



Coming off the Merry-Go-Round

Being a brown, opinionated, highly sensitive, and overly curious female caused me quite a bit of trouble growing up. I was raised in a very rural area. My mom would send my younger sister and me to the tiny local market with my dad whenever we ran out of milk, partially to make sure he would not go into the bar next door to play pool, which he would do occasionally. I walked into that bar at age nine and told my dad he had to drive us home cause my sister wouldn't stop crying and we needed to have dinner.

Around that time, I announced that Darwin was hopefully right cause the world was a mess. I was judgmental and idealistic and read a lot of Thoreau and felt very misunderstood. Then puberty hit, and I became just mad at the world. I got over my aversion to alcohol, but I was not going to smoke pot! I saw the kids who did, and they stopped caring about most things besides getting high. Not me!! I was going to leave that pitiful small town, go to the city, become a singer, a poet, or a journalist...or all three. It was the 60s and "the times, they are a changing."

At college there was encouragement to speak from a woman's point of view ... a Hispanic point of view. Exciting times, but there were also drugs everywhere. Before I knew it, I was a slave to marijuana. I stopped going to classes and dropped out. Then came the horrific merry-go-round of "quitting ... dabbling ... nonstop wake and bake," then self-loathing, white-knuckle abstinence, and then dabbling.

This went on for many years. I had some success in a few fields— music, movies, and fashion— but I was unreliable and had no idea of how to get to a

job on time. I always had to have "just one more hit." People tolerated me but couldn't depend on me. It was the emotional and disconnected wasteland of being wasted all the time.

The progressive nature of the disease was awful. Though I could "white-knuckle," I would be desperate and depressed. A lot of the things that happened then are now known as serious symptoms of cannabis abuse: nausea, hallucinations, distorted thinking, and risky behavior. I put

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myself in situations that could have ended in felony arrests. My health was a wreck. My relationship had ended. It was a very scary and sad time. I got arrested with a DUI, and my roommate got sober that time by reading the literature I brought home. I still considered myself a "periodic," but I was actually the "Poster Child" for cross-addiction.

Ten years of lying (especially to myself), wreckage, and bewildering behavior. In my thirties, I got another DUI. I joined a Twelve Step program that saved my life. I had gone to Marijuana Anonymous to support some friends. But I kept hearing more and more things I could relate to, and I knew that pot had caused much more damage than I initially wanted to admit.

I wanted this information to be available to the "bewildered ones" like myself. The ones likely to listen to people saying, "its just pot," or, "at least it's not hard drugs," and, "you can't get addicted to pot, can you?"

All that idealism and hope for a better world that I had as a child finally had a place to land.

It wasn't easy. For several years it was just four or five of us at the meetings, sometimes it was ten. Occasionally, we had visitors from Europe or Australia. I was a part of something bigger than myself. We grew and finally got enough members to become a District ... Now that was exciting!! Wow!! Then COVID hit but that made the Zoom meetings grow!!

I am not going to apologize for being wildly enthusiastic about how this group, Marijuana Anonymous, has radically changed my life. I'm also humbled. Early in recovery, I was asked if I was willing to go to any lengths. I had to pause and pray and really do some soul searching. I was willing to go to any lengths to get pot. Could I try to find the willingness to stay clean? To do this one day at a time? Have the willingness to participate? To not use no matter what? Give back what was freely given to me? Not take this for granted? I have occasionally wobbled in my enthusiasm, but I have never doubted my true love for this program, my brothers and sisters in the rooms, and in the Gratitude that God gave me a chance to live a Life with Hope.

~Linda 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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Treasures in Our Defects

A bright young man I sponsor recently mentioned his “character defect” of being a very sensitive man. It led to our talking about the double-edged sword of a man having a highly sensitive nature. No, (in my experience) it’s not the male ideal most of us learned in our culture and, yes, hypersensitivity to criticism (or imagined criticism) does make our interactions with others painful and awkward. Hypersensitivity has certainly been a problem for me. However, the flip side of that trait is sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others; not a bad quality at all. It can be a welcome surprise when sensitivity proves to be a source of strength for a man in his human relationships, rather than the weakness he may have imagined it to be.

Our discussion led me to think of how, **as my recovery has progressed, some of my shortcomings have revealed hidden assets.** When diamonds, sapphires, or rubies are mined, they do not look at all like the dazzling jewels they can become when careful cutting and polishing uncover their beauty.

Some of our character flaws seem like those rough minerals. With sincere work through the Twelve Steps alongside the help of a sponsor and the healing effects of connection with a Higher Power, the light inside our defects can come forth.

Not all my imperfections have hidden gems, but some propensities that I thought were purely problematic have become blessings. I have been shown a new perspective on them and was guided to use their energy in ways my Higher Power might want.

My penchant for stubbornness, for instance, which supported the stance, “You can’t make me stop!” contained the strength of perseverance. I need that stubborn energy in recovery to persevere in practicing the Steps every day, one day at a time. I need my stubbornness in refusing to give up my recovery when I’m challenged.

My destructive tendency to judge and criticize is gradually becoming the ability to observe myself and others clearly, but without the taint of harsh judgments.

False pride, cleaned up, cut and polished, can shine through as healthy self-esteem, accompanied by deep gratitude for those qualities I was given as gifts or skills I have acquired that can make me useful to my fellows. Arrogant self-centeredness may, with willingness and help from outside ourselves, become the type of self-awareness that includes accepting our human imperfections and feeling grateful for our assets. I believe that might be called humility.

One of the program’s greatest gifts for me was realizing that my lifelong codependent compulsion to (help) others, once a heroic helper’s obsession, had been transformed into something worthwhile, as predicted in our Ninth Step Promises: “These actions have enabled us to live to good purpose and empowered us to be of service to others ... Our attitude has turned from denial, defiance, and belligerence

12 Step Principles

1. Honesty
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Courage
5. Integrity
6. Willingness
7. Humility
8. Love
9. Discipline
10. Patience/ Perseverance
11. Awareness
12. Service

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.

to gratitude, humility, and a sincere effort to be of service." With the program, more and more I have been relieved of my control agendas and any expectation that I will be rewarded or loved for helping. Doing service has become its own reward. This change has allowed an underlying jewel—my innate urge to help—to reflect light as a genuine desire to help others with no thought of recompense. As I have heard in the program, we can provide "service for free and for fun!"

Some of my problem areas have not revealed strengths as they have been subjected to the program. These just need continual work toward letting them go instead of trying to use their energy in a better way. However, having to learn the practice of acceptance and letting go, so often reinforced in our program, has created another asset—a key to serenity.

Those defects which do prove to contain gems still need continuing work and the help of my Higher Power to guard the new-found treasure. Despite the extensive work required for transformation, it has been a delightful surprise to discover that some rough rock I stumbled over in recovery held a hidden jewel, just waiting for the right treatment to make it sparkle.

~lah

Seeing Myself Clearly

While in active addiction, I was literally and figuratively in a cloud of smoke. A cloud of smoke that distorted my perception of the world and myself. I couldn't have imagined the sense of peace I would have in recovery where I would actually be able to see myself for the first time.

Recovery has allowed me to begin the process of truly loving and accepting myself for the first time—in the process, I've found true freedom. I'm now seven months into my recovery after coming back from a relapse and I can say that my relationship with myself is like none other.

I've finally been able to begin working through childhood trauma surrounding my gender identity and find peace in this newfound perception of myself. One of the blessings of this program is the sense of community that you begin to develop as you stop isolating and begin to reach out. I joined a therapy group for nonbinary and trans people of color, and feel a deeper sense of clarity about my identity. I can now sit with the reality of who I am without smoking. I can look at myself in the mirror free of the desire of wanting to smoke weed to change how I feel in my body. With the support of my ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) fellow travelers, the community that I've developed in MA, and the grace of my Higher Power, I got to that point. If you haven't yet, you will. Just keep coming back.

This program is about progress, not perfection. About doing the next right action, not necessarily always doing the right action. I can now see that when I make mistakes, they are opportunities for my growth. No one is perfect and we all have our own limitations. Regardless of where you are on your recovery journey or how you may feel about yourself, know that your Higher Power or other power loves you unconditionally.

~Ramsey P.



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



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 105 Years of Sobriety!

District 5

Anthony G	1/29/2015	9 yrs
Bill H	1/23/2018	6 yrs
Cory B	2/19/1999	25 yrs
Jeremy	2/9/2014	10 yrs
Justin S	2/18/2022	2 yrs
Rod H	1/31/2021	3 yrs
Sean T	2/20/2018	6 yrs
Susy C	2/6/2021	3 yrs

District 6

Jonathan C 2/26/1992 32 yrs

District 8

Zach A 1/30/2023 **1 year!**

District 27

Tiffany P	2/11/2021	3 yrs
Anthony H	2/26/2019	5 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