



July 2022

Vol. 33, No. 7

Everyday People

My story is not special. I, like many other thousands of people, became addicted to marijuana. How do I know I am a marijuana addict? It's like it says in *How It Works*:

- *That we are marijuana addicts and cannot manage our own lives;*
- *That probably no human power can relieve our addiction; and*
- *That our Higher Power can and will if sought.*

I could not manage my marijuana use. Despite many attempts to quit and control it on my own, I still used marijuana any chance I got. No human power relieved my addiction; not my wife, parents, children, friends, or law enforcement. However, my Higher Power did when I sought Its direction.

I've heard it said often, "my best thinking got me here." I entered the program of Marijuana Anonymous at the end of my rope. Having tried to control the uncontrollable for far too long, my moment of Grace came when I thought there had to be another way. The way into the rooms was a path laid out by those that came before me. I searched Marijuana Anonymous on the internet and found a couple resources that led me to my first meeting. That seed was planted by my wife many years before in a letter she wrote to me while lying awake at night during one of my binges.

I was amazed to hear other people talk about their struggles with marijuana. Usually when I talked

to someone about my struggles, that person didn't really understand my story. But in *Life with Hope* and during meetings, I heard other people telling my story as they described their lives. I knew I was in the right place. The support I received from the fellowship, the hope that was kindled in my heart, and the faith that worked its way into my spirit has held me in recovery for many years. Even during periods of relapse, the sober life and spiritual journey stood its ground. I would always keep coming back, and more would always be revealed.

"I knew I was in the right place."

The added awareness of my personality and character challenges came by sharing at meetings and working the 12 Steps. The *Life with Hope Workbook* and incredible sponsorship have been my guides, though I have also found great strength from AA's Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and other recovery-oriented literature.

As a friend often says, "read the literature, because that's where all the answers are." I always thought that I needed to "figure out" the answers to all life's problems and mysteries myself. The MA program has taught me instead to let go of my preconceived notions and pretentiousness. I still think about having "my way" often. The disease of addiction still clings to my way and my superiority. In the absence of

the sunshine of the spirit, dark clouds hang over my days, and I have the occasional thought that using might again light the way.

When I put myself in my higher power's hands, when I surrender the need to control, the next action comes to me not from a place of selfishness, but from a place of universal connection with a Higher Power and my fellows. Prayer and meditation become my main tools. Taking inventory of my relationships, my fears, and my assets take center stage.

No longer am I controlled by impulsive decision making, but instead have a steady view of the outcome of my present thinking. If there was one thing I wish I did better, it would be self-restraint. But there I go again thinking that I'm going to have all the answers. A sponsor once told me, "figure it out is not a 12 step saying. Let go, and let God is a 12 step saying."

Life in recovery is not always easy. But it sure is easier than trying to manage my marijuana use. I can't say how much easier, but I know that I don't want to go back to being a slave to marijuana. Freedom from the bondage of self is my next frontier. It's truly glorious to be in the flow with all that is, instead of fighting a losing battle with marijuana. I surrender. I am everyday people. Everyday, I strive to connect with my Higher Power and the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous.

~Morgan V.

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: Joemar G.
Treasurer: Graham S.
Secretary: Marcy E.
Managing Editor: Amy F.
Publishing Editor: Kyle C.
ANLP Administrator: Mariska P.

Contact ANLP

Send articles/stories:
stories@anewleafpublications.org

Other inquiries and correspondence:
info@anewleafpublications.org

Copyright © 2022, Marijuana Anonymous World Services. All rights reserved. Published by A New Leaf Publications, Walnut CA (USA)

No Bad Days

Recently I hung a cheerful little sign above my sink to lessen the drudgery of doing dishes. It's a white cardboard sign framed by fuzzy pom-poms. In pink, purple, blue, orange, and green letters it reads: "no bad days."

This resonates with me because, while I've had bad moments, since rediscovering Marijuana Anonymous, I've had no bad days.

I've faced a lot of challenges in the short time I've been clean: turning 50, facing the one-year anniversary of my cat's death, contracting Covid-19, reevaluating friendships, traveling snafus, a heat wave, etc., etc. But in MA I have grown from these difficulties instead of being diminished by them. Attending phone meetings daily and developing friendships with fellow members, I am learning to handle my feelings and anything that life throws my way. I've experienced a dramatic shift in my attitude and am experiencing a "spiritual awakening."

When I was using marijuana daily my motto was closer to "no good days." I was definitely a "glass half empty" type of person. I was surviving and chasing pleasure, merely trying to stave off desperation. I was hopeless and experienced intense mood swings. I had lost my career and my purpose in life, my mom and dad died, but my cat's death was too much to bear. My grief had become so complicated and all encompassing that no amount of weed could take away the pain.

I quit using on my own for four and a half months. But then a conflict with a friend led me to pick up again. We made up a couple days later, but it was too late, the genie was already out of the bottle. It wasn't easy to put weed back down again. I tried to quit a few times and played games with myself about quitting. I used for a

month and a half. It was scary that I couldn't stop, sometimes not leaving my apartment for days at a time. I was finally set on the first day of spring as the day to quit and threw away my stash and paraphernalia and reached out to Marijuana Anonymous. Since then I have been leaving the apartment almost every day. I am more responsible, and I'm taking my meds. I also enjoy communing with nature.

"...I am making the most of every day and making better choices with the help of MA."

I've experienced days of wind, sun, butterflies, and ice cream. I even saw a sandpiper, a bird I had only previously seen in photos. I went on a vacation to see family and was commended for being an ideal house guest. On past visits I was not an ideal house guest to say the least; I was argumentative, moody, and a freeloader.

Just last week I had thoughts of using. I felt bored and isolated and thought weed would relieve my boredom. I shared about it honestly in one of my favorite meetings and no one judged me. This makes me feel safe and accepted in the program. I do feel a connection with other members and feel accountable to them. But most importantly, I have to work an honest program so that I am honest with myself about my addiction. As long as I admit my powerlessness, I can stay clean and have a chance of bettering myself and moving forward in life.

"No bad days" means that I am making the most of every day and making better choices with the help of MA.

~Ingrid P.

Step 9: Making Direct Amends – Financial

I am fortunate to be a marijuana addict who has been able to remain in recovery for a number of years. The opinions I put forth here are based on my personal experience, what has worked for me, and I share them with the hope that they might help another addict out there.

I began working the 12 Steps very early on in recovery, not because I had any real idea of what I needed to be doing, but because I was directed to do so by the man who eventually became my sponsor. As many of us are, I was whipped and beaten when I arrived to MA, and fortunately willing enough to accept help and direction. I'm grateful, at least for that.

I entered recovery in my early 30s after about 15 years of progressive drug and alcohol abuse with marijuana being my biggest and most constant problem. What this meant in recovery was that I had harmed a lot of people and had a lot of amends that needed to be made. A lot of these amends were of the type that could be made, more or less, in the form of a face-to-face verbal apology, and for the most part the process of making these kinds of amends seemed to be a positive experience all around – people were mostly forgiving, appreciative, and supportive.

I also had a number of amends that were financial, however, and these were more difficult for me because early in my recovery money was very tight, and I have always hated to give up a buck. There was a particular amend of \$40 that I had to make (i.e., to pay back) to the non-smoking wife of a pot-head friend that I would like to take the time to talk about.

I'd been ducking this couple for some time. Forty dollars was a lot of money for me back then. I am pretty

sure that my friend's wife didn't think that she'd ever see that \$40 from me again. It must have been two or three years later (about nine months into my recovery) when I showed up at their front door and handed her the cash and the apology.

One hard part for me was her telling me over and over again what a great "unbelievable" person I was and things like that. First of all, like a lot of us, I have a real problem with my ego, but also all I could think was "What are you talking about? I'm not a great guy, I kept your money for years instead of giving it back to you," but I did as my sponsor had directed me, kept it short, thanked her for accepting my amends and moved on.

"I need to be grateful for having had the experience of feeling liberated by having done so."

Don't get me wrong, I do think paying people back is a very good thing, and I also accept that it took some courage for me to do it, but I also know that to become prideful for making an amend is not the right stance, at least not for me. For me, amends are about attempting to right a wrong for which I am responsible, making them is not some kind of personal heroism.

To be sure, I have not made all of my amends or perfectly performed all of the work that is important for my recovery; I neglected some amends, and there are some that can never be made, but I am able to carry myself differently, and I no longer feel like I must hide my face from the world. I want to share one more short experience, and I don't know exactly how to feel about it, but maybe something similar has happened, or may happen to someone who reads this, so here it is.

Several years ago, an old friend, an acquaintance really, came to make his amends to me. As part of this he apologized for stealing several hundred dollars from me when I had allowed him into my home many years before (I'd been in recovery at that time, but he had not).

What he did not do was offer to pay me back, which left me feeling resentful for a while, perhaps even a bit self-righteous (that I was better at recovery than him), but perhaps the lesson as I am thinking about it now is to realize that for me a financial amend is a financial amend, and absolutely does require paying that person back, and that I need to be grateful for having had the experience of feeling liberated by having done so. If this has been helpful and worth your time to read, I am glad for it.

~Anonymous

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Do you want your story to be featured in an upcoming issue of the A New Leaf Newsletter?

We are always in need of recovery-focused stories, poems, etc. – about 500-1500 word pieces. Typically, the submission deadline is the 10th of each month, but we are in dire need now, so please send something in as soon as possible.

It's important that your writing stays focused on what happened and what it is like now rather than what it was like.

Send your submissions to:
stories@anewleafpublications.org

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

MA World Services

340 S LEMON AVE # 9420, WALNUT, CA 91789-2706	+1.800.766.6779	WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG	-	INFO@MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG
DIST. 2 San Francisco & East Bay	+1.510.957.8390	DIST. 16 Melbourne, Australia		+61.403.945.083
www.madistrict2.org		www.marijuana-anonymous.com		
DIST. 3 South SF Bay Area	+1.408.450.0796	DIST. 17 Denmark		
www.madistrict3.org		www.ma-danmark.dk		
DIST. 4 Western Washington	+1.206.414.9270	DIST. 18 Sacramento, CA		+1.916.341.9469
www.madistrict4.org		www.sacramentoma.org		
DIST. 5 Orange County	+1.714.999.9409	DIST. 19 Toronto, ON, Canada		+1.416.999.2244
www.madistrict5.org		www.matoronto.org		
DIST. 6 LA County North	+1.818.759.9194	DIST. 20 San Diego, CA		
www.madistrict6.org		www.ma-sandiego.org		
DIST. 7 LA County South	+1.310.494.0189	DIST. 21 Colorado State		+1.303.607.7516
www.madistrict7.org		www.ma-colorado.org		
DIST. 8 New York		DIST. 22 New England		
www.ma-newyork.org		www.newenglandma.org		
DIST. 11 Oregon	+1.503.567.9892	DIST. 23 Georgia State		+1.770.468.8508
www.madistrict11.org		DIST. 24 Vancouver, BC, Canada		+1.778.554.8997
DIST. 12 North Bay, CA	+1.415.419.3555/+1.707.583.2326	DIST. 25 Chicagoland	MarijuanaAnonymousChicago@gmail.com	
www.madistrict12.org		DIST. 26 Iceland		
DIST. 13 MA Online		www.maisland.is		
www.ma-online.org		DIST. 27 Independent Mtgs.		madistrict27@gmail.com
DIST. 14 London, England	+44.300.124.0373	PHONE MA Phone Meetings		
www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk		www.ma-phone.org		

“Serenity by the Sea”

Annual MA World Services Convention hosted by District 20 | San Diego

The MA World Convention is the annual recovery and social gathering for all of Marijuana Anonymous. The convention includes workshops, keynote speakers, MA meetings, a banquet, dance, and a chance to fellowship with members from across the world. It's a giant sober party and a great opportunity for growth in recovery and personal connections.

Learn more and register for this year's upcoming convention at <https://mawsconvention.org/>

For further information, please email Convention@MA-SanDiego.org

Save the Date!

Oct 7-9, 2022

Celebrating 59 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Suki G.	05/26/1995	27 yrs
Eleanor C.	06/13/2020	2 yrs

District 5

Billy F	5/21/2019	3 yrs
Dave F.	6/7/2020	2 yrs
Justin	6/26/2012	10 yrs
Pearl C.	6/6/2020	2 yrs
Sam H.	6/1/2015	7 yrs

District 22

Brian L.	6/21/2021	1 yr
-----------------	------------------	-------------

District 27

Jillene K	6/22/2019	3 yrs
Roger D	6/10/2021	1 yr

Independent & Virtual Meetings

Maryanne	06/10/2021	1 yr
-----------------	-------------------	-------------

If your sobriety date has occurred, has not been published, and is not older than 45 days, please submit it in the format you see on the left by the 16th of the month. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liason, or e-mail: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org



← **See your sobriety date here!**