



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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A Life Worth Living

If you are reading this, it's a safe bet that you have smoked a lot of pot. Man, I loved pot and will always be a pot head. I really am so grateful for marijuana. Truly. It saved my life for a long time and was perhaps the single constant in my life for over twenty years. That's not to say that I didn't enjoy myself prior to smoking weed. I was generally a happy kid. I loved sports, music, just playing. And then my friends started smoking, so I did too. It wasn't too long into my using where everything became better with weed. And then it wasn't much later that nothing became worth doing unless there was also weed.

It's not that I was a miserable person before using, though there had been a growing feeling that something was lacking; that there was an ingredient, a clue, or a secret that I had somehow missed. TV and sugar did a lot to ease that, along with sports and later music, but nothing completed the puzzle better than weed. I had found my answer. And it was my answer for many years. Once I left college, where I majored in hacky sack, weed also became my secret.

Of course my "close" using buddies knew I smoked (some even knew how much) and even my close family members knew I smoked (never how much). But to most people I presented as a fairly responsible, quasi artistic goofball who always had a job, would generally show up on time, do work well enough to stay under the radar, and be seemingly contented with just a few simple things. I phrased my professional aspirations as simply hoping to not screw up the world any more than it already

was. However, this arguably laudable, and not surprisingly underachieving, goal proved much more challenging in my personal life.

I was always surprised when I pissed people off, when I hurt them or neglected them. I wasn't intentionally malicious or even overtly angry. I was mostly just neglectful and oblivious. But through working the program I discovered that I had been selfish, self-centered, and ultimately dishonest.

Half-truths, lies of omission and convenience were the ways I maintained my relationships with those who cared about me. I don't think I was even aware of all the lies because the greatest lies were those I was telling to myself. I would cheat and steal from those who loved me because I was somehow owed something. I would take for granted friends and lovers because they were simply lucky to have me around.

I could probably track, even justify, this inflated sense of entitlement and self-worth, but the bottom line was that I was running my life on ego alone. There was me, and then there were the rest of you. I might consider you once my needs were met, but probably not.

I'm not writing this to beat myself up; I've done plenty of that, and continue to occasionally when I am not active in my recovery. That's why it is crucial to my recovery that I remind myself daily of how operating on "rob power," no longer works for me. For a long time that was the only way, but my work in program has proven it to be a primitive and shortsighted approach to life.

So today I ask for a Higher Power to guide me, that my ego come in only as it can be
(Cont'd on page 2)

My Stages to Recovery

Stage One – Having the courage and willingness to walk through the doors at M.A.

Stage Two – Having the courage and willingness to introduce yourself as a newcomer.

Stage Three – Having the courage and willingness to stand up and take a welcome chip.

Stage Four – Having the courage and willingness to say something during group share.

Stage Five – Coming to realize and accept that you need help in order to stay sober.

Stage Six – Calling someone, or ask someone to be your sponsor.

Stage Seven – Realizing what you could use as your higher power.

Stage Eight – Realizing the importance of what the chips mean to you.

Stage Nine – Talking to fellow members and feeling as if you fit in.

Stage Ten – Helping out, even if it's just folding up chairs after a meeting.

Stage Eleven – Taking a meeting commitment, and committing to attend weekly.

Stage Twelve – Realizing that people will push your buttons of anger, insecurities, or hurt, and realizing what it means to put principles before personalities and accept the things you cannot change, and finding the serenity in that acceptance.

Stage Thirteen – Realizing that it's not just a program for those who need, or for those who want it, but for those who do it.

Stage Fourteen – Begin working the steps with all your heart and soul.

Jeff Y.

Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

a new leaf

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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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or submit online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the newsletter tab.

A Life Worth Living (Cont'd)
aligned with this Higher Power. I sometimes call this Power "God," but that's just shorthand. For me, this Power is what enables me to stay present, what enables me to stay available to the world around me, and is something I access through daily prayer and meditation. I also access this Higher Power through my connection with the fellowship. You are all part of my Higher Power; I learn from you, I take advice, criticism and input today in a way that would have been threatening and demoralizing before. And I know I will have to do the same tomorrow.

While my ego is still strong and extremely active, I don't have to follow it blindly. My life simply runs better when I seek the guidance of a Higher Power. This "seeking" has proven to be the key for me. I don't comprehend or understand my Higher Power. But I seek It. And I connect to this Power more and more, simply through the seeking.

Asking, Searching, Seeking... all of these actions are how I move away from the self toward faith in a Higher Power. I feel blessed to know that this Search must continue for me. Every day.

Thank you Marijuana Anonymous, for giving me access to a life worth living.

Rob R, District 7.

THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

*In what ways should
MAWS spend money to
"carry the message"?*

(Please submit answers by
September 17, 2012)

Tradition Eight
Marijuana Anonymous
should remain forever
nonprofessional, but our
service centers may
employ special workers.

My Active Addiction

I experienced confusion, paranoia and fear, to varying degrees, throughout my years of active addiction. I was pretty much constantly confused. I smoked in a vain attempt to regulate my feelings, or to try to achieve the impossible: a total lack of feelings. I smoked not to feel. The result was that I never knew what I felt! My feelings were a confused jumble. I'd forget what I was saying, or even doing, mid-sentence/stride.

I never had any super-strong feelings of paranoia. My constant stoned-state was accompanied by a low-level paranoia. I scowled a lot more when I was using because I felt the entire world was against me. It made me irritable: it was Me vs. The World.

The fear and paranoia are related for me. I was afraid of living! I feared my emotions, used to try and regulate them, and then experienced confusion and paranoia as a result of my use. Such is the vicious cycle of my active addiction: Fear Emotions >> Smoke to Combat/Regulate Emotions >> Experience Confusion/Paranoia >> Some Feelings Come Through as I Come Down >> REPEAT!

One of the most beautiful and scary aspects of recovery is the return of a full range of emotions. I am learning, one day at a time, with the help of my sponsor, meetings and other tools of the program, to fully accept and embrace my emotions. By keeping some aspect of recovery at the forefront of my life every day (for example, if I can't make a meeting, I will read literature, like A New Leaf, and/or call a fellow), I am reminded that I am a sentient human being, that it is okay to have feelings, that life is, in a large way, a series of uncontrollable events. What I do have control over is my reaction to events.

Granted, this is way easier said than done. One of my favorite slogans that keeps me from beating myself up too much is "progress, not perfection." As someone with perfectionist tendencies, I keep this at the forefront of my recovery. One day at a time, vis-à-vis a series of imperfect perfections: I recover!

Others Have Gone Before; Others Will Follow, *We Recover*

Registration Form 2013 MA Convention February 15-17, 2013 Hilton/Irvine Orange County Airport

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

___ Check here if you'd like an e-mail confirming your registration

___ Check here if you'd like a mailed confirmation (please send self-addressed stamped envelope)

Banquet Food Choices ___ Chicken ___ Vegetarian	Amount Paid
Registration AND Banquet TOGETHER	\$
Registration ONLY	\$
Saturday Banquet ONLY	\$
Raffle Tickets: \$1 x ____ (qty)	\$
Scholarship Fund (helps others who can't afford to register)	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$

*Registration includes: Friday Night Play and Open Mic Show, Saturday Workshops & Lunch, Saturday Dance and Midnight Rock Show, Sunday Lunch. Banquet is separate.

Register:	by July 31, 2012	between August 1 and December 31, 2012	between January 1 and January 31, 2013	after January 31, 2013
Registration*	\$85	\$100	\$115	\$130
Saturday Banquet	\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60
TOGETHER	\$120	\$140	\$160	\$180

Complete **one form per person** with a check or money order payable to **MA District 5**
Mail Registration form and payment to: 3553 Atlantic Ave. #176, Long Beach, CA 90807
OR Visit **ma2013convention.org** and pay through PayPal.

Reserve your room today! Ask for the **MA 2013 Annual Convention** rates or visit the hotel link.

Hilton/Irvine Orange County Airport – 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612

Reservations 800-445-8667

http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/S/SNAOCHF-MA2013-20130213/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Room Rate\$109 Single/Double (Standard King or Two Double Beds)

(NOTE: Room Rate increases up to \$140 on Jan. 31, 2013)

Questions? E-mail: lizprimary@aol.com

ENCOURAGEMENT DRAWING: Register for the Convention **AND** Book Your Hotel Room** **BEFORE** December 31, 2012 and you will be entered in a drawing to win two Adult admissions to Disneyland **AND** a \$50 gift card to use during your visit.

****must stay in hotel at least one evening to be eligible for drawing**



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District 18 Sacramento

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

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

1) If this is your first conference, what advice was given to you? If you are a returning attendee, what were you looking forward too?

I had no real advice given to me, just some general feelings from my fellows of "I'm glad it's you, not me", which I thought was all the wrong kind of attitude for this thing.

2) What committee did you select and why?

I selected the internet committee, because I think it has the space to be of the most impact to MA, and because I'm interested and have some skills in that area.

2012 MA CONFERENCE Q & A!

3) Describe if you were uncomfortable at any time during the conference and how you worked through it?

I was not really uncomfortable at all. Occasionally, I didn't want to voice my opinion because my little committee in my head said, "you don't have as much time as these guys, and maybe you're wrong, and who cares." I asked for help from my sponsor, and from God, and the answer that I got back was that I was put here for a reason, at this time, and that I needed to voice my opinion because that's why it was given to me.

4) Did the conference benefit your personal recovery?

Yes, absolutely. Almost everything benefits my personal recovery. It was great to meet new fellows, and I love the concentrated power that we achieved over the weekend.

5) What might you share to encourage others to be of service at a conference?

I would just share that service is part of the deal - you got sober here, saved your life, and we give back freely to what saved us. You might not love it (although I did), and you might find that your talents are elsewhere, and you might enjoy other types of service more, but without trying, you'll never know!

Birthdays

Celebrating 185 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP 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

Donna N.	6/19/08	4 yrs.
Steve S.	6/19/10	2 yrs.
John S.	6/1/08	4 yrs.
Joseph H.	6/1/11	1 YEAR!

District 3

Antonia B.	6/19/00	12 yrs.
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District 4

Sonja P.	6/25/12	5 yrs
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District 5

John Mc.	7/2/91	21 yrs.
Sean F.	7/4/02	10 yrs.
Ryan H.	7/7/07	5 yrs.

District 6

Josh B.	7/21/06	6 yrs.
Steve R.	7/21/06	6 yrs.

District 7

Abby	6/16/11	1 YEAR!
Jeff	6/19/01	11 yrs.
Farmer Doug.	6/11/99	13 yrs.
Victoria I.	5/8/03	9 yrs.
Gary	6/23/02	10 yrs.
Don O.	7/5/11	1 YEAR!
Heshie L.	7/7/07	5 yrs.
Les G.	7/11/11	1 YEAR!
Jessie	6/28/11	1 YEAR!
Justin H.	6/25/11	1 YEAR!
Matthew B.	6/1/11	1 YEAR!

District 8

Missy F.	6/25/99	13 yrs
Josh S.	6/29/05	7 yrs

District 11

Alycia	6/26/08	4 yrs
Juliet J.	7/4/09	3 yrs
Brandon R.	7/5/94	18 yrs

District 13 - MA Online

Angel P.	7/2/11	1 YEAR!
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New York

Amy H.	7/10/04	8 yrs.
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Colorado

Alexandra B.	7/1/12	1 YEAR!
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