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A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

What it Took to Work Step One

by Paul A.

It took me over 20 years and some quite severe consequences to admit that I am powerless over marijuana and that my life is unmanageable.

I began smoking weed at age 15, and within a year I was a full-blown addict. The trigger was my father's death, and in retrospect I realize I was smothering the pain and loss in a cloud of smoke. For 20 years, my longest stretch of sobriety was a 19-day period while I was cleaning up for a scheduled UA.

I re-arranged my job, partners, and entire life around the availability of weed or other weed-related issues (UAs, cost, etc.) I was a functioning addict – holding a job with the same company for 13 years – but my life was controlled by marijuana. However, while I was using, I was not aware of that fact. I was just plodding along, smoking, eating, and smoking and eating! Oh, yeah: I slept and worked, also.

Subconsciously, I guess I knew weed was killing me physically, spiritually, and in every other aspect of my existence, but my addictive behavior overrode everything. I don't believe I need to concentrate or glamorize the "good times"; just read the stories in *Life With Hope*, and most of them mirror mine.

I need to concentrate on my recovery now. At age 36, I commenced a 12-year prison term. Five years remain in this term. It is here in the depths of hell that, ironically, I became free – free from marijuana addiction. This environment, away from the regular temptation of a bag, is where I grew up. I became honest with myself and my feelings, and I realized that I was out of control. It took prison for me to accept the reality of Step 1.

I now have a future. A daily journal, meditation, exercise, and university classes are how I live today. I never, under the grips of marijuana addiction, would have taken the time away from bong hits to do anything so truly productive.

I discovered MA in a 12 Step class here and ordered *A New Leaf* and *Life With Hope*. The group is for me. It's the only group to acknowledge that marijuana is addictive. I know it is, and I am living proof of the detrimental effects of addiction.

With solid clean time behind me, I have begun to manage my life, but I am truly powerless over marijuana. I can't smoke it today. I shouldn't ever touch it. And with the help of fellow addicts and the realization of my disease, I won't use again. My Higher Power takes me onward, upward.

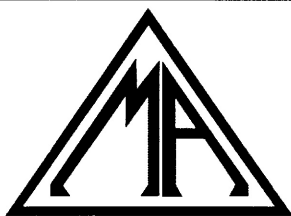
IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER FOR THE CONVENTION!

You can register when you show up in Portland. In fact, if you haven't registered yet, we suggest you keep your check until you get to town, but we ask that you let us know you're coming and if you're attending the Saturday banquet.

Visit our Web site at www.ma2004.org for contact info and to read all about the wonderful events happening February 13-15 in Portland!

The MA Convention is way too much fun!





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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We send approximately 681 copies of A New Leaf each month to subscribers in 31 states

The Roving Reporter

For the March issue, the Roving Reporter asks, "The Third step says 'Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.' How do YOU understand God or your higher power?" and "How do YOU have fun in recovery?"



JOIN the New Leaf Team!

A New Leaf Publications needs a new editor and a bookkeeper! If you're interested in either position, or would just like some more info, please email us at anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

When we put God in charge by praying for God's will and the power to carry it out, God can operate through our group conscience.

— Life With Hope, page 75

Please contribute to A New Leaf

It might not be easy, but it is simple: If you don't contribute, we will one day have no newsletter. Here are several ways to do it:

- Write your story, in about 1,000 words or less.
- Share, in the same length, on a recovery topic that's important to you.
- Share on a Step or Tradition; for the March issue, we'll focus on Step or Tradition 3.
- Write a recovery-related poem.
- Let us know about an event happening in your district or area.
- Answer the Roving Reporter question, which for March is "How do you have fun in recovery?"

Please send your experience, strength and hope to anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org.

I Am Willing

by Susan Marie

H.O.W. is one of our program's basic ideas. Step 1 is about Honesty. We finally have just a tiny bit of honesty about our addiction, and we're handed a key. Step 2 is about Openness. We need just a little bit of openness to the possibility of letting a power greater than ourselves help us recover. Once we begin to open, we're shown the lock in the door, and we insert our key. Step 3 is about Willingness. With a small amount of willingness to do what is suggested in these rooms, the door opens a crack, and we can see into a whole new way of living.

I clearly remember the first time I took Step 3 and felt the sweet surrender that comes with true willingness. For the first time in my life, I was willing to believe a power greater than me could restore me to sanity, and I was willing to let this higher power help me.

I have been willing throughout my recovery to go to meetings, no matter what. I have heard many times that people who quit going to meetings often use. I knew I never wanted to use again, so I have gone to meetings, no matter how much I didn't want to go.

Over the past few years, I have incorporated other types of prayers in my daily routine. One of them is "May all beings be at peace." I will change it to "May I be at peace" or "May ___ be at peace." One day, as I rode the bus to work and was repeating this prayer, I said to my higher power, "You know, god/goddess/all there is, today I really am *willing* to be at peace." Guess what? I felt peaceful that day, and every day when I remember to offer my willingness to be at peace.

The following prayer came to me one day. I use it as a meditation. I repeat each line over and over until I'm ready to move on to the next line:

I am
I am willing
I am willing to be
I am willing to be at peace

Step 2: What Can He Do?

by Angela B.

I never thought I was insane until I learned to comprehend the definition. Insanity means doing the same things over and over again and expecting a different result. This was definitely true for me.

How could I expect to continue using and to pass or avoid drug tests while on probation? How could I expect to find a good job? How was I going to mend the broken seams within my family when all I kept doing was ripping them further and further apart? How was I going to solve my problems?

I wasn't. The reality was the fact that I was all talk. I'd get high, feel guilty, brainstorm all of my solutions, but never take any action to do anything about it. I was numb, and I was satisfied. Why shouldn't I be? I still had friends, a boyfriend, some money, a place to stay, but most of all I still had my intelligence.

Well, this was a load of crap that I continuously fed myself. My friends were constantly changing, depending on how their access to the drug was. I constantly switched up my relationships depending on the man who could support both myself and my habit best. I didn't have money – never my own! How could I? I didn't have a job, just means of support by my enablers. My place to stay was a dirty, cheap, smelly hotel room that I had somehow poorly converted and teased myself into calling "a little apartment." I definitely wasn't intelligent. The extent of my clever abilities was the fact that I always managed to have my drug and the necessities of life – barely. Who was I kidding? This was no way to live.

It was in sobering up that I really realized what I'd been doing to myself and everyone around me. I couldn't imagine what people's perceptions of me may have been. I only managed to always keep in front of me that "someone" who was worse off. But the truth is, I was headed in exactly the same direction, and I didn't ever want that.

So after the seven years of pain, games, lying and drama, I decided to ask for forgiveness and put it all into His hands. I prayed and prayed, begging God to help me change things – and to my surprise, slowly but surely He did! In more ways than one. Things were working out exactly the way they should. It wasn't always necessarily how I wanted it, but it was His plan for me. Not only did He help me to get my life on track, but I was able to help others, and I was finally awake. It was a release to stop trying to control everything. I was letting go and trusting my faith to that **power** greater than myself. It still feels great!

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For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
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BIRTHDAYS

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 1:

Jymi S. 2/22/02 2 years
Karissa S. 2/20/02 2 years
Mike L. 2/23/99 2 years

District 2:

Dion B. 10/11/03 1 year!
Jim E. 12/18/03 1 year!
Katina 1/14/03 1 year!
Joe B. 12/31/02 2 years
Doug P. 1/17/01 3 years
Barbara W. 11/18/01 3 years
Louise 12/3/99 5 years
Joshua T. 12/15/98 6 years
Matt C. 12/31/95 9 years
AnneMarie 1/14/94 10 years
Elizabeth S. 10/27/91 13 years
John L. 12/15/85 19 years

District 3:

Carrie A. 2/21/03 1 year!
Kevin G. 2/23/94 10 years
Dean S. 2/1/90 14 years

District 5:

Tony R. 1/02/03 1 year!
David S. 2/6/02 2 years
Frances 2/24/02 2 years
Bea 2/4/00 4 years
Peter S. 2/17/99 5 years
Wendy D. 2/22/99 5 years
Christine 2/1/98 6 years
Edward W. 2/4/98 6 years
Victoria C. 2/5/95 9 years
Papa Joe 2/1/93 11 years
Hal N. 2/26/91 13 years

District 7:

Judy S. 1/16/95 9 years

District 10:

Pauly R. 1/24/03 1 year!
Mike W. 1/4/00 2 years
Rachel K. 1/15/02 2 years
Conrad G. 1/8/01 3 years
Mike B. 12/21/01 3 years
Fred L. 1/8/97 7 years

District 11:

Dave 2/22/02 2 years
Paul 2/26/00 4 years
Jeff 2/1/99 5 years
Trisa 2/1/96 8 years

District 12:

Debbie 12/27/02 1 year!
Anna M. 2/27/03 1 year!

Celebrating 216 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!