



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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My Path

Nineteen years ago, I was living on some guy's sofa in, shall we say, a less than ideal area of town. A year or so earlier, I had been sharing a comfortable house in a good part of town with a lovely woman (who "happened" to be an active alcoholic). I drove to my impressive professional office in

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my sporty luxury car. I had a social life. Now, somehow, I had no car, no home to call my own, and few people wanted to have anything to do with me, except for others for whom using was a way of life.

The fall came quickly, but can be traced back to a time decades earlier.

I did not become an addict the first time I smoked pot, nor

the second or third. While I first smoked in the summer between junior high and high school, I never went to HS or to college stoned. I was truly a recreational user, smoking a little and having a few beers with friends on Friday nights.

My smoking became a regular feature over the weekends in graduate school. And yet, it didn't seem to interfere with my graduating near the top of my class, or my obtaining a prestigious government job out of grad school. Here, the first signs that I might be a "problem user" started popping up. While I wasn't coming to work high, I was coming to work hung-over from the night before. My work performance, while acceptable most of the time, could have been better.

I started using pot to deal with my emotional pain – relationship, family or work difficulties. I used more and more to escape my reality and to live in fantasy.

In spite of this increased using, my professional life continued to progress, and ultimately I opened my own business. Business was great, and I got to hire a couple of employees -- who liked to smoke as much or more than I did! We started to smoke together after work, then sometimes at lunch. Yet, while neither the business nor my life thrived, somehow it didn't collapse... until it did.

I suffered a serious leg fracture, and a month later hobbled into the middle of an armed robbery. I felt that G-d was giving me a sign
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Gifted 'til I Drifted

I was thirteen years old when I smoked pot for the first time. My parents were away for the day and my older sister got me stoned. I don't blame her. Hell, I wanted to get high. Everything I read talked about a sense of euphoria, a sense of being at peace. And damn if what I read wasn't true.

I had never been a happy kid, never had a close set of friends.

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That first time was amazing. I was happy! What a great feeling. I was a casual, but regular user through high school, but the summers were a different story.

Where I worked, we were all a bunch of stoners. We worked at a country club, the money was good, really good, and so we could always score. The thing is, I was a smart kid, a SUPER smart kid. They called me "gifted" and put me in special classes.

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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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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or submit online:

www.marijuana-anonymous.org/anl

and click on the [newsletter](#) tab.

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My Path

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– that I should explore more of the dark side of life. And that I did. I was able to keep that up for two or three years, before it all collapsed around me. I was diagnosed with ADHD, prescribed medication, and told by my doctor to keep smoking pot to help with my anxiety. Just what I needed – permission to do what I wanted to do, wherever and whenever I wanted!

It wasn't long thereafter that my car was repossessed, I was evicted from my house, and (by the grace of G-d), I ended up on the sofa of some dude I didn't really know.

I don't know how many months I lived there, accepting free day-old bread from the neighborhood baker, being asked by a homeless couple if I were running away from home as I wheeled my laundry in a suitcase up Alvarado Street.

At some point, I was told by a family member of a place in my neighborhood which might be able to help me. I wasn't ready. When I was reminded of that resource several months later, somehow I had become ready.

I visited what turned out to be a rehab, and was invited by the director to "hang out" -- sit in on groups, and go to meetings with the house. I did that for three weeks – while still getting stoned. After all, marijuana had been my solution, not my problem! I would not give up my "solution" unless I could find a new one.

During those three weeks, I heard experience, strength and hope from all sorts of formerly hopeless addicts. And now, from hanging around these recovering addicts telling their stories and talking about their programs, I came to believe that there was another solution – in recovery and the Twelve Steps.

So, one night, after starting the night smoking and drinking with friends, I just stopped, turning down the joint when it came around the circle. And that was it, on the night of April 30, 1997, I was done.

I got a sponsor, and worked the steps with that sponsor. I found my first Marijuana Anonymous meeting a few months in, and MA quickly became my program. I took on service commitments at the meeting level, and then at the District level, and then at the World Services level. I have sponsored a good number of men in MA. I continue to work the Steps myself, and with my sponsees. I apply the Steps to my life. I work to stay in today – in this moment. I try to remember that G-d (of my uncertain understanding) is always available to me... maybe not doing exactly what I might want, or acting in my time, but never letting me down, or leaving me alone.

Today, I live in a house not far from the home from which I was evicted nineteen years ago. I have regained the ability to practice my profession, and enjoy doing so. I have innumerable friends, many of whom I've met through my recovery in MA. I know that even my non-recovery friends are a product of my recovery.

There are challenges – but that is the nature of life. We all grow older (if we're lucky). Friends and family become ill, and some die. If we live long enough, we get to feel more and more of the effects of age ourselves. We have joys. We have losses. With a life in recovery, we get to be present for it all.

For that, and for all of this life, I am eternally grateful.

Alan B.

Gifted 'til I Drifted

cont'd from pg. 1

I think my initial drug use was a rebellion against that, but who the hell knows. I'm 46 now, and definitely would not consider myself "gifted" in any way. I was so smart that I was able to graduate from high school and go to college a year early. Looking back, it was one of the worst decisions I made. I guess I can admit now, that I probably went to college so that I could party without any parental interference.

The drug use got worse, so bad that I couldn't keep friends. My friends were pot and mushrooms, and LSD and cocaine. However, pot was my BEST friend. Looking back, I was clearly self-medicating. It's so obvious now that I suffered from depression beginning as an adolescent and that I thought drugs were the answer.

That first year of college is mostly a blur. I even went and took a final exam tripping on acid. My drug use continued throughout that summer. When I returned to college there were no friends waiting for me. I smoked from the moment I woke up, to the moment I went to sleep. I became suicidal.

One day I just packed my things and went home. My parents were furious that I dropped out. I went into therapy, but of course, I didn't tell my therapist that I was taking drugs because he would try to get me to quit. I started going to school again, locally, and made friends, but they were all stoners. Hell, I even chose a major based on the ability to go to class stoned. I was a Lit. Major, and had no problem going to class high and spouting off nonsense about the deep meanings of works in literature.

Hell, I had this under control. I could go to school high and still get great grades. Awesome right? See,

my problem is that I never really hit rock bottom. I thought I had it all under control. Like I said, I was smart. Of course, I had no direction in life, didn't know what I wanted to do, so I went to law school. I controlled my drug use during law school. I would only get stoned at night, once all my studying was done. I had this thing licked. I wasn't an addict, I could just use socially like everyone else. I held it

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together long enough to graduate law school, meet a girl, get married and have kids. I would only get stoned on the weekends and only when someone else had weed. I was done. I wouldn't buy again, so I wouldn't use regularly.

The thing is, though, that the depression, untreated, reared its ugly head. I became suicidal. I was hospitalized, twice! Eventually, I got the depression under control, found the right balance of medications... I was good. Hey, I can even smoke again! Nope, dumb move. I lost jobs, never really became successful at my career, just got by on my intelligence without doing much work, but eventually the partners would catch on. They would see that I was just getting by, and that is not who they wanted working for them.

Like I said, I never had a true rock bottom moment where I

decided to quit. But now I found myself working for someone else, not making anywhere near what I should. Barely keeping my family afloat. We declared bankruptcy, and all this time I was still smoking. I wouldn't get pot often, but when I did I would smoke on the way to work and the minute I got home. I've always known I was an addict, I just never admitted it to anyone else.

Last night I went to my first MA meeting. My wife called me an addict a couple of days ago, and it just clicked. My secret was out, time to do something about it. Who knows what the future holds? It's not in my hands. I'm not sure if this will help anyone and I know this is long, but I've barely scratched the surface. Thanks for listening.

Brad A.

Service Opportunity... ANLP Secretary

A New Leaf Publications (ANLP) is looking for a new Secretary, for the term starting no later than October 16, 2015. The Secretary serves as one of five ANLP Board members.

The ANLP Secretary must be clean and sober from marijuana, alcohol and all other mind-altering substances for at least two years, and must have experience either as 1) a MAWS Delegate for at least one year; or 2) has been a MAWS Trustee for at least one year; or 3) has been a Managing Director of ANLP for at least one year. The position requires approval by the MA World Services Board.

If you are interested in taking your service to a new level in the ANLP Secretary's position, or have any questions, please contact chair@anewleafpublications.org or Alan B. at (310) 892-2149.

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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

MA World Services

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www.marijuana-anonymous.org
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www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

District 2 East Bay

www.madistrict2.org 510.287.8873

District 3 South SF Bay Area

PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

District 5 Orange County

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District 6 LA County North

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

District 7 LA County South

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 310.494.0189

District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

District 10 LA County East

email info@madistrict10.org or call 626.869.6210

District 11 Portland

PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.567.9892

District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 1088 Penngrove, CA 94951 415.419.3555 or 707.583.2326

District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

District 14 London, England

http://www.marijuana-anonymous.co.uk 24hr Helpline 07940.503438

District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 631-647-0768

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District 17 Denmark

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District 18 Sacramento, CA

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

District 19 Toronto, Canada

www.matoronto.org 647.201.9161 or 416.999.2244

District 20 San Diego, CA

www.ma-sandiego.org

Birthdays

Celebrating **279**
years of sobriety!

District 2

Ari K.	7/3/96	19 yrs.
Dave S.	7/14/14	1 yr.
Kevin V.	7/21/85	30 yrs.
Nadia	7/24/10	5 yrs.

District 4

Jessica W.	7/1/13	2 yrs.
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District 5

Jeremy	7/15/03	12 yrs.
John McC	7/2/91	24 yrs.
Justin	6/26/12	3 yrs.
Pearl C.	6/21/10	5 yrs.
Ryan	7/7/07	8 yrs.
Scott A.	6/25/12	3 yrs.
Sean F.	7/4/02	13 yrs.
Trudie	6/1/98	15 yrs.

District 6

Ben R.	6/1/06	9 yrs.
John B.	6/25/96	19 yrs.
Josh B.	7/21/06	9 yrs.
Mark I.	6/21/99	16 yrs.
Steve R.	7/21/06	9 yrs.

District 8

Missy F.	6/25/99	16 yrs.
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District 10

Josh S.	6/29/05	10 yrs.
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District 11

Alicia	6/26/08	7 yr.
Brandon R	7/5/94	11 yr.
James D	6/18/11	4 yr.
Juliet J	7/4/09	6 yr.
Seth B	7/3/12	3 yr.
Steve R	6/28/13	2 yr.

District 13

Douglas	7/14/13	2 yrs.
Foxflute	5/22/02	13 yrs.
Ray NYC	7/14/12	3 yrs.

**KEEP
COMING
BACK!**



ANL wants to publish your sobriety anniversary. 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.

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

What experiences in
recovery have given
you hope?

(Submit by September 21st,
your answers will be published
in the October 2015 issue.)

STEP EIGHT

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



TRADITION EIGHT

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