



Looking for My God by Paul S.

Somebody who stresses about “the G word” recently asked me, “What do you do when people say ‘God’?”

What followed was a long and rambling discourse that mostly left both of us confused. I could boil it down to this, though: depending on the context and speaker, when someone says “God” to me, I either (A) do nothing or (B) translate their “God” into my “God.”

In other words, if somebody is just describing their beliefs, like saying “I think of God as being that guy on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel,” then there’s nothing for me to do, except thank them for sharing and try to understand their perspective.

Of course, if somebody tries to tell me who or what my God is, or ought to be, my ego gets up, I get defensive, and I try real hard to say nothing and then *act* like I’m thanking them for sharing.

The translation thing, though, is trickier, and at the risk of sounding like I am trying to “explain” God, I will move ahead here. In fact, I am trying to explain “my” God, which is almost as pointless.

I think of God as a purity of love and a complete absence of ego or will – a state of being which exists in each of us and is accessible to each of us, if we can set aside our own ego and will to let pure, unconditional love flow through us. And in that purity of love, all are the same, all are loved,

all are one.

So when someone says “God will take care of me,” I translate that into something like, “If I can cultivate within me the spirit of pure love and no-ego, and live in that state, I have nothing to fear or worry about.” I am fairly sure that all religions have some version of this statement.

Likewise, “Let go and let God” means, to me, “Set aside my ego and will right now, and stop trying

**“Don’t do it! You don’t like it! You’ll regret it!”
And that voice was
always right.**

to control things, so I may act in this moment in the spirit of pure, egoless love.” A tall order, indeed!

My sponsor likes to say that it’s important to have some clear concept of God that you can work with. Without that, how do you turn something over to it? As he says, it should be something you can wrap your head around, even though you can’t possibly wrap your head around God. Encouraging you to do the impossible: That’s my sponsor! “Progress towards perfection,” he likes to say.

My first take on a Higher Power, nine years ago when I started in recovery, was that God was the little voice in my head

telling me to do the right thing. I heard it very clearly in the later years of smoking pot, when even as I lifted the pipe to my face, I’d hear “Don’t do it! You don’t like it! You’ll regret it!” And that voice was always right.

So my first notion of the Third Step was simply following that voice, wherever it came from. Another way I thought of this was “tuning in God’s station.”

Another early version of HP was my home group: whatever those folks were doing, it was obviously more powerful than anything I could come up with, since they were staying sober and I wasn’t. So “letting go” and “turning it over” meant going to the meeting and trying to do whatever the sober, saner folks were doing.

That’s when I started experiencing all those “non-coincidence coincidences” that are so magical. I saw it this way: God sends me a message, and after a lot of Godly nagging, I might tune it in and try to follow it. And whenever I do, I get some kind of positive confirmation, encouragement, or a gift, letting me know that I had done right.

Also, I really like analogies for “God.” Here are some I’ve heard or made up:

- We’re all adrift in the ocean, which is large beyond comprehension, and we’ll die alone in it, but God is like the

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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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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- boat we can survive in. Or God is the power that runs the boat.
- God is like a flow of electricity much stronger than we could ever capture (think lightning), but things like 12-step programs, religions and spiritual practices act like a transformer, allowing us to tap into the power for our use and the benefit of others.
- God is like the wind; I can't see it, but I can feel it, and I can see its effects: leaves blowing around, or people getting sober.
I'm really glad I started

listening to that inner voice, found MA, and started recovering from this disease. I'm also glad I have some useful concepts of "God" to work with – as well as two great sponsors!

Armed with some notion of what "our" God or Higher Power is, we can move forward from Steps 2 and 3. From there, like it says in Life With Hope (Step 2), "Our belief and trust in a Higher Power broadens and deepens as we continue taking the Steps." ▲

Step Two by Anonymous (*February leftovers*)

The first time I approached practicing Step 2, I thought it was telling me to "find and define the one true Omni-potent God of the universe, put him under a microscope, copy his DNA for cloning, and present him to the fellowship for a letter grade". So I went out on a quest: I went to Calvary chapel, the Catholic church, I studied Mormonism and Jehovah's witnesses, Buddhism, science of mind, Muslim, hare Krishna, Indian spiritualism, reincarnation....the list goes on ad-infinitum. You know what I discovered? That all the religions of the world are saying that they are the one true religion and all the other ones are wrong. I did not need that. Today, I need something tangible. Life with Hope suggests to a person of my intellect, to keep an open mind on perhaps using the fellowship as a HP. HP

is defined as "any positive loving spiritual force." LWH also says "that we don't necessarily have to say yes, but we do have to stop saying no." Ah, a light went on in my head when I read that. It makes good sense. Practicing to keep an open mind on "well, yeah, maybe MA can help me" It's that simple. Even if I don't believe MA can help me, I can sure believe it has helped others. That's all I need to get step 2 started. Then, as time rolls on, my mind can become more and more open to the positive, loving force. Everyday my faith grows stronger in that force. If you already have strong faith in an organized religion, then I admire you. You are probably on a higher spiritual plane than I am. But if you have trouble with religion, remember: All you really need is an open mind. ▲

Wake-up Call by Anonymous

I started using oil in grade 6. I got addicted very fast. At first I only got high on the weekends. At first I thought I was "cool" being the only drug user out of all my classmates. My parents didn't know that I was getting high then (Grade 6). If they did know they didn't say anything to me. In grade 7 I quit for some unknown reason, thank god. I started back up in grade 9, using weed (not oil), in high school. My parents found out because I got caught coming out of the bush at

lunch time by the school's camera's. The school didn't expel me nor did they give me a detention. So I continued to use weed every single day. After a while the teachers wouldn't say anything about me being high. They would say, "Mr., are you going to the café to get your snack?" (I had the munchies) I would say to the teacher, "yes I am." By the time I was in 12th grade I felt I had enough with weed and I wanted help, but the high school didn't really help with finding a

treatment center. So off to college I went. Not too long after I was busted for getting high in the residence. They told me to leave, but I fought back and said "I didn't sign the agreement form," so they let me stay on campus. I thought to myself 'let this be the wake-up call.' I finally reached out to a counselor and he helped me think of a few small steps that could make a big difference. ~ Anonymous ▲

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"...a life I could never have imagined." by Case W.

My name is Case W. and I am a marijuana addict. I grew up in a very wealthy family in a suburb of Houston, Texas. I distinctly remember being 10 years old and having my first real drink of alcohol. The first time a chemical entered my body, I came to believe a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity, and made a decision to turn my will and my life over to it. I was scared of marijuana for awhile due to how horrible the education system made it seem, so I waited until I was 12 to try it for the first time. The first time I smoked I didn't get high; I fell asleep and smoked again a few hours later. That's when it happened. I was high. I didn't have a problem or care in the world. It didn't bother me that my parents were divorcing, my dad was an abusive alcoholic, or that I was hated by all my friends' parents. Any problems then just went up in smoke. I loved everything about being high. And from that day on I

decided to remain high every conscience second I could. I dove straight into the cannabis culture and was only about 13 years old. I did what I needed to at school to get by and keep my parents off my back. But most importantly, I did what I needed to do to stay high. My father was seldom around due to business and left ample amounts of cash when he would leave. For awhile money was not an issue and neither was supply. I then hit the age of 14 and became involved with some outside issues that cost quite a bit of cash. I never let anything get in the way of my marijuana. Throughout all of my other addictions marijuana was my "go to" drug, my constant. I started doing things to get bud that you hear of heroin addicts doing to get their next fix. All was well for quite some time. I then hit the age of 15 and wasn't into stealing material things anymore. I learned the art of check forgery - \$20,000+ straight from daddy's account in a matter of three months. That became another addiction in itself. I got and did whatever I wanted and still maintained a front with my parents. Life was great. I hadn't felt a single emotion in years. I was completely numb and didn't know who I was. I

was in the fast and easy road a little too long. In early March of 2007 I was caught. My father found out about the money and that I was a full blown drug addict. I was punished for the first time in my life. I still had enough money and drugs to get high for a good while longer. Then two weeks after getting caught and sitting in my room getting stoned something happened. I was allowed to have some friends over on a Friday night in late March and we got bored and wanted to leave. My dad wasn't okay with that, so we got into a fist fight. It went on for about 10 minutes and I threw one more blow to his chest and took off down the street where I was arrested a block later. I blacked out moments later and only remember being in handcuffs and seeing an ambulance fly by. I then woke up a few hours later in a police station being questioned by police. That fight had ended in my father's death. I don't remember the next week very well. I woke up the day after his funeral and was sent to rehab. It was mostly a diversion while the investigation was going on. I got out on my 16th birthday in late May. I relapsed an hour after leaving. I was back to my weed smoking, pill popping, booze

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drinking self. After a summer of wiping my family bank accounts clean, pawning thousands of dollars of diamond rings, and being a couch-surfing homeless stoner I went back to rehab. This time I got out after 2 months and accumulated a total of 4 months sober before going back out. I got high and felt like me again. The vicious cycle continued. I ended up back in rehab after four months. Finally, it was 12 Step based and introduced me to the disease concept. I lied my entire way through and got out after three months. I went to my first outside AA meeting the night I got out to

see what it was all about. I still had that look that old timers lived for. At the end of the meeting a man came up to me and introduced himself. We talked for a moment and he said he knows how I feel and knows the way out. From that night on I worked the twelve steps with a guy that has 23 years of sobriety. I am currently 17 years old with a year of sobriety. I have things going on in my life that I couldn't have fathomed a year ago. I am starting to find out who I am. On a daily basis I continue to fit myself to be of maximum service to my higher power. In doing that I get things in

return that are better than any drug I ever put into my body. I sponsor several people in the program and the gratitude I have for them can't even be explained. Amends have been made and I continue to make them when my higher power shows me the time is right. In doing these things I now walk a free man and can look anyone in the eye. This program and God have given me a life I could never have imagined and I continue to grow and become stronger every day one day at a time. Young people can get sober too.



birthdays

Celebrating 175 years of sobriety in this issue!

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