



# A NEW LEAF

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## The Voice Within

by Baba, District 2

**H**ow do the geese know when it is time to fly south for the winter? How do the buds know when it is time for the spring bursting? How do we know when it is time to move on? For all of nature there is a voice within. "We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us." That is one of the promises.

Last week as I left my regular Saturday night meeting, something told me that I should pass on the opportunity to go and socialize with my recovering pothead friends. Instead, I felt compelled to go out to the park in Berkeley and visit The Wall. The Wall is the traveling Vietnam Memorial, and it had come to my town. I had business with one of the particular names that is inscribed there.

I stopped at the all-night Safeway and bought a potted white rose to pay my respects. As I meandered through the streets, I began a dialogue with my dead buddy. A lot of life has passed for me since he and I parted ways some twenty-nine years ago. I smoked a lot of weed in Nam. What the heck, I smoked a lot of weed before Nam. Not surprisingly, I smoked a lot more weed after Nam. As I parked my car, I was overtaken by a sense of vulnerability.

I inquired at the tent, and my guy was at 36 East 39. I quickly refused their offer of assistance in finding the name. There was a TV crew there seeking a story for the 11 o'clock news, but I walked out of my way to avoid them. My business was personal. I found my fallen

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comrade's name and paid homage with the white flowers. I talked to him with tear-stained eyes. I knelt at the spot and prayed. I kneaded the grass with my hands and

breathed my way back to a state of equilibrium and peace. After an eternity of minutes I rose slowly and wove my way through the litany of fond farewells, love letters, poetry, remembrances, and sorrows.

I drove home with deliberation and meditative acceptance. I told my family of my trip and they protested. They had wanted to go too. I explained that it was something I needed to do

alone. Two minutes later I surfed the TV news only to see my big butt on the screen, flattened out in front like the grateful, recovering fool that

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## Expectations And Serenity

by Libby G., District 8

**H**rmp! Being a sponsor can be a headache as well as a blessing.

Watching sponsees come and go kicks up my fears that I didn't do enough. Then my sponsor gently reminds me to keep the focus on myself, that I do not have the power to make others get it or to use.

Actually working with sponsees is the same. Sharing my experience, strength, and hope with them

doesn't mean that they're *not* going to make some of the same painful mistakes I did in my process.

Having to listen to them, after I've told them—*warned* them—is difficult.

I feel their pain! My expectations are that they get it without having to go through the rough stuff. And when they don't live up to my expectations, I feel disappointed. Recently, when asked for

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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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# Anniversary Meeting

by **Praline M., District 2**

**T**he First Oakland Meeting on Saturday night celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>! The special meeting was packed full of old and new faces, as we sang and ate birthday cake.

Someone asked, "What do you remember about your first meeting?"

Here are some replies.

"I thought, 'Wow, these people look healthy and normal.'"

"I was tripping on the fact that here were a few people gathered together, talking, and we had never met before, that something like this was possible."

"My son came with me, and he presented me to the group. He was ready for me to quit, and I felt ready to be there. I was looking for a way to stop."

"The room was packed with potheads, and I felt relieved and comfortable. I was exactly in the right place."

"It was a nice, small meeting. Pleasant but not intimidating. I wasn't there because I wanted to be, but people were caring and supportive."

"I actually met someone who smoked differently than me and I was impressed! I thought if he can quit—I can quit!"

"I cried a lot. I couldn't believe I had so much in common with the others there."

"I realized I couldn't make deals with myself about using in 'moderation' anymore."

"It was amazing how much their story was like my story."

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## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!

**District 2**

Edward	Apr 6	7 yrs
Cat	Apr 13	1 yr!
Chuck	Apr 30	1 yr!

Sue T.	Apr 24	1 yr!
Sunnie	Apr 25	3 yrs

**District 3**

Steve	Apr 26	4 yrs
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**District 7**

Stuart G.	Apr 13	3 yrs
Joanne K.	Apr 21	7 yrs
Brian K.	Apr 23	7 yrs

**District 6**

Sheryn	Mar 17	1 yr!
Grady S.	Apr 1	4 yrs
Jerome	Apr 1	8 yrs
Bonnie V.	Apr 4	4 yrs
Susie C.	Apr 6	3 yrs
Linda C.	Apr 8	1 yr!
Van W.	Apr 12	24 yrs
Gwen G.	Apr 13	4 yrs
Sammie	Apr 15	3 yrs
Gordon	Apr 15	7 yrs
Gary Z.	Apr 20	3 yrs
Carol S.	Apr 20	6 yrs
Sabrina	Apr 21	1 yr!

**District 8**

Tom F.	Mar 4	3 yrs
Joe R.	Apr 7	1 yr!
Lester R.	Apr 15	2 yrs

**Other (Las Vegas)**

Geoff F.	Apr 1	8 yrs
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**Correction**

Baiba L. of District 4 celebrated a second sober birthday on March 10.

## Expectations And Serenity

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my opinion (for a suggestion), I shared what I thought appropriate as it followed principles before personalities. Unfortunately my suggestion was not followed and I was there to observe it. My expectations were not met. Imagine that! And when I called my sponsor to discuss this, she reminded me that not everyone gets the program, and I have to remember some are sicker than others. Then she suggested I read page 452 of the Big Book. Smile. She was right on target. I read: "Perhaps the best thing of all for me is to remember that my serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations." So when my expectations are high, my serenity is low. This means it's time to do a 3<sup>rd</sup> step here...take an action, turn it over. I can plant the seeds and even try to nurture them, but I can't make them grow. I am powerless over others, and their lives are not for me to manage. ☸

## Anniversary Meeting

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"I thought everybody in the room was sick—but I was bad. I felt terminal uniqueness."

"It blew me away! I felt a lot of love and hope."

"I was feeling real low because of the state my life was in. I went to a meeting and I cried in front of other people for the first time in my life. Also for the first time in my life, I felt real emotional support."

"I thought I didn't have a problem like everyone else in the room. And then I went home and

## God As I Understand God

by Susan B., Portland, Oregon

When I was a child, I was told that god saw all, was everywhere and knew everything. Since I believed god was an old man in heaven, up in the clouds somewhere, I knew that he couldn't be everywhere at one time. I believed that god looked in on me for a couple of seconds every month or two; there were just too many people for him to be concerned about me. But I had to watch my thoughts and my actions just in case he was looking: God as Super Spy.

When I started smoking pot at age 15, I quit going to church and drifted further and further from any sense of god. I thought pot was spiritual, and I had delusions of meditating on pot. I even bought a meditation bench a few years before I quit pot, though I never used it. I'd get stoned and just space out.

When I first came to 12 Step meetings, I was scared by the "god-talk." I thought this was a cult, and

I felt very defensive. But I kept coming back because I wanted to quit pot. I could see at my second meeting that this was a fellowship and that we did it together.

I wanted the peace I saw in the people in the meetings, and decided to try this higher power thing. I pulled out the meditation bench I'd never used, sat on it, and "acted as if" I believed in some kind of power. I prayed to the wall, reciting the first three steps and the Serenity Prayer. It felt silly. I have no idea how long it took, but I started to get a sense of a presence that cared for me. This was very different from believing god was outside me and didn't have time for me.

It was a thrilling experience to start a relationship with a higher power that I felt cared for me. I spent the first four years of my recovery trying to figure out what higher power is. I first imagined my higher power to be two oak trees holding up a hammock. I would lay in the hammock, being held.

Finally I gave up trying to figure out my higher power. What's been more important for me is coming to believe that higher power is everywhere, in everything, in all of life, in my life. I believe that we are all part of the higher power, that in each of us it is the spark of the divine.

More simply, I believe higher power is the sense I have when I feel connected to other people, to the earth, to all of life. I am deeply grateful that Marijuana Anonymous meetings exist, because this is where I feel most connected. I hear my higher power through people. I thank all of you potheads in recovery for being willing to heal and to recover your life. I can't do it alone. I need you. ☸

got stoned. I did notice how much I had in common with the other people. It took me a year, but I came back and have been coming ever since." ☸

## The Voice Within

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I am. #@@\*@\*#! Private moment indeed!

Showing up, listening, and telling the truth in "these rooms" along with working a program and help and grace of a Higher Power has given me an inner voice. The gifts of intuition and insight are growing in my life and in my recovery. ☸

# Sober For Myself

by Reanna, District 6

**M**y name is Reanna, and I am a 16-year-old recovering marijuana addict. I, like most teens, went to MA for my parents mainly. I knew I had a problem—however I didn't really want to stop. Mainly I didn't want to have real feelings again. I am a very trusting person, but marijuana solved that problem.

My parents put me in an outpatient program. The program made me go to one meeting a week. I chose MA because marijuana was my drug of choice. In MA I learned about calling people.

At 30 days when I took my chip I was ready to be sober for myself. I knew if I didn't do it for myself, it wouldn't mean anything to me and I would go out and use again. At 60 days I decided to learn the Serenity Prayer and get a sponsor. After 90 days I finally got a sponsor. I thought I didn't need a sponsor and didn't need to work the steps. Staying clean will be enough. Now that I have a sponsor, I see how important she is. When I have a good day she is happy for me, when I have a bad day, she tells me it's okay and makes me feel better. After 103 days clean I graduated the outpatient program.

The first really bad day I had was at MA. Lots of people comforted me. That bad day made me realize I need to thank god for the good days and not take them for granted. ☺

Would you like to contribute to *Teens in Recovery*? If you are a sober teen or became sober as a teen, we want your story. Mail it to: MA District 6, Literature Chairperson, P.O. Box 2433, Van Nuys, CA 91404

## Quote of the Month

*The newcomer is the most important person in our fellowship. Sometimes when we go to a meeting we know everyone and get caught up in the laughter and fun. We have all made good friends and wouldn't trade that warmth for any price. But we must not forget to welcome the newcomer or out-of-town visitor who is sitting alone.*

—Life With Hope, Tradition Five [page 82]

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