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# A NEW LEAF

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## The KILLER 4th STEP

by Jeff M.

Everyone I have met dreads this step. Isn't that like most alcoholics and addicts, dreading something they don't really know anything about. How does the Big Book of AA say it, "Contempt prior to Investigation." That is how it was with me, and most of my sponsees. That is how my sponsor looked at it before he did it, and how most of my Brothers in Recovery, we share the same sponsor, have looked at it. But guess what folks, it isn't that bad. No one died doing a Fourth Step. Many people have died, gone back out and died, because they haven't done a Fourth Step. To my knowledge, and I did the good kind of research on this, no one died who started and completed their Fourth and Fifth steps, because they do go together.

I'm not going to state here "How to do a Fourth Step," the Big Book shows one way, there are handouts, and several books written on that topic. What I want to share with you are some tricks, or tips on how to make it easier on you and your sponsees. Further more, these are just a few I have come across, there are most likely many more, nor are these hard and fast rules. The only hard rule I found that applies to this, and any other of the Steps, is 'to do them to the best of your ability being Honest, Open-minded and Willing. At least that is HOW I did my steps.

Besides not wanting to do a Fourth Step, most people don't know where to start, I sure didn't, I had a long list of people I had harmed and held resentments against. Nevertheless I had a hard time starting it until I followed my sponsor's suggestion of putting my name down first. And it makes sense, for who had I harmed more than anyone with my drinking and drugging? Me. I had done both physical and mental harm to myself. So when I put my name down on the list it opened the floodgates and the rest came much easier.

While you work on the Fourth Step make sure you are doing it with the love and guidance of your Higher Power. The way that worked for me was to get all settled, pen in hand paper in front of you, or a computer, and then pause and say a short pray, say something like:

"Thank you Great Spirit, Grandfather, God, etc. for the opportunity for you to guide my thoughts while I cleanse my soul."

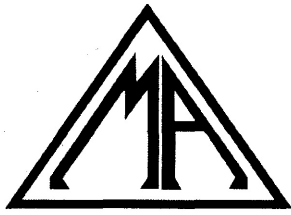
Along with all your Fears, Resentments and your Sexual Inventory be sure to keep a separate list of the good things that you have done and that have happened to you, a gratitude list if you like. This will help offset a lot of the negative feelings that come to the surface during this

step. For even in the best of us there is some evil and some good in the worst of us. We need to keep that in mind for God works in mysterious ways and has a habit of turning things of evil to his Good.

Some people feel very strongly that the Fourth Step should be written by hand, my wife for one. On the other hand people like myself feel that a computer or typewriter is just fine. However, if you do write it up using a computer you will need to make certain precautions. It is hard to say which of these two are the most important, you will have to decide but you should do both. One is SAVE, SAVE, SAVE and not just to a floppy disk, have a back up copy either on your hard drive or some other media. I cannot tell you how heartbreaking it is to have spent weeks working on your Fourth Step and then when you think it is done you go to print it, the printer malfunctions, freezing up your computer, causing a reboot and you didn't save the last 4 hours worth of work. No, I can't tell you but one of my sponsee's sure can. The manufacturer of the printer ended up on his finalized Fourth Step.

Right up there with Save, Save, Save is Protect, Protect, Protect. And what I mean by that is DON'T let anyone see your Fourth Step, it is extremely personal. Spouses, children, girlfriends, boyfriends, lies and other hidden feelings all come out in a thorough and fearless Fourth Step. Things that NO one except your sponsor should see or hear. I had a sponsee who didn't do this as thoroughly as he should have and his wife read his. He was lucky he has a very open-minded and loving wife who, after some explaining on his part what it was that she had read, understood and now the two of them are much closer than when he first started recovery. I don't think my ex-wife would have been so understanding if she would have read mine. My alimony would have been a lot higher than it is.

The last thing is, don't take too long to do it. Try to get it done in a few months' time, don't take years. All that does is to dilute the effectiveness of it. But, I also suggest don't start a Fourth step with only a few months of sobriety, either. You need to have some clarity of what you want and need before you start. However, and whenever, you do your Fourth Step, remember that its ultimate goal is to free you from your past. To free you from your burden of guilt, remorse, and feelings of failure. When you have done your Fourth and Fifth steps you, in my experience, will feel a newfound freedom; a freedom unlike any other; a freedom to finally be and enjoy who you truly are.



## A NEW LEAF

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 necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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We send approximately 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states

# The Roving Reporter

For the May issue, the Roving Reporter asks, "What is it that keeps us from hearing what other people say in recovery? Why do we listen? Why don't we listen? What bugs you about other people in meetings?" Send us anything you can on this topic. If you don't, our new editor will write a long-winded essay, and **nobody** wants that...



## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

If you don't get high today, you'll never get high, because it's always today.

## Did you know... you can attend MA meetings online?

Just go to [www.ma-online.org](http://www.ma-online.org). We have regularly scheduled meetings several times a week, and our chatroom is open 24/7. It's easy, just log on and share your experience, strength and hope with others. It's a great way to touch and be touched by MA'ers all over the world that don't have local meetings.

## MY NEW LIFE

by Randy A.

Threw out the pipe  
 Smashed the bong  
 It's time I started  
 Moving on

Found a sponsor  
 Got the book  
 Gave the Steps  
 My first good look

My old life  
 Was all about weed  
 Now sober living  
 Is what I need

I go and share  
 I talk the talk  
 But for the first time  
 I walk the walk

# Don't Dream It, Be It

by Rosie S.

Her big green eyes stared across the water's surface looking straight through me. They were the same color as the lake, and they were filled with a calm cool serenity that I longed for. Her dark hair was slicked back wet as the rest of her head emerged from the water. Her full lips in a slight smile that showed her confidence and inner peace. I wanted to be close to her. I wanted to be her, just sitting at the surface of the water without struggling, sure of her place. I went towards her and she drew me in. I became her, and we sunk into the water.

Beneath the water was an entirely different picture. Our body was pale and weak, unhealthy from years of neglect, poor nutrition and never seeing the sun. I couldn't breathe. Green leafy vines wrapped around, my arms legs and body and I was powerless to free myself. I kept getting pulled farther and farther under, struggling relentlessly, but I could not break free.

I woke up. It was 2 am. I look over to see my boyfriend sleeping soundly next to me. What a jerk, not waking up to comfort me. I hate him. I should leave him, but I am afraid I will be alone forever if I leave. Who would ever adore me as much as him and not interfere with me smoking as much weed as I want all the time because I deserve it? I need pot to be able to stand this relationship, my job and all the other responsibilities society has put on me.

2:05 AM, my mind is racing. I can't sleep. I get out of bed go downstairs and load a bowl.

As I sit there in the early morning silence and darkness smoking I think, "Who was that girl in my dream? She was really creepy and she seemed so real and familiar to me. The way she looked through me sent a chill up my spine as if some kind of guardian angel is sending me some kind of ominous warning which I am trying to shake off. She looked so familiar she could have been my twin sister, but she was such a better person than me. She was so lovely and comfortable in her own skin; at least on the surface. I can't believe I am smoking weed at 2 in the morning I need to quit. I have to work in the morning." I load and smoke another bowl before I return to bed.

Two months later I find myself constantly full of frustration and anger at how my life is going. I am nothing like I want to be and getting farther from the ideal everyday. I think constantly, "Everything I do is to make him happy. Nothing is good enough for him. I hate him. Why can't he fill the void inside me? I feel empty inside."

My best friend comes over after much resistance from me. She knows I am unhappy and wants to try and cheer me up. She wants to know what I want to do for fun and I say, "I don't care." And it is the truth. It has been so long since I did anything for myself I don't even know what I like anymore. Just as long as I can smoke one more bowl before we go.

Finally, I find myself at my first MA meeting. I've known about the existence on MA for a couple years, but for the first time I am to the point where I want to do anything different to distract me from my constant misery and isolation. The people at the meeting seem to be feeling really good. It is hard for me to believe these people are not stoned. People turn to me after everyone has shared. I say "Hi, name is Rosie and I am a pot head. I have been smoking weed everyday for the past 7 years." I feel myself getting flushed and hot. I think this is the first time I've ever really been honest with myself or anyone else about my pot use. I feel a lump in my throat and I swallow and open my mouth to continue, but I just start sobbing and I can't make any more words. People say, "Its ok, just keep coming back."

After the meeting a man and women about my age approach me and say they can tell I am suffering and offer to take me to some other meetings. I don't want to go home and see him and smoke weed and these two have such positive energy I agree to go with them even though it is out of my comfort zone. I am uncomfortable most of the time lately anyway because weed isn't working anymore. I leave my bag at home for the first time in years.

I tell my boyfriend I am going to quit smoking weed and we get in a big fight and I brake up with him and leave. Soon after, it is Tuesday night. I smoke my last nugget and run out of weed. I manage to go all day Wednesday without smoking, and tell myself that I can go buy another bag after the meeting tonight. Tonight after the meeting I leave feeling really hopeful. I get a great deal of satisfaction from the connection I make with people I meet at the meeting. I decide to just go home for the night and maybe I will get another bag tomorrow.

That was August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and I have not smoked since.

I started putting as much effort into the program as I used to put into staying high. For instance, I used to drive 20 miles one way several times a week to get a bag, and now sometimes I drive even farther to go to a good meeting. I was spending upwards of \$600 per month on pot, so when I got paid, I bought a new car that would reliably get me to meetings and the payment was less than half of that. I bought A Life With Hope, got a sponsor, and now I participate in almost every area of MA than I can.

Years later I find myself feeling comfortable in my own skin. I am able to sit still now that I am not chasing the next bag. I am not afraid of being alone anymore. I know a higher power is looking out for me and as long as I am doing good things with my life by taking care of myself and helping others, the quality of my life will continue to improve.

I am soaking in my hot tub that I would not have if I was still using. I feel thankful for how good my life has become and of all the friends I have made in MA. I feel peaceful and serene. I am becoming the woman on the surface of the water from my dream and my heart is filled with joy.

# MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>  
 email: [office@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:office@marijuana-anonymous.org)

**MA World Service Offices**  
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
 800-766-6779

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 PO Box 460024, San Francisco, CA  
 94146-0025  
 415.522.7373

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 PO Box 8354, Berkeley, CA 94707  
 510.287.8873

**South Bay (District 3)**  
 P.O. Box # 551  
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 408.450.0796

**Western Washington (District 4)**  
 POB # 17323, Seattle, WA 98107-1023  
 206.548.9034

**Orange County (District 5)**  
 (Includes San Diego)  
 PMB #215, 358 S. Main, Orange, CA 92868-3834  
 714.999.9409  
 619.685.2808

**LA County No. (District 6)**  
 PO Box 2433, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
 818.759.9194

**LA County So. (District 7)**  
 PO Box 3012, Culver City, CA 90231  
 323.964.2370

**New York (District 8)**  
 PO Box 1244, Cooper Station  
 New York, NY 10276  
 212.459.4423

**Santa Cruz (District 9)**  
 PO Box 3003, Santa Cruz, CA 95063  
 831.427.4088

**LA County East (District 10)**  
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 07940.503438

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 649.846.6822

**MA Online**  
 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404  
 800-766-6779

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HOSTED BY  
**DISTRICT 5**  
 (THE O.C.)

**MAY 28-31<sup>ST</sup>**

AT  
**CONCORDIA  
 UNIVERSITY**  
 IRVINE, CA

**\*\*ALL ARE INVITED\*\***

CONFERENCE INFO AND  
 REGISTRATION FORMS  
 CAN BE FOUND AT  
**WWW.MADISTRICT5.ORG**

**DEADLINES ARE SOON  
 APPROACHING!**

**DELEGATES/TRUSTEES  
 REGISTER A.S.A.P.**

# BIRTHDAYS

Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in *A New Leaf*? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.

### District 1

Jim B. 4/22/93 11 years  
 Alex W. 4/29/96 8 years

### District 2

Sheldon 4/15/96 8 years

### District 3

Holly K. 4/5/00 4 years

### District 5

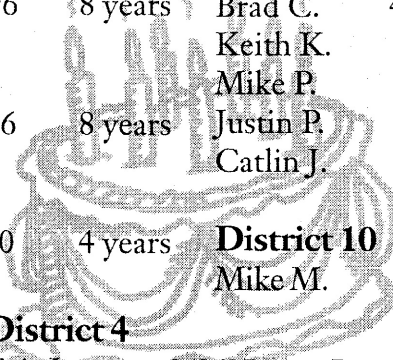
Tom W. 4/12/91 13 years  
 Brad C. 4/10/98 6 years  
 Keith K. 4/7/98 6 years  
 Mike P. 4/13/99 5 years  
 Justin P. 4/1/01 3 years  
 Catlin J. 4/2/01 3 years

### District 10

Mike M. 4/1/93 9 years

### District 4

Eric J. 2/2/97 7 years  
 John S. 3/12/99 5 years



**Celebrating 88 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!**