



Humbled by a Relapse

I was recently digging through some old step work and stumbled across this piece that I wrote as part of my first step when I relapsed in 2009. I decided to submit it in hope that it helps someone else struggling where I was 12 years ago: David G.

Powerlessness to me is my inability to sit down and write this from the heart without trying to think about how I am going to glamorize it or use my usual analytical B.S. Simply put, I need to admit that I don't know anything about anything... especially when it comes to recovery.

I've heard people say that it is the wise man who thinks he is a fool and the fool who thinks he is a wise man. I have to acknowledge that I don't even know how to take care of myself, much less someone else, so how could I be the wise man? My relapse to me is a clear sign of my ego, complacency, and reservations that I have towards the program.

I'm tired of worrying about what other people think or how I should act in certain situations. That didn't feel like as insurmountable of a problem until I became a full-blown addict, and my whole life became a performance. I don't need to self-puppet anymore because it has become clear to me that whether I acknowledge it or not, my Higher Power is in control and has given me plenty of signs of this power.

I can't try to be an intellectual about sobriety. As has been said in MA, "the longer you're sober, the less you know." If there is any indication in

my life that this holds true, it was my relapse. I got to a place where I figured that I knew what it was going to take for me to stay sober, and look where it got me.

This time around, I intend to do things differently, and the first thing I'm ready to do is surrender even if it means giving up everything. If my faith needs to be put to the test, then so be it. Maybe the best thing I can do for myself right now is submit to something I'm not even sure I believe in, be it this program or a Higher Power. Either way, it comes down to willingness – I now have a chance to rebuild my recovery, and I want to get it right the second time around. ▲

~by David G

*This time
around, I intend
to do things
differently, and
the first thing
I'm ready to do
is surrender.*

Broken Development a 4th Step fear inventory in verse

Enlightened- feeling like a titan,

*Feeling peace of mind, like
my shine's been brightened,*

*Feelings so defined but still
a giant baby frightened,*

Of the uncontrolled,

Or the under-told,

Of being misunderstood,

Or not looking good,

Of letting love run cold,

Or identities of old,

*I'm afraid of the ways
my parents scold,*

*Afraid of the part of
me I wanna hold,*

Afraid of the me I can't control,

Afraid of losing you,

Of losing friends too,

*Afraid of not doing
what I should do,*

When I know I should do it,

Afraid I'll just say screw it,

And hit a spliff again,

Was afraid of pad and pen,

But now I'm back at it,

My bad habits forever end,

And I'll forever mend,

This broken development ▲

~by Anthony H.

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.

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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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Good Morning

“Good Morning,” my voice croaked over the PA. My eyes undoubtedly a bit glassy, slightly inflamed even through expertly dispensed drops, breath cloaked with half a pack of gum, and a demeanor characteristically lax bordering on sloppy.

I fidgeted and read verbatim from the paper on the lectern in front of me “Thank you to all the community leaders here today and to those watching at home. I’m here to present to you about...”

Talk about a time to be sober and aware and at my best. And, yet, I certainly was not. I was off-balance, unfocused, and disjointed (pun intended) in my presentation.

I used to go to work high whenever I thought I could get away with it. On the morning of my big presentation, I woke at 5am to go to the gym. Like I did when I had no client meetings or presentations, I’d fumble out of the house making sure to get high before I left.

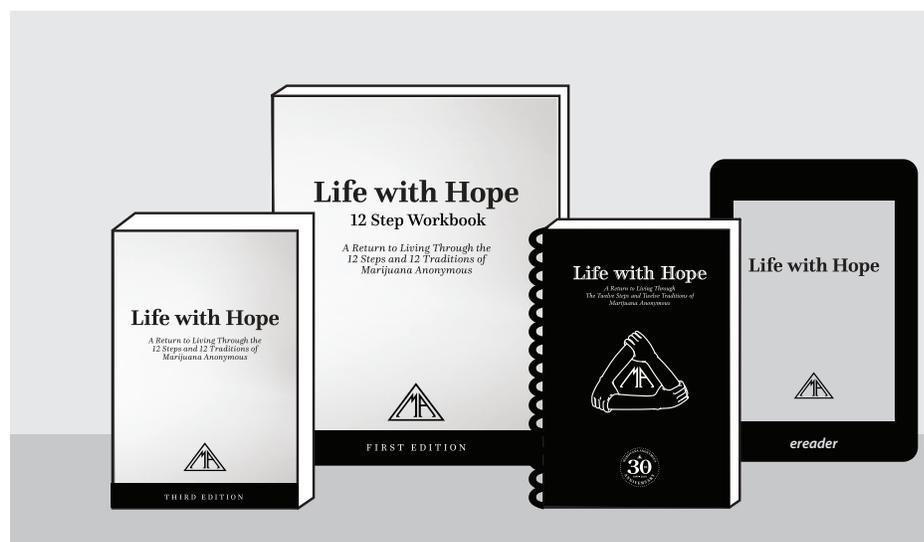
When I learned I could manage it, I’d go to work high as much as possible. I’d justify my abuse, telling myself it made me better, more creative in my work.

As I grew into full addiction, the weed from the legal pot stores became increasingly strong and “predictable.” I could keep my buzz on for many hours, just from a few puffs first thing in the morning. After my workout – yes, I’d swim and workout high AF. Beginning the day high made me feel like I was truly gaming everything. I was pumped up, making jokes, and “coming in hot” to the gym/pool. Then I’d head to work where I’d continue my manic ways.

My productivity and quality, marginal at best, would then drop off completely after lunch. I’d miss deadlines, misreport important data, fudge facts, and blame others for my failures.

When did this all start? How did I get to the point where I was getting high every day and going to work? My self-seeking did harm me. At first, there were quantifiable trade-offs like popularity, acceptance, and not having to deal with my problems. These were offset by lost opportunities, lost time, and shallow relationships.

What about all the shame, all the lost opportunities, the many times I could have risen to the occasion? Instead, I got high and played it safe,



Good Morning continued

never daring to go big. I'd always just go home and get high. In the haze of my addiction, I resented and regretted my past every day. Every moment I was not stoned, I was angry and uncomfortable.

My mom used to tell me "the one thing no one could take away was my integrity." I had given mine away for a quick buzz and unfulfilled dreams.

Only in sobriety have I come to accept that going to work wasted was the same as stealing from my employer. Never thought of myself a thief except when we'd "wahoo" beer in high school. Unlike the fun stories of fleeing a cursing 7-11 clerk as a kid, the theft of work hours at age 48 was something I'd share with no one. I held it close, my best kept secret with myself. I held that secret, and I harmed myself and others. Not very cool.

The Promises (of Alcoholics Anonymous, pps. 83-84) tell us to not dwell on the past, nor seek to shut the door on it. As I grow in my recovery, working the steps, I can see that this promise is coming true. An oldtimer recently shared at a meeting "It's ok to look at the past, just don't stare at it." My adventures before I found sobriety are best used as tools, they

transform my history from badges of honor, to embarrassing episodes to valuable lessons and perhaps most importantly, stories from which others may learn.

Thanks to MA, I am now trying to live a life of rigorous honesty. I'm trying to use my past as a tool for my present and my future.

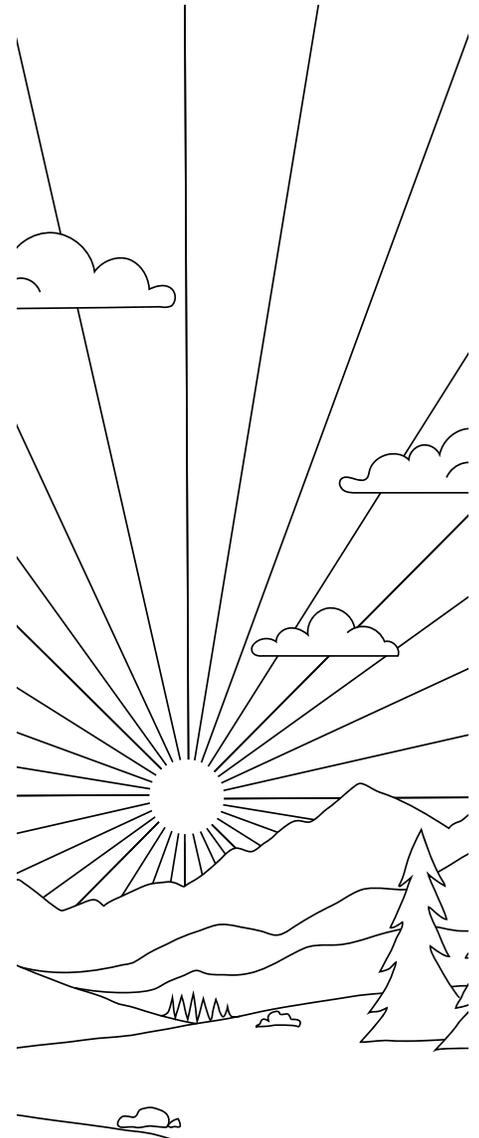
Do I find it difficult to "not regret the past, nor seek to close the door on it?" Yes, I do. I'm still struggling.

But I know there is a path. And that path is the 12 steps.

My bottom (figuratively and literally) was subtle and soft and developed over many years of abuse.

"Getting away with it" is a fallacy, for I cheated no one but myself. I know that's somewhat cliché, but as a grateful addict in recovery, nothing could be truer. How much time did I waste, how many opportunities lost, how many decisions were driven by my desire to get and stay high? I can look at these things and realize that I am now stronger because of it, and that my faith and my release is only possible because of my past. I am stronger, better, and more prepared to do "thy will" now than I have ever been. ▲

~by Anonymous



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Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God whose expression may come through in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Celebrating 205 Years of Sobriety!

District 2	Bravo	1/2/2017	4	Frances D.	1/1/2016	5		
John L.	12/15/1984	36	Tony R.	1/1/2004	17	Lisa	1/12/2020	1
District 3	District 7			District 22				
John L.	1/1/2016	15	Marcy E.	1/5/2013	8	James K.	1/15/2012	9
District 4	District 12			Independant Groups				
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District 5	District 19			District 21				
Hillary	1/1/2009	11	Sarah G.	12/4/2016	6			
John H.	1/10/2013	8	Sean R.	12/20/2019	1			
Layne	1/18/2010	11	District 21					
Matt N.	1/6/1989	32	Phil	21/1/2012	8			
Melody	1/16/1989	32	Mike A.	1/1/2020	1			
Robert M.	1/18/2018	3	Jerry	1/1/2020	1			
			Porter	1/1/2015	6			

See your sobriety date here!



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