



## The Rich Problem

I must first admit that I am scared to tell my story for *A New Leaf*. I feel like my story isn't good enough for you guys. This was part of why I used in the first place, FEAR! But there is a solution to the "Rich" problem, and that is the 12 steps.

I think I was an addict from the moment I was born. I remember as a young child my sister and I would grab hands and spin around and round and "get drunk" as we called it. Yes we were just making ourselves dizzy, but I loved that feeling. My grandmother would give each grandchild \$25 to spend during the summer. I spent mine the first day on comic books and candy. Over the course of the next few weeks, I stole the money from my siblings and cousins, so I could buy more comics and candy. I always wanted more, more, more! When it came to drugs, I used until I ran out or passed out. When I woke up I used some more. I used to roll joints to have at my bedside in case I woke up, so I could smoke more.

My story includes many other drugs and alcohol, but marijuana was always there. No matter what I took, I used marijuana with it. I remember sharing at an outpatient rehab, that I would give up the "drugs" and alcohol, but that I would never stop smoking marijuana. I tried to do this off and on (mostly off) for the last 10 years of my using. I learned two things; one I can not just smoke marijuana, I want to use other drugs and to drink; and two, marijuana use alone is enough to make my life unbearable. My privately defined world was my couch, my TV and a big bag of weed! I did not want to go to work. I did

not want to date, or be social in any way. I could not stand to be around family or what was left of my friends. I could not be relied upon.

July 23rd 2002, I went to rehab, again, but this time it was different. I had the desire to be sober. Do you want to know the most important thing I learned in rehab? I learned the importance of going to meetings, getting a sponsor (and sober fellows), and working these steps.

*"My privately defined world was my couch, my TV and a big bag of weed!"*

The 1st Step for me was a 21 year journey through active addiction. I could not accept that I was powerless, especially over marijuana. Acceptance came for me about 20 days into that rehab. I was challenged to tell my story in a group, and I did. I got honest probably for the first time in my life. The 2nd Step was about finding a Higher Power. You see I was not comfortable with that punishing God of my youth. In the 2nd Step I came up with my own concept of a Higher Power, a loving mother/father figure, who cares for me and upon whom I can rely. The 3rd Step I was asked to turn my will and my life over to this Higher Power. I did my 3rd Step with a priest from my childhood faith. He challenged me to keep saying that prayer and to

really take the decision to heart. So now I'm ready for step 4, right?

Wrong! I spent over a year in this program, just talking about Step 4. But I did not write a single word. Well ok, I took a paper and I wrote "This is my fourth step" at the top, and then promptly put it away. Finally I just did it. I spent a lazy Saturday afternoon just writing and writing. I looked at my resentments, my fears and my sexual conduct. I was told by my sponsor to always look for "My" part in these things. Then when I was ready, I sat down at the beach near the ocean (Nature, my Higher Power) with my sponsor and we did the 5th step. He told me to put away my 4th step and that we would just talk. He helped me identify patterns of behavior. At the end he asked me if there was anything else that I was holding back, a deep dark secret. He then told me his deep dark secret, and I did not think it was so bad! So, I told him mine. He also did not think it was that bad. I always use this "secret" when I take another man through the 5th Step. The closeness to God that I feel at this time is beyond belief.

The 6th and 7th Steps confused me, I thought they were the same, just using different words. But the truth is I was not entirely ready to have "God remove all these defects of character." I had to pray, and to work with my sponsor to get ready. Then in the 7th Step, I ask God to remove specific defects. Patience and tolerance is a big one for me. I must pray and ask God to make me patient and tolerant. It was the

## 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](mailto:chiefs@anewleafpublications.org)

### ANLP Staff

Chairperson: Thor H.  
Treasurer: Beth F.  
Secretary: Aurelie E.  
Managing Editor: Michael O.  
Publishing Editor: Ron H.

### Contact ANLP

Send articles/stories:  
[stories@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:stories@anewleafpublications.org)

Other inquiries and correspondence:  
[info@anewleafpublications.org](mailto:info@anewleafpublications.org)

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## The Rich Problem *continued*

same with Step 8 and 9. In Step 8, I got ready for Step 9. I had to look at the people listed on my 4th Step and add a name or two. Then in Step 9, I would make amends to them. This is more than just saying I'm sorry. It's about explaining how I was wrong, showing them I no longer lived my life that way, and making restitution. Sometimes that means I owe them money or my time.

I live Steps 10, 11 and 12 in the maintenance of my recovery. Step 10 for me is a daily guide. When I am about to, or have just done something wrong, the 10th Step kicks in and I must promptly make amends. This happens to me often at work. I am impatient with coworkers. I must then ask God for patience, and then I must go back to apologize and take the time to help them. Step 11 is about prayer and meditation. I must meditate and listen for a message from my Higher Power. When I pray, I must remember God is not my personal "Santa". I ask God to guide me, and

I trust God. Step 12 is when I share my story. I am reminded that I am one sip of a beer, or one toke on a joint away from a relapse. This story is not me 12 stepping you, but rather you guys 12 stepping me!

So what is my life like today? To tell you the truth I have good days and bad days. The miracle is that I don't have to use over any kind of day. Today I am productive at my job. I am a member of a family, and I have lots of sober friends. These folks can rely upon me today. Lastly, I would say about 5% of my life is great joy and another 5% is great sadness, but the rest is just boring old everyday life. That was when I used most of all, during these mundane parts of my life. The true miracle is I don't have to use any more, over any of these times. Most mornings I wake up and I feel pretty good. But if I don't, I get up anyways and face my day. I suit up and I show up! I don't use one day at a time. I have a 'Life with Hope!' ▲

~by Rich C

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## An Understanding of The Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous

Editor's Note: We happened upon this piece of our literature, labeled H-02 from June of 1993. It talks about understanding the twelve steps by embracing the principles we need to practice to have a spiritual awakening. You can also find these principles in the Step Twelve section of the *Life with Hope 12-Step Workbook*. We hope you enjoy this look into the history of MA as much as we do.

**W**e were once asked what was meant by the reference to "these principles" as they are mentioned in our Twelfth Step. After discussing this question, it seemed to us that "These Principles" were something suggested or arrived at by working the Steps. The Steps were the tools to be used to discover the "Principles". Of course this is a program of action and a personal thing, an individual program, so each person will probably find their own principles for themselves. After much meditation, we have discovered the following principles have greatly helped us to understand and practice our program. When all these principles are given meaning and purpose through LOVE - Love of god, of our fellows, and respect for ourselves, then they truly become the heart of our program of MA. With a deep sense of gratitude and the help of a Power greater than ourselves, we can live in emotional and physical sobriety with serenity and comfort one day at a time.

In working the 1st Step, when we "admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable," we had at last found the courage to face the truth and tell it; we were practicing the principle of **HONESTY**.

In working the 2nd Step, when we "came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity," we were practicing the principle of **HOPE**.

In working the 3rd Step, when we "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God," we were practicing the principle of **FAITH**.

In working the 4th Step, when we "made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves," we were practicing the principle of **COURAGE**.

In working the 5th Step, when we "admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs," we were practicing the principle of **INTEGRITY**.

In working the 6th Step, when we "were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character," we were practicing the principle of **WILLINGNESS**.

In working the 7th Step, when we "humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings," we were practicing the principle of **HUMILITY**.

In working the 8th Step, when we "made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all," we were practicing the principles of **LOVE** and **FORGIVENESS**.

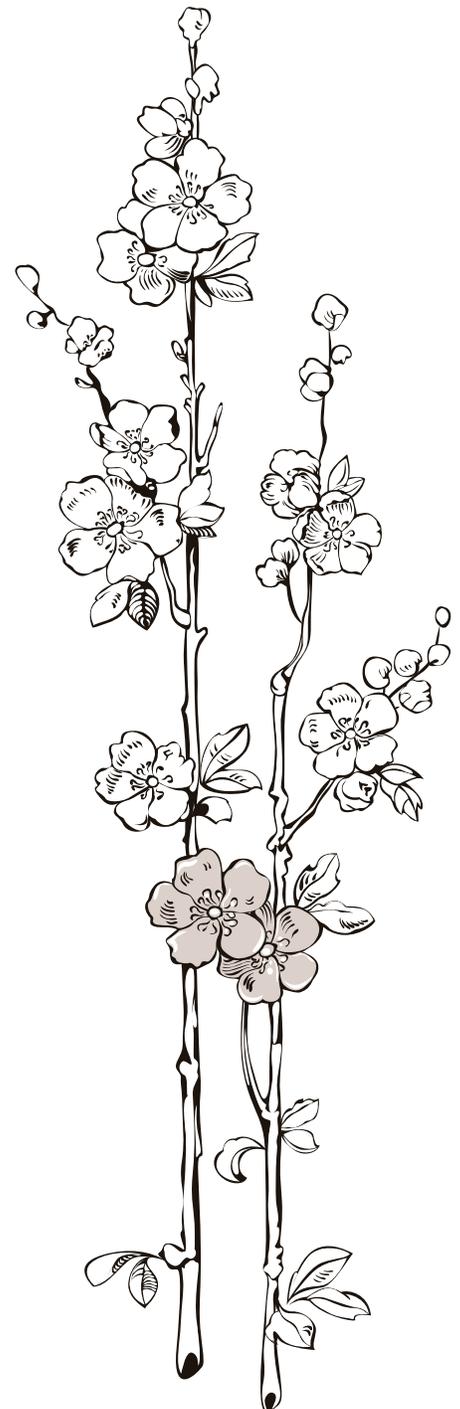
In working the 9th Step, when we "made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others," we were practicing the principle of **JUSTICE**.

In working the 10th Step, when we "continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it," we were practicing the principle of **PERSEVERANCE**.

In working the 11th Step, when we "sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out," we were practicing the principle of **SPIRITUAL AWARENESS**.

In working the 12th Step, when "having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to marijuana addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs," we were practicing the principle of **SERVICE**. ▲

*Excerpted from H-02 - MA Conference Approved Handout 1993*



# 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

<b>DIST. 2 San Francisco &amp; East Bay</b>	+1.510.957.8390	<b>DIST. 15 Long Island, NY</b>	+1.631.647.0768
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### 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.*

## Celebrating 221 Years of Sobriety!

<b>District 2</b>	Mike D	6/6/2003	17	<b>Individuals</b>		
Ari K	7/3/1996	24		April B	7/4/1998	22
Flannery M	7/15/2018	24		Michael D	7/15/2006	14
<b>District 4</b>						
Peeps	7/1/2019	1				
<b>District 5</b>						
Jeremy G	7/15/03	17	<b>District 8</b>			
John McC	7/2/91	29	Rich C	7/23/2002	18	
Justin	6/26/12	8				
Mel G	5/18/19	1	<b>District 11</b>			
Ryan H	7/7/07	13	Exuro P	6/22/2019	1	
Sean F	7/4/02	18	Joseph B	8/19/2018	2	
			Steve F	8/04/2018	2	
			Steve R	6/28/2013	7	
<b>District 6</b>			<b>District 12</b>			
Will K	7/1/2013	7	Lindsay A	6/28/2019	1	
			Charlotte C	6/27/2017	3	
			Stephanie E	6/23/2016	4	
			<b>District 19</b>			
			Michael O	7/6/2010	10	

**See your sobriety date here!**

Allow us to publish your anniversary to celebrate! 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. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org