



# A NEW LEAF

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## Making a Twelve Step Call in Cyber-space

Hi Cyndi,

The interesting thing about marijuana is that it's such a "high bottom" drug. Some of us have gone to law school, started businesses, gotten married, had children and thought we were functioning just fine... thank you.

The bottom is when you get sick and tired of being sick and tired... when you realize your drug use is affecting your relationships with others... when you're making dumb business decisions... when it gets in the way of living. For some of us, we woke up on a futon in someone else's living room and we were 40 years old. We'd spent the last few years thinking about what we were going to do, and thinking about it, and thinking about it..... you get the picture.

I like the part it Life With Hope where it talks about the Fiction Of Functionality. We potheads don't end up in alleys with a needle in our arms. We have to go on to "real" drugs to get there. We just waste our lives away, functioning, but not living.  
*Hugs... Carol*

Dear Cyndi,

Bottoms! What a topic! Hmmm, mine happened while in graduate school functioning fictionally. My one and only smoking buddy died. Although I had "friends", I was alone. Empty describes

it better, emotionally and spiritually empty. Going to church had actually made it worse (imagine going to church "stoned"). My relationship turned out to be a "show" as

Program was put into my life within weeks of that prayer. I found my first sponsor at my very first meeting and have tried to take the suggestions (although, at times, begrudgingly).

For over 20 years I searched for the missing part of myself in pot and other things. Now I've found myself, along with my emotions and spirit, with the help of the program.

And for the past six years in recovery I've learned that "It works, if you work it, and I work it, cuz I'm worth it."

*Libby*

Dear Cyndi,

I had to be out there for almost 30 years, using and drinking everyday, before I finally hit "bottom". I spent years and years believing, convincing myself daily that pot was just an herb, that it was given by God because it grew in the ground and was "natural".

I was proudly defiant to be a pothead. I associated only with other pot smokers.

I told my kids all their lives that they could talk about my smoking pot only to other kids whose parents used pot also. I told them this was the way it was, this was the way I was and that they had to learn to cope with my reality.

I spent the last 10 years of my using life literally alone. I managed to keep

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*The following is an e-mail received from a new member and a few of the replies that were sent to her from MA's Internet Outreach Committee...*

*"...I started an MA meeting in Sacramento. The meetings are going well. We have had a lot of interest in the group. Last night's meeting was the 4th one and we had 11 people. I'm writing because I've noticed a common question from a few members. How do you bottom out on Marijuana? Some people got tested at their jobs and that is their answer. Others are addicted but don't show any consequences to their actions. Some are trying to be clean because it's a gateway drug for them. But most of the people seem to be searching for their bottom. I know it's an individual thing for each one of us, but I thought maybe you'd have some advice for this novice member to share next week.  
Thanks.....Cyndi S. "*

was everything else in my life.

Loosing my friend jolted me into some kind of feeling - pain. There was not enough pot to cover it up. The pain of her death made me look at my empty life which knawed at me till I prayed to God to show me how to change my life and fill the emptiness. I guess this was one of those times when I learned, "be careful what you pray for, you might get it". The Twelve Step



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 necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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# Sober Picnic In Central Park

by Jennifer S., District 8 Bureau Chief

A bunch of New York M.A.'ers enjoyed fellowship and fun during the 5th Annual "Keep Off the Grass" picnic. We designated our area in a corner of Sheep's Meadow in Central Park with a string of balloons, munched on the pickings everyone contributed, and had a relaxing afternoon of chit-chat, basking in the grey humidity.

There was an excellent turnout of about 40 people, including some from out of town as well as a few newcomers. We had a two-speaker meeting, with a first-time qualification followed by someone who was celebrating 3 years of sobriety. Despite the broad time-range, the feelings and recovery in each of the qualifications were similar. As usual, the experience, strength and hope of a fellow marijuana addict helped this pot smoker to better understand herself and her addiction. Having a meeting sitting on slightly wet grass and under gloriously shady trees, in the open air with park-goers all around, was dramatically different than the usual enclosed meetings. With no rent to pay, we gave all the proceeds to Intergroup.

Sheep's Meadow is a major pot smoking haven in the city. When the weather is good on weekends, it becomes a carpet of New Yorkers sunning themselves on the grass, and often smoking some. The refrains of "Ice Cold Beer" are forever being chanted by intrepid guys with

heavy bags of (illegal) refreshment. I felt like our sober presence might be carrying the message to anyone who happened to pass by.

Clapping for day-counts and listening to each other in that setting was very special. I personally used to only go to The Meadow to smoke pot and sit in a stoned haze. What a change to be alive, alert, and participating in a spiritual experience!

One member brought his wife and baby so they could meet the people who have been a part of what "has changed our lives". Other parents also brought their children, making it feel even more like a family. A few energetic souls played Frisbee, while others milled about and became better acquainted with people in the fellowship. Typical of a bunch of dope smokers, there was no pressure to do anything but relax and enjoy oneself. I look forward to the next "Keep Off the Grass" picnic. *~*

## Bulletin Board

On Sunday, Sept. 1st District 7 (LA South) will host a picnic and softball game at Mar Vista Park. The game starts at 10am. There will be a barbecue (bring your own meat!), swimming (\$1.25 for adults, \$.75 for kids), and two MA meetings. For info, call Lori Rae (310) 858-7181 or Jim L. (310) 478-5152.

District 9 (Santa Cruz) will be hosting a Labor Day (Aug.30-Sept.2) campout at Big Basin Redwoods in Santa Cruz. Contact Thomas at (510) 654-2805.

## Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!

Kelly G.	Aug 8	2yrs	Patrick P.	Sept 8	4yrs		
Steve E.	Aug 14	9yrs	Stacey S.	Sept 8	4yrs		
Jailhouse Dave	Aug 20	5yrs	Ursula P.	Sept 8	2yrs		
Lisa T.	Aug 21	6yrs	Brian A.	Sept 11	5yrs		
Cindy C.	Aug 26	7yrs	Wendy C.	Sept 11	9yrs	Jim L.	Sept 25 7yrs
Vicki H.	Aug 28	7yrs	Tamar	Sept 12	4yrs	Derek S.	Sept 25 10yrs
Al E.	Sept 1	7yrs	BW L.	Sept 13	8yrs	Michelle E.	Sept 26 7yrs
Rasputin P.	Sept 1	9yrs	Kristine K.	Sept 15	4yrs	Az A.	Sept 30 10yrs
Lynn S.	Sept 2	4yrs	Seadog	Sept 24	5yrs	Mariska O.	Sept 30 9yrs



# On the Internet

*Continued from Page 1*

job for 27 years now, so my life consisted of working and then rushing home to my precious tray, rolling papers and bong where I could once again begin to feel "normal" as soon as that first hit zoomed through my bloodstream and I could relax. It never occurred to me that I was a lost empty shell of a human being.

My last straw, my bottom, came through sleep deprivation; a schedule change at work had put me onto graveyard shift. I tried for a week to smoke myself to sleep in the daytime. I almost lost my sanity. I finally admitted to myself, God, and my son David that I was a drug addict. From that day on I have been blessed with the willingness to do whatever it takes to stay sober. I found MA and found many kindred spirits who have helped me along this journey. I am now 50 years old and have almost 19 months of sobriety; my first months sober since I was 15 years old. My bottom was emotional and spiritual. I really believe this disease is spiritual in nature and takes a spiritual cure like the 12 Steps for any hope of arrestment. God bless us all on this journey.

*With much love, Judy*

Cyndi,

Wow! What a topic! I am 68 days clean and sober, and let me tell you it has not been easy. Pot is my drug of choice. I still find myself obsessing over thoughts of getting high. My bottom was the last year of my use. It got to where I was using pot on a daily basis. I began to panic when my supply ran low. I played games with myself to make sure I always had some by tucking a little away so when the main stash ran out I had some in reserve. My bottom was when it no longer made me feel good. I always called smoking pot "getting festive" because that is how it made me feel in the early years of my use. Well it got to the point where there was nothing festive about how I felt when I was using. I am in business for myself and I was planning my appointments around when I could come home and get "festive". Then I started attending appointments "festive" (thank God none seemed to know). I even attended 12-step meetings stoned (not MA cause there isn't one

in my area, but OA & ACOA). I was living in a paranoid state always afraid of getting caught, isolating myself so I could smoke, choosing to spend time with only the friends who smoked, and in the end I was stoned more than I was straight. I would begin to crave a joint by mid-morning. I would literally white-knuckle it until late afternoon (say 5:00 p.m.) and use pot instead of having a cocktail. Then when just smoking wasn't enough I began to add alcohol on top of it. It was taking more and more pot to get me to a "festive" state so the addition of alcohol was helping me get there quicker (I thought). Then one day it dawned on me just how unfestive I felt. I felt paranoid and guilty all the time because I was literally leading a double

life. There are very few people who know that I even used pot. I felt like such a hypocrite and I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I did not like the isolated, guilty, paranoid, depressed, lethargic person I had become. I had great aspirations, but they were only thoughts and wishes because the pot robbed me of all of my energy and my motivation. I want to thank you for raising this question. I needed to really look at my bottom and remind myself what it felt like to use. It is still hard 68 days clean. I still want to smoke a joint every day, but I want to live a clean and honest life more. So by the grace of God and one day at a time I am clean today. *Clara*

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# LIFE WITH HOPE

## A return to living through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

At the 1996 World Services Conference it was decided that *A NEW LEAF* would become the world-wide publishing arm of Marijuana Anonymous. With the printing of this issue, a major step in this transition will be realized. As a result, LIFE WITH HOPE is now available to anyone, anywhere via the order form below. Recently, the fourth printing of 1,000 copies was completed. (Previously, 1,500 copies were printed and sold on a first come, first served basis.) We now have an adequate supply for individuals, meetings, and districts to purchase. It will now be possible for every MA meeting to obtain copies, on a regular basis, so that any newcomer can see LIFE WITH HOPE on the literature table and get a copy.

**AND REMEMBER...** We are working on the 2nd Edition of LIFE WITH HOPE which will include personal stories of recovery from members of Marijuana Anonymous. If you would like to submit your story for consideration, mail it to the Post Office Box shown below and it will be forwarded to the World Services Publications Coordinator. Stories should be 4 to 6 pages long, type-written and double-spaced if possible.

**ORDERING TIPS...**

1. Substantial savings can be had by ordering in quantity.

So, we stress that wherever possible, Districts or Meetings should order in bulk.

Individuals are certainly welcome to order on their own.

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