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A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

Doing the Two Step

by Keith L.

Step Two gives me an opportunity to let God back into my life. When I was smoking pot obsessively and compulsively, I was doing something crazy. Sane people don't let pot dominate their lives. When I was using, pot took precedence over everything, including God and family. If that's not crazy, I don't know what is.

Step Two gives me an opportunity to practice humility. Sometimes humility can be a little tricky for me. Sometimes I think I've "attained" humility, as if it were some tangible degree. But whenever I think like that, I need to take a step back and realize that I'm being grandiose. One doesn't attain humility; one practices humility. No matter how humble I become, there is always room for improvement.

Someone once asked Mother Theresa how she could work with and even embrace lepers. Her reply was something to the effect that, "Well it's certainly not because I'm a saint. I'm just a crabby old lady, and doing it makes me feel good." In sobriety, I've come to believe that this type of good feeling that Mother Theresa alludes to is what real happiness is all about. Perhaps true happiness is about helping others. Getting a new car, buying a nice outfit, going to an amusement park — these are all things that can make us feel good, but this kind of feeling good is what I call fun. Having fun is also important. In fact, I believe that fun and happiness are important for a balanced life. But as a practicing addict in the throes of my addiction, I had little opportunity to practice humility, which would allow me to help others and therefore become happy. I was too selfishly consumed by my perpetual quest to get high and stay high. Extending efforts to help someone else would only take energy away from my cannabis quest.

I was at the post office the other day and was in a long line. When the lady in front of me finally got to the front, she inadvertently got into the wrong

line for whatever it was that she wanted. She got a little upset, and went all the way back to the end of the line. When it was my turn to be helped, I motioned back to the lady to go ahead before me — after all, she was originally in front of me, and it seemed like the right thing to do. I immediately thought, "Gee, I'm a swell guy." But just as Mother Theresa embraced lepers not because she was an inherent saint, I let the lady at the post office go ahead of me not because I'm an inherently swell guy. I did it because it made me feel good. I've come to realize that only by selflessly helping other people, can I seek happiness.

While believing in and praying to God has helped restore me to sanity, another power greater than myself that helps restore my sanity is the power of the group — the power of meetings. Sharing and listening at meetings is a great way for me to get out of my head and feel connected to my fellow human beings. It's great to be with a group of people who suffer from the same disease, and who are trying to heal and make their lives more fulfilling.

Some people argue that addiction is not a disease. I can understand their reasoning. They believe cancer is a disease because they can view cancer cells under a microscope. While cancer is a disease of the body, I believe that addiction is a disease of the spirit. And the spirit cannot be seen under any microscope. It can only be felt. And at meetings we discuss our feelings. We share our feelings and ultimately we heal each other.

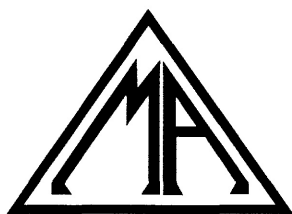
Step 2

CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW LEAF!

You, the reader and member of MA, make A New Leaf possible by sending us your experience, strength and hope. Please take a moment to send a contribution for the March issue by February 20th.

For the March issue, we're looking for thoughts on Step 3 and Tradition 3. We're also looking for answers to the Roving Reporter question, which is related to this month's MA convention in San Francisco: "How does attending MA social events help keep you sober?"

If you have any thoughts on these issues, no matter how brief, send them along! Our contact information is on page 2. We'd love to hear from you!



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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Tradition Two: Governed by Everyone

by Mike F.

I have heard it said that as you go "up" the service ladder to positions of greater responsibility, you actually have less and less control to govern. Marijuana Anonymous is a volunteer organization where the most important person is the newcomer with the desire to stop using. Trusted servants with more responsibility are responsible to the newcomer to make sure he/she has a place to go: Marijuana Anonymous. My experience in service takes the "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern" part of the second tradition and turns it into "Our leaders are but trusted servants, **THEY ARE GOVERNED BY EVERYONE.**"

Being of service to Marijuana Anonymous has proven to be a humbling experience. When I was the "chair back in order guy" at a local MA meeting, I was given a chair map but could not put the chairs in their

place as I chose to without anyone paying attention. However, when I was secretary of a meeting nothing could be done without a business meeting after the main meeting. It would never fail that someone who

had not been attending that meeting regularly, or at all, would give a very good argument against "my" agenda. Needless to say, the group conscience would go against the way I was hoping. At first I was angry that "my" way had not been accepted, but the group conscience was accepted. Perhaps it was a loving God that planted the seed in my head to bring the topic up, and that same loving God planted the seeds to steer the group conscience the direction it did go. One thing for sure did happen: As the secretary of the meeting, I was governed to run the meeting a certain way by the group conscience.

Now that I am a GSR at the district level, I can see the wisdom in a joke that my friend makes about the second tradition. He reads the second tradition as "For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience; our leaders are but trusted servants, they **ARE SICK AND TWISTED AND SHOULD NOT BE TRUSTED.**" No matter how much all of us want to give back what was freely given to us, it's natural to feel that each one of us knows what will make the most difference. Of course, it is important to get our thoughts and ideas communicated to the other trusted servants. It is just as important to listen to a loving God communicating through a group conscience telling us what will make the best difference. However, if you are one of those addicts with the desire to stop using who chooses to leave the meeting before the business meeting, is the message that a loving God is sending to you part of the group conscience?

Tradition 2

The Steps and Traditions

by Carol McD

Our Steps and Traditions: Do you suppose they are there for a reason?

The problem with us addicts, alcoholics, and whateverics is that we are Sick! (And, of course, some of us are sicker than others - but I'm really sure I could not possibly be one of Them! Could I?) Anyway, our Steps and Traditions are suggestions, because we don't take commands well. Or, like it says on page 60 in the Big Book of AA, "What? An order? I can't go through with it!" (Do note the re-punctuation.) So, if it's a suggestion, we think we have a choice, at least at first.

There are many ways to get off our drug(s)-of-choice, but the Twelve Step programs are the ones that not only help us stop our using but give us tools to live life in a more rational and spiritual manner. (No, the two concepts do not nullify each other!) Most of us started using so much and so often because we were not happy with who we were and/or where we were. (Addiction came later.) The Steps are to help us learn to be comfortable in our own skins. The Traditions are to help us learn how to be comfortable interacting with a group. (And considering who we addicts are, that can be one "wild and crazy" group, folks!)

This is, above all, a WE program. We find a sponsor and WE work the Steps. We become part of a group and WE learn how to apply the Traditions. WE learn to love each other - even the folks we don't particularly like to be around! Why? Because we remember that they have been or are going through hell, just like us, and they're trying to be a better human being. And would you believe? Most of us are doing a pretty good job on that. Remember, it's Progress, not Perfection.

So - if you don't have one - get yourself a copy of Life With Hope. It is about the Steps and Traditions, and that's what this program really is about, not just going to a few meetings and hanging out. Getting a sponsor and actually working our Steps and Traditions helps us become the Dopeless Hope Fiends we want to be. Much better than the hopeless dope fiends that we once were!

A Warning to All

by John C

A warning to all:
addiction appears in all walks
wanting, waiting, yet never fulfilled
finding something you've never seen -
wanting everything.
I'm not a pimp
just a stranger in a familiar place
the act goes on,
and everyone's happy...
Except me.
The other day I found something familiar;
trouble is
it's you.
can you blame me?
I'm being deceived by the form
holding my strings
someone's telling me to stick my neck out,
but the guillotine's blade stretches across the scape,
and I've never been one of luck.
Yet I still want the thing that I have assigned such
high
value to
I am pure as rain
sober as a judge.
the job assigned to me will never end
pushing a rock up a hill...
I get crushed by that boulder every day
and what's in the pot at the end of my rainbow?
a note: someday.
I need to know; can't stand the suspense
what's to come?
am I doing the right thing?
who assigns value to the word?
I rot with anxiety, not knowing where I am in this
world.
can you blame me?

Thought for the Month:

We needed to ask ourselves but one short question:
"Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe,
that there is a power greater than myself?" As soon
as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to
believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his
way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that
upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective
spiritual structure can be built.

— Alcoholics Anonymous, page 47

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Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in A New Leaf? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.

District 3

| | | |
|----------|------------|----------|
| Sarah M. | 11/13/1999 | 3 years |
| Shane M. | 1/1/02 | 1 year |
| Pat Mc. | 12/29/1988 | 14 years |
| Dean S. | 2/1/1990 | 13 years |
| Kevin G. | 2/23/1994 | 9 years |

District 5

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Rick B. | 2/1/89 | 14 years |
| Hal N. | 2/26/1991 | 12 years |
| Papa Joe | 2/1/1993 | 10 years |
| Victoria C. | 2/5/1995 | 8 years |
| Christine | 2/1/1998 | 5 years |
| Edward W. | 2/4/1998 | 5 years |
| Peter S. | 2/17/1999 | 4 years |
| Bea | 2/4/2000 | 3 years |
| David S. | 2/9/02 | 1 year! |
| Frances | 2/24/02 | 1 year! |

District 6

| | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| Judy S. | 1/16/1995 | 8 years |
|---------|-----------|---------|

District 7

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|----------|
| Paul | 1/1/2001 | 2 years |
| Mary B. | 1/10/2001 | 2 years |
| Michael | 12/25/1988 | 14 years |
| Glen | | 14 years |
| Mark R. | 12/31/1998 | 4 years |
| Brad | 1/7/2002 | 1 year! |
| Renelde | 12/31/1992 | 10 years |
| Frank | | 15 years |
| John R. | 12/16/2001 | 1 year! |
| Debra M. (aka C.) | 1/03/1995 | 8 years |
| Peter K. | 12/16/1996 | 6 years |
| Jim M. | 01/16/1995 | 8 years |
| Baljit | 12/19/1998 | 4 years |

District 10

| | | |
|------------|------------|---------|
| Gary | 12/18/2001 | 1 year! |
| Michael W. | 1/4/2000 | 3 years |
| Fred L. | 1/8/1997 | 6 years |
| Mark L. | 2/13/2002 | 1 year! |

District 11

| | | |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Dave C | 2/22/02 | 1 year! |
| Paul G | 2/26/2000 | 3 years |

Phoenix

| | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| Wendy D. | 2/22/1999 | 4 years |
|----------|-----------|---------|

Washington, D. C.

| | | |
|--------|---------|----------|
| Yuichi | 2/23/89 | 14 years |
|--------|---------|----------|

Celebrating 223 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!



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