



A NEW LEAF

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Between Rock 'n' Roll and a Hard Place. by Andy C.

I find it funny that music, the International Language, the God-given rhythm in us all, has had a reputation of some destruction, especially in the Rock 'n' Roll arena. I feel that maybe because any art is supposed to be shared, and nobody was supposed to become rich off it.

The problem today is that there is such a hostile environment out there and it's hard to become creative and produce beautiful music when you're agitated and frustrated. Marijuana was my drug of choice because it instantly shut out the world and separated me from all the things I didn't want to see. Therefore, a calm so that my creative side could come out.

It didn't start out this way. I started playing drums when I was four and was straight till seventeen, when I took my first hit of pot. Up to this point I guess I had so much innocence, that my world was wonderful everyday. Then came pot and beer at every band practice. It seemed like I was in surround sound when I was loaded and broke on through to the other side. It was an environment that you could go to.

The sad thing was that I became dependent on getting loaded in order to maintain a good jam. As a matter of fact, if somebody didn't have a joint at band practice, it wasn't going to be a good practice. And it just kept getting worse. I lived for getting stoned and playing because real life and real jobs were a pain in

the butt and ruining my illusion of a life as a rock star. And I was going to be a rock star. I was willing to sacrifice everything to make it.

Eventually like all bands that use drugs to enhance their creative side, their egos are enriched and full of fire. When the pot wasn't there I was always in a cranky mood and eventually the bands I was in self-destructed and we hated each other.

After twenty-two years of smoking pot, relationships gone sour, work ethics that were terrible, I surrendered to Marijuana Anonymous and let it all go. I decided my turn was up as far as making it. It just wasn't going to happen. A wholesome relationship with a woman and good living through good work was what I really needed now. I noticed that after ninety days of sobriety, that my creative side was coming up with all kind's of ideas.

However, sobriety was the most important thing in my life these days. I recorded my own music and thanked God for the sheer enjoyment of creating my own music. I shared it with other people and they said they liked it better than my dark music I use to write. My mother even liked it. I don't know if that's good or bad.

At an MA meeting I frequent, there was a mention of the Convention going to be in our district. I volunteered because I just love putting on a show. After a cou-

ple of Convention committee meetings, I got this wild idea of putting together some of the musicians that come to the meetings, and forming a band for the Convention. The other committee members thought it was a capital idea. The word got out to neighboring districts and musicians from all over the place that were sober jumped at the chance. I knew God had brought us together because we all shared the same message. "We needed a safe environment to play music." We all knew that there was no way any of us could be in a band where some of the musicians were using.

This band that met in sobriety is a gift. Can you imagine musicians being grateful for one another and open to everyone's opinions and feelings. It's a first for me, I'll tell you. Before, it was my song, and we do it my way. Now, I tell them that I love them, and I'm grateful to be here. And we are having fun - a lot of fun.

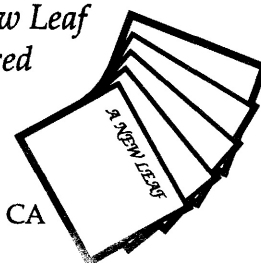
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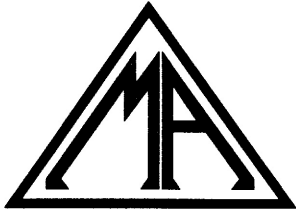
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A NEW LEAF

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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 necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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Rock "n" Roll continued

So I guess my gift is going to be used in a different path than I originally thought. I gave up something I really enjoyed because sobriety was more important than the destruction of being in the glamorous lime light of Rock 'n' Roll. But wait. You can have fun in sobri-

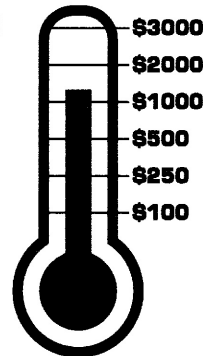
ety. And the illusion of Drugs + Rock go together, are over.

MA has taught me to have fun sober and I have a safe place express my God given gift. If it sound's good sober. It is good. We rock. I also noticed that my heroes that haven't died yet, are sober.

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On "turning my will and my life over..." by Anonymous

What does "turning our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding" mean? For me, I always think back upon a time when I was a university student, studying mathematics

I was taking a 10-week mathematics course. We were in week five, and we had already had our first midterm. I had managed to pass it with a decent grade, but didn't feel at all comfortable with the material. I knew that I could try to "hold it together," meaning I'd just try to memorize the material rather than really trying to understand it. I knew I could do this for five more weeks, and maybe even manage to get a decent grade in the class. I also knew that it would be a strain because this was really a

"half-measures" option.

Because I was in the program, I was aware of another option. I could buckle down and really get to studying, and that's what I decided.

We were already on chapter four or five, and so the first night of really studying, I decided to try to do all the problems at the end of chapter four. But when I read the first problem, I realized that I didn't know some of the terms and so would have to resort to looking them up in the chapter. As I did this, I realized that there were some concepts that I did not understand at all, and so would have to go to the previous chapter, which was chapter three. Yet, in reading chapter 3, I ran across theorems and definitions I didn't feel that com-

On "turning my will and my life over..." continued

portable with, and so to assuage my discomfort, I ended up going back to chapter 2. To make a long story short, I ended up going back to page one of the text, and spent the next two to three weeks locked up in my room for three to four hours at a time, trying to master the material. By the time I caught up with the class, I felt very secure in my learning and proud of my efforts.

What was unexpected though were the following: (1) When I really tried to focus on building a strong foundation, as I was doing, the lessons that followed were much more enjoyable because I didn't feel so shakey in my understanding. As corny as it might sound, I learned that when the foundation was strong, learning was enjoyable. When it wasn't, learning was full of frustrations.

(2) despite having had to go back all the way to page one, the effort and strain was much less, I believe, than had I decided to try to "fake it" all the way through. It takes a lot of effort and energy pretending to understand something when you really don't, especially when confronted with tests. (3) I had thought that I would end up falling way behind during the time I was doubling back in my own studies, but somehow by building a stronger foundation, I was able to more easily absorb the newer material through lecture than I ever had before.

For me, the essence of step three is to take the course of action that results not in "patching" up a problem, but in allowing whatever structure that exists to be torn down, so that building can recommence from

the very foundations. It's the act of deciding to go with long-term gain over short-term gain. If I'm living with the attitude of wanting to get to "the bottom of things" or to "the crux of the matter," not just seeking an interim solution, then I believe that I can be assured of a fruitful recovery.

I once sat in on a lecture given by the world's most prolific inventor. Though I forget his name, he holds the record for the most patents owned by an individual in the world. The one thing I remember from his lecture was what he said about choices. He said, "If you ever come upon a fork in the road, where you must choose between two options, and one choice looks more difficult than the other, always choose that path. In the end, the path that

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| Ron M. | 10/22/89 | 10 yrs |

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|-----------|----------|---------|
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|---------|----------|-------|
| Ilene M | 10/20/94 | 5 yrs |
|---------|----------|-------|

On "turning my will and my life over..." continued

seems more difficult will turn out to take less effort, and the path that seems easier, will turn out to be fraught with unforeseen difficulties." I've always remembered what he said, and try my best, though stumblingly, to apply it in my daily life.

As far as working the program is concerned, how does this apply? For me, it means

that I become willing to focus on building the foundation, which for me consists of attending meetings regularly, working the steps with a sponsor, finding ways to be of service, and maintaining a commitment to my inner growth as a recovering addict, all of which is to say that I am embracing the program as a way of life.

My Higher Power by Dan L.

I was pondering my Higher Power recently wondering if it loved me. Why would this unseen force of my misunderstanding take the time to be fond of me? After all, I am just beginning to like myself. Does it know me? How well does it know me? Can it see through lead? Does it care how often I masturbate? Can I use it to manipulate people? Being sober for five months, these are important sounding questions. Especially when working the 3rd Step.

There is a Higher Power for me today. After praying for an obsession to be lifted, many times it has. Not only is the obsession lifted, but a notion of purpose replaces it. Help has been given to me even when I was too proud to ask. Since joining program, I notice strange positive coincidences in my life... Odd.

Some friends and I chewed over this point at foodow-ship/fellowship. Someone pointed out that GOD must love me or I would wake in a pool of my own bodily juices

every morning. Okay, gross. Another pal said I was loved because GOD is the all powerful Love Force in the universe. Pass the rune stones. After discussing Eastern religions with another comrade, (and finding it absolutely fascinating) a long timer chimed in with one of those sayings I heard in my first meeting, "It's none of your business what others think of you." My Nostrodamus! It's none of my business what GOD thinks of me.

Many wonderful things have happened since I joined the program. Some crappy things. The friends I have made make it easier to enjoy my not so perfect life. When I feel like I can't walk, they carry me. When I feel like a pineapple they hug me until I become a beanie baby. These people genuinely seem to care about me. That is not as amazing as the fact that I love and care about them.

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A Poem by Skiff

So I go
twelve steps stumbling
in the crowd
I see this scruffy guy
mumbling... (something about
the CIA)
taking more cookies than he
should
from the help yourself condiment
table
I think to myself, hey
this guys in worse shape than me
and hasn't eaten all day
so I gave him a dollar.
Do you know what he did?
I'll tell you what he did
He put it in the basket
who's in worse shape?
I wonder!