



## Recovery 101

My first land meeting of MA was at an MA convention. I came because I had been using MA online for four months and felt obligated to show up. So many MA onliners were not able to attend. I was. All I had to do was drive there and an hour later I arrived.

I had no idea if I'd stay for an hour or for all three days. I registered, picked up all the literature, and went to the first event, a "meet and greet," where we picked up anonymous cards with descriptive characteristics of individual attendees. I instantly picked out the person whose card I drew. Who else in the room looked like they had hitchhiked to Woodstock? The woman who

drew my card would later become my sponsor. I had one nice person ask at the end of both day one and day two if I'd be back the next day. Having said yes, I was obligated to return.

I was one of only two attendees at a 7 am marathon meeting the second day. I got "Recovery 101" that day with my one-on-one time with the secretary. I learned about a sobriety date starting with abstinence from everything mind-

altering, including alcohol, and not just my drug of choice. So I went from having four months clean to having one week clean and sober. I was the designated driver on that last night of drinking. I was not supposed to be drinking that night, but I didn't know I was powerless.

At the sobriety countdown the last day, I sat watching people with double digit years of sobriety get up to the podium and give their

sobriety dates. At first, I had no idea I would be part of this event. By the time people with less than one month clean and sober were lining up for their turn, I was tearful and had sweaty palms. My nice, new friend gave me a squeeze of encouragement. I stood up, said my name, identified as a pothead and gave my sobriety date. I said I was

from District 13 (MA Online) and I said "I hope to keep my sobriety date."

My hitchhiking male friend made sure I did not leave without asking if I was planning to start going to land meetings. My one free night of the week landed on a night that he attended a meeting that would work for me, so I agreed to go. I showed up, took the set-up commitment, and cried my way

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## The Caution Chip

I remember celebrating 9 months and feeling pretty proud and someone said "It's yellow; the caution chip." I brushed off what he said. That was a Wednesday.

On a Friday, I went to my ex-boyfriend's house to work off some money that I owed him. He was gone, out of town, and he assured me that he had stashed his "stash." I cleaned the kitchen and the bathroom and was fine. It was weird to be there and not be high, but I wanted to get the debt paid. As I was putting away laundry, I stumbled upon the "Joe Camel tin" that we used to store the pot in. Wow. My brain clicked and went into automatic. I poked holes in an empty soda can and found a lighter. It was like I wasn't in my brain or my body.

When I went to light it up and smoke it, the bud popped off and went into the mop water. I "woke up" and immediately, was like "What the hell?!" I got the hell out of there. It was definitely a "caution" that my addiction was doing those push-ups. I knew exactly what they were talking about. I got it!

I had to stay away from those "slippery" places. The addiction took over for just a few minutes. I'm glad that water was there. I'm happy I did not smoke. I was happy to be able to walk away. I called my sponsor and shared the experience in a meeting and I was okay, but I knew that I could never put myself in that position again. I have 11 years now and I am grateful for that 9 month experience.

- Penny R.

# 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.

**Recovery 101** cont'd from pg. 1 through many shares. I stayed and stayed clean and sober. My hitchhiking friend used to say that he couldn't see himself getting better, but he could see me getting better, so that must mean he's getting better too. He died with six years clean. He always made sure to talk to the newcomers.

Today, I am at my fourth convention, having just celebrated eight years clean and sober two days ago. I've kept the same sobriety date. The woman who was my sponsor is here and I love her. The man, who was nice enough to ask me that first and second day if I'd be back the next, is here at the next table. And I like to think that my hitchhiking friend is at that big meeting in the sky, amongst the stars he loved to gaze upon. He is joined by many others, one especially who I only knew from conventions, but who was a great pen pal and friend over the years. He is dearly missed. His mom was nice enough to send me a letter last year to share the news of his passing. He had eight years clean. He loved the conventions. He would sign his letters, "your pothead."

I'd like to claim that convention attendees have a good track record of keeping clean and sober. Today I saw that secretary from my first one-on-one meeting eight years ago. I know it gives all of us faith in the program and our Higher Power's ability to use the program, meetings, our fellows, the 12 Steps, and conventions, to keep us clean and sober and keep us coming back.

Today, I know my faith in God keeps me clean and sober and he gives me all these ways to help me. Thank you, God. Thank you, MA and thank you to all those who help with the conventions.

- Suzy

## At Home in MA

The thing that still shocks me is that I can have fun and enjoy life without getting stoned all the time.

I viewed myself as a "high" functioning pothead. I was the opposite of the stereotypical pothead who got stoned and sat on the couch all day. I actually sat on the couch and didn't feel like doing anything unless I was stoned. If I needed to clean the garage I got stoned, and it did not feel like work, and was not so boring.

It then became that everything was boring unless I got stoned - washing the car, going to the grocery store, doing laundry, walking the dog, going to a movie, etc.

When I first was dragged into sobriety just over three years ago, at some level I had the view that all the good times were gone. I would never be able to laugh again, listening to the Grateful Dead would

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## Resting on My Laurels

I worked the Steps to the best of my ability. I attended Big Book studies, I worked with a sponsor, and I worked with sponsees. I made my amends, cleaning up the wreckage of my past. I reconciled relationships. I was of service on many levels and had a conscious contact with a H.P. My life was good, actually better than ever. And then it happened... I rested on my laurels.

Many excuses come to mind... but the truth is I had forgotten to be true to myself. I let my guard down. I didn't have good boundaries with people or myself. I let resentment slip in. There were telltale signs that I ignored. Things like yelling at a storeowner who pissed me off, throwing my neighbors dog crap that was in my yard back into his.

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not be enjoyable, etc. It looked like a bleak, drab life awaited me.

Luckily, and surprisingly for me, once I attended my first MA meeting I actually felt at home. There were just a bunch of potheads sitting around telling stories, supporting each other in their sobriety and laughing.

I mean, where else could I go that people discussed scraping out resins, the gross taste of bong water, and all the crazy things they did in order to get high.

I actually enjoyed the MA meetings, not only because I could relate to the stories, but because I enjoyed myself. I believe we in MA may be a more irreverent lot than in other fellowships. This does not make us less desirous of sobriety, it just allows us to laugh and have fun in meetings. As my very wise sponsor has told me, "If we can't have fun in sobriety, what is the point?"

I think it is the case that quite a number of people who are anti-authority tend to smoke pot and later find themselves in MA.

As such, I keep going to meetings for a number of reasons. First, I have heard that the number one reason people give when they "go out" is that they stopped going to meetings. Also, I view it similar to exercise. In that if I exercise for two weeks and start to get in shape, if I then stop I will get back out of shape quickly. I have the same view of meetings. If I go for a while and then stop, I put myself more at risk.

For good or for bad, my brain reacts to pot and I do not have the ability to be a casual smoker. It is all in or all out for me. For now I choose all out - my life works better and my relationships with people actually work.

So now I can listen to The Grateful Dead on the way to a meeting and sing.

- Mike

**Resting on My Laurels** continued from pg. 2

I could see that I was spiraling out of control, but I did nothing to stop it. Until I found myself alone and isolated... having no tolerance for everyone I loved. After 10 years of sobriety this felt remarkably like my first month. Angry, bitter, no direction, lonely, hopeless, and scared – like my first month, when I cried everyday, I know I had to go to any lengths to find relief.

So I did what I did at the beginning and got busy working Steps with another sponsor. Now I had to admit I was powerless over people, places, and things. My life had become unmanageable. Once again I had to come to believe that my H.P. could restore me to sanity. This seems simple for someone 10-11 years sober. But my problem was not a lack of trust in my H.P; my problem was believing that I would let Him.

*I could see  
that I was  
spiraling out of  
control, but I  
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stop it. Until  
I found myself  
alone and  
isolated...*

So comes Step 3 making a decision. As with all decisions it must be followed by action or it's just wishful thinking. Then came the hardest 4th - 7th Step of my life. This work dug into the under layer, the core of my belief system. This required deep levels of forgiveness and new places of acceptance. I had to alter my perspective of the Seventh Step by acknowledging that I had been praying to have my defects of character removed so I'd feel better. I now learned that I needed them to be removed so my H.P. could use me. Step 8 and 9 were thankfully easier this time around, only because I had harmed myself more than others. Making amends to myself seems odd. But for me it is a lifetime commitment to the process of Steps 10 and 11. Always

checking my motives, my behaviors, my "side of the street."

Working closely with a sponsor who gently and continually points me back to my part. Keeping a close and continuous prayer life with my H.P. This relationship comes before all else. Truly knowing that the only peace for me is in praying for his will for me and the power and strength to carry it out... even when I don't want to. Step 12 becomes a natural extension of who I am as I stay the course.

Four years later, I am happy, joyous, and free... sometimes. I live in peace, love, and tolerance of those I love... mostly. This is a work in progress... and I accept that.

-Mary G.

a new leaf

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For a complete listing of all meetings visit [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org)

### Step Five

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

### Tradition Five

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

### ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

**Has service work ever distracted or impeded you from doing your Step work? Please explain.**

(Please submit answers by June 17, 2013)

## Birthdays

Celebrating 323 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 25 yrs.

**District 2**

JC 4/1/11 2 yrs.  
Lucy M. 4/4/06 7 yrs.  
Michael K. 4/9/07 6 yrs.

**District 3**

Cameron P. 3/17/11 2 yrs.

**District 5**

Diana 3/28/95 18 yrs.  
Erik "E Dog" 4/3/06 7 yrs.  
Keith K. 4/7/98 15 yrs.  
Mike C. 3/25/93 20 yrs.  
**Paloma 4/8/12 1yr!**  
Pyro Dave 4/12/09 4 yrs.  
Reinhard 4/11/09 4 yrs.  
Steve 4/1/11 2 yrs.  
Tom W. 4/12/91 22 yrs.

**District 6**

Chuck R. 4/15/04 9 yrs.

**District 7**

Anastasia A. 4/9/11 2 yrs.  
**Gary J. 4/9/12 1 yr!**  
Mark H. 4/8/93 20 yrs.  
**Mark S. 3/11/12 1 yr!**  
Robert B. 3/25/02 11 yrs.

**District 8**

Erica I. 3/21/10 3 yrs.  
Veronica A. 3/29/09 4 yrs.

**District 10**

**Emily H 4/21/12 1 yr!**  
**Francis L. 4/20/12 1 yr!**  
Kel B 3/14/07 6 yrs.

**District 11**

Dave C. 2/22/02 11 yrs.  
Guy E. 2/15/88 25 yrs.  
Harry H. 2/10/87 26 yrs.  
Maria S. 3/15/97 16 yrs.  
Paul G. 2/26/00 13 yrs.  
Rick V. 2/8/03 10 yrs.  
Steve M. 3/1/99 14 yrs.  
Walt G. 2/13/01 12 yrs.

**District 15**

Artie G. 4/19/11 2 yrs.  
**Joe 4/11/12 1 yr!**

**District 18**

Brad. F. 4/8/07 5 yrs.

**KEEP COMING BACK!**

