



September 2009

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I am a newcomer again by Beth P.

After over 2 years of being in active recovery, I am a newcomer again on Day 2. My 'relapse' actually started 2.5 months ago when I was attempting to clear out my side of the garage, a favorite place I used to isolate and party with myself. While clearing, I came across a small roach (1/2" long - yes, small!) Being the lover of pot that I am, though small in its offering, I got excited about my find...what a gift!

I relished everything about pot since first using it and ended up having an extensive love affair with it. There was nothing about MJ I didn't like. Holding that little doober obviously confirmed my attraction had not diminished. Even after my decades of active drug abuse, the ensuing emotional immaturity that I'm still growing up from, and losing people near and dear to me because of my addiction, still all that did not deter me from relishing all the things I loved about pot.

Memories of consequences melted away and the choice was made before I even realized it - I was going to smoke it. And not only was I giving myself permission to indulge in something I had committed to giving up, I also decided then and there it was a gift from God and it would be our little secret, and remained a secret... until this week, that is.

I attended a twelve-step meeting the morning before last and shared that I didn't feel I was being rigorously honest in working

my program (of course I thought this had to do with my personal life and nothing at all to do with my playing God in the garage two months prior).

I was definitely feeling restless, irritable, and discontented and as I entered the garage I noticed something in a bin my daughter had stored in the garage while home for summer college break. She had had her wisdom teeth removed earlier in the year and had some leftover Vicodin which I

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noticed even through the opaque plastic of the bin. I did not hesitate a minute to dive into her personal belongings and help myself to a couple.

While briefly contemplating the wisdom of my decision, my phone rang with calls from fellow 12-steppers. Needless to say, I did not answer it and went on to cater to my self-will of looking for chemical relief from my angst.

Not once did I ask for help from God, my sponsor, or anyone. I was determined to get that familiar relief that used to take care of me. Well, after ingesting a pill, I waited for that "ahhh..." feeling. It came and I felt it -- for about 30 seconds and that's it! Then the guilt and remorse started surfacing and the thought came: "Well, since I'm

going to have to start over maybe I should go ahead and do it up big for a few days." I envisioned calling my old 'supplier' of the drug of my choice and having a few days of blissful binging (maybe it would last a week -- not sure -- my will is weak when on pot -- I keep smoking until it's gone).

By the grace of God, I didn't stay stuck in the image of smoking to feel better -- the 'Think Think Think' suggestion kicked in and I saw the aftermath of purchasing some pot, which could include some of those 'yets' I had not experienced. Then an image surfaced of the pained look in my family's eyes when I behaved the way I did for years, treating them and myself so badly. And I saw myself truly starting over but this time I could be starting another several years of addictive behavior and more damage than even before. I really did not know.

You see, I am powerless over marijuana - if I have it, then it has me. So the only way to stay free of its power is to stay away from it. For good. And the only way that I can stay away from its influence and possible relapse is to stay away from anything and everything that chemically alters my brain. I just don't know how any of it will affect me -- I just know that it will in one way or another. If I relax my commitment to recovery, it's just a matter of time before I return to the high that I love - that of pot.

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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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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and click on publications

I am a newcomer again.

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I guess this is just a roundabout way of saying that I am a true alcoholic - I do have a disease of the body coupled with an obsession of the mind. Once I put anything into my body there is no telling where my mind will lead me - in spite of the time in recovery, my service work, and what choice I made yesterday, today I am still susceptible to marijuana's lure.

My disease will play tricks on my mind to get me to indulge in it one more time because it reminds me pot is my favorite and tells me I can handle it. So I have to remain

rigorously honest, stay on my program and do what is suggested, without fail. If I slip in being truthful, especially with myself, life turns into a living hell because I can't have any secrets like that anymore. It makes me sick to my stomach and if I let it continue, I know it will destroy me. So my watchword today, Day 2, is truth.

I'm being honest with my sponsor, my sponsees, & the alcoholic fellowship which I am a member. And tomorrow night I'm returning to the roots of my recovery, the MA Meeting where it all began. ~ Beth P.



Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 9 - What it means to me: This has been a tough step for me. It seems the longer I go without taking action here, the more isolated I am. I had an "aha" moment reading "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions". At the end of the chapter on step 8, it says this step "is the beginning of the end of isolating from our fellows and from God." So is that why I still isolate, because I'm still unwilling

With the ok of my sponsor, I even went through some of my list of amends with a counselor to differentiate my part from those of the people on the list. I'm sure much of why I am holding back is that this separation of my part and theirs is incomplete.

When I look back at each direct amend I've made, I have always felt relief afterwards. There has always been some nervousness and unfamiliarity in being that raw, vulnerable, responsible and considerate. Isn't it considerate to

try to place someone else's feelings above our own, put ourselves in their shoes, try to see ourselves from their perspective, and attempt to make right a wrong?

I have noticed in many of my direct amends, they were more for me than for the other person. I have been told much of what I'd felt sorry for had been overlooked or forgotten. It was always appreciated by the person and I'm sure gave them a sense of dignity and feeling regarded with respect and concern.

The most important amend I've made has been to myself. It was the longest, darkest and most hurtful list of poor treatment I have been able to discover. It is one my sponsor says I ought to look over once in a while to make sure I'm still acting on it.

When I want to beat myself up over those amends left untended to, I remember to marvel at those I've done, and remember that I am

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Letter from the Bottom - by Duncan M.

You've likely heard about the remarkable Memorial Day weekend Marijuana Anonymous World Services Conference. My second MAWS Conference confirmed what an amazing experience it is. Granted, it's a lot of intense work but the energy of so many passionate people working to maintain and improve what we are all so grateful for is truly a boost to my recovery and, I believe, to all in attendance. Thank you to District 3 for the extraordinary effort exerted in hosting such a successful event.

While there was nothing particularly controversial that resulted from the Conference, there is work to be done – work for all of us to participate in. On top of that, the economic situation the world now faces has had a direct impact on Marijuana Anonymous as well. The Finance Committee went through heroic efforts to get a handle on the situation and let the Conference body know what needs to happen in order to assure that MAWS, with the help of A New Leaf Publications, can assist districts and meetings to continue with our primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Financially, we aren't out of the woods but we can work together to ensure the continued health of the organization.

While our financial situation most definitely deserves attention, I'd like to leave that to a future edition of A New Leaf. This is the first installment of what is planned to be an on-going feature. In each of the coming issues one of the MAWS Trustees will submit an update on the work being done in the part of MAWS they coordinate. The goal is to increase awareness of the work that is done at the

committee level and bring visibility to opportunities for the membership to be of service.

The MAWS Trustees are merely "Trusted Servants" not people with all the answers or the only valid approach to a solution. Trustees are meant to help achieve the progress part of our program which is good for me as I know I'm a long way from the perfection part. Trustees get their guidance from the fellowship as a whole. But the work is done by those in the fellowship that have the skills, creativity and desire to work towards maintaining and improving this fellowship so that we might better serve the individual members and those that have a desire to stop using marijuana.

One of my favorite 12-Step ideas is to "just say yes." It's the idea that when you're asked to do something you just say yes. Being asked is a wonderful thing – something to be grateful for. It implies a trust in you: they wouldn't have asked if they didn't think you were capable. It provides an opportunity to practice getting outside your privately defined world. It provides an opportunity to fulfill our number one goal: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Consider this letter to be an open invitation and a request for you to help.

If you're ready to make service a part of your recovery or bring your creativity and energy to a new part of this fellowship or if you feel you've already offered but aren't being utilized shoot an email to president@marijuana-anonymous.org. Put "What can I do to help?" in the subject line. If you aren't ready for working on world service issues, attend your

next home group business meeting or your monthly District business meeting and ask what you can do to help.

Yours in grateful service,
Duncan M
Addict in recovery
MAWS Trustee / President



Step 9... *(continued from page 2)*
on the other side of what used to seem hardly a possibility. God gives me the humility and courage and the program makes it all possible.

A dear friend who I got that 12 & 12 from said something once that made sense to me. An amends ought to make the recipient feel better. So is bringing up some past, forgotten drudgery really going to help someone feel better? Maybe this step is more about action than words. I may need to open up more dialogue with the person concerned and consider receiving outside help for healthier boundaries before I take their inventory and assume some harm was done. I tend to more so blame myself for something than is sometimes necessary.

I made amends to my niece this week. I've been a neglectful Auntie with a drug problem who was too "far out" to reach out, or still hasn't yet learned how to. She tells me I have done enough. I struggle to believe her. She doesn't know any different or is being nice or both. I just don't know. I guess that one brings me back to that amends to myself. More will be revealed. Like my sponsor points out to me, quit beating myself up. Thank God the goal of my recovery is progress not perfection.

~ by Anonymous, District 10 ▲

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

SERVICE: POSITION ON THE ANLP BOARD—TREASURER

There is an open position on the Board of A New Leaf Publications. If you would like to be of service at this level and meet the qualifications, please submit your name to anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org.

Qualifications - must be clean and sober from marijuana, alcohol, and all other mind altering substances for two years AND must satisfy at least one (1) of the three (3) following requirements: Has been a managing director for at least one (1) year; or, Has been a MAWS Trustee for at least one (1) year; or Has been a MAWS Delegate for at least one (1) year.

Specific Duties of the Treasurer: (1) Report on the financial condition of ANL-P at the end of each quarter, or upon request from the Board. (2) Bill the Districts for subscriptions to ANL. (3) Comply with all MAWS Inc. requirements, including coordinating with, and filing reports to, the MAWS Treasurer and/or MAWS Bookkeeper with regards to yearly taxes. (4) Coordinate and supervise the Office Manager in the performance of the following duties: (a) Receive payments for subscriptions to the newsletter and purchases of LWH and all other MAWS approved literature distributed and sold by ANL-P, and communicate necessary information to other board members as needed for shipping. (b) Administer the checking account. (c) Pay (or reimburse) the normal operating expenses for ANL-P. These expenses include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: (i) post office box; (ii) rent for ANL-P's office (if applicable); (iii) normal publishing costs (not including additional printings of LWH, see Section 5.1, e); (iv) postage for mailing of ANL; (v) postage & packing materials for LWH sales. (d) Reimburse approved expenses. (e) Keep careful records of all transactions and promptly make out receipts whenever necessary.

birthdays - Celebrating 184 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANL contact information on page 2.

District 2

Janice	9/3/08	1 year!
Carmit	9/3/00	9 yrs.
Mary Anne C.	9/13/08	1 year!
Sally	9/17/04	5 yrs.
Tres P.	9/20/02	7 yrs.
Jonathon M.	9/24/01	8 yrs.

District 5

Terry H.	9/07/96	13 yrs.
Bill	9/16/08	1 year!
Big Dog	9/22/06	3 yrs.
Thievin' Dog	9/30/86	23 yrs.

District 6

Lisa T.	8/21/90	19 yrs.
District 7		
Michele H.	7/7/99	10 yrs.
Bhavato U.	7/12/02	7 yrs.
Gary K.	8/5/07	2 yrs.
Kip M.	8/13/07	2 yrs.

District 11

Marvin H.	9/9/84	25 yrs.
Stefan H.	9/15/03	6 yrs.
Mike C.	9/18/84	25 yrs.
Mariska P.	9/18/87	22 yrs.
Jim S.	9/24/07	2 yrs.

District 12

Donnie K.	12/8/06	2 yrs.
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Other locations:

Philadelphia, PA

Christopher G.	1/10/08	1 year!
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