



Cold Sweat: My Experience with Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS)

I woke up in a cold sweat, my heart palpitating, my hands shaking. "Not again," I whispered as I ran into the bathroom and began profusely vomiting. Thus began the 18 days I spent in and out of the hospital, in and out of the bathroom every fifteen minutes, in and out of consciousness and sanity.

This was not my first time with this experience.

For a year, I suffered from cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS). Doctors upon doctors told me to stop smoking pot, and yet I continued to blame my experiences on anxiety, on trauma, on life itself. I refused to admit that my continued retching was a result of my consistent use of marijuana, and throughout the course of that year, I endured eight different episodes. Until one final day, the hospital told me I was reaching fatality.

For a year, I told myself I would rather subdue my thoughts and go through near-death experiences than face my mental health symptoms head-on. I was trapped in an endless cycle of using and refusing to work through the very experiences that forced me to the point of using substances. I was willing to sacrifice my life in order to continue to use marijuana as a coping mechanism.

But that day, that fateful day, I realized the extent that cannabis controlled my life.

I had been in Marijuana Anonymous meetings for over a year but was declining to participate in any of the readings. I told myself I was above, that I did not have an issue, and that marijuana was not something one could be addicted to.

And then I finally decided to listen to the twelve questions. I identified with all of them. Even if I didn't have the physical ramifications of CHS, I was still severely addicted and rejecting anything that would confront my unhealthy way of coping. Marijuana Anonymous helped save my life.

"Until one final day, the hospital told me I was reaching fatality ... I realized the extent that cannabis controlled my life."

Each time I had attempted to get sober, it was for someone else. Someone else who had told me my use affected them, or that my use would inhibit our relationship. And when that relationship fell through, I fell back into cannabis use.

I never believed that I was worth recovery, worth living life to the fullest extent, worth experiencing the joys that everyone else experienced. And it was ironic, but this belief came from the fact that I prioritized others' well-being over my own. I was not convinced that I could come first, that my happiness was worth fighting for.

The day I decided I had value changed my life. Since getting sober, I have not had a single vomiting episode. I have not had a single day where I've fought for someone else's jubilation more than my own. I have not had a single day where I've believed the subdued nature cannabis induces was worth

sacrificing the joys that everyday life can bring you.

This is not to say that sobriety is easy. There are days when I think, "f**k it, I might as well use." There are times when I believe that ignoring my problems is better than facing them with the erudition I have gained from years of research. But, from my therapist, I have learned to ride the wave. With each feeling that comes, I know it will pass with due time, and that any decision made in the moment can have repercussions that will last a lifetime. From my family, I have learned unconditional affection and unconditional love of the experience of life. From myself, I have learned that I inherently am valuable, I am deserving of joy. Because of these realizations, when I experience these emotions, I continue to choose myself. I continue to choose a life in which I prioritize the well-being that I, for so long, decided was not worth it.

And so, I live to tell you that you are worth it.

You are worth fighting for.

You have value.

You are more than what your past tells you.

And you are more than what cannabis does to you.

~Lila J.



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.

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<https://anewleafpublications.org/submit-your-story/>

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Volunteer Design Editor Help Wanted!

A New Leaf Publications (ANLP), the publishing arm of MA World Services, is actively searching for a volunteer Design Editor. The Design Editor's primary role involves working in collaboration with ANLP's Content Editor to publish creative renditions of the monthly *A New Leaf* newsletter, and infrequent assistance with updates to Conference-approved MA literature. The Design Editor attends and is a voting member of monthly ANLP Board meetings.

An applicant for this position should have 2+ years sobriety, and graphic arts/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 office@anewleafpublications.org.

New life at 59!

I believe I was born with an addict brain. Drugs and alcohol were rampant on both sides of the family. My Dad was a very angry blackout alcoholic, and I was always torn between fear and wanting to fit in. From a very young age I was the people pleaser, peace-keeper, and caretaker. Because of this, I suffered from anxiety and panic attacks.

Then at the age of 12 I was introduced to marijuana. It was magic, for the first time in my life I felt relief and relaxation.

I was silly and carefree. This was my solution. Over the years in high school, I was voted biggest partier (not so proud of that now). But I always had that other side of me that wanted to be better (to be normal).

At 17 when I graduated high school I joined the Army, thinking this would stop me from using drugs and alcohol. Little did I know, they were very easy to get there as well. They say you can't run from the addiction, because it follows you everywhere, that is the truth.

I did my three-year enlistment, got out and married the man I met in the Army. We both still smoked daily and drank on the weekends.

Serenity Prayer Musings

*"God, Grant me the Serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference."*

"God, Grant me the Serenity" . . .

When I am into the pot, there is no serenity for me. Pot becomes my Higher Power and everything becomes blurred.

"To accept the things I cannot change" .

I cannot change the fact that I am addicted to marijuana, no matter what I tell myself. I also cannot change other people, places and things, as much as I would like to.

"Courage to change the things I can" . . .

I can change myself and act on life rather than react to it. It's up to me to set boundaries to avoid the situations that get me into trouble. I have to remember HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired).

"And the wisdom to know the difference." . . .

In this sense, wisdom is another word for clarity. When I am actively using, there is no wisdom or clarity and I literally cannot differentiate between the two. When I am free from my addiction, I can tell the difference.



The drinking was out of control, but it was not my life like the marijuana was. I could not survive without it.

I managed to raise three beautiful daughters but have a vague memory of many details of their life growing up because I was high 24/7. I thought I was functioning and doing a good job at the time.

In my mind I was not hurting anyone with my addiction, not even myself. I believed it helped me with the anxiety and depression. And I could not live without it for ANYTHING or ANYONE.

The insanity of needing marijuana 24 hours a day to survive and the things I did to get it lasted 45 years. And then I could not fight any longer, I was so desperate at the thought of giving it up I was willing to end my life.

Only by the grace of my Higher Power did I end up in a treatment facility and was able to see clearly for the first time. I was sent for 30 days and ended up staying 60 days. It was the best thing that could have ever happened to me, even though I did not think so at the time.

I was clean from all substances and received the therapy that I needed to see that my life was totally unmanageable.

When I got out of treatment I felt like a lost puppy. I had no idea what to do next, so I took the advice of professionals to go to 90 meetings in 90 days. I did not know of MA at the time, so I went to AA. I did about 270 meetings in 90 days. I found a sponsor and I worked the steps, I started greeting at meetings, then making coffee, and eventually chairing meetings and sponsoring others.

That was the turning point to becoming a living being.

I know that I am an addict and cannot have any mind altering substances if I want serenity in my life. I will only crave more.

There will always be things in life that are not easy, but because of this program and working the steps I can handle



MEMBER STORIES PROJECT

Help us to share the experience, strength and hope of marijuana addiction diversity...

THE MA LITERATURE COMMITTEE SEEKS STORY SUBMISSIONS

Shedding light on stories of recovery that may not always be told, the following are some examples:

- Detoxing, CHS
- Identity (*gender, racial, religious, sexual, etc.*)
- Mental Health, Psychosis
- Seeking Sobriety During Different Stages of Life
- Cross Addiction and Support From Other 12 Step Fellowships

SUBMIT YOUR STORY: MA12.ORG/STORIES

Willing to help?

Join the Stories subcommittee to support the review of these stories for implementation in various projects.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 4pm PT / 7pm ET.

Email to join the subcommittee: Literature@MA12.org

MA Book and Workbook Prices:

Increases and Discounts

Life with Hope (LwH) MSRP Price Increases. The manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of the following MA literature titles currently sold through the Hazelden Publishing bookstore, www.hazelden.org/store, increased on January 1, 2024, as follows:

- LwH text: \$16.95 to \$18.95
- LwH text eBook: \$11.95 to \$13.95
- LwH 12 Step Workbook: \$9.95 to \$12.95

The above prices may be lower after January 1, 2024 for online purchases.

Hazelden (only) book purchase discounts. Independent of MA's contract, Hazelden Publishing offers discount incentives to all 12-step members, designed to encourage individuals to join groups and for groups to join districts, as follows:

- Online purchases by individual members, 10%
- Group purchases over \$200, 20%
- District purchases (no minimum or limit), 40%

Note: Group and district purchasers should contact Hazelden Publishing Customer Service at (800) 328-9000 or customersupport@hazeldenbettyford.org, before making a purchase, to set up an account.

things without the need to block them out with marijuana. I no longer live in a privately defined world driven by an addiction only to hide and barely function.

I live today to be a better human being, to love and be kind to everyone. No judgement, only encouragement. I live to be the best version of myself and to help the next person to find this mira-

cle of life.

I pray that MA will be a daily part of my routine until I leave this earth.

The 12 Step promises do come true.

~Diane G., Pennsylvania



Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

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

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			DIST. 28	MA Phone Meetings www.ma-phone.org	

Step and Tradition of the Month

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 132 Years of Sobriety!

District 5

Andrew L	1/3/2022	2 yrs
Jason P	1/3/2021	3 yrs
Layne	1/18/2010	14 yrs
Melody C	1/16/1989	35 yrs
Natalie O	12/23/2021	2 yrs
Robert M	1/18/2018	6 yrs
Robert S	1/2/2017	7 yrs
Tony R	1/1/2004	20 yrs

District 11

Lisa D **1/17/2022** **1 year!**

District 22

Carole M	1/3/2022	2 yrs
Janice O	1/6/2023	1 year!
Joshua H	1/11/2023	1 year!

Independent & Virtual meetings

Katie R	1/16/2023	1 year!
Jay F	1/15/1987	37 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 by the 16th of the month. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or email to

birthdays@anewleafpublications.org