



Peaks, Valleys, and Plateaus

Every year following my sobriety date in 2016, January serves as a reflection point. As I complete my eighth trip around the sun since the fateful Saturday on which I declared I was going to get sober with the help of MA, the direction and trajectory of my life has never been the same. The progression of marijuana addiction was a fact in my life, from that first joint during the summer following my 8th grade school year to discovering the elation of doing everything high in high school. Isn't that what the "high" in high school stands for anyway? This included going to assembly and class, or skipping (school) to meet with friends in the woods, to the final days of daily smoking, morning, noon, and night. The power of this insidious addiction had me in its grips alright (as it says in *Life with Hope*). It impacted the opportunities I had in life; it impacted my desire to do much other than smoke; it impacted my mental and emotional well-being; and ultimately, it impacted my previous marriage. This last impact was so significant that my wife decided we should part ways, which sent me to the bottom of my mental, emotional, and spiritual bankruptcy; a depth I would never have imagined in those early days of smoking. If you asked me back then, I would have told you getting high every day was great, and I want to live like this forever into my old age, sitting on a porch in a rocking chair, smoking joints with my buddies.

Equally powerful is the progression of recovery. Soon, I discovered MA online, read and answered "Yes" to every one of the Twelve Questions, and stayed up all night reading about sponsorship and the Twelve Steps. I finally saw a

way out of the dark hole I had dug for myself through the abuse of my favorite substance. I was sure I had found something that would work for me, and I considered the next meeting I could attend. The closest one was the next day, about 1.5 - 2 hours from me, near Cape Cod in

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Massachusetts. I stayed up so late reading that night, I knew I wouldn't make it to the meeting. So I found the next one I could attend on Thursday night in Boston, a less formidable 50 minutes away. Instead of hitting a meeting, I woke up and proclaimed to my parents that I was "going for a drive," which likely alarmed them because they were concerned about my emotional and mental well-being, given I had been walking around in a depressive and primarily high and drunken stupor for the last several months. But I was incapable of considering their worries at the time.

It was my idea to go north to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, drive around and smoke the last of my weed, even though I had made up my mind to go through with the MA process at that point. Us potheads are like that, we can take a little time to act after making a decision. As I drove around smoking, weeping, and questioning what life would be like after pot, I found a place to park and a trail to walk in the snowy woods. Looking back, it was all so theatrical and over the top, the emotionalism and the drama of making this decision.

Walking through the woods, I found a log to sit on with my notebook. I threw my bowl and the little tin where I had been storing my weed into the woods and asked myself, "How is this time going to be different?" Over the years, I had thrown away many bowls, rolling papers, and the like. What was it going to take to change? Having read the message of MA the night before, I wrote down, "I will have the tools, the knowledge, and the support of people to help me along the way." This little note was much more potent than I realized then and has been more spot-on than I could have known. I had no idea just how much of that statement would become reality.

The declaration to live a *Life with Hope* started me on my journey to a meeting that Thursday, which would become my home group for the next 8-10 months. I drove to Boston once or twice weekly to join my new friends for meetings and fellowship. I discovered the MA phone lines, completed my first "90 in 90," and kept up daily meetings for the next two-and-a-half years,

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.

We are reaching out to districts to update the ANLP Liaisons and birthday lists. Additionally, district/group service representatives, including but not limited to those serving as ANLP Liaisons, are encouraged to stay in touch.

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Volunteer Design Editor Help Wanted!

A New Leaf Publications (ANLP), the publishing department of MA World Services, is actively searching for a volunteer Design Editor. The Design Editor's primary role involves working in collaboration with ANLP's Content Editor to publish creative renditions of the monthly *A New Leaf* newsletter, and infrequent assistance with updates to Conference-approved MA literature. The Design Editor attends and is a voting member of monthly ANLP Department meetings.

An applicant for this position should have 2+ years sobriety, and graphic arts/design experience is required. The commitment for this position is one year at approximately 4-6 hours per month.

If interested, please contact ANLP at chair@anewleafpublications.org.

connecting with scores of amazing people. It was not easy, but they told me I had to do the work if I wanted to develop the peace of mind and contentment I was after. It's simple to say, "go to a meeting every day," but not always easy. Life gets in the way. But, I was also told to keep my recovery in the number one spot, which I almost always did, and the work paid off. Life became full, and I no longer felt the need to get high. After some time, I no longer had the desire to get high either. The transformative power of the Twelve Steps and the simple direction to connect with a Higher Power led me to something miraculous.

Today, life is not always perfect. I have my highs and lows, and when I forget that those highs and lows are a part of the recovery journey, I remind myself of something my friend Ben said, "Recovery is not a straight line." Inevitably, it comes with twists and turns, sometimes with regression or relapse, though relapse has not been part of my MA story. Life continues to happen whether I like it or not, and with the support of the fellowship and reliance on a Higher Power, my ability to deal with life has grown exponentially.

My 2023 calendar year was marked with many peaks, valleys, and plateaus. I walked through my fear of remarrying after a divorce. After four years of developing a healthy and thriving partnership, I married a beautiful woman in recovery in front of a small group of family members. There were successes in major projects at my job; my wife and I took a once-in-a-lifetime trip that had me jumping off a cliff into the deepest depths of the water of Crater Lake in Oregon and walking through the hallowed ground of the Grove of Titans in Redwood, California. I invested time and energy into the next phase of my spiritual growth by deepening my meditation practice and working with a meditation teacher.

There were also times when I plateaued in my recovery, where I skated, felt I could have done better, or needed to switch it up after getting stagnant with the same meeting, just being comfortable, sleeping in, or not working on myself. Slipping back into old behaviors, being on my phone too much, reading the news, succumbing to fear, avoidance, procrastination, and distraction. There were also many valleys through challenges in my relations with others, including at work with my boss, that led me to reacquaint myself more closely with my therapist if you catch my drift. I lost the woman who became my spiritual advisor in early recovery, my Aunt to cancer, my best friend and roommate from college died as a result of fentanyl poisoning, and a fellow member and trusted servant who I got to know closely through service work in MA passed away from a heart attack.

Through it all, I stayed clean and sober, and I was told when I started this recovery journey that, above all else, that was the single most important thing. I did not pick up. I did not get high. And, knowing where I came from, that is a miracle in itself. It was an unlikely future that started with the decision to try another way on a cold day in January. I'm grateful for my recovery, I am grateful for MA, and I am forever indebted to the founders and the people who helped me along the way.

~Anonymous



Romancing the Stone

I started smoking weed in my second semester of college. By summer I had walked away from my dream of studying art, to smoking weed daily after work. Some time passed and I eventually developed an addiction to alcohol that I could not control. Because of AA, I was able to put down the alcohol; and, therefore I didn't pick up weed for six more years. I went regularly to (AA) meetings and fellowship, but I had never been in recovery because I never worked the Steps. After six years, I picked weed back up when I encountered an emotional crisis. That time was for about a month, and then I began to work the AA steps with a sponsor for the very first time. Another six years passed, and I began romancing the idea of getting high again. I call it "romancing the stone".

After 13 months of daily, all-day long smoking, I quit. I did not know Marijuana Anonymous was even a thing at that time. It took me several more attempts to quit before I was told about MA. I find marijuana addiction to be so cunning, baffling, and powerful. For me, the decline of my life and emotional health was so subtle and so long as I stayed under its influence. I was not able to see the damage I was causing for myself and my family. Each time I

MA Book and Workbook Prices: Increases and Discounts

Life with Hope (LWH) MSRP Price Increases. The manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of the following MA literature titles currently sold through the Hazelden Publishing bookstore, www.hazelden.org/store, increased on January 1, 2024, as follows:

- LWH text: \$16.95 to \$18.95
- LWH text eBook: \$11.95 to \$13.95
- LWH 12 Step Workbook: \$9.95 to \$12.95

The above prices may be lower after January 1, 2024 for online purchases.

Hazelden (only) book purchase discounts. Independent of MA's contract, Hazelden Publishing offers discount incentives to all 12-step members, designed to encourage individuals to join groups and for groups to join districts, as follows:

- Online purchases by individual members, 10%
- Group purchases over \$200, 20%
- District purchases (no minimum or limit), 40%

Note: Group and district purchasers should contact Hazelden Publishing Customer Service at (800) 328-9000 or customersupport@hazeldenbettyford.org, before making a purchase, to set up an account.

relapsed and used for months at a time, I would notice that I could not recapture the experience of the first high after all that time sober. I became isolated because I stopped driving when I was high, which was all the time. I would not answer phone calls from my children because they would know I was altered. I finally was in more conflict with myself when I was using that I began to yearn for the peace I remembered I had in sobriety.

So one day I made up my mind to smoke for the last time... I knew I was done. I flushed what I had left and threw my paraphernalia in the trash and asked God to please remove the obsession to get high, and it did! I attended MA meetings daily once I found the phone meetings. Now, three years and five months later, I still attend the MA phone meetings at least five times a week. The fellowship sustains me through rough times and good times. I'm more likely to relapse when I'm feeling on top of the world so that's when I have to double up on meetings and contact with other fellows in the program! The fun I've experi-

enced, and still experience in sobriety, far exceeds the fun I thought that I was having when stoned. This fellowship has opened the doors to other 12-Step programs that have enhanced the quality of my sobriety. I feel so lucky to have lost my way, to the point where I was willing to give this thing a try. I am forever grateful to this new way of life and to all of you fellow travelers!

~Anonymous



See your sobriety date in A New Leaf!

If your sobriety date has occurred, has not been published, and is not older than 45 days, please submit it in the format you see on the left by the 16th of the month. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or email to birthdays@anewleafpublications.org

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit

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	www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk			www.ma-phone.org	

Step and Tradition of the Month

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.

Celebrating 268 Years of Sobriety!

District 4			Ernest F			District 22		
Krista D	3/17/2004	20 yrs	Joe M	3/7/2011	13 yrs	Dean A	2/14/2004	20 yrs
Tim L	3/15/2004	20 yrs	Kelly	3/17/2007	17 yrs	District 27		
District 5			Kennedy	3/2/2023	1 year!	Kel S	3/17/2018	6 yrs
Aime	3/17/2016	8 yrs	Lisa L	2/22/2004	20 yrs	District 28		
Alejandro	3/12/2018	6 yrs	District 6			Lucy	3/22/2023	1 year!
Alex G	3/4/2016	8 yrs	Jonathan C	2/26/1992	32 yrs	Independent & Virtual meetings		
Alex L	3/3/2019	5 yrs	District 8			Lloyd J	3/4/1982	42 yrs
Christian	3/17/2014	10 yrs	Jana Z	2/21/2023	1 year!			
Ehsan	3/8/2021	3 yrs	Mallory H	3/9/2018	6 yrs			