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# A NEW LEAF

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## That Little Voice

by Jesse

If the weed didn't kill me, not telling my therapist I'd relapsed would. It had been three months and I was back up to using every day again. I'm not sure how it happened (*lie*) but it did, and I knew I had to come clean with him.

We had an arrangement (his idea, not mine) and I'd agreed to it (*lie*). At the beginning of each session, twice a week, Rob would ask me if I'd had any alcohol or used any drugs since the last time we'd met. And I would answer him honestly (*yeah, right*).

Well, this worked ok for a while because I DIDN'T have any pot and I was pretty much off the pills too (*uh huh*) so when Rob asked the question, "Have you blah, blah, blah..." I would shake my head and say "Nope." (*lie*)

Then I started screwing up. I slept through an appointment. I cancelled another and said I had a headache (*stoned*). I couldn't pay attention when we talked.

And from time to time Rob would say how proud he was of me (*Don't say that!*) for staying clean (*I'm not clean!*) because he knew how hard it was for me (*please pay attention!*) and to keep up the good work (*thud*).

I really, really, really, really worried about this because even though lying is common for us addicts, lying to Rob didn't feel right (*guilty*). So I did what we do and smoked more and more pot to feel better (*worse*) but you know what? I felt worse (*told you*).

Because I'd had several relapses over the years, Rob had told me if I had another I'd have to start attending meetings again (*never should have stopped*) and go to intensive outpatient treatment, maybe inpatient, and if I did it again, he'd probably have to seriously consider not seeing me in therapy anymore.

But since three months had passed, I was hesitant (*scared*) to tell him I'd been smoking dope all this time because I'd prided myself (*lie*) on being truthful with him all along (*lie*). I could have just stopped smoking (*lie*) and never tell him about the slip (*full-on relapse*) but my conscience wouldn't let me. I knew I had to tell him.

But the thing was, I knew if I did, then I'd *really* have to stop and wasn't sure if I was ready (*sure you know*). I'd become comfortable sitting on the recliner every night after supper and rolling a joint (*two*) then lighting it up as I turned on the computer. And I'd spend (*waste*) hours just cruisin' around the net, looking up fascinating (*useless*) stuff and joining all these interesting (*boring*) lists so I'd get hundreds of emails (*spam*) every day.

I even Googled Marijuana and discovered I could order cannabis seeds from Holland! I found out I could buy all kinds of cool (*tacky*) stuff with a marijuana leaf on it if only I had a credit card (*ruined my credit a few years ago*).

I liked the way the apartment smelled (*reeked*) again -- it reminded me of how our house (*lost it*) smelled twenty-five years ago (*how long?!?*) when we were married (*got divorced*) and smoked constantly.

I liked the way it felt when I inhaled (*cancer*) and let the smoke unfurl in a cloud (*cough, cough*). And again (*sore throat*). And again (*bad breath*).

I liked kicking back with a couple of beers and a pizza at midnight (*munchies*) and who cares if I've gained a little weight (*22.4 lbs.*) since I started smoking again. I'll work it off when I start my walking regimen tomorrow (*you've got to be kidding*).

And my writing? I never write better than when I'm stoned. Maybe I missed a few deadlines, but my work was deep, man, really deep and inspired and heavy. Really heavy. (*crapola*)

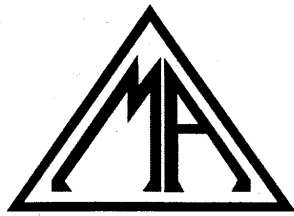
Back to the purpose of this little (*huge*) confession. Despite all the good (*bad*) stuff mentioned above, I knew I had to tell Rob or I would crack up. Did I say I really, really, really didn't want to do that?

I went in his office on Thursday afternoon and said, "Rob, I've gotta tell you something. I've been smoking pot."

You know that look of disappointment in the eyes of someone you respect a whole lot? I saw it in Rob's eyes. I think I would rather he had gotten angry with me and yelled. Or punish me somehow. He thought about it and I just sat there feeling about an inch tall and it's funny (*not that funny*) because the last thing I wanted was to get high. I was really nervous about what he was going to say or do.

Guess what? He praised me. He said he was proud of me for telling him. He said he wished I'd told him sooner, but he was glad I did it now and he knew it must have taken a lot of guts to admit it when I didn't *have* to. I said "Yeah, but I *do* have to or I can't live with myself anymore, and I couldn't continue letting you treat me because I respect you too much. I can't lie to you."

Rob appreciated my honesty (*for real this time*) and asked me to throw away what I had left (*I didn't*) and he hoped there's not a next time, but if there is, to tell him right away. I will. (*I will*)



## 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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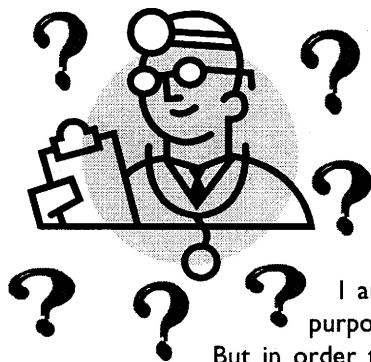
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We send approximately 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states



## Dr. Know, M.D. (The Marijuana Doctor)

Welcome M.A. members, my name is Dr. Know, M.D. I am your professional marijuana recovery physician dedicated to clean living and a healthy mind. Like you, I am also a marijuana addict in recovery. My primary purpose is to educate the marijuana addict who still suffers.

But in order to do this, I need your help to learn as much about addiction as possible. Over the next few months, I will be asking some tough questions seeking honest answers in the pursuit of delving into the core of our problem. With a healthy discussion, we can unite to eliminate the parasites of our disease and lead a fulfilling, joyous life.

For next month, I'd like to Know your response on something that's causing a stir among the MA community: Sobriety, Drinking, Booze, Mind altering chemicals. What does it mean to be clean and sober? Can we take a chip if we're still having the occasional beer? Different meetings, different districts, what do you think? Dr. Know needs to know.

### Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character

This piece is not meant to be confusing to the newcomer. That being said, the best of intentions often lead one down the wrong path. I will endeavor to be brief and to shed light on my strength and hope for your recovery by relating my own thoughts and experience.

On looking at the sixth step I see that I did not even begin to feel it until I got to step 8. I worked the sixth step initially in my head as an intellectualization. Perhaps this is a bow it can work, and a how "not to do it" at the same time. If you can get humility by grasping at your human core and weaknesses and truly beg God to fully heal you, you are getting at what I feel now. But what I am saying is that I did not get to that point till I thought through step 6 and seven and started working on step 8.

Let me back up. When I first approached the twelve steps in the mid 80s, I thought step six would be like standing on a pedestal in a dark empty room - assuming my position on the pedestal would be the same as my "humbly asking." Then a beam of white light would strike me and I would have step seven. It was an image placed in my head somewhere along the line.

Then I thought, not only is that ridiculous even as just a concept, it sounds like too much work. I thought -my next mistake- that I could think my way through this step. Of the many times I tried to get sober through the 80s and 90s, I looked at this as mostly a thinking step, maybe a bit of prayer went into it too, but not much.

I had to get practical.

Now I see, having again surveyed the real damage I did in my addiction to marijuana, that this step is a matter of realizing at the feeling level, a matter of the heart. I have to be willing to give up behavior that is unacceptable to me and to society - this has often been behavior that has set me at odds with that society. It is this wrong behavior, and its consequences that put me in the psych hospital. I could not rationalize what I had done, and what I was in the process of doing - so I sought help and found MA through the net.

So, I guess this path lead to the conclusion that I have been working step six since I put down the pot and picked up some books - but that I did not really want to give up the non-pot behaviors until I started to look at the consequences to others.

Patrick P.

# The Good Ship MA Online

by valzee

A few people were hanging out on the shores of Recovery River, watching the boats float by. Some were simple sailboats. Others had outboard motors pulling water skiers, and all the crafts were filled with people working together to ensure a safe and enjoyable adventure. The bank on this remote part of the river made getting to the other boats difficult, so they decided to build a raft. A couple of the raft builders had experience building water-worthy vessels and navigating the river safely. Many of the raft builders came into boat building with few skills, so the experienced ones shared their expertise, showing how best to use the oars, when to flow with the currents, how to get back upstream, and what to do during inclement weather. They all shared a commitment to build a craft that many people, stranded on this remote riverbank, could use to enjoy the river.

It was time to give it a float. The handful of passengers climbed onboard and headed down the river. All rafters were pleased with their new craft, having a marvelous time building it, learning much wisdom from one another, and enjoying one another's company. More and more people began to hear of new raft that would allow those on the distant bank the opportunity to enjoy the healing waters of the Recovery River. Many came to the banks and looked longingly at the simple raft filled with happy people. They wanted to enjoy the cool water, but remained stuck on the banks. Despite the crowdedness of the raft, the rafters welcomed them aboard. There were many more people lined up on the banks, desperate for a ride! Other rafts were soon needed. The rafters, who learned many skills from the more seasoned members, showed others how they were built. Before too long all the rafts were filled. All agreed larger boats needed to be built, as nobody should be denied the healing waters of Recovery River. They tied the rafts together with upgraded materials, and what a beautiful sight to behold! Word spread of the Good Ship MA Online, and even more people were at the banks of the river, climbing on board to experience the fun, unity, recovery, and spiritual growth the passengers were enjoying.

As more people boarded the larger Good Ship, it became apparent that few members knew basic boating skills. The proportion of inexperienced boaters outnumbered the seasoned boaters by a staggering margin. Those who knew proper boating skills and river navigation increasingly had a more difficult time teaching these things to the newer passengers. Some of the newer members didn't seem to want to learn how to navigate the Good Ship, they just wanted to enjoy the water and the marvelous fellowship. Soon, the boat was veering off course. A few other boaters on the river, concerned that this fabulous new craft may sink, offered to help with the navigation. The Good Ship stayed the course, but more experienced hands on deck were still needed. Many of the new passengers truly wanted to learn proper boating techniques, and often times other inexperienced passengers gave them misinformation. There were not enough boat hands onboard to teach all the new passengers. Some of the new members thought they could pilot the boat with no training, and began criticizing the experienced boaters for being out of touch, forgetting what it was like to be a new passenger.

Unless more experienced boaters come onboard and share their experience and wisdom with the newest passengers, it could veer off into a very dark tributary of the Recovery River; Desolation Creek. The Good Ship MA Online is a fine, magical boat. It expands its limitless capacity to hold as many passengers that are willing to climb aboard. The only thing it's missing is more crewmembers who have experience in the Twelve Steps of Good Boating. There are many who are willing to go to any lengths to get this knowledge, might you be willing to join us some evening to share what you've learned? It leaves the banks four nights a week, and may be found at <http://www.ma-online.org>.

# MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>  
email: [office@marijuana-anonymous.org](mailto:office@marijuana-anonymous.org)

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Fellow M.A. members,

Please give thanks to our fellow M.A.W.S Trustees, Delegates and attendees who worked diligently at the 2004 Conference to make Marijuana Anonymous a better place for the addict who still suffers.

I personally would like to thank all the volunteers who helped during the weekend, without you I couldn't have done it myself (even if I thought I could!).  
**THANKYOU!**

Members, look for 2004 Conference news in an upcoming issue of *A New Leaf*.

Sincerely,  
Peter S.  
2004 MAWS Conference Chair  
ANL Production Artist

## BIRTHDAYS

**Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in *A New Leaf*? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.**

### District 2

Oliver	06/17/01	3 years
Chris M.	06/10/00	4 years
Clif	05/5/98	7 years
Kathy L	06/14/95	9 years

### District 3

Jerry P.	06/27/93	11 years
Ron A.	06/15/95	9 years
Pam L.	06/23/01	3 years
Will J.	06/9/03	1 year!

### District 4

Wendy M.	04/02/03	1 year!
Chris L.	04/04/02	2 years

Carol M. 04/20/91 13 years

## Celebrating 63 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!