



Putting It Down

When I was using, my addiction was willing to go to any lengths to get marijuana and stay high. At the end of my using, I could never get high enough, for long enough. My addiction told me lies: "This is medicine. It helps my anxiety and GI issues." "It helps me feel more connected to the Universe." "It's just an herb. It's natural, not harmful." "It's part of being a hippie chick. I'm gonna smoke till the day I die." "Pot makes me more social." And on and on. Because my addicted brain believed those lies, I told similar lies to others. "Yes, I need to smoke more pot right now" when my partner said, "Haven't you had enough?" as I defiantly smoked in the house, knowing he couldn't stand the smell of marijuana. I was willing to go to any lengths to use marijuana, becoming more bold and taking more risks the longer I continued. I bypassed my rules of not smoking while driving on the Interstate and stopping 6 hours before I had to be at work.

I used to help myself not see things, "painting red flags white." I used so I could bypass my intuition and blind myself to others' hurtful behavior. I used to escape reality and responsibility. I used to quiet my relentless inner critic and numb the pain of feeling like I didn't fit in and being too sensitive to everything. Any relief was only short lived. As it says in *Life with Hope*: "We had a problem with living."

My first wedding anniversary was the first of 968 clean "one day at a times." Two days later, I gave my remaining stash to my best friend. A few days later, I gathered my paraphernalia and asked my partner

to keep it somewhere. I just couldn't bear to get rid of it – yet. I'd spent good money on it, and the rituals involved in preparing and using marijuana brought me such comfort . . . until they didn't.

I dove into 12 Step recovery by calling into and sharing at Marijuana Anonymous meetings every day, sometimes multiple times a day, getting a sponsor, contacting other addicts, reading literature, and starting work on the steps. As I worked Step 1, I started to realize the depth of my problem with using. The longer I work the program and the more my addicted brain heals, the more amazed I am at the insanity that has been my life. I realized I had to grieve the losses that came with putting marijuana down and begin rewiring my brain: disconnecting pot from my hippie chick identity, learning how to listen to music in a different way, struggling to tolerate social gatherings, going no contact with my best friend of 34 years, navigating the extremes of emotion that no longer had a buffer, redefining and building more than a "Santa Claus" relationship with my Higher Power, having to be in and with my body in its rawest form, and seeing myself and the world through a painful lens of truth and reality. My privately defined world had been so delusional, I didn't even know it existed.

As I surrendered to my program of recovery, I finally became willing to throw away my paraphernalia. I no longer kept it "because someone could use it." I surrendered my reservations about using and threw it in a dumpster. After a couple

of months, I grinned with the knowledge that I could pass a drug test. I felt the freedom of being able to travel anywhere in the world now that I didn't have the chains of marijuana keeping me tied to car trips only. I no longer worried about having enough pot with me, just in case. I didn't feel anxious when I saw the police. My obsession to use has been lifted!

Having recently completed Step Seven, I understand more about my problem with living. I have faced some hard truths about myself and my life. I have received the gift of my sponsors' guidance, Higher Power's strength and love, and tools of the program. I am experiencing more moments of serenity. As I surrender my addiction to intensity, control, self-deprivation, victimhood, isolation, and anti-dependence (see Pia Mellody's work on codependence) that started in childhood, I make room for my Higher Power to work in me and my life. I look forward to starting Steps 8 and 9 by putting down the grudges and misperceptions I've long held toward myself. As it turns out, I'm not the worst of the worst or the best of the best. When I align my life with my Higher Power, I am right sized. From this place of humility, I can put down my shame and work on amends to others I've harmed. As I continue putting things down one at a time, my whole attitude and outlook on life is changing. The Promises are coming true.

~ Laura L

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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Interstellar Bloom

Who is this person I'd become
It took ten years to feel so numb
Until I came into these rooms
To start my interstellar bloom.

I took a dive when my mom passed
My heart felt heavy, I was aghast
A life without her seemed untrue
Pain of her loss grew and grew.

I smoked my days for ten long years
Fighting through the tears and fears
Tried to put those roaring fires out
Became a burden, there's no doubt.

At last, a thought I'd had before
A million times, or maybe more
It's been years, still distraught
Must be time I quit the pot.

In recovery my thoughts shift
I've given myself such a gift
A sober life has done for me
What a puff of weed could never be.

I dreamed I had an alien head
Which layers of began to shed
Blossom from despair and gloom
An interstellar bloom.

Who's to say what of tomorrow
A day I can't beg, steal, or borrow
As I walk my newfound path this way
I try to live for each new day.

~ Laurinda G

Feel Like a Stranger

I was a California Deadhead. I was not able to go out of state, but I saw the Grateful Dead in the Bay Area, some camping trips at Cal Expo, etc.

I often felt alienated by the second day. I stayed up way too late, smoking pot and tripping. My grasp of reality began to shift.

In short, I began to "feel like a stranger."

Were the people around me really nice people? I began to not trust anybody. I knew nothing bad about them, but their vehicle seemed too close; they seemed to have a better take on being a real Deadhead.

I often think of Deadheads as free spirits, with long dreads, pretty flowing clothes, full of brotherly love, living on air. Statistically, engineers and lawyers were reported by the Golden Road as the two most prevalent jobs of Deadheads. Being a Deadhead was not cheap if you paid to go to the show; your high income was the miracle.

So I felt envy of those expensive cars, the seemingly stable partnerships; resentment that those others had it better than I did. Better jobs, better sightings of Jerry, better tents, soft laughter around the bong. Better at doing drugs.

I felt disconnected, alienated, like a stranger.

Flash forward 27 years, I found myself camping and surrounded by people again. I went to a bluegrass festival. I volunteered to check people in at the front gate. I saw so many people, helped so many people. I was there for nine days!

So much was different. I had a three day slip in 2018; maybe no coincidence that I had just returned from a festival! But my experience at bluegrass festivals

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began right around the same time I got sober.

I went to my very first festival called Wolf Mountain while I still smoked. I parked away from other people and decorated my truck with my hippie and reggae treasures. I smoked anytime there was a break, hidden in my truck and not communicating with anybody. Again it made me feel removed from humanity and hostile toward others. I remember being so high Friday night that I couldn't process correctly.

By the second festival, I had been sober for almost a year. I was recognized as a true aficionado. My tickets into the show were comped by the band leader, which meant to me that I had a place. And I was not a

lawyer or an engineer; I was a banjo player!

I stayed near Camp Spam, which was a big camping site that offered emotional help to people who were feeling like strangers. I was pleased to be nearby. It seemed to me that I might need them! The head of the bluegrass association met me at the gate, and found this newbie a spot near Camp Spam.

I did not become hostile, envious, or alienated. In fact, I actively sought out people I knew a little, and I got to know them better. I was still shy, but I got out there. I admired cool campsites, but was perfectly happy in my little blue and red tent I had borrowed from my daughter! I felt surrounded by people who liked me, and I had learned some good opening questions, chief among them

being, "what do you play?" I felt so proud I could say "banjo!"

I spent last weekend camped under the pine trees with thousands of people at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. I was surrounded by people jamming away on their instruments. I met with people I already knew. I had those moments I used to envy at Dead shows; the big hug of people who had not seen each other in ages.

I was connected, I was of service, I fit in without ostentatious displays of my drug use. It felt really good. It felt good to tell people "I am Sally."

And I am sober.

~Sally T.

Annual MA World Service Convention Registration is OPEN!

"Serenity by the Sea"

Hosted by District 20 | San Diego

Oct 7-9, 2022

The MA World Convention is the annual recovery and social gathering for all of Marijuana Anonymous. The convention includes workshops, keynote speakers, MA meetings, a banquet, dance, and a chance to fellowship with members from across the world. It's a giant sober party and a great opportunity for growth in recovery and personal connections.

Learn more and register for this year's upcoming convention at <https://mawsconvention.org/>

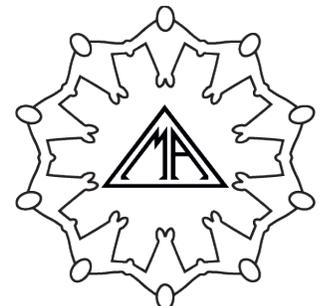
For further information, please email Convention@MA-SanDiego.org

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.



Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

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A Message from A New Leaf Publications:

Thank You MA!

Through your submissions and support, *A New Leaf* newsletter promotes ideas and inspiration to our recovery community. Through the sale of *Life with Hope* and other products, ANL also provides vital financial support for MA's primary purpose. Want to know how you can support our mission?

- Contribute a story from your experience, strength, and hope.
- Start a writing group and support others in expressing their wisdom to the wider fellowship.

Yours, A New Leaf Publications

Celebrating 248 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Nina S 6/21/1985 37 yrs

District 5

Jeff 7/1/2014 8 yrs
 Jeremy G 7/15/2003 19 yrs
 John McC 7/2/1991 31 yrs
 Ryan H 7/7/2007 15 yrs
 Sean F 7/4/2002 20 yrs
 Manny 7/24/2014 8 yrs

District 4

Jamie K 7/7/2021 1 yr

District 8

Rich C 7/23/2002 20 yrs

District 11

Joe M 7/4/2016 6 yrs

Jen G 5/23/2022 1 yr

District 14

Claire D 7/4/2020 2 yrs

District 19

Audrey 7/1/1997 25 yrs
 Michael O 7/6/2010 12 yrs
 Sinyi 6/27/2020 2 yrs
Laura 6/12/2021 1 yr
Judy 7/5/2021 1 yr
 Anthony 7/16/2020 2 yrs
 Michael 7/6/2006 12 yrs

District 22

Victoria J. 6/20/2021 1 yr

Independent & Virtual Meetings

April B 7/4/1998 24

← **See your sobriety date here!**

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 by the 16th of the month. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liason, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org