



a new leaf

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But for the Grace of God by Ted

My name is Ted, and I am a marijuana addict. As the youngest of five kids I learned a lot from my big brother and three sisters. The main thing I learned was to keep my head down and not to question authority directly. I thought my family was a very typical middle class suburban family. Today I realize that I am from a dysfunctional family. I discovered pot when I was in sixth grade. I thought that I had found the answer to all my anxiety, fear, and pain.

I remember being the smallest kid in the sixth grade and ambitiously trying out for the middle school flag football team. That is where I met Todd. Todd was the first person to introduce me to marijuana. I really admired Todd because he was a sure thing for quarterback for the football team plus he seemed to like me too. When you're a small kid, big friends are very nice to have. Todd and I spent a lot of time smoking his step-brother's weed and drinking beer from the keg his step-dad kept full in their game room. I still look back on those days with some measure of fondness. I spent the next fifteen years trying to re-live those days when using marijuana made me feel better. That same year I learned that my dad was being relocated to a new city by his employer. I was really upset. I knew I would have to face

being a new (little) kid in school, and make new friends too, which was a very scary idea at the time. Of my original seven family members only my dad, mom, one of my sisters and I moved to the new town. My brother and two of my sisters were in their late teens and decided not to move with my par-

"I spent the next fifteen years trying to re-live those days when using marijuana made me feel better."

ents to the new city. I really missed my oldest brother and sisters who stayed behind. I also missed my old friends and school where I was sure that I would have made the school's flag football team. In the new town I felt very anxious to meet new friends. The first kids who opened up to me were really cool, and we instantly had common interests. We enjoyed smoking pot together. I also met a sweet girl who I really liked. I still remember the pain I felt when she dropped me for an upper-classman in the middle of eighth grade. I didn't date another girl until I was a junior in high school. After being dumped, my dope smoking really picked up. I never tried out for sports after that. I didn't want sports or other after-school activities (including girls) cutting into my party time with my buddies. I was twelve years old.

At first my buddies and I would get high every day after school. By the time I was in eighth grade I would meet my buddies a couple of times a week before school to bong out. We would smoke out before school, at lunch and after school too. My pot smoking progressed like this until I was a junior in high school. Pot was a great escape for me! I didn't have to think about my family problems or my dreams of what my life might be.

I began to think that I might have a problem with pot when my high school girlfriend threatened to leave me unless I stopped getting high all the time. I cut all ties to my middle school buddies because I could not spend time with them and not get high. I didn't smoke pot for my entire senior year in high school. That year I got all A's and graduated from high school. I also grew twelve inches and gained fifty pounds in that year. I have the drivers license to prove it! I really re-

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submit

Share your experience, strength and hope! Submit your article to your Bureau Chief or see page 2 for contact information.



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 & 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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But by the Grace of God continued

sented my girlfriend for "making me quit" and felt terribly guilty about not seeing my old buddies. After graduation I signed up for a three-year stint in the US Army. Although I told myself I was doing this to get money for college, I really knew that I joined the army to get some distance from my using buddies and hopefully change the direction of my life. After ten very lonely and difficult weeks of boot camp, I got an honorable discharge for medical reasons (I fabricated a "runner's knee" injury and got out). I immediately went back to smoking pot, broke up with my girlfriend, crawled back to my old using buddies and found some new smoking partners too. I then decided I would work my way through college and managed to get about half way through school when I realized that being high all the time was taking its toll on the quality of my life. I remembered many times when my pals would tell a joke and everyone present would laugh except me. Or when yet another tragedy would happen in my life and I would feel no remorse. My loneliness, emptiness, and desperation were getting too big to ignore. I knew I had to do something, so I transferred to a university out of town to finish my degree. In that new town, I was able to function for about three months or so, after which I fell back into my old ways. This move also put me closer to my big brother who by now was coming to terms with his alcoholism. We moved in together, and I went to my first 12-step meeting in an effort to support his desire to arrest his addiction. I answered yes to 10 of their 12 questions but still felt very out of place there. I

didn't think I was as messed up as the people I saw in that meeting. I know today that every addict has to find his own bottom, wherever that may be. While living with my brother I made new connections and resumed my familiar relationship with Mary Jane. I found myself partying harder and feeling worse than ever. I continued to do or say things I regretted while I was loaded and really began to despise myself for it. I redoubled my efforts to use people to try to feel better about myself, including girlfriends, employers, or anyone I could deceive. This only made me feel worse about myself. I was racked with guilt and ultimately ended a four-year relationship of convenience with a girl, which I should have never started. I remembered that first 12-step meeting and set out again to find help. I went to an MA meeting and really liked knowing that I wasn't the only person who was addicted to marijuana. MA meetings were very scarce at the time, and I was very tenuous about this new way of living. I managed to put short stints of clean time together only to relapse days, weeks, or months later. When I graduated from college I got a good job as an analyst with a big corporation. I also decided to rent a room from an old using buddy. Looking back, I have no idea what I was thinking to make such a decision. Sure enough, only weeks after I had moved in, I found myself sneaking his weed and even scraping his bong to stay high. Living like this, I was not able to function in my new job and eventually resigned to "seek other opportunities." I moved back to my hometown and

resolved to get my act together. I started to attend 12 step meetings for both alcoholics and addicts regularly. I still felt superior to the people in those meetings and didn't believe my problem was as serious as theirs. Today, I have the freedom of knowing that I am no better nor less than any other person. In spite of this feeling of superiority, I looked for the things I had in common with the people in the meetings, listened for the things that I could use to stay clean and disregarded the rest. I stayed and gratefully made friends with some meeting members. After a couple of months of this I decided I needed to get out of town to do some soul searching, plus I needed to get a job and get out of my parent's house. I cashed out my savings account and went on an extended vacation. I was clean and sober when I left, but I cut the trip short halfway through, so that I could go on one more drinking and smoking binge. This taught me a very important lesson about myself. I

am an addict and an alcoholic. I returned to my parents' house and sulked around for a couple more months when my mom asked a friend of hers who was an active member of a 12 step program for drug addicts to pay me a visit. He did, along with three other recovering addicts.

**“you never have to
drink or use again,
no matter what.”**

They told me “you never have to drink or use again, no matter what.” I still have that big book my oldest brother gave me and three of these four guests signed that day. I have since done a couple of “90 meetings in 90 days” and have managed to stay clean and sober for 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, 1 year, eighteen months, and now 12 years respectively. It takes what it takes to get on the path to recovery. My recovery has included multiple relapses, but the people I met in recovery

(especially my sponsor) never gave up on me and always told me I was welcome and wanted. I really enjoyed the honesty I heard in the rooms of recovery, especially when I saw men getting honest about their feelings. I have a special place in my heart for MA because I can really relate to marijuana addicts. I know I am addicted to marijuana, even though it is not supposed to be an addictive drug. The 12 steps of MA have given me relief from my suf-

fering and a wonderful new relationship with a higher power of my own understanding. There are many “yets” (You're Eligible Too) in my life, like jails, institutions or early death as a result of my addiction that I don't have to experience, if I choose to recover and I am willing to let my Higher Power work in my life. Today when I see a street junkie, or a skid row bum, the first thought that comes to my mind is, “But by the Grace of God there goes I.”



the roving reporter

“Do you still wear tie-dye? Why?”

I never wore a tie-dye until I went to an MA Convention and bought a T-shirt, I only wear them to bed as sleepwear. Once I tried to make a giant tie-dye window drapery type of covering to keep the sunlight out when I was using in my teens. Unfortunately, the materials I used did not work, but it was an

interesting story that a lot of people know as the tie dye incident.

James V (Jackhammer)

I don't really know what the tie-dye represents. I wasn't from the flower child generation and I didn't follow the Grateful Dead. But I do remember drawing hemp plants on my notebooks at school, and others would ask me to draw them on there's as well.

I could have had an art scholarship but I blew that or I should say “smoked” that opportunity. I guess there is a real reason they call it dope. I'm sure other opportunities went up in smoke too. I'm grateful for 12 step programs today. I really wish they had started me on the steps in kindergarten. I would

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roving reporter

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have had more to offer than drawing leaves on books. When we had a beach event, the meeting's topic was gratitude. I have to focus hard on being thankful because of my negative thinking problem. Then I realized I was

wearing my "Grateful I'm not dead" T-shirt. Today I have a lot to be grateful for. Sure, life can be hard, but compared to what? I'll probably never dye (as in tie-dye). Thanks for the both topics. One triggered the other. Program triggers recovery.

Xdis_ease

I'm even more psychedelic sober than when I was whacked all the time on drugs. Hell yeah!

I don't wear pot-leaf adorned clothes though or anything that endorses drugs/alcohol, since I'm abstinent.

Ari K.

birthdays

Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? 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 3

Chuck F.	9/6/99	7 yrs
Larry B.	9/14/05	1 yr!
Chris M.	9/12/05	1 yr!

District 5

Thievin' Dog Az	9/30/86	20 yrs.
Terry H.	9/7/96	10 yrs.
Tres	9/20/02	4 yrs.

District 7

m	8/25/04	2 yrs.
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District 8

Scott	9/17/04	2 yrs.
Stu	9/23/04	2 yrs.

District 11

Mary S.	9/5/05	1 yr!
Mike C.	9/18/84	22 yrs
Richard R.	9/22/03	3 yrs.
Stefan	9/15/03	3 yrs.

District 15

Loren S.	7/31/04	2 yrs.
Ellen N.	8/19/04	2 yrs.

Fresno, CA

Christina C.	7/29/03	3 yrs.
Kent H.	8/8/05	1yr!
David G.	8/12/03	3 yrs.
Juana N.	8/1/03	3 yrs.
Ventura	8/1/04	2 yrs.

Jon	8/8/04	2 yrs.
Norton C.K.	8/7/04	2 yrs
Christy O.	8/20/03	3 yrs.
Amanda M	9/20/05	1 yr!
Monquie R.	9/4/03	3 yrs.

Misc.

Sandy P.	8/6/99	7 yrs.
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