



## On Deserving Happiness

When I started smoking pot as a teenager, I was looking for fun, adventure, and a sense of belonging. But now, looking back, I realize I was also looking for escape, and to “check out” from the discomfort of living.

And why was I so uncomfortable? Well, for one thing I was a teenager! But I was also developing this tragic sense that I wasn’t destined for happiness. I felt that the smart, cool, connected and attractive people were “doing it right” and their lives would work out, and the losers like me were screwing up and wouldn’t amount to anything or find love, happiness or success. That’s a lot of pain to carry around, and smoking pot let me deaden that pain and escape to a fantasy world where I was one of those cool people – for a while.

As the years went by, though, the ratio of fun and escape to depression and shame started to swing towards the latter, and by the end I was definitely that “furtive, neurotic bundle of unexpressed emotion” we read about in our book. And the “unexpressed emotions” for me were depression, anxiety, shame and fear.

Finally, all that was too much, and I got that sense of desperation over my pot use that brought me to MA. But just as I thought smoking weed was the solution in my youth, I showed up at my first meeting thinking that smoking weed was the problem. As soon as I fix that problem, I reckoned, everything would be cool. I wasn’t even thinking about fixing the underlying problems of self-esteem and fear that drove me to smoke (and drink alcoholically) in the first place.

Happiness and joy? Forget about it! I was here for one thing: quit pot. And the people in the meeting started telling me how to do that: go to meetings, share honestly, take a service position, attend social events, get a sponsor and work the Steps. And I started doing those things.

The results of this process utterly amazed me. Not only did I quit smoking pot, but I also quit drinking, which believe me was not in my original game plan. Beyond that, I was given real friends who knew me better than any I’d had before. I was also given a trusted advisor and confidant in my sponsor, the ability to discuss my feelings and problems, a spiritual practice, and access to amazing teaching traditions that enriched my life on many levels.

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## First Meetings

How did I get here? Where has the time gone? How have I been so fortunate? My first meetings were a time of confusion, fear, and hope. I wasn’t sure I belonged. I wasn’t sure I was a full blown addict. I wasn’t sure who I was nor why I had been smoking pot so often and for so long. Would I know how to live without getting high?

It was a meeting of 15 to 20 people and many seemed to have abstained from smoking for a “long time”—6 months! One woman took a cake for ONE whole year. I wondered how that could be, what would inspire me to do such a drastic and seemingly impossible task. Such will power, so I thought.

Looking back, over two surreal decades of sobriety, I see a life of change, growth and meaningfulness. I am truly amazed at this miracle—ME. The woman who took the one year cake is still in the fellowship and I feel deep affection for her and our long friendship. Everything I cherish has come from the relationships, spiritual lessons, and strength derived from the 12 Steps and MA.

I often consider how important those first meetings were for me and try remembering this when welcoming newcomers into the rooms. They may be confused, fearful, yet still hopeful. I wish for them the change I got; to open their mind, try something new and to trust that life will not only get better, but they could feel miraculous too. Keep coming back. Your life is going to become real and amazing.

**Patricia F.**

“I was here  
for one thing:  
quit pot.”

# 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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:  
anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org  
or submit online:  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
and click on the newsletter tab.

A New Leaf  
P.O. Box 6482  
Torrance, CA 90504

## In Support of Service in Recovery

In recovery there are many ways to provide service to others. Many require a specific commitment of time and resources or a particular skill. There are many positions available at the meeting level and at the district level. Beyond that there exist service commitments on the world service level. Service can seem overwhelming at first. A good reason for volunteering to do service comes from a desire to give back to the program. In my case this flowed from a deep gratitude for those who came before me. If not for them I may well have never made it out of the black hole that was my use.

One of the most basic forms of recovery is to welcome the newcomers and others in early recovery. We do this by engaging them before and after the meetings. These are opportunities to speak directly to newcomers who are coming through the doors for their first, second or third visits or are in their first thirty days in the program. In my experience it is best to approach people one on one to offer them encouragement and support, while resisting the urge to give direct advice. This is, in fact, a huge moment for many of us. Being accepted into the group by well-meaning friendly members on a first visit can make a second meeting much easier to attend. Just showing up at a meeting and speaking our truth is a valuable service we can all practice.

These first impressions may determine whether new members feel safe enough to come back. We lead by example. Ideally we are compassionate and sensitive to others' feelings. We succeed when we create a meeting space where

people feel included and willing to become part of a larger community. The collective wisdom of the group is shared with the newer members through our words and deeds. It is important to choose our words carefully. Consider sponsoring another member in need of guidance.

Without willing volunteers to do the daily and weekly service necessary to keep the program running it would grind to a halt. Those who provide this service  
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### These Rooms

We enter on our knees  
Ears and hearts broken open

Light appears on the horizon  
Of this dark night of the  
soul

Grace arrives on wings  
Of stories and thousand  
pound phone calls

Angels who've been there  
Listen and silently invite us  
to speak

Honest pain and hope  
Generate a glow of unfolding  
transformation

Warming these containers of  
refuge and peace  
Where the us we are  
becoming is incubated

Old dogs getting comfortable  
with new tricks  
"Never again," finally sticks

The war within dissolves  
And through each other we  
start to love ourselves

This is where God hangs out  
on Friday nights.

Juliet J.

### FEELING CALLED!

**Step Right Up... A New Leaf**  
*is looking for its next Chairperson  
and Field Editor. Serve the fellowship  
while getting to know the MA  
family worldwide. Join A New Leaf  
Publications today as ANL's next  
Chairperson or Field Editor. Contact  
us at the email address above.*

**Service** cont'd from pg. 2  
 keep the program alive and growing. Service is caring for others before us. Service is taking action. And service is simply listening. My first actual commitment was on the phone committee. This job has slowly disappeared. Most people find MA on the Internet today. I remember calling people who were struggling to admit that they had a problem with pot and sharing with them my experience in recovery. It was an important function to perform that had a powerful effect on my attitude towards myself and for life in general. I developed a deeper compassion for others and a better understanding of myself. I hope many of you will take on a service commitment to help keep MA moving forward. We all benefit by raising our hands and stepping up. You can't keep it if you don't give it away.

**Tim V.**

**On Deserving Happiness**  
 cont'd from pg. 1

I used to think of these things as extras, beyond my simple goal of getting sober. But I slowly figured out that, in our program, all of that is exactly how we quit smoking pot. Our program, after all, is primarily about not picking up again. And we do that by looking at exactly who we are, accepting it, doing things for others, prayer and meditation, and all the other things we refer to as the "daily maintenance of our spiritual condition."

Even more amazing than that is the change that has begun to happen deep within myself. I am slowly starting to accept, and really live my life from, the idea that happiness and joy are available to me. I don't mean getting what I want; I mean being happy, joyous

and free, and also facing life's difficulties without spinning out into the old ways of thinking and behaving: my life won't work out, I'm a loser, and I'm doing it all wrong.

Today, I am blessed with 14 years of continuous sobriety, thanks to this program. I am still blessed with that trusted advisor, amazing friends, my spiritual program, and a worldwide fellowship of peers who share my experience and speak my language.

But best of all, I have been given what I lacked way back when I first picked up a pipe: the sense that I am okay, right now, as I am. It's a fleeting thing, and I still get into fear and despair, but thanks to the Steps, they do not drive me anymore. I actually have been given a life with hope!

**Paul G.**



**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Coin**

The first unity conference of what was to become Marijuana Anonymous World Services took place in June of 1989. Until then, our budding fellowship existed by three distinct names, in separate geographic locations.

The 25th anniversary commemorative coin honors our collective commitment to the unity, service, and the recovery of our growing fellowship, now spanning 275 in-person meetings in 11 countries. Proceeds will go toward MAWS' continued effort to carry the message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

This limited edition coin has an antiqued silver finish, is 1½ inches in diameter and weighs in at about an ounce. It is now available to members with a minimum donation of \$25. The Fellowship will ship your coin(s) without charge.

**How can we get ours?**

Donate a minimum of \$25 per coin either by using this short link – <http://ow.ly/twm1a> – or the QR code (click through to the donate page), or by mailing payment with the form below.



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Checks to "MAWS" and mail to:  
**Marijuana Anonymous World Services**  
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 Torrance, CA 90504-9207

# marijuana anonymous worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org

**MA World Services**

PO Box 7807 Torrance, CA90504 800.766.6779  
www.marijuana-anonymous.org  
email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

**District 1 San Francisco**

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

**District 2 East Bay**

www.madistrict2.org 510.287.8873

**District 3 South SF Bay Area**

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

**District 4 Western Washington**

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

**District 5 Orange County**

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

**District 6 LA County No.**

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

**District 7 LA County So.**

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 310.494.0189

**District 8 New York**

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

**District 10 LA County East**

PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.869.6210

**District 11 Portland**

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.567.9892

**District 12 North Bay, CA**

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 or 707.583.2326

**District 13 MA Online**

www.ma-online.org

**District 14 London, England**

07940.503438

**District 15 Long Island, NY**

www.ma-longisland.org 631-647-0768

**District 16 Melbourne, Australia**

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

**District 17 Denmark**

info@ma-kbh.dk

**District 18 Sacramento, CA**

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

**District 19 Toronto, Canada**

www.matoronto.org 647.201.9161 or 416.999.2244

## Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

## Tradition Four

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

## ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

**Which defects of character are you most desiring of God to remove and why?**

(Note: Submit by Saturday, May 17th, answers will be published in the June 2014 issue.)

## Birthdays

Celebrating 301 years of sobriety!



Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that, a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

**District 2**

|                |                |              |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Chris M.       | 3/14/86        | 28 yrs.      |
| Dale           | 3/3/10         | 4 yrs.       |
| Dave W.        | 3/8/03         | 11 yrs.      |
| Lee K.         | 3/10/99        | 15 yrs.      |
| Meredith       | 3/5/97         | 17 yrs.      |
| Tim V.         | 3/1/94         | 20 yrs.      |
| <b>Tony M.</b> | <b>3/12/13</b> | <b>1 yr.</b> |

**District 4**

|            |         |         |
|------------|---------|---------|
| Jeff D.    | 3/1/13  | 1 yr.   |
| Kaitie W.  | 3/13/09 | 5 yrs.  |
| Michael S. | 3/13/09 | 5 yrs.  |
| Tim L.     | 3/15/04 | 10 yrs. |

**District 5**

|               |               |              |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Dan B.</b> | <b>3/1/13</b> | <b>1 yr.</b> |
| Ernest F.     | 3/9/95        | 19 yrs.      |
| Grateful Joe  | 3/7/11        | 3 yrs.       |
| Lisa L.       | 2/22/04       | 10 yrs.      |
| Mark S.       | 3/11/12       | 2 yrs.       |
| Nathan S.     | 3/15/12       | 2 yrs.       |

**District 7**

|          |         |         |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Eric P.  | 3/11/12 | 2 yrs.  |
| Ernie C. | 3/5/05  | 9 yrs.  |
| Louis W. | 3/4/11  | 3 yrs.  |
| Peter B. | 2/21/10 | 4 yrs.  |
| Steve G. | 2/19/98 | 16 yrs. |

**District 8**

|              |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Adam H.      | 2/18/13        | 1 yr.        |
| Don W.       | 2/20/85        | 29 yrs.      |
| Fordham      | 3/9/06         | 8 yrs.       |
| <b>Larry</b> | <b>2/25/13</b> | <b>1 yr.</b> |
| Lizz R.      | 2/16/11        | 3 yrs.       |

**District 11**

|            |         |         |
|------------|---------|---------|
| Dave C.    | 2/22/02 | 12 yrs. |
| Donovan H. | 3/6/03  | 11 yrs. |
| Maria S.   | 3/15/97 | 17 yrs. |
| Paul G.    | 2/26/00 | 14 yrs. |
| Steve M.   | 3/1/99  | 15 yrs. |

**District 13**

|                    |                |              |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Patricia Z.</b> | <b>2/16/13</b> | <b>1 yr.</b> |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|

**District 15**

|              |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Larry</b> | <b>2/25/13</b> | <b>1 yr.</b> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|