



A NEW LEAF

A PUBLICATION OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

July 2001

Volume 11, Number 7

The Ultimate Share

Andrew D. & Ron H.

The following was recently performed as a monologue at a Marijuana Anonymous talent show hosted by District 6 in L.A. The share evolved from a log Andrew had been keeping of the clichés that pop up in meetings. Too often he heard these lines pouring forth from fellow addict's mouths with what seemed like little thought to their meaning. He began constructing a share built entirely on these phrases, which in the end says absolutely nothing.

As Andrew sponsor I feel it important to address what he sees as weaknesses in our fellowship. If I cannot defend that which I base my own recovery on there is little hope of it lasting for me. So together we began to craft this share. In the process we both had an enormous amount of fun and learned a lot about the clichés.

Catch phrases develop because there are problems that are universal for most addicts. We latch onto phrases that address these problems to provide a shorthand for other addicts and to let newcomers know we relate to what they are going through. If a line is phrased cleverly it is easier to remember. The important part of any cliché, however, is the thought behind it. When this is lost there is little chance of even the best-worded expression to truly communicate to someone. While we both feel there is incredible strength and hope that can be gleaned from these "classics", this pitch is about the dangerous practice of "recovery by rote."

Hello, my name is Andrew and I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic, addict, overeater, co-dependant, spouse beating, sexaholic, manic-depressive, pothead, love slave.

By the principles of this program and the grace of my higher power, which I choose to call "Ghost Dog," I am sober today. The record for sobriety is twenty-four hours. That's all any of us have. The fact that I have one-thousand three-hundred and forty-four days of sobriety doesn't make me any better than you... all by itself. But I do have 1344 days of sobriety. Not consecutively, but remember, progress not perfection.

I'd like to congratulate all the birthday people and chip takers, especially the newcomers—you are the lifeblood of this program, you are the reason we are all here, you are the most important people at this meeting. Now you

need to shut the fuck up and listen to what I have to say.

I wasn't going to share tonight. I was just going to listen because Ghost Dog gave me two ears and only one mouth for a reason. But then I heard the topic... WOW... Acceptance. I mean how often do you hear that as a topic? And it just happens to be exactly what I need to hear.

I'd like to thank our speaker, Jonathan. Oh, it's Alex? Sorry, man. That's what'll happen when you shoot black tar heroin into your carotid artery with a turkey-baster for twenty years. Anyway, that was a great pitch, Jonathan, I really identified. You told my story. I mean it was about you, but the whole time I was thinking about myself. And you are the living definition of a miracle. I remember when you first came in here; you were an angry, ugly, poorly-dressed,

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Refugee Jeff M.

When I first heard that song, I thought it was OK, but I really didn't like it that much. It didn't make much sense to me. Why would anyone live and/or mistreat themselves that way if they didn't have to. Back then I thought I knew a lot more about myself and the world. Using drugs and alcohol on a daily basis does that to me. Makes me think I know more than I really do. The humility that being clean and sober gives me has taught me that I know a lot less about my self and the world than I use to think I did. Although, if I trust my intuition, if I trust the truth my Higher Power shows me, I know much more about myself and the world than I ever knew when I was using. Such is the paradox of be-

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A NEW LEAF

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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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The Ultimate Share

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unhappy, obnoxious person. Seeing you today is a total Ghostdogshot. Proof that this program works. You dress much better now.

isms and my disease is definitely an ism, not a wasm. I suffer from the disease of Andrewism. And what is disease except dis-ease... so easy does it. It's an allergy of the mind, a malady of the spirit, cunning, baffling, powerful. One is too much and 100 is not enough. I would use on any day that ends in a "y". Because I was a drug garbage can. In my brain I'm a piece of shit, but I'm the piece of shit that the world revolves around which is the very definition of insanity.

That's what's happening in my head. My head is a bad neighborhood, but I still need a roommate if I hope to afford to live there. My disease is in a prison cell in my head. My disease is doing push-ups and getting in shape to try to take me again. My disease is carving my name in the wall with a shiv. My disease is laying out frilly pink underwear that it's going to put on me right after it tattoos "property of drugs and alcohol" on my ass.

I was in a men's stag meeting the other day and a guy, some of you might know him, his name is Sam, anyway he told the group that he's cheating on his wife and I said, "how can you do that?" Which is important because HOW is a big tool for me. If you're new you're going to want tools. Like HOW – Honesty Openness Willingness. If I'm in FEAR I will Fuck Everything And Run, but if I'm in recovery I going to Face Everything And Recover. Which is what this guy is going to have to do now that I told his wife. I had to show him that he's in

DEKIAL – Don't Even Know I Am Lying. I gotta keep my side of the street clean.

He can blame me, but that's God's will. And GOD is just Good Orderly Direction, or Group of Drunks, or Get Off Dope. When I use these tools I find myself in gratitude, which is a great-attitude. And if I don't use them I start to isolate which means "I so late" for a meeting. And I go to fourteen a day. I go to AA, MA, NA, CA, OA, GA, SLA, and RA. RA's a new fellowship I started called Recovery Anonymous for people who become addicted to twelve step programs. Because I have to be of service like that.

I might have another run in me, but I don't have another recovery in me. So every day I have to go to meetings, talk to my sponsor, make amends to the girls I sleep with, work with newcomers, eat lunch, speak at high schools, visit my old rehab, meditate, floss, re-arrange the chairs at two meetings, make coffee at three, call all thirteen of my sponsees, volunteer at a soup kitchen and make amends to my boss for not making it to work.

Well there's the bell. You know, when I was new I used to want to punch that timer guy in the mouth. I hated that guy. Now I have more serenity and I see that person as an addict who's sick, because everyone in these meetings is sick. It's just some of us are particularly sick, angry, ugly, manipulative people who like to ring little bells so they can control others, but there but by the grace of Ghost Dog go I.

And it appears Ghost Dog is using the bell again to tell me that

The Ultimate Share *concluded*

I'm out of time, so out of respect to the meeting, I'm going to wrap it up. I just want to say a couple things to the newcomers because the holidays are coming up... in about six months, and that can be a pretty slippery time for some people. So I suggest you put as much effort into your recovery as you did into getting high. If you're uncomfortable, or in a great deal of pain— good. That's exactly where you're supposed to be, because you can't save your face and your ass at the same time. If you're new, the good news is that there is a solution. The bad news is, this is it. The last thing I want to say is, if you're new, don't leave five minutes before the miracle or else you're headed for either jails, hospitals, institutions or death. Stay out of bars or any slippery situations because if you sit in a barber's chair long enough, you're going to get a haircut. And that is a bad haircut.

Yeah, okay. I hear the frickin' bell. I want to apologize to the group for sharing past my time. I'd just like to say "fake it 'til you make it." Which means let us love you until you learn to love us. Or at least let us sleep with you until you go out.

Okay, okay. I'm wrapping it up. That's all I wanted to share. Just remember, if you're new, you don't have to be a slave to substances. Look at me. By the grace of Ghost Dog I am free from alcohol, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, complex carbohydrates, recreational sex with minors, self-mutilation, nicotine, caffeine, mushrooms, Quaaludes, Vicodin, Atavan, crack, crank, and NyQuil today. It took me a lot of time, but now I've learned to live a life without any substance whatsoever.

I hear the bell so I better shut up. Thank you for letting me share and participate in my own recovery. And if you're new... KEEP COMING BACK... and you can hear this exact same thing again next week.

Refugee *continued from page one*

ing clean and sober. Such is the paradox of 'Living like a Refugee.'

I have come to realize that one of the reasons I didn't like that song was because it was about me. I was living like a refugee the whole time I was using, and the first few years of my sobriety. I lived liked a refugee because I felt I wasn't worthy of living any other way. I was worthy of working long hours for good money. I was worthy of supporting a wife, and being a major contributor of support of my daughter's family, but I was unworthy of buying things I needed or wanted. I was worthy of putting certain aspects of my life on hold for my wife and daughters family. But I was unworthy of giving and/or doing what I needed to do to nurture my soul. In other words I was worthy to give every one else what they needed to live, but to my soul, the best I could do was allow it to live as a refugee in its own home.

It was synchronicity, a series of coincidences, that included the near death of a good friend that showed me that I was slowly killing my soul from lack of nourishment. It was getting out of myself that showed me that I needed to take care of myself or I wouldn't be any good to anyone else. This wasn't a blinding flash, an "Ah Ha" kind of realization, in fact it was a painfully slow one. It was an emotionally painful series of events that resulted in my realization that I had been a refugee in my own home, in my own soul, for far too long. I think many addicts have this same problem. I feel it stems from a lack of self worth, a low self esteem, from the concept that 'I am not worthy.' How I came to have this, how any one develops low self worth I don't know, but almost every addict I have ever met has this.

My journey away from low self worth, from living like a refugee, started several years before I got clean and sober, but would have never progressed to its current stage without being clean and sober. In an effort to control my drug use, and to do something I couldn't do at 18 when my daughter was born, I decided at the birth of my grandson to go to college. I found a college geared toward older students that only met on weekends which was perfect because that is when I would smoke the most. Even though I won scholastic awards, scholarships and maintained a 4.0 average I felt less than. It wasn't until I stopped drinking and using that the feeling of unworthiness began to be lifted. It wasn't until someone who loved me, more than I loved my self, pointed out to me that I was living like a refugee. It wasn't until they held

Refugee

concluded

a mirror up to my life that I saw for my self how I was still, however subtlety, treating myself as less than. I could easily point out all of my faults that everyone I was helping kept telling me I had. All the while, playing down the major accomplishments of my own life.

The solution for me mistreating myself wasn't a simple one. You know how when you come into the program they tell you only have to change one thing, Everything. Unfortunately that was the solution to my treating myself as a refugee. I had to remove my self from the self-defeating relationship I was in. It was not easy. Nevertheless, after doing the footwork, after praying for guidance, after going to counseling, after doing everything I, my sponsor, and counselor could think of to ensure that removing myself from this relationship was the best thing for me, I did it. As it turns out this was the best thing for the entire family.

Sure I have had second thoughts, sure I have felt like giving up and trying to go back to the way it was. However, I know deep down in my heart, my soul, my enlivened soul, that me going out on my own was the best thing I could have done to restore my life and save my soul. The best thing I could have done to start living life, and to STOP living life as a refugee.



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