



a new leaf

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The Problem Was in Me

Stopping my use of marijuana freed me from the hell of my marijuana abuse, but it did not free me from the hell of addiction. While the initial reprieve from stopping marijuana was powerful enough to allow me to start working the Steps, making big changes in my life, chairing meetings, and even taking on a few sponsees—after over 5 years in the program—I hit another bottom and ended up in treatment for behaviors that had become completely beyond my control.

This helped me realize that addiction was not simply limited to drug use, but could manifest in powerful behavioral patterns. Moreover, it allowed me to finally recognize that the problem was not the drug or the behaviors—the problem was in me. While thankfully this program adheres to a singleness of purpose concept that allowed me to connect with other marijuana addicts and cease my marijuana use, my addiction had a much more powerful hold than I ever could have imagined.

It took me almost half a decade to realize that my marijuana use was a symptom of a much bigger problem—and without addressing the trauma, negative self-talk, resentments, judgment, and self-deceit/manipulation that were festering under the surface, my addiction had never really departed, but simply went into hibernation until it found another set of vices on which to manifest—arguably even stronger than before.

I ultimately had to realize that I had been lying to myself, believing that because I had stopped using

marijuana and was an active member of a 12-Step program, that I was fully in recovery. However, the painful truth is that I was an addict that had stopped using marijuana and then tried to justify and rationalize that this was enough for me to stay healthy. Ironically, my ability to use the language of the program, be a “known” in my meetings, and even being a sponsor ultimately got in the way of my ability to be honest with myself or others. It stopped me from seeing that my addiction was insidiously running the show behind the scenes—ready for another round.

*The painful truth is
that I was an addict
that had stopped
using marijuana and
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When I finally hit a third bottom—I had had enough. I got a sponsor (and a grand sponsor) who was willing to hold me accountable and challenge me. I stopped trying to work the Steps my way and took direction. My sponsor told me to make three phone calls a day—so I made three phone calls a day. My sponsor told me to make five phone calls a day

—so I made five phone calls a day. My sponsor had me take a much closer look at the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Steps, and kept me on them for long time until I really started to learn about powerlessness and surrender versus self-defeating behavior.

It has been over a decade since I stopped using marijuana—but only in the past three years have I truly started to grasp what recovery can feel like when I am living in integrity and owning up to my behaviors. I still make mistakes; I still find myself engaged in self-deprecating thoughts; and I even find myself struggling with fear that there is simply another bottom waiting around the corner. But I now am able to work a program that allows me to move through those fears and behaviors, in order to get a clearer vision of the path in front of me. And while it isn't always a fun path to walk—I continue to discover myself and learn more about recovery along the way. ▲

~ by David G.

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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: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org

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I Was Different

I remember thinking that thought when I was in school, sitting next to these perfect kids with their perfect lives. I remember thinking that when I was with my friends who just smoked weed to get high. I remember thinking that every time I went to rehab; I was nothing like these drug addicts. You see, I wasn't a drug addict. I only used marijuana, and it wasn't recreational for me; it was about much more than simply having fun.

Ever since the first time I got high when I was 15, it was to treat my PTSD and depression. If I got high, I wouldn't have the nightmares anymore. I wouldn't wake up sweaty and shaking. If I got high, I wouldn't get the urge to hurt myself. All week I was free from the scary suicidal thoughts. I was never smoking pot to be cool, or to fit in, and I hated people who did. Marijuana was my cure. To them it was a social prop, a game, a joke.

In rehab I thought these were just the kids who decided to throw away their perfectly good lives with drugs. I, on the other hand, used marijuana to gain my life back. We were polar opposites. These other addicts could've stopped if they wanted, and they would've gotten better, but if I stopped I would've gotten worse. I was broken before I ever used marijuana to fix me. And that is the lie my disease told me for years.

Eventually, I did get worse, much worse. When I was 20 years old I couldn't stop self-harming, contemplating suicide, and getting

high every half hour. I couldn't remember the beginning of a thought. I haunted no-man's-land like a ghost drifting from hit to hit. The minutes stopped moving, and the days didn't change.

When I went to rehab this last time I finally became open minded. In my group they said, if marijuana was treating your depression, it wasn't very effective; why did you keep using it? Instead of getting angry and defensive, I got vulnerable. I felt sad. I cried, "It's all I know, it's all that's ever worked." I couldn't accept that it stopped working because it was my only hope. I had been in denial for years. Protected by the safety of the recovery community, I allowed myself to ask, "Did it ever work?"

Maybe it never treated or cured anything. Maybe it just let me stop thinking for a while. Maybe the problem was my thinking, and I never had to learn how to fix the problem and change my thinking, because I figured out I could just stop thinking with drugs. I didn't believe I could get better without pot because I didn't believe I could get better. I never learned I can change the way I think. I can be kind to myself. I can learn to recognize emotions and name them and share how I feel with others, and then I wouldn't feel alone. I can talk about my secrets. I can learn that I'm not a bad person, and believe it. I don't have to stop my thinking anymore, because with help I can change it.

I am not different. I never was. I just never learned that I belonged. ▲

~ by Noah C.

Hello Again from MA Online!

We would like to welcome back all MA Online members, and anyone that would like to join MA Online. After a recent shut down, we are regrouping, and apologize for any inconvenience to your recovery.

Come visit us at www.ma-online.org. There are lots of opportunities for service, and we look forward to all of your support!

Observations for Serenity

Hey Now

Remind me to be in
observance of peace.

And

That when I think there is hatred,
I can feel love.

That where I think there is wrong,
I realize it is just a thought.

That when I think there is discord,
I may feel harmony.

That when I think there is error,
I may hear truth.

That when I think there is doubt,
I may see faith.

That when I think there is despair,
I may see hope.

That when I think there are shadows,
I may touch light.

That when I think there is sadness,
I may feel joy.

That I may seek rather to comfort,
than to be comforted.

Also remind me

To understand, than to
be understood.

To love, than want to be loved.

And

It's by setting aside my wants,
that I may get what is needed.

Also . . .

When I forgive, I will not feel the
need to be forgiven.

*This is a version of St. Francis' Prayer
that I modified for myself and wanted
to share with all.*

~by Davy O'.



There's a Lot To Do

There's a lot to do
I'm running around
Just trying to keep my feet on
the ground

The world feels scary
Or is it just me
Is this reality or the way
I perceive?

Then I stop for a minute
And close my eyes
Guidance from inside says,
"It's all lies"

I looked way deep down
To the center of me . . .
G-d said . . .
"Truth lives beyond what
you see"

"Open up and allow
Spirit to flow"
So I did . . .
Now I know

~ by Sandra J.

Wiggling Out

Unearthing the old places,
digging out within,

I do this for recovery, I
do this for my win.

I do this to begin again, every day;

I do this to love myself, in every way.

Nor by myself, but for myself,
yet here for everybody

Sweet irony pours on me as we
become our bestest buddy.

~ by Sheri B.

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

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

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Step Three

*Made a decision to turn our will
and our lives over to the care of
God, as we understood God.*

Tradition Three

*The only requirement for membership
is a desire to stop using marijuana.*



Celebrating 30 Years of Sobriety!

District 11

Jack S.	1/27/2019	1 yr.
Rick V.	2/8/2003	17 yrs.

District 21

Angela B.	2/9/2007	13 yrs.
Kelly G.	1/22/2012	8 yrs.
Michelle	1/23/2019	1 yr.
Reed	1/1/2019	1 yr.

MA Phone

Anna H.	2/15/2017	3 yrs.
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Birmingham, MI

Chris S.	1/26/2017	3 yrs.
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**See your sobriety
date here.**

Allow us to publish your
anniversary to celebrate!
Provide your sobriety date to your
local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to:
chiefs@anewleafpublications.org

