup of a woman whose recovery I have admired since I first heard her share.

I have learned most from the examples set by women like her and my sponsor.

So, I have procrastinated and put off the editor of this fine publication many times when asked to be of service by writing an article. Fear in any and all of its forms has kept me from "doing it."

Until now, that is! Like anything, the sooner I do it, the thing that's in front of me, the better I feel and I no longer worry about it. — *Anonymous* △

## O' Captain...

**T**he editors of *A NEW LEAF* wish to express our gratitude to Loren N. who has turned over his commitment after serving as one of this newsletter's editors during the last year. Under Loren's direction, *A NEW LEAF* continued to progress and provide a valuable service by carrying the message of recovery to everyone in MA.

Although Loren steps away from his editing duties, he will continue to be of service with *A NEW LEAF* as treasurer of The New Leaf Editorial Board. △

## What's Your Opinion?

We are seeking full-length articles on the subject of "Singleness of Purpose" to be published in an upcoming issue of *A NEW LEAF*. Please send your articles to *A NEW LEAF*, P.O. Box 4314, North Hollywood, CA 91607.

## A Few Gifts From the Program

by Brian A.

**H**i Everybody!  
In my little over two years of sobriety off all mind altering chemicals, I have received many gifts as a result of MA and the 12 Steps. I would like to discuss a couple of them in particular.

First, I now have the ability to accept things in my life that before would have made me extremely angry. I have learned to do what is in front of me and to do my best. To handle these things with the most love, compassion and care that I am capable of and, whatever the end result, to understand that this is God's will for me.

This program has taught me acceptance through the Steps and my sponsor. To be less selfish and less self-centered — these are big steps for me. If there is some situation I simply will not accept, I do my best to change it and then get out of the way and let

God take care of the rest. I have done all I could do. I am powerless over certain things but I am not helpless. So I do the best I can and try to accept the end result. This applies and works in most situations I encounter.

Another gift is the joy I get out of being with my children. I was not always there for them when I was using. I was in my own selfish world of drugs and self-indulgence.

Although I still have many defects, I found that I can be there for and with my children. I share feelings with them now that I could not show them before. And

they love me right back. My kids are gifts that mean a tremendous amount to me. I would never claim to be a great father, but I know from the gifts of this program and the loving people in this fellowship, I am getting there.

Thank you all for being here. I need you and your recovery. So keep coming back! △

*"I do the best I can and try to accept the end result. This applies and works in most situations..."*

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Rita M.	December 23	30 years
Mike LB	January 10	7 years
Dan L.	January 12	1 year
Loren N.	January 14	4 years
Everett	January 16	39 years
Angel S.	February 1	5 years
Rick D.	February 1	5 years
Eric M.	February 1	1 year
Joe S.	February 1	1 year
George B.	February 6	6 years
Steve G.	February 8	2 years
Bill D.	February 9	4 years
Cora	February 9	1 year
Billy D.	February 13	1 year
Cindy K.	February 15	1 year
Russ	February 15	1 year
Terry M.	February 24	6 years
Paul F.	February 24	1 year
Richard M.	February 25	1 year

# The Last Six Months of Using

by Bob L.

The last six months of my using began on Nov. 10, 1992. Those six months were about the worst I can remember since 1982 when I hit my bottom because of cocaine. I didn't sink quite as low this last time, but the fact that I sunk as far as I had is depressing in and of itself.

During those last six months I was drinking up to a quart of hard liquor a day and smoking an eighth of an ounce or more daily if (it was available). I stayed home countless days from work because of this.

Needless to say, my job performance suffered terribly. I was making a lot less

money and spending a lot more on pot and alcohol. The debts mounted.

I tried to quit drinking and smoking completely at least three times that I can remember. I had to quit because three different times I had to see a doctor for bronchitis.

I still believed I was in control and could handle everything by myself. This went on until May 10, 1993. On that day, I reached out for help.

Since then, the last six months have been very different.

I went to a 12 Step meeting nearly every day for the first 90 days. If I missed a day, I would go to two meetings the next day. And I discovered there were a lot of other

people, very much like me.

I began working the steps. I realize now that I'm not in control and that I never was. I realize that I'm powerless over my disease of addiction and that a Higher Power — God — will restore my sanity. I have turned my will and my life over to the care of God. And I've been working on a "searching and fearless moral inventory" for about four months.

I've read the Big Book and the NA Basic Text; I have a copy of the Twelve and Twelve, as well as a lot of other reading material. I pray daily.

I have a sponsor and I've taken commitments at most of the meetings I attend.

Thanks to the program, I have been completely clean and sober one day at a time for the last six months — and I am starting to recover. △

***"I realize now that I'm not in control and that I never was. I realize that I'm powerless over my disease of addiction..."***

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NEW ZEALAND  
(no info at this time)

## Upcoming Events

### District Service Committee Meetings

District 5  
2nd Monday of Month - 7:30 p.m.  
REA Community Center  
Room 640  
661 Hamilton, Costa Mesa

District 6  
1st Thursday of Month - 7:30 p.m.  
(Ask your GSR for  
meeting location.)

District 7  
2nd Wednesday of Month  
7:30 p.m.  
(Call Teri A. for location.)  
(310) 823-3446

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**MA World Conference**  
May 28-30  
San Jose, California  
*Details in Upcoming Issues*

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