



Reflection on the Group Conscience Process

“Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share our experience, strength and hope with each other that we may solve our common problem and to help others recover from marijuana addiction.” (MA Preamble).

At the 2016 MA World Services Conference, the voting members overwhelmingly approved gender-neutralizing the MA Preamble. They did so with near unanimity. This change resonates with the social and cultural shifts we see around us. Our Third Tradition states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana. Most of our members probably aligned within the previous Preamble language referring to “men and women”. Still, the membership at large agreed the change of using genderneutral language in the MA Preamble was a step in the right direction to represent that all men, women, transgender and gender non-conforming people (Ed.: and children of any gender identity) who have a desire to stop using marijuana are welcome.

This change impacted me on a very profound and personal level. I am a member of Marijuana Anonymous and I am a transgender and nonbinary person. I am not special. We all live within social constructs of terms and labels. We compartmentalize various parts of ourselves depending on what group of people we find ourselves among. Just as being a person in recovery does not fully define who I am, neither does the fact that I am a transgender person. I am just like you. I’m living a life of

recovery from marijuana one day at a time. I have walked through this life day by day acquiring ideas, beliefs and identities, and I have also shed many along the way. I am ever evolving, and part of my walk in this life has included shifts in my gender presentation and identity. My spirituality has also shifted. My ideas and understanding of the world have shifted. My coping mechanisms, self-care and relation to others have shifted. That’s what we do in this program, we grow and change.

When I first got clean and sober I relied upon a larger (?) Twelve Step fellowship. In many ways, that fellowship provided much of what I needed to learn to stay sober and connected with others in recovery. Hearing a gendered preamble at all of the meetings I attended always stung a little. My elders who loved and cherished me encouraged me to accept the things I could not change. Still, I yearned for the sense of belonging and representation within the language of a Preamble which stated who was in the fellowship. Those three words I heard at every meeting, “men and women”, did not represent me but here I was, a member of the fellowship. I came to a place of surrender with those three little words. While I did not expect the fellowship’s view on the language or the literature to change, I always remained hopeful that I would find a recovery home which might consider the shift for full gender inclusivity—that the fellowship was for all people.

Then I found the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous. Immediately, I felt a resounding

Sobriety First

I was always told “Sobriety first before anything.” At first I laughed at that thought. I couldn’t believe that sobriety had to come before basic human needs, or work, or family. It seemed ridiculous. But when I was early in sobriety I did what I was told. I followed directions because I was scared - I didn’t want to relapse. So I put sobriety first.

The first way that I put sobriety first was by avoiding situations where I would be tempted by people smoking pot. I slowly but surely started to believe that I was awesome, and that if people wanted my time, they would not use pot around me. If they couldn’t make that sacrifice then they weren’t worth my time.

Once I started to put sobriety before friendships I started to realize who my true friends were. It warmed my heart to have friends give their support and respect for my sobriety. I felt loved and cherished for the first time in a long time (maybe even the first time ever). My true friendships got stronger than ever, and my fake friendships faded away.

And I started to realize that sobriety really did need to come first. In order to be the best version of myself, in order to give myself proper self care, in order to value my family, in order to be a true friend, in order to be a valued employee—I needed to put sobriety first. For me in order to put sobriety first I need to make time for my recovery. My recovery keeps me sober and my sobriety keeps me sane. ▲

~ Anonymous

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.

District Bureau Chiefs

We will be reaching out to districts soon to update the District Bureau Chief list. Additionally district representatives, including but not limited to those serving as Bureau Chief are encouraged to stay in touch: editor@anewleafpublications.org

ANLP Staff

Chairperson:	Alan B.
Treasurer:	Keith G.
Secretary:	Rick V.
ANLP Admin:	Mark C.
Managing Editor:	VOLUNTEER*
Publishing Editor:	VOLUNTEER*

Contact ANLP

Send articles/stories:
stories@anewleafpublications.org

Or they may be submitted online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org/story

Reflection on the Group...

Continued from page 1

connection with my fellow marijuana addicts. The fellowship welcomed me with open arms and affirming hearts. I was encouraged to get involved in service on the group and District level. I had finally found the fellowship I needed. Because Marijuana Anonymous is a more intimate community, where one has greater access to all levels of service and group-conscience work, I spoke up at a District Service Committee meeting and asked how the District of which I was a member felt about a gender-neutral Preamble. To my joyful surprise, District 11 (Portland, OR), resoundingly said “yes, we like that, we understand that, let’s submit this idea to the fellowship at large.”

The inverted pyramid of service was established so that the highest guiding authority within MA are its members and groups. The MA Service Manual states, “The only authority is that which is first expressed in the group conscience and then communicated by the group to MA as a whole,” (Chapter 3, pg. 3). And so, the process began.

District 11 authored and submitted an Agenda Item (proposed Motion) to

the MA World Services Conference which was then distributed to the District Delegates around the world so they may survey their own meetings and members. All voting members came together at the 2016 World Conference and expressed their group conscience on this matter. To be completely honest, I was beyond nervous when this matter came to the business floor, but I also knew that I had to trust the group conscience process of MA and honor the outcome no matter what. In what was a rather quick discussion and vote, the group conscience of MA was expressed—MA is a fellowship of people!

The third edition of *Life with Hope* was recently released, and as soon as I could get my hands on a copy I opened the book to see the new Preamble in print. There it was, a gender neutral Preamble!

I continue to provide service to MA because MA has become my recovery home. I am honored to be a member of the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous. As we approach the upcoming 2017 Conference, the group conscience process will again be heard and honored. Soon, the District’s will begin discussion and surveying their groups and members on various business items. Your voice and participation are needed in this process. Indeed, MA would not have come to light, nor progressed, without the participation of MA’s groups. MA exists because of the service work of its members, groups, and Districts. Much of this work is conducted through service committees on the group, District and World levels. There are many opportunities to get involved. Together, we can accomplish what none of us could do alone. To the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous, I thank you for welcoming me, and for fostering service, unity and recovery in all areas of my life. ▲

~Drift M.

Purchase Books & Subscriptions

www.anewleafpublications.org
or subscribe by sending your name, address and a \$15 check (\$20 non-US) to:

A New Leaf Publications
340 S Lemon Ave # 9420
Walnut CA 91789-2706

Other inquiries and correspondence:
info@anewleafpublications.org

*To **VOLUNTEER** at ANLP send a note to board@anewleafpublications.org

Goodbye

Hello there old friends, it's been about a month since we last spoke. I've been thinking about you lately. I remember the first time we met. You scalded my throat and burned me from within, coating my mind and heart with a false sense of security. You made me feel like I could finally be myself around other people.

But you were a fair weather friend and your qualities eventually rubbed off on me as I became less and less reliable to those I loved. You tricked me into thinking I had control when in reality, you had grabbed my reigns when I took the first sip. You led me into a path of destruction, and convinced me it wasn't your fault. I now see you for the liar and manipulator you really are and must respectfully say goodbye. It's not you, it's me.

As sips turned into puffs, I thought I had found "the one." I believed you, marijuana, were my soulmate. We coyly courted each other and tiptoed the line between friend and lover. I let you move in and gave you everything I had whenever you came asking. I defended you from the start. Whenever anyone

bad-mouthed you, I had your back. You made me feel like I was better than everyone else because of the special relationship we shared. What started off as love became toxic.

Ill with the sickness of egotism, isolation, and abuse. You left me resenting the world, making sure you were the only one who could comfort me. When I tried to take a step back, you came in through the cracks in my doors like an evil green mist and sunk your claws deeper into my soul. You left me feeling ungrateful for my life and used me to spread your seed, water your soil, and provide artificial light for you. In return for my efforts, you turned that compact fluorescent glow into artificial enlightenment and filled my head with lies. You hurt me like I never thought anyone could. You made me feel weak and alone. You had me right where you wanted me. Like a prisoner with Stockholm Syndrome you kept me tortured and trapped when all I ever wanted was to please you.

It is time for me to say goodbye now. You can no longer treat me like your bitch because I have learned that I am strong, loving, compassionate, intelligent, connected, and wild without you. I will no longer be fooled by your deceptive green mist. I've lived behind your green tinted lenses for far too long. It's time for me to take those glasses off for good and be the woman God intends me to be. I'm thankful for the good and bad times we shared together, for they have made me stronger in my faith and who I am today. Our chapter together is now over. As I say goodbye to the self-doubt, insecurity, egotism, and fear that we shared, I say hello to a life filled with grace and gratitude for each moment. Thankful for each day, knowing that with a clear body, mind, and heart, I will be able to receive the divine messages I need in order to be the best woman I can be. ▲

~ Gwynedd A.

Share your sobriety milestones!



tiny.cc/mabday

Submit a Story

marijuana-anonymous.org/story
In the web-based form
you may submit a feature-length personal story of
up to 5,000 characters.

We need YOU!

IN STEP TWELVE, we take action to carry the message of recovery to the marijuana addict who still suffers. Listed below are a number of opportunities for you to participate in your own recovery while helping others. Please volunteer today!

► An ANLP Managing Editor

Maintain relationships with district Bureau Chiefs, encourage participation in ANL community, collect articles, birthdays, etc. Please get in touch!
board@anewleafpublications.org

► An ANLP Publishing Editor

Produce the monthly ANL newsletter using Adobe InDesign and other tools. Use your design skills!
board@anewleafpublications.org

► An ANLP Treasurer

Manage ANLP's money, transaction records and reporting. Rule the world!
board@anewleafpublications.org

Mar-Anon:

An online Mar-Anon Family Google Group is now available. Mar-Anon Family Group is a fellowship for the relatives and friends of marijuana addicts. This is a "private" group, so those interested must submit a request to join. Either go to Google Groups and search for "Mar-Anon" or visit www.mar-anon.com for more information.

- www.mar-anon.com
- outreach@mar-anon.com

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

MA World Services 340 S Lemon Ave # 9420, Walnut CA 91789-2706
www.marijuana-anonymous.org ▲ info@marijuana-anonymous.org ▲ +1.800.766.6779

DIST. 2 San Francisco & East Bay www.madistrict2.org	+1.510.287.8873	DIST. 13 MA Online www.ma-online.org	
DIST. 3 South SF Bay Area www.madistrict3.org	+1.408.450.0796	DIST. 14 London, England www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk	+44.300.124.0373
DIST. 4 Western Washington www.madistrict4.org	+1.206.414.9270	DIST. 15 Long Island, NY www.ma-longisland.org	+1.631.647.0768
DIST. 5 Orange County www.madistrict5.org	+1.714.999.9409	DIST. 16 Melbourne, Australia www.marijuana-anonymous.com	+61.403.945.083
DIST. 6 LA County North www.madistrict6.org	+1.818.759.9194	DIST. 17 Denmark www.ma-danmark.dk	
DIST. 7 LA County South www.madistrict7.org	+1.310.494.0189	DIST. 18 Sacramento, CA www.sacramentoma.org	+1.916.341.9469
DIST. 8 New York www.ma-newyork.org		DIST. 19 Toronto, Canada www.matoronto.org	+1.647.201.9161/+1.416.999.2244
DIST. 11 Portland www.madistrict11.org	+1.503.567.9892	DIST. 20 San Diego, CA www.ma-sandiego.org	
DIST. 12 North Bay, CA www.madistrict12.org	+1.415.419.3555/+1.707.583.2326	<i>Note: We received notices in Feb 2017 that District 10 had folded, and in March 2017 that District 1 merged with District 2.</i>	

Celebrating 354 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Nicole B-s	1/1/16	1 yr
Catherine F.	1/12/16	1 yr
Alex C.	1/21/16	1 yr
Jeff	1/8/16	1 yr
Audry W.	2/20/01	16 yrs
Tim V	3/1/94	23 yrs
Dave W.	3/8/03	14 yrs
Josh C	3/12/16	1 yr
Chris M	3/8/86	31 yrs
Edwin A	3/17/16	1 yr
Lee K.	3/19/99	18 yrs
Meredith H	3/23/97	20 yrs
Melina R	3/30/16	1 yr

District 4

Michael S.	3/13/09	8 yr
------------	---------	------

District 5

Aime	3/17/16	1 yr
Christian	3/17/14	3 yrs
Ernest F.	3/9/95	22 yrs
Hal N.	2/26/91	26 yrs
Joe M.	3/7/11	6 yrs
Kelly	3/17/07	10 yrs
Lisa L.	2/22/04	13 yrs
Nico	2/16/14	3 yrs
Randy	2/21/14	3 yrs
Russell	2/28/14	3 yrs
Steve C.	2/16/16	1 yr

District 8

NinaMarie F.	3/24/16	1 yr
--------------	---------	------

Formerly District 10

Suzy P.	2/14/05	12 yrs
---------	---------	--------

District 11

Dave C.	2/22/02	15 yrs
Donovan H.	3/6/00	17 yrs
Guy E.	2/15/88	29 yrs
Paul G.	2/26/00	17 yrs
Rick V.	2/8/03	8 yrs
Steve M.	3/1/99	18 yrs

District 13

Bruce A.	3/15/15	1 yr
Margaret A.	3/15/15	1 yr
Rob Y.	2/11/14	4 yrs

New England MA

Drift	2/28/14	3 yrs
-------	---------	-------

GOT A YEAR? WOULD YOU LIKE

ANLP to publish your sobriety anniversary?
Give your sobriety date to your local GSR and it will be forwarded to your Bureau Chief **or** e-mail chiefs@anewleafpublications.org.

Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that
1) **HAVE** occurred, 2) **HAVE NOT** been published and, 3) **ARE NOT OLDER THAN 45 days.**

Please format in this manner:
Name (tab) Date (Tab) #yrs
(as seen to the left here)

Share your experience
Fellowship-wide with the readers of **A New Leaf**

tinyurl.com/MAconv2017

What have been the highlights of your MA Convention experience this year?

How did your MA Convention experience strengthen your recovery?

Did the MA Convention change your relationship with the MA Fellowship?
If so, how?

Why did you decide to come to the MA Convention this year? Was your experience worth your expenditure of time and money?

What changes would you like to see implemented for future Conventions?

Submit your responses online—it's SO easy! tinyurl.com/MAconv2017

From Life with Hope

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.



Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or MA as a whole.