



A NEW LEAF

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Learning How To Live; "Life With Hope"

by Brint B., District 5

I just spent the last hour and a half cleaning my house. I didn't do major cleaning, just some light work. It didn't take very long, and with a favorite CD playing in the background, it wasn't a chore. A little over 10 months ago, however, it would have been a different story.

First, if I even felt motivated to clean, I would have started with a joint - "just to make it less unbearable". Then, after I picked up a few things, I would have had another hit, just to keep things going. About five hours later, the house would have still been a mess, if not worse than when I started. So, one thing that I want to thank MA for is the simple ability to accomplish something once I've started it.

Needing to "get my house in order" wasn't the reason I came to MA, however. I'm HIV positive, and my drug use was a way of postponing everything in my life - not just the cleaning. I used pot to postpone living, because I thought that if I postponed living, I could postpone dying. Rather than deal with my fears about my health, going to the doctor and taking care of myself, I used pot (as well as alcohol and other drugs) to create a world that wasn't real. I was so afraid of dying that I escaped into my bag and lived there, instead of enjoying what life has to offer free of drugs. Very early in sobriety I discovered the great gift that MA and other Twelve Step programs have to offer. It's perfectly described in the MA slogan, "Life With Hope".

Hope is the greatest gift I've been given in my recovery, so far. I say "so far" because after having gotten to

know some old-timers in the program, I know that other gifts await me as I work the Steps. Before coming to MA, my life consisted of waiting to die, thinking about dying, and being afraid

"I thought that if I postponed living, I could postpone dying."

of dying. Now that I have a Higher Power in my life, I am learning to turn those fears over to my H.P. and just get on with living. In fact, just turning my fears over to my Higher Power (as well as not abusing my body with drugs and alcohol) has resulted in less physical and mental stress, and my physical health has improved to the best it has been in five years. My spiritual, emotional and mental health are the best they've been since I started drinking and using!

I can enjoy myself now, have a sponsor and friends that I can talk to,

and most of all, know that I don't have to be alone with my fears. I am learning that I don't have to be in control of anything, and that my Higher Power does a much better job of taking care of me than I ever did myself. I'm working on my Fourth Step right now, and am looking forward to unloading my fears and resentments so that I

don't have to carry them around with me anymore. I'm also looking forward to the self-discovery that will happen as I get to know myself as a recovering addict, instead of an addict in his disease, cut off from the world and everything in it. Gratitude is a new feeling for me, and it's one I like. The gratitude I feel right now for the gift of being clean and sober is as great as the misery I ever felt while using. I never would have received these gifts without MA. I have my life back now, and can live in a world with plenty to offer! 🍀

Taking Step One

by Kory B., District 6

Why am I powerless? How has my life become unmanageable?

One and a half years ago I was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder (manic-depressive). Up to that point, I had the world by the balls. I had a great career, a nice home, a new truck, a boat, and women when I needed them.

After being diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, I started to blame everything negative in my life on the disease. The medication, therapy, and support groups would not fix it totally. I needed to stop smoking pot, so that my

medication could work. At least, this is what I was told. I refused to do so. From the time of my diagnosis until now, I didn't have the ambition to do shit. Everything was about me! Oh pity me!

I could not control my manic behavior. I was a walking time bomb. I lost my grandfather, my wife miscarried our first baby, I got married, I was advised to give up my data processing career, and to top it all off, I had this mental disorder. I could not manage myself out of a paper bag after all of this B.S.

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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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A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship "Odds And Ends"

What did you think of the Convention? Should we have another?

Al O., District 5, 6 mos.

I was impressed with the Convention. I got a lot out of the workshops, especially the Isolation Workshop. I'm looking forward (one day at a time) to the next one!

What was your favorite Convention workshop? Why?

Todd E., District 7, 1 yr. 5 mos.

My favorite workshop was Bill D's "Secrets". As addicts, our lives became poisoned with secrets and lies. Bill talked about secrecy vs privacy and our ability to open up with courage. People in the meeting, including myself, opened up and it was a safe place to do so. It was an incredibly powerful meeting for me. This is not to say I haven't enjoyed all the workshops, because each one was extremely vital. I also really enjoyed the "Meditation": workshop with Ginny. Also an amazing experience. Thanks for this Weekend!

What Big Book reference do you use the most? Why?

Captain Kurt, District 6, 2 1/2 years

The last two paragraphs on page 452. By remembering to keep my expectations of others, and life in general, down - my serenity level rises. Up on my acceptance of others, and down with my expectations, works best for me.

Why do you attend MA meetings?

Richard A., District 3, 5 years

I attend MA meetings because that is where I was given a second chance on life. That is where I found the 12 Step program of MA. That is where I have met true friends that are clean and sober. That is where I learned how to live life One Day At A Time, clean and sober. Thank God, MA was there when I needed help, and I will do all I can to make sure MA is there for the next addict who might need help.

What qualities should one look for in a potential sponsor?

Chris F., District 2, 7 years

For me, I want a sponsor who works a strong program - lots of meetings, has a sponsor, and uses program tools daily for their own recovery.

The Roving Reporter

Bulletin Board

DISTRICTS 1 & 2 - Campout! June 9th, 10th, and 11th at Big Basin in Santa Cruz. Call Thomas (510) 234-9232 for more information.

DISTRICT 3 - Pat Mc. will be the new San Jose Bureau Chief. To place notices of upcoming birthdays or events or to submit articles, please either contact him or write directly to *A New Leaf*. Welcome Pat, and thanks for your help Richard!

TRI-DISTRICT SOFTBALL GAME - between Districts 5, 6, & 7 - May 13th. For information contact Todd E.(310) 281-9504 or Joellen J.(818) 763-8308.

CONFERENCE !! - Districts 6 & 7. We need members for transportation and/or to lodge attendees in your home. Got a spare bed, couch or futon? It's a great way to feel "a part of" and to help MA. For information call Joellen J.(818) 763-8308.

CONFERENCE FUND RAISER ! - May 21st, 12 Noon at 9939 Topanga Canyon Blvd.#7, Chatsworth. Backgammon Tournament, Swimming, Tennis, Auction, & Raffle. \$5 suggested donation. Call Joanne M.(818) 341-3246 or Lance D.(818) 340-4320.

Step One

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I continually blamed all my short comings on all of the above. I was powerless and unable to manage my day to day life. I had a beautiful new wife, and no job. I was on disability, and I was a marijuana addict. I felt smoking pot calmed me down, so I increased my pot habit with money my wife and I didn't have. I was an asshole to my friends, family, and wife. I was ready to fight anyone at anytime. So I smoked more pot! I see now that this aggravated the entire situation.

I ended up destroying our Condo from the inside out, in front of my wife and step-children. I frightened them. They could no longer trust me. My wife had to call the local police because she did not know why I blew up, nor did she know what to do about it. They could not arrest me because I did not hurt myself or anyone else during this action. I was then put into a mental hospital for 14 days so that I could be watched while my doctors tried another medication.

I felt great when I came out. This was due to me not having pot in my system for 30 days or so. After that, I started smoking again. I found myself depressed and unable to manage anything again.

I struggled like this for months, and finally decided to get help. I admitted myself again to CPC Rancho Lindo Hospital as an out-patient to detox from pot. After I completed one month of this program, I found Marijuana Anonymous. It is the best thing that ever happened to me.

After a couple of weeks in MA, I relapsed. I started using crank. Why I did this, I do not know. One thing I did know is that using crank was not the same as smoking pot. So, I convinced myself that it was ok. After two weeks of using speed, I was over the edge again. But this time, I did not go crazy. I called my doctor, and my sponsor, and then went into the hospital for four more days. *Continued on Page 4*

"A" Is For Addiction

by: Carol S., District 7

One of my sons is, by virtue of a miracle, three years clean and sober as a member of (and with the support of) MA. One of my sons still smokes pot. My sons are a product of pot smoking parents and the 60's, when they were born. It was socially correct (albeit illegal) to smoke pot and drop acid. We had graduated from "beat", to "hep", to "hip" (and boy... we were hip). They grew up with long hair (which one still has), flowered bell bottoms (which they both gave up), and the Grateful Dead (which neither gave up).

Sunday brunches at our house brought lots of friends and their kids for pot pancakes and maple syrup. All gatherings and parties included a salad bowl of pot and papers on the coffee table along side the appetizers. It was "All-American" as far as we were concerned.

My sons were kids then. They're men now. They're real humanitarians. They love animals, their country, their world, and nobody could ask for better friends. However, my son that still smokes pot hates MA. To him, this program is the new addiction of his

brother and his mom. He considers exchanging MA for pot a bad trade. No amount of reasoning, no explanations or living proof that our lives are immeasurably better since we have quit (and stayed better with the support of MA) can convince him otherwise.

My ex-husband (their father) still smokes. Though he's had multiple heart surgeries and bypasses, he'll still insist, "I refuse to be a hypocrite!"

Well, my darling son (the one who still smokes pot) has not yet noticed that these days my door and my drapes are always open. I don't have to worry anymore about a "friend" ripping off my stash. I have no stash and I no longer have those "friends". I no longer have anything to hide. These days, problems don't work me out, I work them out. I'm not a turtle on its back anymore, with little feet churning, going nowhere.

I love my sons. They are really good people, sensitive, smart, talented and funny. But, my son who still smokes doesn't know his ass from his addiction. It must be his father's side of the family! 🐢

Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!




Sailor Chris G.	Apr.01	4 Years		
David M.	Apr.05	2 Years	Jeff B.	May 05 4 Years
Brenda S.	Apr.08	6 Years	Shannon W.	May 05 5 Years
Barb H.	Apr.10	3 Years	Charlotte M	May 06 6 Years
Tom W.	Apr.12	4 Years	John R.	May 07 8 Years
Scrappin' Mike	Apr.18	2 Years	Lee A.	May 08 4 Years
Carol S.	Apr.20	4 Years	Hope P.	May 18 3 Years
Paula C.	Apr.24	8 Years	Cap'n Seth	May 20 5 Years
Evan B.	Apr.28	6 Years	Bob E.	May 20 7 Years
Mark-yber	May 02	3 Years	Melody E.	May 20 7 Years
Brian K.(Dst.5)	May 03	2 Years	Norm B.	May 30 12 Years

Step One

A Twofold Challenge

Continued from Page 3

Since being discharged from the hospital, I have come to every Saturday MA meeting, every meeting on Wednesday, and meetings at the hospital for addicts with bi-polar disorder. I have started to take some control of my life. I started my own lawn-care business. I have had a baby boy (he's beautiful). And, I enjoy my family. More importantly though, my capacity for meanness and aggravation is basically gone. I have realized that I cannot manage my life. The only one that can is God! I can enjoy my life now. I am being restored to sanity. I can now feel my real feelings. 

by: Bruce S., District 6

I often share my feelings about my first meeting and recall how hearing people speak of God and spirituality almost kept me from returning. Luckily, I kept an open mind and today I enjoy the fruits of the emotional and spiritual work I have done in the program. One reward I have received is that I am better able to identify my feelings, both past and present.

I have discovered that my early discomfort at meetings had causes more complex than my personal attitude that God didn't fit into my world view or that the idea of a Higher Power "just turned me off".


An important part of our Steps and Traditions is that we carry the message of recovery to fellow addicts. We have, in fact, a responsibility to do so, both to our fellows and ourselves. It is a responsibility for which we can be grateful as it is integral to our continued sobriety and recovery.

Yet, we have another responsibility as stated in our Steps and Traditions - practicing these principles (of spirituality) in all our affairs. It seems a simple and obvious outcome of the program, but it can present a greater challenge than carrying the message of recovery, perhaps because the results are not as obvious and because this is an area in which the line between progress and perfection becomes blurred.

The day to day responsibility of leading a spiritual life is great. We must try to deal with others according to the standards we adopt as part of our faith regardless of whether we feel tired or do not particularly like someone. We must try to refrain from judging others while we continue to monitor and improve ourselves. We must strive to be the very best people we can.

As my faith and understanding deepens, I am coming to better understand that my fear of facing that spiritual challenge and failing, as well as the selfish desires and attitudes that fueled my addiction, created the wall that arose in my mind just as I was getting my first glance at the gifts of recovery.

I can no longer afford to indulge my selfish fear because it nudges me from the spiritual path. I have come too far along that path to deny that practicing honesty, compassion, and love brings happiness and serenity to both myself and others. By accepting the necessity of faith I find that I *am* better able to handle situations which used to baffle me. Living a spiritual life feels right because practicing these principles in all my affairs is what I *am* here to do.

Living life on spiritual terms is my purpose, my responsibility in life. 

Thought For The Month

"Wanting is the urge for the next moment to contain what this moment does not. When there's wanting in the mind, the moment feels incomplete. Wanting is seeking elsewhere. Completeness is being right there."

Stephen Levine

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