

# A NEW LEAF

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## Have I Learned? by Richard A.

It's been a year now since I moved from district three to the Central Valley of California. Unfortunately, Marijuana Anonymous is not yet established out here. I started to think what would I do without the constant support of my MA meetings and friends?

Then I was reminded from one of my best friends what MA had told me from the beginning. The twelve steps are a program that TEACHES me how to LIVE life clean and sober. Now it was time to see if I had done my homework and learned what I had been taught.

I am coming up on ten years clean and sober and here I am for the first time in my clean life away from my MA meetings. I was amazed how easy it was for me to fall right into the principles that I had been taught. For nine and a half years I have practiced these principles, and I am finding it is true that the more you practice something, the more it becomes second nature. This does not mean that I sit back and let complacency take over. It means that I stay with my program through constant contact with God, "Life with Hope" and joining another twelve step program. It

means I continue to carry the message and to work these principles in all my affairs (step twelve)

Three of the most important things I have learned in the program were steps two, three and eleven. My belief and constant connection with my higher power. Like I've heard a million times, "If I could have done it myself, I wouldn't be here at these meetings". I never forget that my higher power is opening doors for me everyday and that I cannot do this thing called life by myself. Turning it over is probably the most difficult thing an addict can do, but I have found it easier and easier the more I practice.

I used to look at each day in a negative way, but now I see each day as a time to grow and learn more about life and myself. If problems arise, I now see that God has a lesson for me to learn. When I look at challenges this way, they are so much easier to deal with. Instead of fighting the day, I accept the situation and deal with it through the help of my higher power. I say the serenity prayer and take on the challenge. For if I don't, tomorrow the challenge will still be there

growing even bigger not smaller. I was taught through the program not to wait, but to take care of situations immediately (step ten). I am so grateful to Marijuana Anonymous for teaching me this principle. It is so much easier to sleep with a clean plate, than to have a difficult situation running through my mind all night.

Every morning I start my day by praying to my higher power for his will to be done (step eleven). I pray for nothing more, for if I pray for anything else, I am just praying for my will and not for God's. At the end of each day I thank God again for another great and wonderful day. For as difficult as a day may be, if I remained clean and sober, it truly is still a miracle.

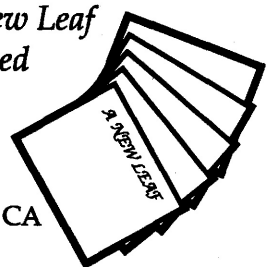
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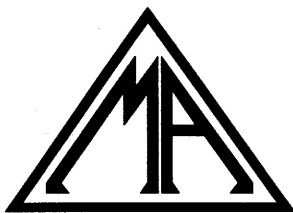
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## A NEW LEAF

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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 & 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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## Have I Learned? continued

Everyday, I have a choice to use, and because my higher power has blessed me for the last nine and a half years, today I have again made the choice not to use. This step, step one has always been the most important to me for this is where it all started. To realize that I had a problem, started me and has kept me on the path to recovery.

I knew soon after I had moved that I needed to find another twelve-step program to be involved with. Sure enough, within a few months, god put another addict in my life. Through her I found AA meetings in my area funny how God works through others, but he always does.

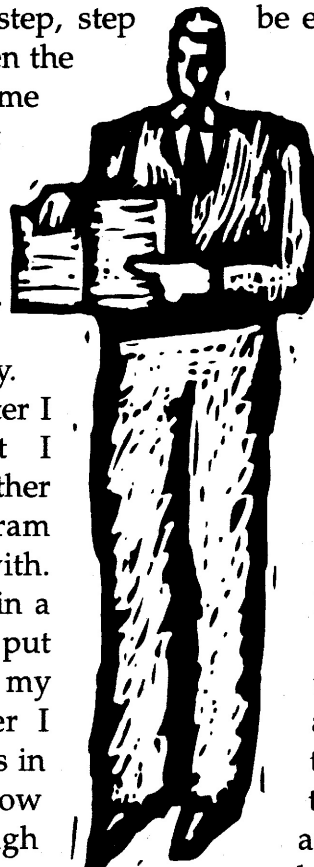
As each day passes I am grateful and thankful for the unselfish love and teaching that each member of Marijuana Anonymous gives to other addicts. I see the steps working

in my life everyday and it is no longer a mystery to me how it works. My higher power is responsible. That each day is a miracle in my life whether it be easy or difficult, because

it is God's day. If I just get out of the way and let God do his work, things go so smooth. I know I am making this sound so simple, but it is. Like we have all been taught "This program is not easy, but it is simple". I find that if I don't complicate things they take care of themselves with God's help.

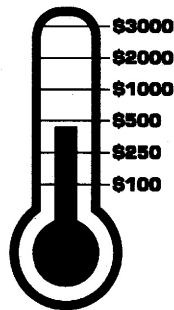
I look forward to the day MA is out in my area, but in the meantime, I will stay in touch through "A New Leaf" and I will keep doing what I have been taught.

As Rocky from Santa Monica once said in a speaker meeting at the world convention, "It's not who's right, but who's left". I am grateful to Marijuana Anonymous, through their teachings, that I am still left.



### YOUR PENNY JARS ARE ADDING UP!

Thanks to you, our Pennies from Heaven drive is closer towards reaching our goal of \$3000 to help with early expenses for Convention 2000 in Santa Clara this January. To donate your penny jar contact your local delegate or Kevin G. convention chairperson at (408) 249-9865.



## We Agnostics (part n) by Yuichi H.

Many recovering addicts/ alcoholics have trouble with steps 2 and 3 as well as with the concept of a Higher Power (or God).

Here's the deal: In my experience and observation, what's required for sobriety is not God, God-consciousness, a Higher Power nor anything relating to some ethereal or "divine" concept of "something greater." What's required is a spiritual way of life.

Many of us in this culture are trained to equate "spirituality" with an intertwining of God (or H.P) within one's life, but that is simply not true. If it were, all Buddhists, for example, would not be "spiritual," for Buddhism in its essence is atheistic. Same with a few other Eastern religions.

So if "God-consciousness" is not the core of spirituality, then what is? I think this is a question that must be seriously asked by all people in recovery and answered within oneself.

In my own experience, "getting out of self," as we so often say and hear in meetings, is the essence of spirituality. A fancier, more impressive word for the same phenomenon is "selflessness." The attainment of a state of selflessness (which is the opposite of selfishness), in my mind, is the goal and essence of all spiritual paths.

Some choose to believe in a God or Higher Power in the hopes that an adoption of such a belief-system will bring them to a place of selflessness. Others choose to believe in a set of values that they believe will lead them to the same place. What's important is not that the methods/paths are different, but that they all lead to the same place, that is to a diminishment of one's ego.

So newcomers, if you find that you just can't believe in a Higher Power, be easy on yourself. Remember that you are part of a culture that equates spirituality with an acceptance

of a God or a Higher Power, and that there are other cultures where spirituality and God (or H.P) have nothing to do with one another. Despite the fact that certain religions work for some, you wouldn't expect it to work for everyone. So why should you expect a God-minded path to apply necessarily to everyone, including yourself?

There are many for whom "a power greater than themselves" is simply the group conscience of a meeting, the calm and beauty of nature, or a set of principles that seem to make some sense of life and all its complexities. More importantly, these and other "solutions" work!

Though I've clothed this article as an admonition to the newcomer, my greater hope was to incite some kind of reaction in you, the reader, toward questioning your own beliefs about spirituality.

★  
 ★ **Congratulations to Our Members** ★  
 ★ **Celebrating their Sober Birthdays!** ★



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Malaika	2/3/98	1 year!
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Clif	5/5/97	2 years
Meredith H.	4/23/97	2 years
Cat	4/13/96	3 years
Suki	6/9/95	4 years
Edward	4/6/90	9 years
Steve W.	6/9/87	12 years
Kathy H.	6/14/95	4 years

### District 5

Tonia	6/1/96	3 years
Brian W.	6/2/90	9 years
Cinde B.	6/4/94	5 years
Jim G.	6/13/94	5 years
Amber B.	6/15/92	7 years
Barbara H.	6/16/92	7 years
Al	6/20/94	5 years
Aleta	6/20/94	5 years
Cindy	6/20/94	5 years
Dean W.	6/29/92	7 years

### District 8

Libby G.	6/6 /90	9 years
Krannie	5/2/97	2 years

### District 11

Craig S.	5/15/87	12 years
Wade Y	5/16/97	2 years
Rick S.	5/17/93	6 years
Emily A.	6/4/90	9 years
Martin M.	6/15/97	2 years
Rychen	6/28/94	5 years

## The Roving Reporter

How often do you meet with your sponsor and what do you talk about?

Tammy C. Dist. 5 ; 3 years

I meet with my sponsor once a week. We usually go to a meeting together. Sometimes we just hang out and talk about life stuff. It is wonderful having someone in your life that you can tell everything to and they understand. We laugh, we cry, we vent, we pray and we work the steps. My sponsor is a gift from God. She has taught me to believe in myself, and above all she has taught me how to trust.

Mary K. Dist. 1; 4 1/2 years

I meet with my sponsor weekly or at least try to. My sponsor is having me check in with a 10th step nightly right now and bringing me back to basics with gratitude lists daily. I love my sponsor. I thought for a while that a sponsor had to be perfect and when I started seeing her defects, I wanted to get a new, "Wonder Woman" sponsor.

My sponsor has shown me support by showing up for me and being there when I need her to laugh or cry with, we even go to concerts together. I knew she was a keeper when she took a cab to a midnight meeting to hear me speak. She is really there for me.

Adam G. Dist. 5; 3 years

Once every 6 months. We talk about why I don't talk to him more often.

Why are the Twelve Traditions important?

Aiesha R. Dist. 6; 14 months

The traditions are important because they provide MA with guidelines to keep the flow of our meetings harmonious and free from unintended static due to misappropriation of the MA principles.

What is your favorite tradition?

Bonnie, Dist. 6, 51/2 years

It's not one of the 12 traditions, but my favorite tradition is the circle at the end of a meeting when everyone links up and recites a prayer together. It rejuvenates my inner sense of peace.



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