

A NEW LEAF

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Recovering in Cyberspace... by Anonymous

For a long time, I was a member of the on-line committee that responds to the e-mail sent to the MA web site. I recently heard from an old "pen pal" who is (one more time) in that same place so many of us found ourselves over and over and over again. At least it's where I was for almost ten years. She said I could share this with you. (A few changes were made to protect her anonymity.)

I ask:

Have you thought about doing a new Step One on Maryjane? Are you powerless over it? How powerless? Why?

She answers:

Yes - definitely powerless. Especially since, more often than not now, I prefer not to be high. And then bingo - I order some from my connection. It's sent it in the mail so there is usually a 2-3 week waiting period during which I regret having ordered it. I tell myself that THIS TIME, I will use it sensibly maybe smoke up before doing my workout (I love the effect that pot has on my body awareness.) Or that I'll just use it in the evening. Or that I'll just use on the weekends. Then it arrives in the mail (usually in mid-afternoon) and I race home and smoke up immediately, regardless of the activities that I have scheduled, and I stay smoked up until the bag is gone. This time I only had a little bit so I smoked morning, noon and night for two weeks. Last time, I bought two bags (\$600) and ended up flushing it down the toilet in a moment of supreme paranoia about being found out. This is truly madness ...insanity.

For the first week, my mind is racing with ideas and I work with discipline and creativity. Then, after one week, I begin to disintegrate into smoking, sitting on the couch and staring into space drugged dreams. Good ideas flow, but get

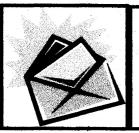
lost in the fog. And I HATE the stress of deception. Hiding the smell is quite a challenge: breath fresheners, air fresheners. And then the layer of fog that remains in my mind. Even today, on day two of withdrawal, I feel a clarity of mind returning, and a joy at living that is dependent on no external conditions.

I ask:

WHY are you doing it? When I think about using it's because I want some mental Novocain. Are you "feeling" too much? Too up? Too down? Too what? Think about it.

She answers:

Why am I trying to do what? Quit? Stay quit? I'm quitting because I ran out. I suppose I could just order more, but I really don't like being high that much anymore. I especially don't like being high in a setting where I have to figure out ways to hide my use. I don't like wondering if I'm making a rational deci-



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Articles submitted should reflect recovery, unity and service. The articles contained in A NEWLEAF are the sole opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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Recovering in Cyberspace (continued)

sion or if I'm just drug affected. I don't like being on this merry-go-round. I don't like deceiving my friends about my drug use. I don't like deceiving my workers about my drug use. The euphoria, the intensified body awareness, the floods of creativity are all available to me if I use my spiritual tools. I know that. But I'm a lazy type so it seems so much easier to light up a joint than it does to meditate, discipline myself to exercise, take the dive into the depths of my being to open the floodgates of creativity. I feel incredibly guilty when I'm using ...like I have failed at something really important and like I am really a "fuckup" who is pretending to have her shit together.

Why am I reaching out to you again with hopes that dialoguing with you will help change a very deep psychic structure? I want to be joyous, happy and free from this addiction. I think that apathy and fear are the emotional/psychic ments in me that dissolve in THC. I usually start thinking about scoring when I can't get myself motivated to do what I need to do and so end up watching a lot of movies and eating a lot of crappy food. Or I play games on the computer. Also, I think I'm afraid of people. For example, I had wanted to begin to make a new friend for some time. but kept putting it off. As soon as I smoked up, I had a bath and put all my smell masks on and then went over to her house and we had a visit. I somehow needed the THC to get me over the hump of making that first contact.

So - there you have it. My attempts to honestly answer your questions. Please keep asking them.



A Special Thank You!

Thank You's are in order to some dedicated members on the team of A New Leaf. Tom M. is stepping down as co-editor and Ilene M. is also stepping down after serving M.A. as secretary of

A New Leaf's executive board. All of us at A New Leaf would like to extend a warm Thank You to both of them for their service and committed participation.

excerpt from...THE SOLUTION by Anonymous

I guess I was so lonely, and so in need of some kind of solid community that I did the right thing for the wrong reason; I gave up pot to be one of the group of people I met at meetings. They gave me a clear message, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana..." and my efforts to be a moderate pot user simply didn't work. So, I quit on a trial basis only. (Denial? Me. Trouble letting go of my old ideas and ways doing things? You bet.) I said I would try it for six months. "That's OK," quipped a lady with a whole nine months of recovery, "If you want to go back to it, your misery will be cheerfully refunded."

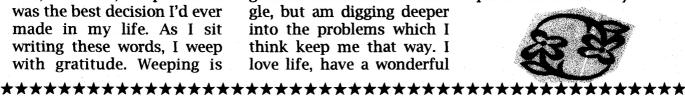
I asked a woman to be my sponsor after I quit. She said OK, but I had to give up alcohol too. I went for it. I was, after all, desperate. It was the best decision I'd ever made in my life. As I sit writing these words, I weep with gratitude. Weeping is one of the gifts of my recovery. I could cry when I used, but the weeping, that deep joyous teary stage, is a new gift. I am cleansed by my tears, and have far more joy and serenity in my life than I ever had as a child, sober teen or moderately using adult.

I've taken on the demons drug-free, and have used exactly the same tools when stoned: therapy, self-help groups, gymnasium, yoga and spirituality. The difference is that I can sustain my work, I can go deeper, I can really process all of that old pain. I'm coming clean.

I've got a lot of help from my friends, some deep wounds to heal, and a bunch of wreckage to address. I am friends with my kids again and even a few grandchildren. I'm still single, but am digging deeper into the problems which I think keep me that way. I love life, have a wonderful

set of careers and many great friends. I still get thrown back into fear and depression by trigger episodes such as random rage from a stranger or a failure or two. But today I have tools. I have people to call, meetings to go to, and more and more I am beginning to develop an inner strength and sense of serenity which takes me back to happiness soon after a painful episode. I am not ashamed to be an addict.

I have had a fascinating life so far. The roller coaster continues, even in recovery. Adventures are still possible, now that I have mended the ship. I look forward to many more beautiful days filled with love and forgiveness, a relationship with a gentle power greater than myself, and the strength to work with whatever life puts in my path. I'm in recovery.



Congratulations to our Members Celebrating Their Sober Birthdays!

****	****	****	****	****	****	****	****	****
District 1			District 5			Carol S.	4/20/91	8 years
Tom "Monster" 4/15/96 3 years		Sailor Chris	4/1/91	8 years	Susie C.	4/6/94	5 years	
District 3			David D.	4/1/96	3 years	Van W	4/12/73	26 years
Amanda C.	4-21-97	2 years	Anna M.	4/4/96	3 years	Gwen G.	4/13/93	6 years
Joyce	4-7-98	1 year!	Tom W.	4/12/91	8 years	District 7		•
Margee W.	4-29-96	3 years	Jason	4/14/95	4 years	Joanne K.	4/21/90	9 years
Sherrie L.	4-26-98	1 year!	Adam G.	4/17/96	3 years	District 11		•
Susan L.	4-9-98	1 year!	Jeff Y.	4/23/96	3 years	Maria S.	3/15/97	2 years
Daniel A.	4-10-92	7 years	Evan B.	4/28/89	10 years	Eshaia	3/17/97	2 years
Larry F.	4 -1-98	1 year!	District 6		- ·	Chris P.	3/24/97	2 years
Steve S.	4-26-93	6 years	Geoff F.	4/1/89	10 years	Shantelle C.	3/28/98	1 year
Tony C.	4-28-95	4 years	Sammie F.	4/15/94	5 years	Angie S.	3/30/97	2 years
District 4		-	Sunnie R.	4/25/94	5 years	Mike B.	4/18/94	5 years
Howard	4/3/92	7 years	Brian K.	4/23/90	9 years	猫	新	345

THE ROVING REPORTER

do you have and how have sober they been an essential part I do phone service and am secof your recovery?

sober

1) M.A. Hotline - Talking to new comers, imparting meeting and other info. It helps me to remember that it doesn't get any better out there and it makes me grateful for my sobriety. To have what these callers desperately want. and 2) Meeting Treasurer - It gets me to the meeting!

Debra R., District 6, 15 months sober

Secretary, District Events Chair. Co-distribution coordinator for A New Leaf. My service commitments are essential to my recovery because I want to try and give back a portion of what I have gained in M.A.. Being involved also helps me feel like I am a part of the M.A. family.

Robin H, District 6, 4 years sober

I have commitments at the meetings that I attend every week. I am GSR at one and the meeting treasurer at the other one. I am also one of our districts delegates and am also the co-distribution coordinator for A New Leaf. I have also enjoyed working on the MA convention committee to help make this (1999) convention an informative and fun experience for all! These commitments help me to keep me focused on today and out of my head. Being of service has been a rewarding experience for me.

What Service commitments Hilary, District 2, 6 months

retary at my home meeting. My meeting took a group con-Rachel W, District 7, 23 months science and bent the rules to vote me secretary after only two months clean. It's kept me coming back. Some people were worried that I didn't have enough time to be secretary, but I really treasure the people who had faith in me.

Steve S., North SF Bay, 35 months sober

Co- secretary and Chip person-Help me to feel connected and I'm responsible for more than my own stuff!



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