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A NEW LEAF

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Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

I'm a 33 year old MA world-hopper. I just turned 8 in July. I've lived in 3 continents since I got sober in MA in LA, and I owe the MA program quite a lot. I moved to SF in 2002, and love it up here. Most people try to stay to the positive when they share, but I always tend to start on something negative and then turn to the positive: I hope you can hang in there with me to the good stuff! HA HA.

Step 10 was no exception to starting with the negatives — when I heard it, I thought I was supposed to start apologizing for everything again. When I first came into the program, I was apologizing for almost everything! "Oh, sorry." "Sorry about that." And was I sorry? No. Was I apologizing? No. And moreover, had I done anything wrong? No. I had been programmed to apologize for everything! So when I finally got over that, the last thing I wanted was to go back & apologize all the time! Luckily I learned that Step 10 is not necessarily about apologizing. For me, it's another tool in my toolbox that I can use to figure out what is going on. When I'm spinning, lost, or too deep into something for any perspective, I can sit down and write a quick inventory on it, and the answer is usually right there. I also bounce my 10th Step off a sponsor or friend, just to make sure I'm not being way too off the mark. One reason I occasionally spin out is when I get narrow vision and can only see a few possible options to resolve an issue. If the options are unacceptable, I start to spin — to the problem, to the unacceptable solution, and back again ... until I start freaking out.

Doing a 10th Step tends to short circuit this process, I'm happy to say. Generally, once I pray for the person/place/thing and accept that they are sick, a few more alternative options come up. (Sometimes they do involve apologizing, but generally not.) It's important to do the 4th column (from Step 4) when doing a 10th Step: This is the column where I ask myself, "What can I do otherwise? What could I have done differently?" I think the magic of Step 4 and Step 10 come from this column. It's extremely valuable to look back at my life and identify patterns, no doubt. But for me, it was far more important to look at how I had done things before and realize that I had other options, and to list what they were. For me, this opened up my life to whole new areas that I hadn't even considered before — for me, this was specifically in the area of relationships.

When I got clean, I was also seeing a therapist in LA who was (and still is) clean & sober as well. He often

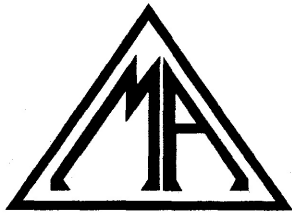
walked me through the possibilities I had never thought of. After Step 4 I learned how my sexual relationships had been troublesome and how I'd made them more damaging to both parties. But I hadn't figured out what to do differently to change things going forwards. One of his most beneficial suggestions was that I say clearly and honestly to women, even on the first date, what kind of relationship I'm looking for and whether I encounter any "deal breakers" with that person (such as 'are they available to a relationship', are they kind, funny, positive, etc). Also very beneficial for me was his suggestion to abstain from sex with a romantic interest long enough to build up an 'emotional framework' with them that could support a sexual connection.

Maybe most people realize this naturally, but for me this was a massive breakthrough in my '4th column of what could I do differently' with relationships. I laughed so hard about it during my session, saying, "Can I really DO that?" Won't the woman get upset? He said that actually, it's possible the woman will thank me for being mature and honest — and that did happen a few times (if we didn't have sex first). Once there's sex, everything seems to change. I've discovered that if I abstain from intimate sexual contact long enough to really get to an idea about who the woman is (for me, one or 2 dates a week for about 1 month more or less), this is enough time to evaluate (on the surface) whether I want to be intimate with this person. The desire to be intimate earlier does not go away for me, but the action of not hopping in the sack right away has been so rewarding. I'm amazed to hear myself write this, b/c sexual relationships have always been so difficult for me - they were always easy to find, but not with the right person for me. I am not perfect, but things have really changed for me in the last few years.

Anyway, there are many other things I've put on my 10th Step, including jobs, family members, apartments, bosses, feelings, and so on. With all these things, as long as I can be honest, I have found relief. I've also been blessed to do a 10th Step w/a friend when he was in some real emotional pain — and I was able to watch him transform through the pain and come out the other side. Do I do a 10th Step every day? No way. But I do it when I need to, and I do attempt daily to keep my spiritual condition in order. It's been working for me, I hope you have found something that works for you!

PEACE AND LOVE

Ari K (in SF)



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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We send approximately 681 copies of *A New Leaf* each month to subscribers in 31 states



The Roving Reporter

Thank you very much for your contributions.

Steve said his favorite phrase was "If I could smoke like that (like a normie) I'd smoke every day." Valerie said, "The phrase that has seemed the most profound to my personal experience is 'the illusion of functionality,' from the *Life With Hope* book. My alleged "functionality" was the biggest excuse I used, during many years of active using, to keep me in denial that I had a problem with marijuana. This phrase put it in its proper perspective!" Lastly, Danny B. said, "Creativity lies within all of God's instruments! A human's voice is one of those beautiful devices! Our voices need to be heard because we are all free in God's world! What sets me free is that my God is music to me!"

My personal favorite is when I hear people say "you're right where you're supposed to be." I'm not sure if it's deeply profound or a bunch of nonsense, but to each his own.

The holidays are coming up and they were normally a good time for addicts to get high. For next month, please share with us some things you do to stay sober during the holiday season.

**I almost forgot--check out District 10's new website-- www.madistrict10.org

Top 10 Reasons Why I Quit Smoking Weed & Began the Recovery Process by Krista D

I probably hit my bottom long ago ... one day I wanted weed and couldn't find any. My husband coaxed me out on a beautiful Saturday afternoon to play frisbee golf in hopes this would take my mind off my obsession. I went along ... maybe the sun, fresh air and play would shake my ugly mood. It didn't. I ended up on my knees in the park, pounding the earth with my fists and crying, all for lack of pot. But I tried to control my abuse and deal with life as a pothead for several years after that. What brought me around wasn't one moment of clarity, not One Great Big Thing that opened my eyes all at once, but a culmination of circumstances and realizations, small signs if you will, that took place over a very short time until the answer was impossible to deny. Here they are:

10. When I turned 42, I thought about all I wanted to do before I died, and realized I'd need a few more lifetimes than the one I had at the slow-mo stop-start rate I was going, between bags.
9. My dad and father-in-law both fell ill within a few months of each other. It was time for me to grow up and get over old resentments, to heal the emotional cripple inside me—the torch is being passed, and Mommy and Daddy won't be there forever.
8. Pot sabotages and saps what little physical and emotional health I have, which isn't much, considering that I have the immune system of a bubble boy and the metabolism of a slug. I'm slowly getting over chronic fatigue syndrome, no thanks to weed. (Psst ... have I mentioned the clinical depression I secretly thought I was helping to self-medicate with pot, despite a good psychiatrist and SSRIs?) Extra souvenirs I brought home from my last couple cross country trips were nasty bugs that took about a month to recover from. The second time was a wake-up call. I love to travel, and my family's a few thousand miles away, but I actually considered staying home before I considered dropping the dope from my life.
7. To assist my health further, now that I have quit, I am motivated enough for a personal fitness regimen.
6. I want to successfully lose and keep off the 50 pounds I've gained from pot-triggered munchies as well.
5. Furthermore, I want to quit smoking cigarettes for good (another addiction heavily triggered by pot). One day I realized that I'd never accomplish this or the previous two goals until I left the weed behind first.
4. I don't think it's asking too much of myself to do my part in the house and in my marriage, to be a good friend, to take part in my church, to teach literacy, and to work for social change in the world. Maybe even get a job. In other words, I want a life!
3. My biggest hope is that in recovery I will develop the self-esteem and discipline needed to regularly do what I love again — to write fiction!!!
2. The pain of being so stuck and watching my world shrink around me for so long was finally greater than the fear of taking that leap of faith into the unknown. (It turned out to be a simple step.)
1. I knew I couldn't figure out how to live sober and find serenity on my own, and I knew the 12-step fellowships worked. I'd seen it work for others. Discovering MA was a bonus!

There they are. I don't know if my goals will be achieved through recovery, but I know they won't be achieved through active addiction — I tried that way long enough, and it just got me sicker and more isolated and useless. I turn over my expectations to my HP's will when I feel frustrated and impatient, and I take one day at a time, one step at a time, do what I need to do for the moment, and not dwell or fret about time wasted or obstacles feared. But the promises of recovery are coming to me already, and I don't even have a year in yet! May they come to you, too.

CELEBRATE!!

2005 MA Convention

*Presidents Holiday Weekend February 18th to 20th 2005, at the beautiful Torrance Del Amo Marriott
Rooms are available Wednesday February 16th to Tuesday February 22nd at \$89 per night (1 to 4
people)*

*For reservations call 800-228-9290 by February 1st 2005 and state that you are with the MA
Convention*

Free self parking available (\$6 valet parking)

Convention registration begins at 4:00pm, Friday February 18th

The Convention ends at 3:00pm Sunday February 20th

Transportation to the Marriott will be available to and from LAX and Long Beach airports

		<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Registration:	\$20.00 (\$25.00 after January 1 st)	_____	_____
Banquet:	\$40.00 per person	_____	_____
Includes:	Dinner, Banquet Show & Dance		
Dinner Choices:	Chicken ___ Mahi Mahi ___ Vegetable Wellington ___ *One choice per person Vegan entrée upon request		
Dance Only	\$5.00 per person	_____	_____
Raffle Tickets:	\$\$Prizes\$\$ \$1 for 1 ticket, \$5 for 10, \$10 for 30	_____	_____
Tee Shirts:	Women's Tanks		
	Med ___ Lg ___ \$12.00 (\$15.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
	Mens Solid Tees		
	Lg ___ and XLg ___ \$12.00 (\$15.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
	2XL ___ and 3XL ___ \$15.00 (\$18.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
	Tie Dyes		
	Lg ___ and XLg ___ \$17.00 (\$20.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
	2XL ___ and 3XL ___ \$20.00 (\$23.00 at Convention)	_____	_____
Donations to help another MA member share the convention experience are welcome		_____	_____

Grand Total : _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ Email Address _____

If you will need transportation to and from the airport

Arrival Date: _____ Time: _____ Airport _____ Airline _____ Flight # _____

Departure Date: _____ Time: _____ Airport _____ Airline _____ Flight # _____

Please mail this form and Payment to: Make Checks payable to MA District 7

Penny Roebuck

MA Convention 2005

2106 Grant Ave #1

Redondo Beach CA 90278

For further information call Mike LB or Penny R. at 310-376-2400 or go to WWW.MA2005.com

MA WORLDWIDE

For Land and Online Meeting Schedules Go To: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>
 email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

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 PO Box 2912, Van Nuys, CA 91404
 800-766-6779

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 408.450.0796

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 206.548.9034

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 619.685.2808

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 323.964.2370

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 800-766-6779

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 5

Tom G.	10/17/93	11 years
Jason	10/29/93	11 years
Jackhammer.	10/29/98	6 years
Aaron	10/12/02	2 years
Darryl M.	10/08/02	2 years
Sarah V.	9/30/03	1 year!

Cambridge, MA

Dalit	10/03	3 years
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District 3

Judy F.	10/10/93	11 years
Doug F.	10/15/97	7 years
Jim B.	10/15/01	3 years
Mel G.	10/31/87	17 years
Ron M.	10/22/89	15 years
Steve Mc.	10/04/93	11 years
Thomas B.	10/04/02	2 years
Denis	10/03/03	1 year!
Janice M.	10/18/00	4 years

District 7

Chris T.	8/02/95	9 years
Dena S.	9/15/99	5 years
Cynthia P.	9/01/98	6 years
Dravpadi D.	8/22/03	1 year!

Davis, CA

Tyler	9/11/96	8 years
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Celebrating 142 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!

STRIP #2

<p>THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF ABE NORML</p>		
<p>This is Abe, Abe Norml. Abe has a problem. He loves to smoke weed all day long and hang out with his dog Sparky. His girlfriend is MJ and best friend is BUD. Follow Abe through his journey to recovery.</p>		
<p>Abe, wake up! Your boss is on the phone. He says you are late again. This is your last chance.</p>	<p>Abe, MJ and Bud are here. Do you want me to let them in? ABE! WAKE UP!</p>	<p>Dude, get up you lazy ass. You need to find a new job. Time to wake and bake!</p>