



A NEW LEAF

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Searching For The Path Out Of The Forrest

by Loren N., District 6

When I first came into the program, one of the fallacies I entertained was that once I simply stopped using, everything would automatically be perfect and all my problems would be solved. I soon came to the realization that my issues went well beyond my pot use, and that I had a difficult path ahead.

When I expressed my frustration at meetings about this seemingly never ending process we call recovery, I often heard an old timer or two say, "Look how long it took you to get into the forrest, you can only imagine how long it will take you to get out". This forrest metaphor helped me learn the spiritual principle of patience, and to accept that I am right where I am supposed to be at any given moment.

I also learned that the path I used to get into the forrest is not the same one I needed to take to get out. In fact, on the way into the forrest, I wasn't even aware of the path that I was on, or for that matter, that I was even on a path. However, looking back it was clear. My path into the forrest was riddled with dishonesty, greed, hatred, jealousy, fear, ignorance, selfishness, and a whole slew of other character defects that I practiced at various times in my life. It was evident that I could not take this path back out of the forrest.

The path I needed to take out was narrower and steeper than the path into the forrest. This was a spiritual path. The path of faith, hope, willingness, honesty, kindness, love, compassion, humility, and selflessness. At first this path looked impossible, and I was not


sure if I wanted to take it. I was afraid of where it would lead, and who I would be once I reached my destination. Seeing that others had successfully taken this path before me

"..... the path I used to get into the forrest is not the same one I needed to take to get out."

gave me courage to start on my journey out of the forrest.

Today I still travel this spiritual path, only I am no longer concerned about my destination and how long it will take to get there. Instead, I embrace the unknown with faith in God, and I enjoy the journey not

worrying about what lies ahead of me. What I do know is that this steep and narrow path gets easier to travel the more I trust in God, and am willing to let go of my character defects and the things in my life that keep me from spirituality.

I have no regrets about choosing this path. In fact I recommend it enthusiastically. My only suggestions, if you choose this path, are to follow the map (the 12 Steps), and to get a guide who has travelled the path before (a sponsor). Remember this path is simple but it isn't easy. So have faith that you are on the right path and enjoy the journey, and we will surely meet as we trudge this road of happy destiny. God be with us all. 

MA World Service Conference "Welcome" Letter


On behalf of District Six, I am privileged to welcome all the MA Conference Trustees, Delegates, and attendees. District Six is proud to host the 1995 Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conference.

Preparations for this event began in July of 1994. At that time, this district committed itself to cover all the operating costs for the Conference. Together with the members of other districts, we attained our fund-raising goals. We had garage sales, a bike-athon, a holiday party, tournaments, auctions, softball games, tee-shirts, and more. Many thanks to all our members who gave so generously of their time

and resources. You are all miracles!

The collective efforts to organize all of the aspects of the Conference were invaluable, and cannot go unrecognized. From the location committee to the food committee, everyone worked together to make this conference a success. Our collective efforts will continue throughout the days of the Conference.

As the years go by, it has been exciting to witness the unity among all the districts of MA growing with each new conference and convention. Keep looking forward, and keep coming back!

Yours in Service, Tomaso G. 



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.

Editors
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District 1 Bureau Chief: **Joanne A.**
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Published by
A New Leaf Editorial Board

Patricia G., chairman
Loren N., treasurer
George B.

Send all articles, inquiries and
 correspondence to:

A NEW LEAF
 P.O. Box 4314
 North Hollywood, CA 91607

NEW Fax No.
 (818) 990-2980

Editorial Phone Nos.
 (818) 708-0717
 (818) 505-1408

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A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

What is the importance of UNITY to the Fellowship of MA?

Thanks to the party goers at the May 20th Dist.6 Conference Fund Raiser

Mike C., 2 Yrs. 1 Mo.

Unity is essential to the MA society. Without unity there would be no fellowship, really no MA at all. Without the unity, MA would be several small uncertain groups possibly working toward the same purpose but without the momentum and power that unity provides.

Patricia G., 4 Yrs. 10 Mos.

People need each other to thrive. MA is founded on unity, so that together we can survive. Thank God for MA unity

Captain Kurt, 2 Yrs. 9 Mos.

The oneness of the Fellowship is important to all of us. Without the group, all of us would still be out there alone. I have found a home in MA where I feel a part of. I am able to relate to others and feel that others can relate to me.

Sandy L., 11 Mos.

If there was no single-mindedness of purpose within our Fellowship, our direction would be unfocused. The first Tradition tells us our recovery depends upon MA unity. Even though every one of us is individually unique, we must be aware of the fact that we are each only a small part of the big picture within our group structure. If anarchy were to prevail then our purpose would no longer be directed toward recovery. Individuality has to come second to our combined welfare, or we begin to put certain members above our single purpose. Without this most important concept, all of our other traditions would be nearly impossible to uphold and MA membership would slowly disintegrate.

Greg, 6 Mos.

Unity is important because it makes a bond of common cause and common interest. It sets standards for comparisons of direction and purpose. Unity gives a source of identity and strength.

Lance D., 9 Mos.

The Common Bond. We share the same dilemma and it bonds us together. Our stories, our emotions and our feelings are basically the same. When I listen or speak at a meeting, I feel comfortable opening myself up. The old me used to stuff those emotions. Not today. Today I consider the Fellowship to be my family. The common bond we share allows me to feel closer to some in the Fellowship than to some members of my natal family.

Kathy C., 8 Yrs. 7 Mos.

Without MA unity, there is no fellowship; without fellowship there is no MA. Our Higher Power is in charge and oversees the entire program, but unity is the thread, here on earth, that keeps us all headed in the same recovery-minded direction.

Jack D., 9 Mos.

One addict helping another. Sharing our common goal to stay clean, sharing our past history with each other so we can get well.

Tina K., 5 Yrs.

When I'm feeling wacky, it's usually because I've separated myself from people in the Program, and I'm not spending enough time sharing with my sponsor, spending time with my female friends in the Program, or opening up to those who are close to me. It's real easy for me to forget where I came from. Through unity, I'm reminded of what it was like, what happened, and I'm now given the opportunity to share my recovery with others.

George B., 7 Yrs. 3 Mos.

Without unity there is no Marijuana Anonymous. The Traditions refer to unity. It's important that none of us put ourselves above the fellowship as a whole. If I'm always thinking of myself above MA, then I'm putting my personal beliefs and character defects in place of what is best for Marijuana Anonymous. That's why God's will comes through in our group conscience.

The Roving Reporter

Life Started Changing 90 Days Ago

by David, Dist.6

On Saturday, February 4, 1995, I called the MA Help Line because I knew I was at the end of my 28 years of drug abuse. Earlier in the day I had told my wife a ridiculous lie about why my friend and drug supplier had to begin serving a jail sentence. The reason for the lie was that I just couldn't speak the words, "He is going to jail because of drugs". He was busted big time, yet to me he was a good guy who sought popularity by giving great deals on high quality drugs. I knew when I was telling my wife that far-fetched tale she didn't believe me. It showed all over her face, and the disappointed look she expressed only made me feel worse.

Sunday, the following morning, I called her at her sister's home to tell her the truth. I was sobbing uncontrollably not only at my guilt but because I was now in day three of drug withdrawal. I told her how sorry I was about the lie and also that I had called Marijuana Anonymous and spoken to a phone volunteer. I would be attending a newcomers meeting on Monday evening.

Those first few days of withdrawal I felt like a naked man standing alone in a barren land. My body was trembling uncontrollably and I was in a pit of depression. I knew why I was going through this though, because way back in 1967 I had embraced and surrendered myself completely to the drug culture as a way of being in touch with my inner self. I had never been happy with who I was and this new lifestyle seemed so exciting to me. I used many of the psychedelic drugs of that time, but as soon as I combined meth crystal or diet pills with marijuana I was hooked beyond my control. This combined use of drugs continued through three states and many cities for the next 28 years.

I've always known, in spite of being drug saturated, that sooner or later everything comes to an end. So on February 2nd I knew I must face the most difficult challenge of my life: I


must learn to live without drugs. But how could I possibly do that? Drugs have been the closest friends I have on this earth. I didn't think life was worth living if I couldn't get high and wired.

I want to say that without MA I would be lost forever. My being would have either drifted off to some unknown place or I would have continued being a slave to my addiction until, like my friend, I too was incarcerated. I believe that I would have then been truly lost because jails and prisons are a living hell.

As of this writing I feel OK, not great, but OK. I attend about five MA meetings a week. I often pray and recite the first part of the serenity prayer during periods of stress and bewilderment.

Although I've had good paying jobs during my years as a drug addict, at age 53 I'm flat broke. I have no job, no job prospects, and my unemployment benefits have expired. But I feel like I have a lot to be thankful for. I have a non-drug using wife who loves me very much. Fortunately, she has a good job with good medical benefits. Everyday

she cooks me excellent meals. I live in a comfy little apartment that is well furnished. I have plenty of good clothes to wear and a '91 T-Bird which gets me to MA meetings and other places. Furthermore, I've become a member of a family of people who know exactly what my withdrawal misery is like. Finally, along with my good health, that I'm grateful for, I can go through drug recovery and discover a new way of life on my own terms; that is, I'm not being forced to do this by any outside authority.

Before I finish, I want to take a moment to say something about spirituality. I've been an atheist, not an agnostic, for all my life. I am just now beginning to feel the power of our Creator and the power of spirituality. It is a slow process, but I'm beginning it. I feel it working in me. I know it can't be rushed, but if I put forth a little bit of effort each day I hope someday I'll be able to feel the full power of it all. I know some of it will come from being of service to MA and more will come from the camaraderie of fellow travelers on the road of recovery from drug addiction. 

Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Mark-yver	May 02	3 Years		
Mike S.	May 02	1 Year!	Mikki K.	June 15 4 Years
Abdol	May 18	10 Years	Molly	June 16 2 Years
Patti"cakes"	May 20	1 Year!	Barbara H.	June 16 3 Years
Sandy	May 29	1 Year!	Al & Aleta	June 20 1 Year!
Sean P.	June 01	4 Years	Cindy	June 20 1 Year!
Brian W.	June 02	5 Years	Chris K.	June 22 2 Years
Jim G.	June 13	1 Year!	Carol Mc	June 23 7 Years
Amber B.	June 15	3 Years	Dean W.	June 29 3 Years

The Greatest Gift Of All

by Anonymous, Dist.2

I am a recovering marijuana addict and alcoholic. The first time I was drunk was at age five, when an uncle gave me vodka instead of water. The first time I smoked, I was 10 or 11 years old. I don't really remember getting high, but I do remember that from that point on, all I did, I did stoned. I have done every drug I know of except heroin.

I was the type of addict who could smoke a lot and still "function". I received a masters degree in anthropology with a high grade point average on a full scholarship, and I was stoned all the way. I took great pride in winning contests where 25 to 30 joints later I would have smoked people under the table. This was a great achievement to me. I smoked 27 or 28 years of my life, every day, all day, morning to nite. I didn't go anywhere without pot, and I don't remember much. I don't even remember being devirginized.

The alcoholism really kicked in about ten years ago. It made my disease escalate. Whenever I drank, I wanted to smoke, and visa versa. I never hit a non-functioning bottom. I got into recovery because I was in an abusive relationship and I thought maybe it had to do with my use of marijuana and alcohol.

I never admitted to anyone that I was an addict, yet daily I tried to not use. The voice in my head said that I was an addict and alcoholic and that I was killing myself. And I didn't care. I was experiencing blackouts and my using had increased. I could feel how my brain and my body were being affected. On some level I didn't care, and on another, it really bothered me a lot. I knew that I was killing myself. My whole life centered around getting high and then making sure that I held it together so that nobody knew how high I was. It was an awful life. It was so painful. I did not enjoy it.

I started going to CODA (Co-Dependents Anonymous) meetings, and one night I was sitting in an empty

room waiting for a meeting to start, but no one showed. I saw all these people going into another room. I figured any 12 Step meeting would do, so I went in.

The question for me is not, "Does God exist?" I know God exists. I believe my Higher Power led me to that first MA meeting. I was being cared for and directed to the right place. If you want to stop, but you can't, keep coming back. This program and the people in it work miracles. Today I experience my life as better than it has ever been. With almost one year of sobriety, I just feel so great. I am recovering from a fatal disease - that was killing me. I now have my energy and my life back. And I am not afraid anymore. I feel, and that is the greatest gift of all. Good luck and love to you all... and thanks. 🙏

Thought For The Month

"The foolish and the dead never change their opinions."

James Russell Lowell

BULLETIN BOARD

ALL NEW LEAF READERS - Please note we have a new FAX number - (818) 990-2980. (And while you're at it, why not fax us an article?)

NORTHERN CALIF. - Campout! June 9th thru 11th at Big Basin in Santa Cruz. Call Thomas at (510) 234-9232 for more information.

DISTRICT 5 - 4th of July Pool Party at Mike LB's house! The entire family is welcome. Hot dogs will be provided. Bring something else to share. Call Mike LB at (714) 547-3693 for more information.

SOUTHERN CALIF. - Campout! July 20th thru 23rd at Marion Mountain Campground in Idyllwild. Bring your own firewood and all supplies. \$7 per car, per night. Reservations are recommended. Call (800) 444-7275.

SOUTHERN CALIF. - Campout! Sept. 15th thru 17th at Palomar Mountain near the observatory in San Diego county. \$10 per person for both nites. Kids under 12 free. Reservations **MUST** be paid by June 15th! Call Mike LB at (714) 547-3693 for more information.

MA WORLDWIDE...

DISTRICT 1 - SAN FRANCISCO
P.O.Box 194252
San Francisco, CA 94119
(415) 522-7373

DISTRICT 2 - EAST BAY
P.O.Box 8354
Berkeley, CA 94707
(510) 287-8873

DISTRICT 3 - SOUTH BAY
P.O.Box 111341
Campbell, CA 95011
(408) 450-0796

DISTRICT 4 - SEATTLE
P.O.Box 45646
Seattle, WA 98145-0646
(206) 458-9034

DISTRICT 5 - ORANGE COUNTY
358 S. Main #215
Orange, CA 92668
(714) 999-9409

DISTRICT 6 - L.A. (NORTH)
P.O.Box 2433
Van Nuys, CA 91404
(818) 759-9194

DISTRICT 7 - L.A. (SOUTH)
P.O.Box 3012
Culver City, CA 90231
(213) 964-2370

DISTRICT 8 - NEW YORK
(no address at this time)
(212) 459-4423

DISTRICT 9 - SANTA CRUZ
P.O.Box 1481
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
(408) 427-4088

NEW ZEALAND
(no info at this time)

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE, P.O.Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
(800) 766-6779