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A NEW LEAF

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I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT IT WORKS by Wendy

I started using marijuana when I was in 7th or 8th grade. I remember the first time I smoked: my brother, his cat and I went out to his El Camino and smoked until the front of the car was full of smoke and the cat was getting a contact high. I went inside and giggled and giggled until the soap operas were over.

The second time I smoked pot was at a party with some other "wild" girls, and I choked and coughed the smoke out into another girl's face, who did not like that at all. Let's just say we never really got along in high school.

I smoked one other time, at a football game in 9th grade, and it was on after that. I smoked as much and as often as I could, which was often.

I was involved in many activities at school: cheerleading, softball, drill team and four years of varsity volleyball. I was on the honor roll and involved in student government. And my mother worked at the high school as a teacher's aide. I went to church every Sunday.

I had a friend; I'll call him B. B and I were in youth group together. Our mothers were friends, also. The other thing we had in common was that we both had older brothers who were also friends and were BIG stoners. B and I could score dope from his brother or my brother any time we wanted. B and I both had jobs and cars, so access and scoring pot was not a problem.

This is where things started to get bad. I lost my virginity when I was 14 to one of my brother's friends when I was drunk. I slept with over 20 different guys before I was out of high school. My senior year of softball I quit the team three games before the end of the season. My mother could not believe it; she kept asking me why I quit when softball was my favorite sport. I didn't know why; I was just angry all the time. I would get stoned before school, during school, in the park at lunch, then after work, and before practice. When I was a senior and 17 years old, I moved out on my own and have been independent ever since. I never went to college and have been working to support my habits and living paycheck to paycheck.

I continued smoking, drinking and doing as many

kinds of drugs and alcohol as possible until I was 34 years old. I had been depressed throughout the years, but I never sought any kind of medical help. I once went to a mental health place and talked with a counselor, who suggested I check in for six to eight weeks. No way could I do that; I had to work and support myself. I took medication for a while but stopped. I was never treated for depression but probably should have been.

I went to the bar just about every weekend and drank and smoked pot as much as I could. I would spend down to my last dollar. I would sleep with any guy who showed any kind of interest in me. I would try any kind of drug given to me. I lost many jobs over drinking and using because I could not make it to them on a regular basis. I ate food, and ate more food and then more food until I developed bulimia. I could put away two large pizzas, crust included, but then I would go and puke them up from guilty feelings — then be hungry again.

Finally, after many bouts of depression and many lost jobs, I prayed to God to let me die, but it just didn't happen. I just wanted to go to sleep and never wake up; I did not want a painful suicide. I had often daydreamed of who would actually show up to my funeral. I prayed and prayed, but no answers.

I finally decided to induce the sleep I wanted. I went to my bathroom and took every pill form of medication I could find. —I swallowed them down with cough medicine, one beer and finally water. I lay down and went to sleep, thinking it would finally be over.

About four hours later, I woke up and vomited for the rest of the night and the next day. I was really angry that I did not die. That was my bottom, both emotionally and physically. When I finally felt better, I called Kaiser because I had medical coverage and needed an excuse to be gone from work. I also felt like God, for some strange reason, needed me on this planet, but if I was going to be alive then I wanted to live happily.

The one thing Kaiser asked me was could I get clean and sober, that I needed to do that in order for

continued on page two



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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I Don't Know How, but it Works

concluded

them to work on my depression. I said I was willing to do anything, whatever it takes. Kaiser set me up with their day treatment program where I first learned about MA and other 12 step groups.

I now have more than nine months of complete sobriety from illegal drugs and alcohol. I take prescription medication for my depression, but I am only given enough medication for one month because of my history.

I don't know how this program works, even though we read it at every meeting, but it works. I don't know why I am doing it, but I am. I do not have a perfect program. In fact, I have done some things that were "suggested" not to do. But I recommend doing the suggestions of your sponsor. If you don't like what your sponsor says, do it anyway.

I did about 85 meetings in my first 90 days. I took commitments. I let go of my old friends and bar buddies. I don't associate with my

brother, who still smokes. I try to stay away from situations with pot and alcohol if possible. I struggle through every holiday but am looking forward to getting through my first year. I don't like everybody at every meeting, but I try to remember "principles before personalities," and I keep coming back, no matter what.

I am still in the middle of my 4th step. I write in a journal when I am frustrated or angry. I have daily meditations for women that I read and I am emailed a thought for the day. I still pray to God, but I try not to ask for things for myself. I pray for those who still suffer and I thank God each day for my sobriety. I pray for my family and those I know who are still using.

In closing, this program has worked for me. I have not "gone out," and under God's will I won't. I write this today because if at least one person finds help from this story, then writing it is worth it.

On the Ninth Tradition

By Carol

Anyone who's ever done service work for MA understands how seriously we take the admonition that we "ought never be organized." Now, mind you, it's not that we don't try! It just kinda seems to happen that way.

The absolutely amazing thing about that is that the work gets done somehow. We have always had folks who jump up and down, wave their arms around, and say they'll do something — and then they just don't. I don't know, maybe they're still in their disease?

Anyway, we've also always had folks who don't seem to make a big deal about it, but simply hunker down and do what needs to get done.

Since we've been asked to write about the Ninth Tradition, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank that last group. You know, the ones that get things done? If not for them I wouldn't have had meetings to come to where I could talk about my real drug. If not for them, I wouldn't have literature to read or cyberspace bulletin boards and meetings to go to whenever I need help and there isn't a land meeting around. If not for them, there wouldn't be coffee at my home meeting, my therapist wouldn't know about MA, there wouldn't be an 800 number to find out about meetings in other states, and I wouldn't have any sobriety chips on my key ring. If not for them, I wouldn't be clean and sober!

So thank you — to ALL those Service Boards and Committees! I appreciate you.

The Roving Reporter asks...

“What is the most important thing your sponsor told you early in your recovery?” and MA answers...

When I first got into recovery my sponsor told me to “hit my knees.” I didn’t understand him immediately, but he was telling me to consciously contact my Higher Power and surrender. The concept and the process of surrender has become so important to me over the past 6 years in the program. Life does not always work out the way my ego would like it to. The best that I can do is release all of my ideas of the way that I think that “people, places, and things” should be. I have also found that as time goes on, each successive degree of surrender is deeper and more profound. As my sponsor says, we may not always see the shift as we did in the early days of recovery, but it is there. As I continue to let go of the results, and stay in the current of the flow of life, I don’t have time to wonder “how things should be.” I’ll leave that up to my Higher Power and be pleasantly surprised.

— *Craig J, District 7*

I heard in a meeting, sometime in my first week, this: If I need help, and I need to call someone for it, go at it like I would call around for weed. Call even if I don’t know the person. If I get no answer, call again or try someone else. If I don’t get what I need, try someone else, or go where I know I can find what I need (like a meeting). If one meeting doesn’t help, go to another. Use the same tenacity to get recovery that I used to get weed. I have. And I’m still clean today since 8/20/01.

— *DD*

My answer is simple. EVERYTHING. My sponsor told me to go to meetings, get phone numbers, work the steps and call her (among a few thousand other things). They are words I still try to live by today, although I don’t call her enough! I have 4 years and seven months free from pot, and I owe it to her. Yeah, I did the work, but she gave me the blueprint to follow. Without her, I’d be lost. Thanks Mary M!

— *Sabetto, grateful recovering pothead, Seattle.*

When I got an MA Online sponsor 18 months ago, her best advice was: Be Here Now. Equally valuable advice was: Slow Down. I was spending too much time in the past or the future and not savoring and being mindful in the present, where I actually live. I wanted to get busy and do all 12 steps in the first month! I had to find a way to slow myself down without using pot to do it.

I started practicing Tai Chi and sitting meditation. Now I can slow myself down without putting a drug in my system. And it only took me a year to work/write on all 12 steps and share them with my local sponsor.

I have been weed free for 17 months and still must remind myself daily to BE HERE NOW and SLOW DOWN. It works!

— *Sharon D.*

The most important thing my sponsor said was “Whatever happens,, don’t smoke, don’t drink, and go to a meeting. Go to a lot of meetings.” Five years later, I still do exactly that.

— *David v B*

The most important thing my sponsor told me early in my recovery was that I could choose what characteristics I wanted my Higher Power to have, which enabled me to give birth to a realization of a real, personal, genuine Higher Power.

At first, as an atheist/agnostic I could not define my HP, because there was no distinction between everything that exists in daily life and my HP. I still cannot entirely define my HP, but I am aware of some important distinctions, such as the fact that my HP does not fear, but consists purely of love and compassion.

Peace, Love and Light!

— *Jessie A, Portland*

“When I was using, life really sucked, but now, it only kinda sucks.” I could relate to that big time and still remember it when I need to realize that I’m not the only one who gets frustrated with life in recovery.

— *Tristan H., District 4*

Contribute to *A New Leaf*

In the October issue, we’ll be discussing the 10th Step, “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it,” as well as the step’s operating principle of perseverance.

We’re also looking for discussion of the 10th Tradition, “Marijuana Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.” Anybody who’s been to a MAWS Conference should have some input on that one!

Contact information is on Page 2. A truckload of thanks to everybody who sent stuff in for this month; if we didn’t run it, that’s not because it wasn’t worthy, but simply because we had more than we could fit in. So keep it coming, keep it brief, and keep it real!

For the October issue, Roving Reporter asks: “What is your favorite MA literature reference, and why?”

Choices

By Trisa

You ask me, Who am I
And I respond quite openly,
That I am a part of the universe
that shares the same space as you.
Yet,
We are unique within that very
occupancy.

I am a woman of substance today.
I share my life with others, letting
them know I care.

It didn't always used to be this
way.

I am recovering from myself to
be myself.

Now I know what it means to
play,

It's not about competition, but
instead compassion.

It is not what I speak that makes
me heard, but how I stand and
say.

I am a child of dysfunction with
many scars.

I am a mother who heals the past
with love, not shame.

God made me, gave me choices in
life.

My lessons were often coarse and
hard to swallow, because I took
control over a plan that was not
my own.

God showed me, I still have
choices.

My lessons were rough, yet had a
sense of ease and accomplish-
ment, because I surrendered and
became part of the plan that was
not my own.

God can take me.

It is there that I will finally have a
plan of my own.

That plan will be to share the
best gift ever,
Comfort in myself.



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For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
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★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ Congratulations to Our Members ★
★ Celebrating their Sober Birthdays! ★

Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in A New Leaf? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.

District 2

Leonard B.	8/4/94	8 years
Doug F.	8/13/01	1 year!
Leah F.	8/13/92	10 years
Kathleen M.	8/28/01	1 year!
Matt I.	9/18/01	1 year!
Marishka	9/30/87	15 years

District 3

Kimberly M.	9/11/97	5 years
Michelle H.	9/3/97	5 years
Susan S.	9/26/97	5 years
Chuck F	9/3/98	4 years

District 4

Rosie S	8/29/00	2 years
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District 5

Pirate	9/30/86	16 years
Terry H.	9/7/96	6 years
Matty	9/1/97	5 years

District 6

Nicole S.	9/8/91	11 years
Kari L	9/14/98	4 years
Ellie F.	9/24/97	5 years
Laurie Rae	9/9/96	6 years
Tamar	9/12/92	10 years

District 7

"Angry" Greg	6/04/00	2 years
Ari B.	7/8/98	4 years
Vaneddle	7/9/90	12 years
Mark	7/13/01	1 year!
Oscar H.	7/16/01	1 year!
Jim A.	7/29/01	1 year!
Kate C.	8/1/00	2 years
Morgan A.	7/11/88	14 years
Elaine S.	8/9/99	3 years
Eleah H.	8/11/99	3 years
Doug F.	8/13/01	1 year!

District 8

Jonathan F.	9/22/97	5 years
Jeff S.	9/1/99	3 years
Scott P.	9/3/00	2 years

District 11

Jessie A	9/26/01	1 year!
Pat L.	7/23/94	8 years
David	8/18/01	1 year!

Texas

Charlie L.	8/01	1 year!
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Celebrating 181 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!