



## A First Step

My name is Marc F. I am a marijuana addict. During my first 72 days of sobriety, I worked with a temporary Sponsor to write and discuss my answers to the questions in the Life with Hope Workbook. I made it through Steps One and Two, and most of Step Three, but I got stalled on the last five questions. I then had a relapse over a two-week period that ended just about thirty days ago.

At the 2018 MA Convention in Seattle, I attended a workshop on working Step Four to get a sense of what lay ahead of me. The workshop leader gave several suggestions to, as he put it, “kick” us through the difficult parts of Step Four. It seemed to me that he was just the kind of person to give me a “kick in the you-know-what” when I needed it, so I asked him to be my permanent Sponsor.

What follows is my first assignment, one of many that I will need to work through to thoroughly work Step One—to fully understand in detail just how I am powerless over marijuana and how my life has become unmanageable. This assignment comprises the first mini-step of the first of twelve large steps, upon which I climb from the abyss of chronic addiction to a life of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual sobriety.

### Incidents Caused by my powerlessness over marijuana which led to unmanageability in my life:

Three incidents stand out that occurred during the first decade in which my habit of using marijuana put me in unmanageable situations. The

first was on a trip I took to Central America after graduating from college in 1975. I was not yet 21 and I was on my way back north after getting as far south as Panama.

In Nicaragua, I took a bus from the southern border (Costa Rica) to the northern border (Honduras), but it was a long trip and the bus stopped in the capital, Managua, for an overnight layover. It was in the hotel near the bus station where two men approached me and asked me if I wanted to smoke. Though they didn’t use words to indicate they meant marijuana, it was clear by their hand gestures that that is what they meant.

Without the slightest hesitation, I nodded “Yes” and went with them to their room. One man rolled a joint, laid it on a table, and then left the room, while the other man engaged me in conversation. I figured this was an opportunity to not only get some pot, but also some cheap cocaine that I could smuggle back into the States to sell. I told him I wanted to buy some and we talked about prices. I agreed to a price for both some pot and some cocaine. Then the man pulled out a badge from his pocket and said, “You know what this is?”

“Yes” I said, as fear spread throughout my body. He said I could go to jail for 10 years. My fear seemed to be most concentrated in my feet, screaming to escape the body which was stuck in this most horrifying of situations. I made an attempt to bolt, but he blocked me and said, “You try that again, and I’ll fuck you good!”

I said I’d cooperate.

He went through my bags and found a \$100 travelers check. “You see this?” he said, “You’re going with me to the bank to cash it and then you’re going to get out of the country.” He accompanied me to the bank and then to the bus station. Later I realized his partner had taken my camera out of my bag.

Most likely they had been con artists, as the police probably would have really put the screws to me, not only in terms of money but also perhaps some years of my life in a hell-hole jail, locked in a dirt-floor cell with a single bulb that never went off and a bucket or hole in the floor for a toilet, accompanied

by vicious criminals free to have their fun with me. In retrospect, I am very grateful to these con artists for taking just my money and my camera and teaching me a lesson, which I learned in only a limited way.

What I did learn was to abandon the (incredibly stupid) notion that I could outsmart the system and be a lone drug smuggler without getting caught. But whereas I could have learned a great deal more from that lesson, I didn’t.

I never again considered engaging in drug trafficking, but I did once bring a small amount of hashish that I had bought in Paris on a train to Vienna, through Germany. At the German border, drug agents came through the train with dogs. A dog must have smelled my hashish, and the agents assumed it belonged to the single guy

*In retrospect, I am very grateful to these con artists for taking just my money and my camera and teaching me a lesson...*

## 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

Please get in touch with our ANLP's Managing Editor to collaborate on continuing to breathe life into our fellowship's newsletter. Your ideas and service are welcome, wanted and needed. Contact Thor H. at [editor@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:editor@anewleafpublications.org)

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Send articles/stories:  
[stories@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:stories@anewleafpublications.org)

Or they may be submitted online:  
[www.marijuana-anonymous.org/story](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/story)

### A First Step...

*Continued from page 1*

sharing our sleeping compartment. He had nothing, and perhaps because the amount I had was very small, the dog didn't lead his handler to my bag.

These incidents did not stop me from continuing to seek drugs while traveling in foreign countries during a three-year bicycle trip I later made around the world with my wife. I only felt relief that I escaped arrest, and after the incident in Germany, I never even considered the fact that I was putting my wife at risk.

While in southern India, there was another incident in which my seeking pot could have really screwed things up. My wife and I had booked a trip on a canal boat going down the coast to the southernmost city on the east side of India. We were on the boat, waiting for it to leave, when I decided I could probably find some pot very quickly and told my wife, "I'll be right back."

It took a little longer than I thought it would, and the boat was already unmoored and just about to leave when I came in sight of it. I saw my wife on deck frantically watching for me and yelling for me to run as soon as she saw me. I did get on the

boat, happy I had some pot to smoke, and, again happy to forget the risk to myself and even more so, to my wife, this time about getting separated from one another in a foreign land.

The above are the most memorable instances of taking risks to procure marijuana, and are from my first decade or so of use. Most of the risk-taking that I engaged in over the following years have been when stoned. The potential and actual trouble that I got into were the result of poor judgement, insensitivity to feedback, and/or unwillingness to accept reality for what it was—to face life on life's terms.

As I look back on that initial decade of my 44-year "*Marriage to Juana*" and anticipate writing about how, over the next three-and-a-half decades, my addictive behaviors isolated me, limited my potential, and hurt myself and others, I first am astonished by just how extensive and deep their effects have been on my life. Then I am appalled at just how far I was willing to go, and the risks I was willing to take, both for myself and others. I'd always thought of myself—and tried to be—a practical, honest, and responsible person, but my behaviors did not reflect that self-image.

As I work with my sponsor on Step One, four months into recovery after 44 years of marijuana addiction, and 29 days back from my first, and (I believe) last relapse, a solid faith is growing in me that the Ninth-Step Promises will become realities for me if I thoroughly, fearlessly and persistently work the Steps. Developing the serenity to accept what I cannot change—a shameful and wasted past—allows me to face squarely the person I have actually been and what I have actually done. Building an accurate and honest understanding of my addictive behaviors will provide the foundation upon which I will recover the life I've wanted to live all along, with a clear head and with humility, one day at a time. ▲

~Marc F.

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### 3 Poems, Various Authors

#### Untitled I

It's a change that only I can make  
 A chance that only I can take  
 Is optimism a choice?  
 Am I silencing my own voice?  
 Trapped in thoughts, tinted in blue  
 And yet the choices I make are the hell I go through  
 And each time a craving finds me  
 It ends up being the thought that binds me  
 And winds me  
 Into the same prison  
 A simple craving arisen  
 And my foolish decision  
 To trust yet another false vision ▲

~Anonymous

#### Untitled II

With my eyes half closed  
 I observe whatw appears to be a rose  
 For I have yet to truly see  
 That a sharp thorn lies in front of me  
 And each time I give in  
 I find that this world that I live in  
 Takes me over once and for all  
 As I begin to fall  
 And I must crawl up out of my illusion  
 For in this world there are no conclusions  
 No resolution and no evolution  
 For a seed cannot grow  
 If it does not let go  
 Of the case that surrounds it  
 The small world that enshrouds it  
 In order to finally break to the surface  
 And truly question its bigger purpose ▲

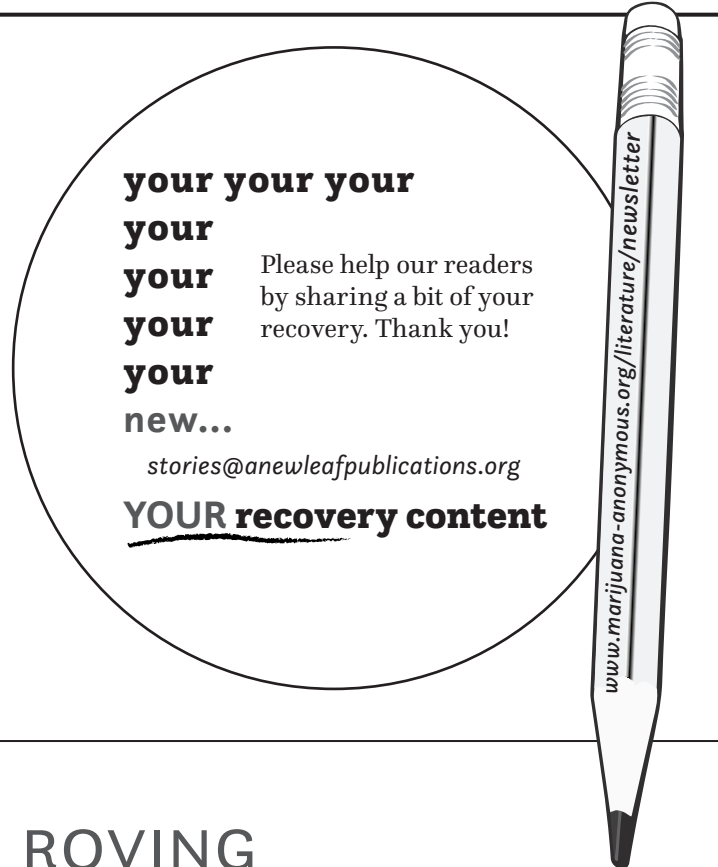
~Anonymous

#### My Daily Prayer

To all higher powers, without and within:

I'm grateful for another day.  
 For peace in my own heart, I pray.  
 May love and kindness be the light  
 That guides me, morning, day, and night.  
 Let life unfold in its own time,  
 And gently show the path that's mine. ▲

~Ben W., District 8, NYC



## THE ROVING REPORTER

Every month, our readers have **another opportunity** to reflect on their recovery and to help carry the message to the addict who still suffers. This issue presents certain questions/topics, the responses to which may be published in the May issue. In addition to questions/topics, the Step and the Tradition corresponding to the month of publication are offered as topics. For example, in this **April** issue we are requesting submissions related to **Step/Tradition Five** for publication in **May**. The deadline is the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month. You need not write more than a couple paragraphs and the exercise may strengthen your own recovery. The action you take will certainly bring to life **Step Twelve** and **Tradition Five**. The Fellowship hopes to hear from you often. One of this month's topics is derived from a line within **Step Five of Life with Hope** (3rd Ed., p. 23, 2nd para).

First, to quote: "Perhaps the most important aspects of the Fifth

*Step are the acceptance, compassion, and forgiveness we feel from our sponsor and from a Higher Power."*



So for those who relate, who have experienced this, please give an account of... **a Fifth Step experience where the acceptance, compassion, and forgiveness you received from a sponsor helped you to heal.**

And/or you may wish to respond to a different topic:

**Briefly describe the initial resistance(s) you may have had about approaching a Fifth Step, and the experience(s) that brought you to courage and trust.**

One final suggested topic, related to Fifth Tradition:  
**How do you practice this Tradition, personally? How do you encourage it at the meeting level? At District? At MA World Services?**

# Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

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

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www.marijuana-anonymous.org ▲ info@marijuana-anonymous.org ▲ +1.800.766.6779

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## Celebrating 182 Years of Sobriety!

### District 5

Aime	3/17/16	2 yrs
Christian	3/17/14	4 yrs
Ernest F.	3/9/95	23 yrs
Joe M.	3/7/11	7 yrs
Kelly	3/17/07	11 yrs
<b>Kristen</b>	<b>2/21/17</b>	<b>1 yr</b>
Lisa L.	2/22/04	14 yrs
Russell	2/28/14	4 yrs

### District 7

<b>Daz</b>	<b>3/5/17</b>	<b>1 yr</b>
Eric P.	3/12/12	6 yrs
Felicia	3/7/16	2 yrs
Jonathan C.	2/25/92	26 yrs

### District 11

Dave C.	2/22/02	16 yrs
Donovan H.	3/6/00	18 yrs
Paul G.	2/26/00	18 yrs
Steve M.	3/1/99	19 yrs

### District 22

Bruce A.	3/15/15	2 yrs
Margaret A.	3/15/15	2 yrs

### District 22

<b>Nick G.</b>	<b>1/25/17</b>	<b>1 yr</b>
Drift M.	2/28/14	4 yrs

### Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

<b>Christine</b>	<b>2/27/17</b>	<b>1 yr</b>
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## 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.*



### GOT A YEAR? ALLOW US TO PUBLISH YOUR ANNIVERSARY TO CELEBRATE!!!

Provide your sobriety date to your local GSR to be forwarded to your Bureau Chief, **or** e-mail your details to [chiefs@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:chiefs@anewleafpublications.org) **or** submit them online at [tiny.cc/mabday](http://tiny.cc/mabday).

**Members / GSRs / Bureau Chiefs  
are encouraged to submit  
Birthdays that**

- 1) HAVE OCCURRED,**
- 2) HAVE NOT been published recently,**
- 3) and ARE NOT OLDER THAN 45 days.**

Please format birthday submissions in this manner: **Name <tab> Date <tab> #yrs**

