



March 2023

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Is It Over? Yes!

Shortly after the 2020 MAWS Convention in Van Nuys (Los Angeles) in February, our country and the world moved into a pandemic lockdown. The Covid-19 virus hit us hard. I didn't understand how this would affect me at the time, but I soon found out.

March 11 is my sober birthday, and I was looking forward to celebrating my 9th year at my home meeting the first Saturday after my birthday. I was looking forward to sharing my accomplishments with my fellows that morning, only to find out that the meeting was canceled. Because it was in a senior citizens center, it made sense at the time.

No worries, I thought. There was my Sunday meeting in a private building, so I could wait one day. Sunday came, and I found out the lockdown hit there, and there would be no celebration this week.

I got there early so I could perform my commitment and could not believe that this venue was locked down too. I was the first one there, so I called other members of this fellowship to keep them from making an unnecessary trip to the Sunday meeting.

I wasn't worried about my sobriety, I just wanted to share my story. This would have to wait. Luckily, some members came through in a big way. They were able to share their Zoom accounts, and by next Sunday I attended my first Zoom meeting.

Our district (District 7) came through in a big way, and district and world-wide meetings started up in the next few weeks, which we hoped would only last for a few months at the most.

When I realized this lockdown was going to be around for a while, I didn't know what to think. My work had gone to online meetings with the East Coast headquarters months before the lockdown, and I soon found that I didn't like looking at my fellows on computer screens. It's not the same. It helped, but it's not the same.

I started the lockdown attending three meetings from District 7 first. This was enough to keep my meeting cravings at bay. Unfortunately, this schedule, along with my work, was very taxing, and soon it became too much. When my commitment to the Sunday meeting ended, two weeks later, I dropped this meeting from my weekly devotions.

By the end of 2020, I had my work and one meeting on Zoom per week. This, with TV, was all I had or needed. This started to seem all too familiar. Eleven years ago, while I was using, this was my routine.

Substitute getting high nightly for Zoom meetings, and I am back doing the same thing that got me into the rooms in the first place: work, TV, and an occasional meeting. I was stuck in a rut. The only difference was that I wasn't getting high.

2021 dawned, and I was still in a rut. Even the meetings at work were getting to be too much. So, I suffered through my one meeting a week and worked a lousy recovery program. I made a vow that I would not celebrate another sober birthday online. Then, one day in 2022, I heard that a live meeting started up in District 7.

I got reinvigorated about my sobriety and my program. Oh joy! I attended my first live meeting. There were only five people there, but they were real. I got to celebrate my 11th birthday and get a real chip!

I came back the next week. Two weeks later, I accepted the position of secretary at this meeting and filled this position for the six-month term. I heard that there were more in-person meetings that had started, and I began to fill my nights with real people and meetings! I took commitments where I could and became an integral member of three meetings a week.

I'm still working a good program, attending three to four meetings a week, and I even volunteered to help on Saturday night's Zoom meeting. I feel good. I am helping others in recovery and working a good program for myself. Thanks to Adam B, Jordan, Asher, Jeff, Nedas, and Ade for being there. I love you all and look forward to seeing you at the Wednesday meeting.

~ Louis W

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 Can't Handle Marijuana

My life goes on, and I have remained step-by-step on our path of recovery. Experiences have piled up, some good, some definitely not, and some that are as yet to be determined. In the best-case scenarios, whatever these experiences have been, they have been instructive, revealing to me my strengths, my weaknesses, and how I should consider going about in the world.

Recently, I started thinking again about a particular experience I had when I was free, clean, and sober for about fifteen years. My life was just getting to the point where things seemed to have turned around, and I was feeling pretty well and content in the world. In retrospect, I think that I might have also even been feeling a bit smug and invulnerable, and I believe that therein lies the rub, so herein lies that tale.

At fifteen years of recovery, schooling was already in the bag, and I was well started into an interesting and challenging job in the profession for which I had trained. On top of this, I was newly married – everything in my life seemed to have fallen nicely into place. I hadn't actually seen or been in the physical presence of marijuana for years, it just had nothing to do with who I was anymore. I did, however, still live in the town in which I'd grown up and where I'd done the bulk of my using, but my circles had completely changed, and for a long time, all of the hours of all of my days had been filled with doing the things that I needed to be doing.

The situation was that my wife and I were invited to a large party following the wedding of a childhood friend of mine. It was a perfectly splendid affair at a fantastic old house with beautiful circuitous gardens and a pool house and firepit out back. The afternoon had been fantastic, every time I turned around there was somebody smiling at me whom I hadn't seen

in years; the kids from my old neighborhood and schools – now all grown up. It was just like going home!

The sun went down, and my wife was inside and having a great time chatting with some women that she'd met. I wandered out back to where a group of about eight or ten men, all old friends that I'd known forever, were chopping it up, standing and laughing around the bright and crackling fire. I joined them and immediately began having a great time catching up and batting around recollections.

After ten minutes or so of this, the gentleman on my immediate left reached into his jacket pocket and with a flourish, pulled out a clear glass cigar-tube from which he then extracted a large and obviously very high-end chunk of marijuana. All eyes widened, zeroing in on the tube, and every face was suddenly grinning. The gentleman, clearly a connoisseur of these things, proudly held up his bud between thumb and forefinger, then hefted it up under his nose, gave it a hearty sniff, then turned smiling and proffered it to me.

I could see that everyone in the circle to the other side of me was eagerly waiting to have their own good whiff, so I (foolishly) took that fat and aromatic bud into my own hand, gave it a polite cursory sniff, then passed it quickly to the guy on my right. I could see that smoking was coming up next, so I took my leave and meandered off into the throng to be elsewhere for a while – end of anecdote.

Here's the good news; there is no relapse in this story. I didn't get high, and it's been a couple decades and I still haven't. I shall insert here for all to understand, that for this I am immeasurably grateful. Here's what did happen later that night however – I had one of those terrible marijuana dreams; not a dream about smoking, but a dream of mortification and guilt, about realizing "oh my god, I got high – I'm not sober anymore!"

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

The dream stalked me for a few nights, but as I dug into my daily program and shared and talked about it with fellow marijuana addicts, it dissipated over time and was gone. The lesson for me in all this is about hubris. How could I regard marijuana so blithely as to hold it in my hand and smell it after all the damage it had done to me earlier in my life?

I realize that I always need to remember that I am not immune to marijuana, that marijuana is my nemesis, and that despite my pride, I will never be invulnerable to relapse and addiction. There is something about my physiology and personality that will always make marijuana dangerous to me. I can't handle marijuana – and by remembering this, I never have again.

I hope that you are well, Godspeed. I wish you safety and happiness on your way.

~ Anonymous

Anonymity & Confidentiality

Over the years I have read quite a bit of our literature, you know: *Life With Hope*, the big blue one, flyers, pamphlets, all that stuff, but I am not that kind of person to be seen walking about at all times with an annotated text tucked under my arm, one who poignantly cites the literature – chapter and verse, because the memorized words are always at the tip of my tongue.

I'm glad there are people who can do that, I think we need them actually, but I'm not that kind of person myself. Okay, that was my pre-excuse for all my observations and recollections that might need some tweaking in the good-old accuracy department.

I think we have a lot of necessary focus on anonymity in our literature; this venerable concept is even part of the name of our beloved fellowship – Marijuana Anonymous. However, I don't think we talk about confidentiality quite as much. I'd like to throw in my (there he goes again) one-and-a-half-to-two cents worth on why I think these two concepts are interrelated, and why I think that confidentiality, like anonymity, is also important to our strength and collective sobriety, or at least, how I know it's important to mine.

Anonymity, from the Greek “anonymos”, literally means “without name.” Anonymity reminds me that we are about principles, not personalities. Anonymity also reminds me to not share someone else's stories or revelations, and that's where the idea of anonymity begins to bleed into confidentiality in my opinion.

Confidentiality, from the Latin word “confidentia” is a combination of the word roots meaning “with” and “trust,” and has more to do with not sharing disclosures that were made to us with the faith that they would not be shared; you know, keeping things secret.

I learned early on from experience in recovery and from the sage advice of some of those who came before me (and some that came after) that although anonymity is a cornerstone of our strength and unity that it is unwise for me to disclose in a meeting those things that I would never want to be spread around or known about me – people do talk.

There are places and times for such disclosures, and each person should bear in mind exactly what they want to share in forums where confidence is not guaranteed. Sometimes in our smaller circles, a name doesn't even need to be dropped for people to figure out exactly who is being talked about. What I believe that I need to do is to share my experience, strength, and hope, not my deepest darkest secrets and experiences, and I'm just sayin' . . . be careful!

I have had the experience (and thank God, not because it was me who spilled the beans) where a breach in confidentiality between a sponsor and sponsee, specifically about the sponsee's Fifth Step revelations, somehow got around to others in our small fellowship. The breach was very bad for everyone involved and made for a couple intense evenings together. I don't know, so I can't say how it all played out in the long run for the people directly involved.

I can only hope that the ensuing loss of faith didn't cause anyone to relapse back into active marijuana addiction. In my case, my experience as a sponsor (I still have a sponsee) has been informed by my professional experience and education – it's a legal requirement in my profession to maintain confidences in a specific sort of way. In my personal life however and in Marijuana Anonymous, it is up to me.

In MA, I will accept a confidence, and when I do, I keep it airtight, but I always share at the get-go that I'm not a dumping ground. If someone is being badly hurt, like a child or something like that, I will not keep it secret. My personal and moral imperative is that protecting a dependent or vulnerable person supersedes confidentiality, so I always make this known.

I do want to be a good friend, and I have and do want to help people with their step work, but there are other people to share such things with, not me. Fortunately, this has never been an issue for me in MA sponsorship; the things disclosed to me have always been only along the lines of the things all of us who've done a fifth step have had to share about – life's stuff. In a nutshell, I do believe in being of service, but for me, it's first do no harm. As always, this is my experience, and these are just my personal beliefs, not gospel.

~ Respectfully,
Dr. Anonymous

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
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Step and Tradition of the Month

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 195 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

| | | |
|----------|-----------|--------|
| Yvette D | 2/20/1986 | 37 yrs |
| Lee K | 3/19/1999 | 23 yrs |

District 5

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Anthony G | 1/29/2015 | 8 yrs |
| Bill H | 1/23/2018 | 5 yrs |
| Cory B | 2/19/1999 | 24 yrs |
| Jeremy | 2/9/2014 | 9 yrs |
| Lisa L | 2/22/2004 | 19 yrs |
| Rod H | 1/31/2021 | 2 yrs |
| Sean T | 2/20/2018 | 5 yrs |
| Tony R | 1/1/2004 | 19 yrs |

District 6

| | | |
|---------|-----------|-------|
| Jen Jen | 2/12/2017 | 6 yrs |
|---------|-----------|-------|

District 7

| | | |
|----------|----------|------|
| Laurie S | 2/2/2022 | 1 yr |
|----------|----------|------|

District 22

| | | |
|-----------|------------|--------|
| Dean A | 2/14/2004 | 19 yrs |
| Jesse B | 1/3/2022 | 1 yr |
| Sam D | 1/3/2021 | 2 yrs |
| Melissa G | 12/31/2022 | 1 yr |
| Carole M | 1/3/2022 | 1 yr |
| Glenn T | 12/12/2022 | 1 yr |

District 27

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Tiffany P | 2/11/2021 | 2 yrs |
| Mickie D | 1/23/2013 | 10 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 Liason, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org