

A NEW LEAF

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Surrendering by Jeff M.

When I first heard that I had to surrender my life to a Higher Power, I bristled. I mean it is one thing to give up your dope, but to surrender come on man, that is just too much, I never gave up on anything in my whole life. As bad as my life was it wasn't that bad. Sure I had just failed a drug test that put my job, my life as I knew it, on the line. I was the main source of income for my family, and my daughter's family, but surrender never! Of course this was before I had a sponsor who explained what he felt surrender meant. Explained how he dealt with the concept of surrendering, of giving up. First, he had me look the word up in the dictionary where I found out that didn't mean exactly what I thought it meant. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary surrender means, "to give (one-self) over to something (as an influence); to give oneself up into the power of another, to yield." After I read that I realized that I had long ago given my self over to the influence of marijuana because I did everything under its influence. I had yielded to its power, therefore yielding, which sounds so much better than surrendering, to a High Power shouldn't be

that hard. When I talked to my sponsor about what I had found and what I thought about it, he added that if I was really like him, I had thought that I had control of my life, even though I never really did. Whenever I tried to 'force' things to go the way I wanted they didn't. And if they did, they still weren't exactly what I wanted. Things never went quite like I wanted them too. So in some ways I'm not really surrendering, or yielding cause I never really had control of it in the first place. My sponsor had some good points, but it didn't seem to ring true, it felt like semantics to me. Just taking the words and twisting them around to mean what ever you wanted them to mean. I didn't buy it. I understood what he was saying because my life was truly unmanageable, and completely out of my control. The only thing I had control over was putting down the joint. I was powerless over picking it back up, so who was I fooling, about this surrender stuff. Still I just couldn't get past the idea that surrender equaled loser.

My sponsor noticing my indecision said, "Well, lets try this from another angle." He started telling me a story about

a man who was sailing when his boat was capsized by a huge wave. He didn't have a life jacket on and moreover he couldn't swim. Fortunately, a Coast Guard helicopter was close by and was there immediately to help lift him out of the water. The only problem was that this man was so panicked that his flailing arms prevented the Coast Guard rescuer from helping him save himself. The rescuer had to talk to him to calm him down enough so they could work together to save him. The man in the water had to surrender, had to yield, had to have faith that if they worked together he could be saved. We are no different, in spite of our flailing attempts to control our lives, our using, we have to yield. We have to give the control of our lives over to

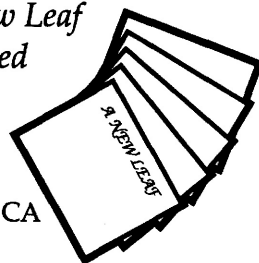
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A NEW LEAF

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 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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Surrendering continued

our Higher Power, in this case the Coast Guard, if we want to be saved. That is not to say we can or even should just give up. We have to work with our Higher Power, we have to work in a partnership. We do the footwork and leave the results in his hands. Listening to that, it began to sink in. Surrender isn't admitting defeat, that you are a loser. Surrender in this instance is admitting you need help, then being mature, and adult enough to let them, the Higher Power help you as you work with them in making a better life for yourself. Now that made sense. I can do that, I can ask my Higher Power, or God for help in my life. I can work on turning my life over to God; I can work on surrendering my life to my Higher Power. It isn't like I had done that well as far as using drugs is concerned. I can start with turning my drug use over to my Higher Power. Then as I do the footwork, going to meetings, keeping in-touch with my

Higher Power and the miracles occur, some times slowly, sometimes quickly, I can, I will want to turn more and more of my life over to God, my Higher Power. Do you know what? It has worked. The more I turn over the better my life gets and the better my life gets the more I want to turn over. This doesn't mean that your life will always be rosy. I know mine hasn't been, but as I have learned to turn over the small things, I turn the bad things over too, all the while doing whatever footwork is required. When I do that the problems seemed smaller, less threatening, and they become manageable. Therefore, I handle them better with less drama on my part. Just like the Coast Guard, stop flaying around in the water and let your Higher Power save you, it is much easier. It may not seem like it at first, nothing new ever is but it does get easier, and it does get better. ▲

Why? by Carol M.

Why stop using? If you want to quit, you need to have an answer to that question. If you want to stop using forever (one day at a time), it better be a good answer.

My answer is I want to live. Using robs you of your life in one way or another—self-respect, joy, physical health. I want to live. That wasn't always true. I'd been taught,

unknowingly, that life was to be endured, not enjoyed or at least appreciated. But, through many experiences and the gaining of much knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom, I taught myself to find at least a fraction of the joy available to us all.

I had to fight to reach that point, and I was beginning to forget when God showed me a (continued on next page)

Why? continued

way to find it again in M.A. I feel like M.A. is where God intended me to arrive. Is just arriving at M.A. the final destination, the end of the journey? Probably not, but it is most def-

initely a road sign I wasn't meant to miss.

I believe my feet need to keep moving if I am to arrive at the next road sign, so I continue on, trying to work the steps and

be willing and unafraid to move step by step one day at a time. Hope to see you on the Road of Happy Destiny! ▲

2001 convention!

The 2001 MA Convention will be held on January 19-21, 2001 in Orange County, California at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Costa Mesa. The Wyndham Garden is located for easy access, via a free shuttle, from the Orange County Airport, near the South Coast Plaza Mall and the Orange County Performing Arts Center.

The theme of next year's Convention will "2001 An MA Odyssey."

The Convention Committee

will need MA members to lead workshops and meetings at next year's event. If you would like to participate in the recovery of fellow MA members by providing a recovery or personal growth related workshop, we would like to hear from you. Please submit a brief (couple of paragraphs) summary of your workshop including an estimated time length and materials or equipment needed. We also invite any input or suggestions that will help make

this weekend of fellowship, personal/spiritual growth and fun, a more pleasant experience for all that attend.

All correspondence for the Convention can be sent to either:

MA2001Convention@aol.com.
or

MA 2001 Convention
2485 Newport Blvd.
PMB 149
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

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

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Julie F. 8/12/96 4 yrs.

Rudolfo 8/12/94 6 yrs.

Ellis L. 8/9/96 4 yrs.

Tony N. 8/6/96 4 yrs.

Neil R. 8/13/97 3 yrs.

— Ron M. 8/20/93 7 yrs.

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Dancin Tom 8/8/89 11 yrs. Sue 7/8/99 1year!

Fellowship Mary 8/3/94 6 yrs. Debra 7/99 1year!

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Jacon 6/12/99 1 year! Ricky L. 8/1/99 1 year!

Sean 6/99 1 year!

Garry 4/92 8 yrs

Goodbye by Robert W.

Goodbye To My Dear Friend Cannabis Sativa

As you well know by now, I've recently changed my opinion about you. I used to regard you as one of my oldest and closest friends. You helped me with my creativity, you were always my excellent partner in bed whether we were alone or with someone else. You were there when I was having a good day or a bad day. When I was having a Maalox moment you calmed me down. Yes, you and my mind got along quite well. I remember when we first met in junior high I loved the Twilight Zone, mind expansionality of it all. It was exciting. I did put our relationship on hold during my high school years. Pretending to be a jock instead of a stoner, but after high school you were right there waiting for me and embraced me with open arms. We spent a lot of time together. Practically every waking hour. I didn't mind spending money on you because I could afford it and it was real important to me to be with you always. You met my needs on a lot of different levels. If I needed to figure something out, needed to chill out, needed to get happy, horny, or mellow, wow, you have to be one of the greatest botanical wonders God ever created! Oh, yeah, speaking of God, here's the bad news. There's this love triangle going on and it has to end. It's kind of started already as you've probably noticed. I loved you and God loves me and I have to make a permanent decision because I can't hang out with

both of you and when you think about it my relationship with you has affected my relationship with him for almost 17 years now. No hard feelings boddu, but deciding between a plant and God is pretty much a no-brainer — and besides our relationship has gotten dangerous in the last year. I can't seem to hang out with you alone any more. Sooner or later the meth monster shows up. And on top of that I want my job, my kids, and my life back. I want financial independence, freedom, privacy, respect. None of these things I can have if I hang out with you. Sometimes I wish it could be just me and you like the old days. But it can't be. I'm sorry, but this disease as they call it, has progressed to a life-threatening stage. It can't be like the old days. The only purpose you serve now, much like alcohol, is you numb that first layer of the brain and lead me back to the other shit. We've proved that to each other 3 times last year, and that stuff was in the process of killing me and driving me insane. I will be talking to him next.

Well, my friend, a bitter-sweet breakup it is — God has a plan for my life and you can't be part of it. I owe him a lot, he's forgiven me and has given me more chances than I deserve. I know I'll see things from time to time that will remind me of you, but that's OK. This cranial enema will take time to complete. Just stay on your side of the street and I'll stay on mine. ▲



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