



a new leaf

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My Love For Smoking Pot

Marijuana and I began our relationship in New Jersey, in a rural town, sometime during the end of my Junior Year of high school. Prior to that encounter though, I had a deep-rooted resentment against all substances, and all substance abusers. My familial experiences certainly fueled my un-indulged distaste for drugs and alcohol; and I suppose, looking back now, I feel safe suggesting that I was just fearful of the hereditary potential of failure and addiction. Needless to say, some prophecies are very much self-fulfilled.

I came out of the closet to friends at the age of twelve, while in the 6th Grade. And technically, I came out to my mother and to my family much earlier on, whether through my taste in toys and hobbies, or because I proudly admitted that I couldn't stand the girls in kindergarten and wanted to kiss the boys in my class. I always perceived the girls as my peers or my competition; and I shamelessly considered the boys as dull objects or adorable accessories. It was simply my childhood nature.

Growing up, my family was very supportive of my nature, despite being rather unsupportive of their own. My mother struggled with alcoholism; my father lost his license and was incarcerated (although briefly) for possession; and the rest of my family came and went with their own series of addictions, health failures, and psychological and emotional disorders. I was introduced to suicidal behavior long before I was introduced to drugs and alcohol, and I was introduced to self-loathing as a consequence of those experiences. I didn't really know or understand how to apply those lessons to myself until I came out of the closet. The unpopularity of my nature and of my sincere honesty really left an impression on me, and on my spirit. It wasn't soon after when I began to seek escape and solitude.

At first, the Internet provided adequate escape; but with hormones looming overhead; a continually depreciating sense of self-worth; and a ravenous craving for socialization and acceptance; I sought the affection and attention of sexual predators and social deviants. The adrenaline rush of sneaking out to meet men from the Web who "appreciated me" was undoubtedly my first drug of choice, and my first true addiction.

My blatantly amorous and overall abusive behavior carried on throughout intermediary school, and throughout most of high school. I still maintained the semblance of functionality, despite having little to no self-esteem. Fast-forward to Junior Year and

the repercussions of my lifestyle no longer had novelty. Still seeking mental and emotional escape, as well as meaningful relationships, I began conforming and embracing youth drug culture. Dating a drug dealer became my first priority in achieving notoriety, and to succeed in distancing myself from reality.

By the time I turned twenty, I had done every drug that came my way, and I actively sought approval from men by objectifying myself at bars and clubs. I dropped out of high school, a month before graduation. I saw no future for myself and I had a sincere desire to end my life, whether by overdosing or by harming myself violently.

It took an emotional confrontation by my only brother to convince me that I had serious problems. And it took an awful minimum wage job at a local supermarket to convince me that I needed my diploma. Soon thereafter I re-enrolled into the same high school I left, and returned to graduate with my brother (and best friend). This would be my first step in the right direction, and one of the many experiences to have enriched my life, and that have humbled my ego.

Perhaps my Higher Power wanted to reward me, even then, despite my not having been entirely sober and clean of weed and alcohol. Because during the final months of that second Senior Year, I met someone in New York City, who would later prove to be one of the best influences in my life to date. We moved rather quickly, as most homosexuals do, and I moved in with him shortly after

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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and click on the newsletter tab.

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receiving my diploma. I envisioned a fresh start for myself, while not entirely comprehending what would be needed of me to succeed as an adult, per se.

To avoid going in depth about the trials and tribulations of investing in a relationship long term, and without discussing the complicated experience of living with another human being (watch Sex and the City); I'm now going to focus solely on my recovery and Marijuana Anonymous.

I had never attended a meeting regarding recovery or addiction until moving to West Hollywood, California. Not to say that I hadn't seen a therapist or sought therapy, but I never once wanted to address my love for smoking pot.

Initially, and honestly, I came into the rooms hoping to prove to myself and to every human being that I did not have a problem. I didn't believe that reefer is addictive (despite logical reasoning). I didn't want to lose my friends, and the subsequent subculture we belonged to (even though I really had no true friends and the subculture I refer to, was more of a manufactured illusion).

So I walked into the Friday night Marijuana Anonymous meeting titled "What's the Damn Solution" feeling confident that I knew damn well what the solution was; to get everyone to leave me the f**k alone! But the stories I heard I related to. The speaker who shared made me feel less alone. The crowd seemed sincerely proud and enthusiastic. I felt included and welcome. So naturally, ...I cried. Each meeting thereafter ...I cried. And I continue to cry. It's just in my nature.

It took me two tumultuous years to be ready for sobriety. Popping in and out of meetings, taking on

commitments and not following through with them, and even avoiding my sponsor. I always did the bare minimum, and I never really did it for myself. Instead, I tried to do it for others. I certainly had compassion for my fellow addicts, and I believed in the principles and purpose of the 12 Steps. But I just couldn't convince myself that I was capable, or deserving of a sober life.

My Mom died on September 4th 2011 at the age of 52, and despite her battle with liver failure as a result of alcoholism, she had maintained sobriety for the last years of her life. Mostly because, she sincerely did not want to die, and she truly regretted the many decisions that put her in such a painful predicament. And no matter how sick she had been, nothing prepared us for her passing and she died of a complication unrelated to the cirrhosis. Her body had just had enough.

I smoked, a lot. I didn't want to face the reality of her being gone. I spent eight months at home with her as a caregiver and I couldn't deal with the reality then either. And my father has always been emotionally unstable, so now, he just... retreated and disappeared in mourning. The responsibility of calling family and friends became mine. The task of choosing what outfit she'd be cremated in, also became mine. And the travel arrangements for relatives, and planning of the memorial service, I took that on too. I immersed myself in what needed to be done, all while numbing myself to the pain, regret and anguish. I'm not proud of being stoned then, but it seemed to be the only way I knew how to cope, and that's the truth.

I open my eyes now to it, and reflect on the person that I

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was. I am able to do this thanks to Marijuana Anonymous, and thanks to the friendships that have encouraged me in program. The bottling up of my emotions, during my life, and immediately following my mothers' death, put me in a psychiatric hospital. But now, with a clearer mind intent on healing, I am able to focus on what's important. Marijuana Anonymous (along with its members and my Higher Power) keeps me on a path. I don't know what the future will bestow upon me, but I'll be better prepared for whatever comes, thanks to the tools this program offers.

I'll be 90 days sober by the time this story is published in the New Leaf (if it gets published), and I want all the Newcomers to listen to me when I say, don't beat yourself up for relapsing or for not maintaining a perfect program because the two personal commitments that got me my 30, 60, and 90 day chips were my promises to be rigorously honest and to keep coming back!

Malcolm D.

Daily Meditation

Mindfulness practice is the basis for my meditation. When I remain in the present of the moment and as conscious as I can be of what's happening within me and around me, then I can trust in the presence of a power greater than myself that I call God. There is a connection to "This Power" that I strive to improve when I can.

Working to improve this connection is like expanding the space in my mindfulness to sustain a kind of "Gods' Presence", ideally; all throughout the day. Seeing my thoughts and feelings as they arise gives me a chance to effectively let go of them before they become triggering.

This foundation eliminates a lot of my problems. Mindfulness practice in turn has many benefits for me. It allows me to be aware of what's happening at the moment and allows "Higher Power" to help me as I need it.

This path which is ever changing is my focus in recovery. Practice Mindfulness and you lessen your distractions and illusions. You cultivate love, patience, piece of mind, compassion, happiness and understanding of the true nature of things.

By seeing through "Perfect Awareness" I intuitively know what I have to do in the moment. It is kind of a "Spiritual Guide". When I make this connection I experience it working in my life, in tangible ways. My ability to maintain a conscious contact grows stronger and my faith (confidence) in that connection grows stronger. The less doubt I have about a "Conscious Contact with a Higher Power".

This practice is bearing fruit in my recovery and adds joy to my life as I build healthy relationships and spiritually based connections.

Chris M.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

MAWS is conducting an "Effectiveness Survey" to evaluate what the society of MA thinks about MAWS' service to date, to Districts, meetings and members. We hope to collect a society-wide group conscience to give direction to the type of work in which MAWS should be engaged and help evaluate MAWS' current ability and potential to serve MA's needs as conveyed by that MA group conscience.

SHARE YOUR OPINION. This month we would like your, your groups', and/or your Districts' answers to the following questions:

1. Is the amount of Seventh Tradition funds used by MAWS and the Districts for the Conference and other MAWS expenses warranted?

2. (Tradition 5) Does MAWS do anything that conflicts with our carrying the MA message to marijuana addicts who want a way out from their marijuana problem?

For more details, please go to the website forum.marijuana-anonymous.org. To submit your ideas and share your thoughts on these questions email us at mes@marijuana-anonymous.org.

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

Which Spiritual Principle really speaks to you?

(Please submit answers by May 17, 2012)

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

MA ACROSS THE USA

A new meeting has started in Morro Bay, CA

Two new meetings are underway in Detroit, MI

A new meeting started March 5 in Normal, IL

A new meeting has been started in Louisville, KY.

(First meeting in that state!)

A new meeting started Saturday, February 25, in Bloomington, IL

A new meeting has started in Jamaica Plain, MA

Two new meetings, in the same location, started in Ferndale, MI

A new meeting started Jan. 13 in Detroit, MI

Birthdays

Celebrating 91 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that:

a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

District 1

Bill B. 4/9/88 24 yrs

District 5

Herbie 3/10/07 5 yrs

Steve 4/1/11 1 YEAR!

Erik 4/3/06 6 yrs

Reinhard 4/11/09 3 yrs

Tom W. 4/12/91 21 yrs

Charles 4/12/05 7 yrs

District 6

Carol R. 4/20/91 21 yrs

District 8

Brigette R. 3/17/11 1 YEAR!

Erica I. 3/21/10 2 yrs



**KEEP
COMING
BACK!**

New Meetings Start-Up

All The Time.

Check your local
districts website
for updated
information!

or

Get listed on the
MAWS website for
details contact:
office@marijuana-anonymous.org