



A Furious Love

My wife lost patience with me for having no patience for her and others who, unknowingly, prevented me from seeking fun. This idol delivered every time, or so I thought, when I would drink or get high or both. Without these, I could not have fun. Fun became my focus, instead of what really matters in life.

She said I'd have to change or else she would seek divorce. Instead of realizing the weight of her words, I simply left her. I'd rather be on my own pursuing pleasure than having to deal with a spouse who didn't understand me. Drugs, specifically marijuana and vodka, "helped" me with anxiety and depression and made life fun. To a depraved mind, it's easy to see how easily becoming depressed can be, especially when life throws difficulties like 100 mph fastballs. When drunk or stoned, those fastballs seemed to hit me, the batter, every time. To feel better, I'd drink and get high. That was my way of dealing with difficulty.

In a full-tilt withdrawal from life's challenges, I didn't have the answers she was looking for. We agreed to separate. I moved back to Huntington Beach, renting a room from friends. I thought I was free to enjoy life the way I wanted. For seven months, I contemplated divorce vs. going into rehab for treatment. Turns out, I wasn't free. Instead, the chains of addiction had extended into every area of my life.

Through bleary eyes, nauseous belly, foggy brain, feverish body and the overall opposite of well being, I counted the other costs for my pursuit of pleasure. The woman I loved wanted divorce. My

daughters wouldn't speak to me. My friends didn't know my hypocrisy. My prayers seemed to fall on deaf ears. I lost hope. I lost hope in love, friendships, my faith and eventually in life.

I've never been a wiz with math, but these were expensive costs that were bankrupting me. Plus, I felt like death warmed over. "Maybe I need help," the thought finally occurred to me. I reached Step one. "Admitted I was powerless over marijuana and alcohol, that my life had become unmanageable."

It took me a few more weeks, and a few more horrific hangovers, to muster up the courage to make the call to a rehabilitation treatment facility. But finally, I did. Then, I admitted to my housemates that I had a problem, and I was leaving the next day.

I made the drive, sober and scared. Without the usual chemical cocktails running through my brain and body, I was a shivering, nerve-wrecked mess. Detoxification settled in. Upon arriving, I met Brian, who showed me where to check-in and offered to keep me company, in other words, to take me under his wing. I was extremely grateful, because I felt alone in the battle to beat the "ism" disease.

Somehow, I knew God put Brian in my life at the right time. Brian, a former pastor now hooked on fentanyl, became my first sponsor, helping me through the next two of 12 steps. He handed me my first assignment — Read "The Furious Longing of God," by Brennan Manning. This little book opened

my eyes to the big heart of God, and his passionate desire to fall in-love together. He writes that it's often easier for a Christian to believe in God than it is to believe He loves us. So, Manning encourages the reader to pray this simple, but paradigm-shifting prayer for 30 days: "I am my Beloved's; and His desire is for me." (Song of Solomon 7:10) I started to grasp His furious longing for me, which led me to Step 2: "Came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore my sanity."

My next assignment was to read the first 11 chapters of the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous, which discusses the 12-step program, how it works and what it accomplishes. I felt God stirring my heart. I was eager to take the next step; AA's Step 3 says, "Made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God..."

Among those pages is a prayer which sounded very familiar, but nevertheless had new meaning to me. With all the earnestness I could muster, I turned my will, my life, everything over to God, again. God answered that late night prayer.

"Woooooosh," a new clarity of purpose wiped over my life. Immediately, I knew what needed to happen. God stamped my mind with these five actions that He was going to help me with.

- Reconcile with my wife, Heidi
- Restore my relationship with my daughters
- Be the breadwinner for my family
- Find a 12-step community in my area, with a sponsor
- Find a men's Bible study asap

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

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Furious Love (continued from page 1)

I didn't know how this was going to happen, but I knew, beyond any shadow of doubt, that God would help me, because of his furious longing to love me. All I had to do was surrender to His Lordship, and ultimately to His love. That was 9 months ago. Since then, God has revealed to me His ever-presence and longing for me. I had become new, a changed man with a purpose for living. God opened my eyes to the exciting work He is doing all around me, and through me. Life is ripe with opportunity. His mission has become my mission.

It took a while for Heidi to believe the change. But she found forgiveness for who she now calls David 2.0. God installed a new upgrade program that doesn't have any bugs anymore. After 12 months of separation and nearly divorcing, God saved our marriage and it is now stronger than ever. My daughters have started talking with me again. I found a Marijuana Anonymous 12-step group in Santa Barbara and an awesome, experienced sponsor to help me. I've focused on earning like never before,

because now my mind isn't cluttered, weighed-down or inwardly occupied. And, I've taken steps to participate in a new men's Bible study, that allows me to be nourished, while God nourishes others through me.

God has restored my life in awesome, mind-blowing and incredibly amazing ways. He has healed me with His love. I know now God desires more than a relationship with me. He desires complete unity — a level of intimacy the Bible compares to a marriage. God sent His son so we could know His love, but also so God could pursue us with his love to accomplish His goal of becoming united in Him, with his Spirit taking root in us, so we can bear fruit that never withers.

I've come to realize deeply in my soul that God loves to "lavish unending love" on his children — which brings me back to those simple, but powerful words in Song of Solomon that today I celebrate with certainty: "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is for me." ▲

~by David J.

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Gratitude Practice

When I entered recovery, my sponsor told me to make a list every morning of the things I was grateful for. I did it for a while and then stopped. I've recently returned to the practice and have found it uplifting and empowering. My gratitude practice now is to prepare a text about what I'm grateful for first thing in the morning, and then to send it to a couple dozen people. This allows me to start the day focused on the good things in my life, and at least slows down my tendency to slide into complaint or cynicism. Some of the folks that receive the list send me one back, and then I get uplifted by their gratitude.

Sometimes my gratitude list is sort of thematic and reflective; here's the one I did this morning:

This morning I am grateful that the desperate failure and pain of the latter stages of my active addiction brought me to a place where I was willing to ask for help and, for the first time, to listen to and follow

recommendations. I am grateful that little chink in the armor of self has been enough to open me to a whole new way of being and living: one where asking for help is the first thing rather than the last, and where being in relationship is Being itself, rather than a necessary evil. I am grateful to have failed up and fallen home, and hopeful that today I will be able to be a small part of the homecoming for someone else.

Other times it's more basic; here's one from a few days ago:

This morning I am grateful for the meeting that I get to attend in a little while, and for the chance it will give me to be out of my head and connected to others. I am grateful for another beautiful spring morning; for the chance to be together with friends this afternoon; and for the chance to talk to my mother. For a really good sleep. The simple stuff.

Sometimes my gratitude is concrete and reflective at the same time:

I'm grateful this morning for my dogs, two of my most important teachers. They sleep a lot. They give and receive affection, exercise a little (one of them a very little), eat, and pretend to protect the home we share. One of them shows up all jaunty and intrepid, greeting any situation he meets with curiosity, joy, and unbridled enthusiasm. (The other is too old for all that.) Neither one of them has any idea what is going to happen next from one day to another, and they have no pretense otherwise. That's their entire repertoire, and they are enthusiastically loved and accepted for that, and exactly as they are, by me and by my God. I am grateful for the lessons my dogs are trying to teach me and I aspire to really learn from them.

Regardless, though, I am a huge fan of intentional gratitude practice. It only takes about 10 minutes a day, and the rewards are tremendous. If you haven't tried it, I encourage you to do so. ▲

~by Anonymous

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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 257 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Ari K.	7/3/1996	25 yrs.
Juan V.	7/5/2015	6 yrs.
Zach W.	7/9/2020	1 yr.

District 5

Angela	7/15/2020	1 yr.
Jeremy G.	7/13/2003	18 yrs.
John McC.	7/2/1991	30 yrs.
Justin	6/26/2012	9 yrs.
Matt R.	7/4/2020	1 yr.
Ryan H.	7/7/2007	14 yrs.
Sean F.	7/4/2002	19 yrs.
Stephanie	7/1/2009	12 yrs.
Taek	7/4/2020	1 yr.

District 7

Michael G.	7/7/1988	33 yrs.
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District 19

Michael O.	7/6/2010	11 yrs.
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Independant Meetings

April	7/4/1998	23 yrs.
Davy O'	7/18/1987	34 yrs.
David R.	7/7/2003	18 yrs.
Holly A.	7/1/2020	1 yr.

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