



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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What should we share about at meetings? The Great Debate!

As a newcomer to MA with less than 9 months of sobriety I often hear people debate the topic of what's acceptable to talk about at meetings, and what's the real purpose of sharing. The process of getting sober and eventually obtaining some form of recovery is dependent on attending many meetings, and part of attending meetings is listening to the chosen speaker and hearing the shares of fellow addict's.

This process is indispensable, and in this recovering addict's opinion is the essence of 12 step meetings. I thoroughly enjoy hearing the experiences, strength and hope of a recovering addict as well as hearing the trials, tribulations and daily struggles of my fellow addict's. The affect of both have different benefits in my opinion.

The meetings are designed to be a safe haven for addicts to share their hopes, dreams and trials regardless of content. I love hearing a speaker with a real message of how recovery has changed their lives and the lives of their loved ones. It gives me hope that if I do the same things my life, the lives of my family will begin to repair themselves from the wreckage of so many years of uncontrollable using.

Most speakers are chosen by the meeting secretaries because they've heard them speak at other meetings and liked their message. This is what makes MA meetings worth attending week after week as the message delivered by

people who've stared death and destruction in the face and lived through it gives me hope. When we come into the rooms battered and broken, hope is the one thing we are all seeking and good speakers communicate that hope through action. "I love that."

The flip side of the meetings are the participants who simply dump their daily struggles on the group and the message isn't one of hope and recovery, it's one of desperation and despair. Is this also acceptable meeting etiquette? I'm not sure but I do know that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana, and nowhere does it say that the message always has to be one of purpose and laden with a message of recovery. I do think that it helps the newcomers achieve hope, and allows the light at the end of the tunnel to be more illuminated if the messages are ones of construction, but by no means is it the rule so I'm told.

I love the fact that everyone is made to feel safe, welcome and accepted regardless of length of sobriety and the ability to communicate effectively. Some of us speak better than others, some have the ability to construct a better message of hope and recovery while others simply need to let it out and get love and reassurance from the group. Both are vitally important and even though I think everyone appreciates the well thought out, concisely delivered message of recovery and how program has created miracles in

their lives, others just need to be heard and loved. To me they both seem acceptable.

So... in conclusion, I really hope that the freedom of being able to say and emote whatever is troubling us at that moment remains acceptable in our fellowship as I believe that if these rights are eliminated the attendance at meetings will surely decline. On the other hand I believe the speakers who are the "headliners" should have a message of experience, strength and hope and be able to articulate to the fellowship how the 12 Steps of Marijuana Anonymous has changed their life. If we follow the road they've truded, our lives can get better too.

That's the essence of MA and why we come to these meetings. Let's allow the proper people to deliver the proper messages and not legislate those who don't have the experiences or understanding of what's considered acceptable

Recovery comes in many different costumes and no one person has the market cornered on how and when it happens. Let's all remember why we came to MA and allow everyone the safety and reassurances of being accepted no matter what. Just my opinion, take it for what it's worth.

A Recovering Marijuana Addict!

////////////////////////////////////
This issue is Jam-Packed,
you can feel the
Recovery!
////////////////////////////////////

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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the newsletter tab.

CHARACTER DEFECTS AT WORK IN MY LIFE

The whole notion of ascertaining one's character defects, sharing them with another human being, and being entirely ready to engage in transforming those aspects and developing positive ones seemed a bit distant from my real reason in attending MA: to quit smoking pot.

Fortunately, I had hit a rock bottom, and was lucky enough to find a skilled and experienced sponsor. Not really seeing where this would all go, I nevertheless did what was suggested. The reality that my character defects led directly to my becoming an addict was revelatory. Although, like most folks, I have plenty of character defects, a rigorous and honest fourth step made me realize two particular ones were dominating my life, and combined to make a really lethal combo. The deadly duo for me consists of false pride and envy.

Among my assets, I am a bright, hard working and considerate individual. But, I see all around me people who are none of these things. It is easy for me to see people being lazy, foolish and unkind. When I see the same people with more money, friends or recognition than me, it is a bitter recipe for resentment and self pity. Why bother to work, study or help others, when there is no reward for it, and indeed it sometimes seems to be punished?

Might as well treat myself to some dope. It's no use trying anyway, and this way, I won't burn myself out caring. It's exactly that kind of stinking thinking that made me use daily for 37 years or so.

With the help of my higher power, I am able to work daily on my gruesome twosome. Some days I do better than others, but each day I remember I need to feel

humility and compassion, gratitude and acceptance. I see now that my attitude towards others is nothing short of intolerant and judgmental, which are traits no less destructive than the ones that bother me when displayed by others. If I can cultivate activities that are inconsistent with false pride and envy, I find that my emotions gradually will follow.

It's slow work at an inconsistent pace, but it is a lot like lifting weights. Every day I am a bit stronger, and can work a little harder. The absolute emotional rathole that made smoking dope seem like a good solution is something of which I can steer clear. For me, working on my defects of character has been a major tool to relieve the daily obsession to use.
Gene B. District 5

ROVING REPORTER ASKS?

Question for August
What is your favorite meeting commitment??

(Please submit answers by September 17)

Step Nine
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition Nine
M.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

LIVING THE LIFE I HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED

So it has been just over 3 years that I quit smoking marijuana. Much of my time as an addict was spent on a couch smoking a bowl and dreaming of the life I always wanted to lead. I was riding dirt bikes, surfing, doing gymnastics, traveling the world, falling in love but the reality was that I was still on my couch high and daydreaming.

I locked myself away, only socializing with other stoners and around events where I could be stoned. I wondered why I wasn't living the life I dreamed of in my head. Well, the people who rock climb, do motocross, adventure are not on my couch getting high... reality check.

My time stoned, 18 years, was complete arrested development. I didn't know how to socialize or connect with people without pot. I was often accused of being cold and a bitch when in reality I was so shy and insecure that I lived only in my head and feared the outside world.

The dialogue that pervaded my head was toxic. Feelings of worthlessness, jealousy, anger, resentment, and inner pain were creating a traffic jam in my brain.. The only thing that dulled it down to white noise was getting high so I smoked more instead of dealing with any of my issues or feelings. I was in constant escape mode; reality was my enemy, marijuana my key to altered perception though the vision that was created was a false reality.

Like many addicts, I justified my smoking with "it is just pot, it is all-natural, it's harmless." (Another example of distorted perception of reality.) The truth was I spent tens of thousands of dollars, was often broke, a completely broken person inside, and had distanced myself from my family. I deceived

myself to thinking everything would be alright as long as I had weed. I did have weed, but I didn't have a life and surely wasn't living except in my daydreams.

When I did finally quit smoking, I was so poor that I was delinquent in credit card payments and hadn't worked in months. At another meeting, a woman had told me about Marijuana Anonymous. The next day, I went to my first morning meeting and never looked backed. I truly identified with these people. I had found my family in recovery.

Though I was lucky enough to never want to smoke again after I stopped, I didn't know how to live my life without pot or deal with my repressed emotions and emotional pain.

As a recovering addict, my first 90 days were a sea of anger. I slowly learned to deal with my feelings and anger as they arose and not run from them. I found peace and solace through reading *Life With Hope*, attending meetings, yoga, and meditation. Through the last 3 years, I have continued to peel away at the layers of my personal issues and continue to grow. In the process, I have become, Miss Positivity. Yes, "I am one of those sunshine, rainbows, unicorns and fairies kind of people and I love it." (When I was smoking I couldn't stand people who were always smiling and optimists.)

I have learned how to ride a motorcycle, gone scuba diving in Hawaii, took up roller-skating, Kung Fu, Tai Chi, and gymnastics. I have learned to be social and relate to people without being high. My confidence is growing as I boldly deal with my issues past and present as they arise with help from the 12 Steps. I am conquering

my fears physically, mentally and emotionally. And challenging myself to grow and embrace a sober life. More and more each day I am living the life I have always dreamed of. I am truly happy and grateful for MA. J.L.▲

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

MAWS is conducting an "Effectiveness Survey" to evaluate what the society of MA thinks about MAWS' service to date to: Districts, meetings and members. We hope to collect a society-wide group conscience to give direction to the type of work in which MAWS should be engaged and to help evaluate MAWS' current ability and potential to serve MA's needs as conveyed by that MA group conscience.

SHARE YOUR OPINION. This month we would like you, your groups, and/or your Districts answers to the following questions:

1. *Do the participants of the Conference body represent a true group conscience of our fellowship as a whole?*
2. *(Tradition 8) Are there any fees being charged for Twelve Step Work? (Examples: fellowship, sponsoring, step work, counseling)?*

For more details, please go to the website forum.marijuana-anonymous.org. To submit your ideas and share your thoughts on these questions email us at mes@marijuana-anonymous.org.

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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District 13 MA Online

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District 14 London, England

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District 15 Long Island, NY

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District 16 Melbourne, Australia

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District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

SPECIAL NOTICE!

This is to inform everyone that the OFFICIAL ADDRESS of MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS has changed as of DECEMBER 7, 2010.

Every effort has been made to account for all the business names that can be used for our address; but please be careful in future to use the address below as the address for ALL official correspondence, including 7th Traditions:

**MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES
 PO BOX 7807
 TORRANCE, CA 90504**

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD! Tell your local meetings, tell your DSC meetings, and especially tell your Treasury and Literature chairs!

This notice will appear on the website, and will be carried in the New Leaf, for a period of a year. Thanks in advance for helping to make the transition a smooth one!

HELP WANTED

FIELD EDITOR NEEDED

INTERESTED ADDICTS

SHOULD EMAIL

THE ANLP BOARD.

anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org

birthdays

Celebrating 221 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANL contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that, a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

District 1

Melissa M. 7/5/09/ 3yrs
 Donna N. 6/19/09 3yrs
 Steve S. 6/19/10 1Year!
 Amy C. 6/21/10 1Year!

District 2

Ari. 7/3/96 15yrs
 Tim F. 7/4/06 5yrs
 Vicky. 7/5/06 5yrs
 Michael D. 7/6/87 24yrs

District 3

Oliver. 6/25/01 10yrs
 Patrick R. 6/27/02 9yrs

District 4

Karen S. 7/13/11 1Year!

District 5

Andrea. 6/15/10 1Year!
 Pearl C. 6/21/10 1Year!
 Stephanie. 7/01/09 2yrs
 John Mc C. 7/02/91 20yrs
 Ryan H. 7/07/07 4yrs

District 6

Jesse B. 7/19/10 1Year!

District 7

Lucas H. 6/16/10 1Year!
 Ray. 6/10/09 3yrs

District 8

Rich R. 9/23/05 6yrs
 Missy F. 6/25/99 12yrs

District 10

Cody L. 7/10/06 5yrs
 Josh H. 7/3/08 3yrs
 Kim M. 7/3/06 5yrs
 Stan R. 7/3/90 21yrs
 Gorge G. 7/7/94 27yrs

District 11

Alycia S. 6/26/08 3yrs
 Peter C. 6/27/08 3yrs
 Juliet J. 7/4/09 2yrs
 Brandon R. 7/5/94 17yrs

Other Locations

Michael D. NJ 7/15/06 4yrs
 Sammie S. NB 7/9/09 3yrs

