



July 2021

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Allergy

I take the subway from Central Park West down to Brooklyn. I'm headed to a party that some old friends from college are having. These are my *chique*, New York friends who unintentionally make me feel like a country bumpkin. My winter coat didn't look so boxy and my boots didn't seem that scuffed until I arrived in NYC where style becomes more apparent... but I don't care; I love the city at Christmas. I walk briskly from the subway toward my friends' apartment, past the funeral home with the neon sign, past the Kennedy Fried Chicken. I am freezing, but I feel alive. I am in the middle of my first Christmas season without a drink.

I arrive at the party, ruddy cheeked and out of breath. I surprise myself by naturally joining in conversations. I have things to say! I confidently decline cocktails, wine, and beer, but at this point in my recovery (it is 2004), I have not yet put down the weed. I go ahead and smoke what is offered. I tell myself, Why not? It's a party..., but within a half hour, a mental fog rolls in and covers me in silence.

I bow out of the kitchen and look for a place to have a quiet cigarette. An old friend turns to me and says "I know you're not drinking anymore, but I don't know what your deal is with coke. They're doing it in the bathroom if you want some," and she walks away. This is a punch in the gut. I know that doing that would surely lead to a drink. I have nearly four months without one, and I won't throw it away tonight. I scan the apartment and I feel inferior to all these fashionable hipsters, laughing, drinking, always finding things to say to each other.

Then I remember my plan is to sleep here tonight. I have nowhere else to stay, but I am done with this party. Now I realize why people in AA recommend always to have an exit plan at a party with alcohol. I curse myself for lacking a plan and I consider calling someone in the program. Since I've just smoked weed and have been keeping this a secret from people in AA, however, I decide not to use the phone. I recall a member saying 'You're only as sick as your secrets,' and I know I am sick in my secrecy about marijuana. I enter my friends' bedroom where the guests' coats are strewn across the bed. Closing the door behind me, I collapse face down on top of all the coats, ignoring the fact that many of them are wool which I am allergic to. The skin on my face and hands winces at the scratchy fabric, but I lay still and hear muffled sounds of the party from the other side of the door. I feel safe on the coats, where I don't have to attempt conversation or beat myself up for having nothing to say. My only concern right now is the increasing irritation of the wool against my skin.

I feel a light pressure on my back, tiny footsteps, and a soft meow. Oh no, the cats are in here...all three of them! I am horribly allergic to cats and am now surrounded by them. Almost immediately, I am sneezing, my eyes are burning, and my throat is so itchy that I want to shove the hairbrush on my friend's dresser down my throat just to give it a scratch.

What a nightmare! I have a choice to make. I could head back into the party and risk the drink, the cocaine, the conversation... or I could stay in here with the cats and

the wool. Either way, I am trapped, but I choose the latter. It's a more manageable, safer kind of pain. I toss some pillows onto the floor, and lay on top of them. I allow the cats to strut and traipse on top of me; there's no stopping them. When party guests come in to collect their coats, I pretend I'm asleep. Before too long, I actually do manage to sleep a little. Tomorrow will be a new day.

Tomorrow is, indeed, always a new day. Although it took me two and half more years, an arrest for possession, and so much marijuana-induced social anxiety, I finally stopped smoking weed in 2007. I also have always attended AA meetings since 2004. Once I admitted to members about my marijuana use, I felt a huge weight lifted. The saying about being sick in my secrets rang true for me. Once I could share freely about my addiction to both alcohol and marijuana, I became ready to find real recovery by getting honest and working the steps. It was no longer necessary for me to hide or lie. I am lucky that my marijuana use did not lead me back to a drink or to other drugs, as has happened to many people in the program. One thing that helped was that I never stopped going to meetings. I am now nearly fourteen years clean and sober. I like my time alone and I like my time with people. I no longer freeze or shrink with social anxiety, and I've become comfortable in conversations, no longer needing to either dominate them or disappear in them. I can truly say I am comfortable in my own skin, especially when there are no cats or wool around! ▲

~by *Patty B.*

ANL's Purpose

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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole. MA is not affiliated with—and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

We are reaching out to districts to update the ANLP Liaisons and birthday lists. Additionally, district/group service representatives, including but not limited to those serving as ANLP Liaisons, are encouraged to stay in touch: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org

ANLP Staff

Chairperson:	Thor H.
Treasurer:	Beth F.
Secretary:	Marcy E.
Managing Editor:	Michael O.
Publishing Editor:	Ron H.
ANLP Administrator:	Mariska P.

Contact ANLP

Send articles/stories:
stories@anewleafpublications.org

Other inquiries and correspondence:
info@anewleafpublications.org

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Sometimes You Move Me to Tears

Your gut wrenching stories of loss and hopelessness take me back to my days of addicted despair. Days with no way out and no place to rest my tired frame. Our stories as addicts speak with stark clarity against a society of perfect Invisalign smiles and hypoallergenic labradoodles. Was it that long ago that I was you? My MA heroes had resumes of a single year of sobriety. Gods that walked the earth with patient wisdom and a satchel bag full of all the right answers. Was it that long ago that they were me? Sometimes you move me to tears when I see myself in your eyes and hear myself in your words. Lost in a world that was too busy to see me then, too busy to stop for us both now.

At 16 months I have as much patient wisdom in my worn leather satchel as my 1 year heroes once carried in theirs. Not exactly a bag full of all the right answers though. Perhaps just enough wisdom to know what is on the other side of the seemingly insurmountable mountain of that first year of sobriety. I have learned along this journey that the best help

I can give the still suffering addict is to listen. They need us to hear, to feel their despair, to experience their pain as we once experienced ours. They need to tell us their stories as we once told ours. They need to see us walk without shame as forever addicts, our half full satchel bags at the ready. Ready for their stories to move us to tears.

A year from now they will take our place with their heads held humbly in quiet dignity. Ready to listen to the all too familiar stories of heartbreak and crushing loss. Their hands will clutch at the worn leather of their satchel bags just as ours do now. Always knowing that they will never be full of the right answers. But roomy enough to be filled by the stories of newly recovering addicts that need them to be heard. Our new heroes will show us this well-worn path with 10 or 20 years of stories in their satchels. Still nowhere near full of all the right answers, but with just enough room for our stories that need to be heard. Sometimes you move me to tears dear friend, you remind me that I'm finally alive. ▲

~by Mike A.

Service opportunity!

Open Volunteer Service Position at ANLP

Publishing Editor

- 2 years clean and sober
- Position open as of August 1, 2021; one year term, plus one additional year
- Works with Managing Editor to select and edit articles printed in the A New Leaf (ANL) newsletter, and design and layout of ANL
- Produces the masters for each month's ANL and assures timely delivery to ANLP Administrator. Works with MA World Services Literature Trustee to format MA literature and service materials.
- Experience with Adobe InDesign is very helpful

My Third Step Prayer

Love/God/Higher Power, for so long I have tried to grip, resist, force and do it my way. I did what I wanted and what I believed was best for me. I have tried to carry a ton of brick for way too long. I let go, I fully let go. I let go with my mind, my heart and soul. I feel free. I am forever cradled. I fully know my life is chaotic when I try to run the show. I ask for your help in finding harmony, alignment, ease, peace, open heart and inner strength. Grant me truth and recognition of truth. Grant me

inner rightness, higher vibrations. Help me to release the ego. Help me to surrender and to embody the following qualities in my daily living; empathy, connection, softness, compassion, sincerity, faith, presence, fearlessness, spiritual growth, self-love, open hands, willing heart and love of others. Help me to become a soft butterfly floating in the sky. Grant me patience, confidence, and exploration. I know that when I am out of alignment with God/Love/Higher Power, I am operating

from a place of lack and lower vibrations. Help me to see the inner goodness in all individuals, as this leads me closer to you. Help guide me to practice love and forgiveness. Remove the blocks that keep me from harmony and love. Help me to align with your beauty. Help me to know that all humans reflect the image and likeness of God/HP/Love. Seeing the good and love in others, moves me close to you and allows me to see this in myself. ▲

~by Anonymous

Third Step Outsourcing Agreement

Higher power, I enter into this outsourcing agreement with you.

Whereas my life is unmanageable, and I can no longer attempt to control the uncontrollable.

Grant me the serenity and wisdom to accept the things I cannot change,

and courage to change what I can.

Help me focus on what I need to do today, instead of what I want to do today.

~by Josh L.

T.R.U.S.T.

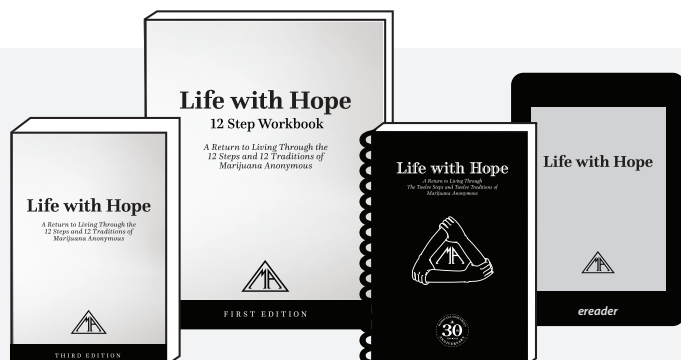
*Try Really Using
Step Three*



A Meditation

How freeing it is to read that it is arrogant to criticize myself. If I know that you're perfect just the way you are, how can I not believe the same about me? Am I suffering under the illusion of terminal uniqueness? Criticizing myself is just another form of self-centered fear. I came to recovery believing I needed to be perfect, and never make mistakes. In recovery, I've learned that that's what humans do: make mistakes, and hopefully learn from them. As I learn to care for myself, and give myself the nurturing I've wanted from others, I feel freer, kinder and more loving.

~by Anonymous



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MA World Services

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DIST. 2	San Francisco & East Bay	+1.510.957.8390
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	www.ma-phone.org	

Step Seven

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

Tradition Seven

Every MA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Celebrating 67 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Joe A.	5/17/2016	5
Kathy H.	6/14/1995	26
Nina S.	6/21/1985	36

District 5

Andrea Y.	6/15/2010	11
David F.	6/11/2020	1
Sam H.	6/1/2015	6
Trudie	6/1/1998	23

District 7

Heather C	5/17/2019	2
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District 13 - Topeka

Bradley T	2/20/2003	18
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See your sobriety date here!

Submit your sobriety date to your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to:
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