



# A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

June 2001

Volume 11, Number 6

## Acceptance

Ask most any practicing addict and they will gladly tell you that they have accepted their place in the world. They will for the most part continue by telling you that their place is at the bottom of the heap. That they never get a break, and that the world is against them. On top of that they will give you a detailed list of grievances and the names of

people who's fault each one is. Never will their name be on that list. That is one form of accep-

tance. It is a far cry from the type of acceptance we learn from working the 12 Steps of recovery. The acceptance we need, we must have to maintain our recovery is best described on page 445 of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is the type of acceptance I work toward everyday.

I work toward this acceptance everyday with the help of my Higher Power whom I choose to call God. Evidently he feels I need help with this because lately he has been working me over time. One of the funnier incidents involved my father and my vacation. My fa-

ther is 91 years-old, hard of hearing, has poor memory retention, and doesn't get around much any more. He lives in an assisted living home so I don't have to worry about meals and such but I do help him with his banking, doctor visits and the medications he needs to take. This one week I had planned to take a vacation from work but stay in town. I had the vacation

*When I do accept what happens as just that, my life, my days go much simpler.*

planned out to the day, some time for my self, do some things around my apartment, spend quality time with my girlfriend, my daughter and the grandkids. As the joke goes, Want to Know how to make God laugh? Make a Plan! My vacation didn't go anything like I had planned. On the first day, as he has for the last several months, my Dad went into the hospital ER. I stayed there till he is admitted. I made arrangements for someone, in addition to my self, to check in on him the next day. Things come up and on the second day I only get part of what I wanted done, mainly because of things getting back from Monday. Wednesday

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## Jeff M. Tools of the Trade

### Anonymous

The other day I was sitting in parking lot of a restaurant some members of this program and myself use as a rendezvous spot when we carpool to meetings. As I waited, I watched a flatbed tow truck unload a huge red mechanic's toolbox at the service station next door. What came to mind was the phrase we use "spiritual tools" in working the 12 Steps of Marijuana Anonymous. I also make my living using tools and thought of some interesting similarities between building my tool set to earn money and recovering from my addiction.

I reminded myself that I had to build my work tools slowly, as I could afford and needed them, much as in the learning process

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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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## Acceptance

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comes along and they tell me Dad is going to be released in the morning, cool so I make some plans for the afternoon. As soon as I confirm those plans I am told that Dad will be released, but only after several more hours. OK, I move my plans to later in the afternoon. Unfortunately I didn't anticipate my Dad wanting to go with me to the bank, to the pharmacy and out to dinner after being in the hospital for several days, consequently I had to cancel my afternoon plans. These weren't just ordinary plans either, these were fun, relaxing, highlight of my vacation plans.

Needless to say by the time I dropped Dad off at home after all the running around in peak evening traffic and dinner I was very frustrated. I was sitting at a traffic light, in a hurry because I was running late for a very much needed meeting when I asked God a question. I said, "God, how can I get rid of this frustration. Before I would have smoked a joint, or punched a wall or something stupid like that. What can I do? I need your help." No sooner than I had finished saying that little prayer the light turned green. When I pulled away the truck seemed very sluggish and that is when I heard the flap, flap, flap of a flat tire. Oh I was pissed. I pulled over and kicked that tire as hard as I could. I did everything except cuss out God. It

wasn't until I was starting to work up a sweat, about half way through changing the tire, that I realized what had happened. God had answered my pray, he gave me something to work out my frustrations on.

It doesn't mean you have to like what God gives you, you just have to accept it. And that is what I am learning, acceptance. When I do accept what happens as just that, my life, my days go much simpler. I am not so stressed about everything. Unfortunately I have to learn that everyday. Some days I don't have a problem, not good things happen and I take them in stride then on other days, oh man it is not good. But I do realize that it is just that moment, not the rest of the day, or my entire life that isn't good. When I stop and think about what is happening, when I stop and thank God for me being alive and sober, and thereby being able to do what is in front of me, my day goes that much better. Then I am learning, some times slowly, sometimes quickly how to be more accepting in my life everyday, every hour.



## Tools of the Trade

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of recovery. I did not just one day have everything I needed to do my job nor did the fact that I merely just stopped using enable me to live without the crutch of being stoned. I started my trade with no experience and no tools, much as I walked into my first MA meeting. I was convinced that I was without power of my own to quit using and that my life was unmanageable. I had no experience with life on its own terms and no tools to do so. In the beginning, I had to rely on others with the experience and the tools to get started in both cases. In my first days of this new trade I had to do a lot of listening and learned the most basic tasks. At my first meetings I just listened to what the people there had to say, I identified immediately and after my second meeting I smoked my last joint, the first thing that must be done in recovery. The principle of “one day at a time” was explained and it was suggested that I attend as many meetings as possible. As new experiences, both were scary and with both I was assured I did not have to do it alone. At the job I had a co-worker watching me closely, teaching me and correcting my mistakes as I made them. At my first meeting another member had “taken me under his wing” as my temporary sponsor. We attended meetings together, talked every day and he shared his experience of recovery with me. At work I used my supervisor’s tools and he showed me the correct way to operate

them by showing me first and then placing them in my hands. My sponsor explained how a “power greater than myself” would be used to lose the compulsion to use and then, in turn make my life manageable. I learned at work what the basic tools I would need were.

In program I learned about My Will versus God’s Will and what a basic concept of the new way I need to live this was. I bought those first tools and became a bit less reliant on another person. I did a Second and Third Step and became aware that something other than my own willpower would help me. As time passed and I got more clean days, I started to gain confidence in the team effort of me and my “Higher Power” staying away from using and using situations. As I completed simple jobs at work, I became a little more competent and I began to obtain the basic tools all the while watching the tools others used for the more complex jobs. I continued attending meetings and listening for “solution” to how other members stayed sober thought difficult feelings and situations. As I continued working the rest of the Steps, I began to see what in me needed the work, and then how to use spiritual tools and do the foot work to change the defects of character that caused me so much pain in the past. The simpler jobs at work, and overcoming the daily emotions that brought about urge to use had become a lot less

difficult. The work and the emotions did not stop there though. As I needed to “work up the employment ladder” I also needed to learn to stay sober through my difficult situations and emotions. While it is possible, to lay an entire slab for a patio mixing the concrete in a wheel barrow or to change a car’s flat tire with a crescent wrench, it is difficult, slow, and possibly dangerous. By not even looking for a better way to complete the task, no experience is gained and no growth has taken place. It will just as difficult the next time. The program has tools in comparison to power cement mixer or an air powered impact wrench, but I have to be willing to look for such things. I have to be willing to look honestly at my part and place my focus there. I have to be willing to walk through my fears, or turn over the present situation to my Higher Power and let him, her or it be responsible. I have to be willing to do the work that I believe is God’s Will for me and stay out of the result. I have to be willing to work, and then live all of the Steps of this program. In my employment, I also have to be willing to keep obtaining the tools and learning new techniques to make my jobs more efficient, more fulfilling and in turn more profitable. Often, I have to borrow tools, both spiritual and work related, sometimes more than once, to be convinced they will work for me. Once in while they don’t, but when they do I obtain that tool and add it

# Tools of the Trade

*concluded*

to my toolbox. I am willing to lend these tools and help others use them. Unlike a work related tool, a spiritual tool is always returned, sometimes with better features. Both toolboxes grow in size as a take on bigger challenges in all areas of my life. It is possible that someday my work toolbox will fill to capacity and may require a tow truck to move it from place to place. But my internal spiritual toolbox, with it's infinite capacity for my growth, seems to lighten the load as it expands.

## In case you missed it...

As we're sure you're aware, *A NEW LEAF* is always looking for articles and stories from not only our readers but all persons working their program of recovery from marijuana. We'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that there's no need to commit to telling your life story; anything you feel worthwhile to share in a meeting is worth submitting.

Along those lines, in an effort to encourage submissions on a continuing basis, and in keeping with a specific meeting format used in various areas, we would like to suggest a topic for future articles on a regular basis. We'll start with this issue, and will make a new suggestion every three months.

So...let's kick off with a topic that probably every addict has had to face at one time or another...**ACCEPTANCE.**

We're looking forward to putting forth your thoughts! Thanks for your support!

# MA WORLDWIDE

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Bob	6/3/97	4 Years
Chris McK.	6/10/00	1 Year!

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Doug K.	6/10/88	13 Years
Jerry P.	6/27/93	8 Years
Ron A.	6/15/95	6 Years

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Dean W.	6/29/92	9 Years
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Cindy	6/20/94	7 Years
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Nick M.	5/16/96	5 Years
Allan B.	5/1/97	4 Years
Tommy J.	5/1/98	3 Years
Barry R.	5/1/99	2 Years
Steve P.	5/10/00	1 Year!
Alex	5/27/00	1 Year!

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Bobby P.	4/30/00	1 Year!

### Idaho

Stephanie T.	6/7/00	1 Year!
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