



My Name is Neal

My name is Neal and I am a marijuana addict. Not only am I an addict, I am also blind. I became blind 4 years ago as the result of a self inflicted gunshot wound to my head. I became very depressed as the result of my drug abuse and I ended up attempting to take my own life. It was on July 2nd, 2004. I went out to my father's house and drank about a gallon of gin and found his gun. I put the gun to my right temple and pulled the trigger. The bullet entered at my right temple and went straight through and exited out my left temple. On the way through, it destroyed my optical nerves, leaving me completely blind. I suffered a traumatic brain injury and spent 1 month in a coma before waking up and then spending 3 more months in the hospital doing extensive re-

habilitation. I had to relearn how to do everything - walk, talk, eat, even how to wipe my own butt after using the restroom. After I was released from the hospital, I started training at The Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB). There

“I ended up attempting to take my own life.”

I learned all of the skills needed for independent living as a blind person. They taught me that blindness is not the end, that with the proper training and attitude I can do anything in life as a blind person. I went 1.5 years after the injury without drugs or alcohol, but smoked weed 1 time and was hooked right away. I was smoking marijuana on a daily basis for

2 or 3 years until I decided to go to treatment on April 17th, 2008. I came to Hazelden and did 28 days of treatment and am now living in a sober house in Saint Paul. I have been clean for 169 days today and I love life and I love myself again. Last week I went to my first Marijuana Anonymous meeting and loved it. It is now my home group. I was so happy to find MA, as marijuana is and always has been my drug of choice. At times I felt looked down on by alcoholics in AA meetings or crack heads in NA meetings, but I feel at home at the Marijuana Anonymous meetings. I will continue to frequent MA meetings and share my story to help others. I feel so blessed to be drug free and to have found Marijuana Anonymous. ~ Neal

Problem Thinking By Thomas (bugggin)

A friend read these as the 20 questions of AA for a topic of discussion at one of my meetings recently. I had never heard the 20 questions of AA before, and certainly not his revised addition. I enjoyed them so much that I incorporated MA's questions in with them and came up

with the 24 questions of the 12-step program. Here they are, the idea is not original but I believe that the message is true. We are here to work but we are also here to laugh, have fun and yes, even laugh at ourselves. This too is part of our recovery. I hope you enjoy them as much as i did.

It has been said that our addictions are not so much a cause of the substances we use, but are rather a symptom of our own thinking.

Here are the "Amended 24 questions" of the 12-step program.

(continued on page 2)

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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or submit online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on publications.

Problem Thinking (continued)

1. Do you lose time from work due to your thinking?
2. Is it hard to imagine a life without thinking?
3. Do you think because you are shy with other people?
4. Is your thinking affecting your reputation?
5. Do you think to avoid dealing with your problems?
6. Have you ever gotten into financial difficulties as a result of your thinking?
7. Do you turn to lower companions and an inferior environment when you are thinking?
8. Does your thinking make you careless of your family's welfare?
9. Has your ambition decreased since thinking?
10. Do you crave a think at a definite time of day?
11. Do you start thinking in the morning?
12. Does thinking cause you to have difficulty when sleeping?
13. Does your thinking let you live in a privately defined world?
14. Is thinking jeopardizing your job or business?
15. is thinking making your home life unhappy?
16. Do you ever think alone?
17. After thinking do you feel anxious or worried that you will never think again?
18. Have you ever had a complete loss of memory as a result of thinking?
19. Has your physician ever treated you for thinking?
20. Do you think to build up your self-confidence?
21. Have you ever been to a hospital or institution because of your thinking?
22. Do you plan your life around your thinking?
23. Have friends or relatives ever complained that your thinking is damaging your relationship with them?
24. Do you ever think and drive?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions your thinking may be your real problem!



Calling All Writers!

Ellen N. the newly elected Literature Trustee for MA World Services, is requesting submissions from members:

- 1 – TheThird Edition of Life With Hope needs new stories!
- 2 – A Daily Mediation book. Your writing printed on your sobriety date.
- 3 – A chapter similar to "We Agnostics" from AA for Life With Hope

For more info: Literature@marijuana-anonymous.org.



Roving Reporter: How do you deal with unfamiliar emotions or feelings in sobriety?

First, I feel them, which is different from when I was stoned. Then I try to stop, take a breath, and remember that it's just a feeling, not a reality. Then I try to figure out what the feeling is, where it comes from, and what part of it is true.

That's the part I usually screw up, so when I need help, I ask for it. I call or email my sponsor, depending on how severe it is, and he gives me some perspective on things. Or I take it to a meeting. Sometimes, just sharing it with a group takes away some of its power.

Mainly, my goal is to feel feelings but not be swept away by them -- not, in other words, over-react to a situation just because I have some emotions involved.

~Paul G., District 11

When unfamiliar emotions or feelings come up the first thing I do is share/talk about it. I try not to keep it inside me because now I know it is a threat to my serenity and sobriety. I try not to focus too much on it. I try to think about the solution. I know feelings are normal and they will come up. And it's the matter of dealing with them, if the problem can not be solve right away, just simply drop it (not easy) I try to realize that this too, shall pass (as my sponsor always says). Or even remember to pray about it. I call on my sponsor hop-

ing I can get a better solution, and keep calling and listening until I get someone vanish my uncomfortable feeling. Sometimes just by listening to other fellow addicts and hear their problems worst than mine calms me down, thinking, why am I whining about this tiny problem when I hear a fellow addict suffering more than me. That way I get out of myself and try to help another addict which helps me stay sober. ~ Ruell

When I'm dealing with unfamiliar feelings or emotions in sobriety, one of the first things I have to remember is that these are just feelings- NOT FACTS. Just because I FEEL (and boy! What a change THAT is from when I'd get high) something unfamiliar doesn't mean it will be like stuck this forever. It doesn't mean the world is against me. It doesn't mean that my world's gone nuts. It doesn't mean I have to be overwhelmed. What it means is, I am experiencing something new and unfamiliar, that I was numbing out before.

New and unfamiliar can be scary or it can be exciting. It all depends on how you approach it. When a feeling overwhelms me, like an ocean wave, I try to accept it. The less I fight it, the more I can deal with it. I try to be like the reed that bends with the wave, but is not uprooted by the tide. I try to be the rock that

the wave breaks on, but is solid enough to remain stable when the water rolls away. Remembering acceptance, that everything happens for a reason, is key to coping and processing.

Ultimately, if the feeling is negative or scary, also remembering "this too shall pass" is another way to get through it. Just knowing that you are not alone and sharing those unfamiliar emotions and feelings in a meeting is another great way to work through it. As soon as I realized that I was not terminally unique and others had been there, I felt like I could handle anything that came my way.

Oh, and don't forget to BREATHE. - Noelle A.

Having Bipolar disorder means that I have an emotional illness. In recovery I have especially had to watch symptoms that regular people experience when their drug of choice is removed, such as: bitterness over the past, depression, and anxiety. I have had to find ways to cope emotionally when before I used to "stuff" my feelings. Sometimes I go with my feelings and other times, I just do what I have to do, despite my emotions or my feelings at that time. My emotions have experienced the most growth of all! I have come to enjoy my emotions to a large extent. ~ Anonymous



marijuana anonymous worldwide

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

birthdays

Celebrating 235 years of sobriety in this issue!

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

District 1

Anonymous 8/30/08 1 year!

District 2

Manny O. 10/1/03 5 yrs.

Elisabeth 10/27/92 18 yrs.

District 5

Michael L. 10/29/90 18 yrs.

Tom G. 10/17/93 15 yrs.

Jason 10/29//93 15 yrs.

James V. 10/29//98 10 yrs.

District 6

Andrea A. 8/29/88 20 yrs.

District 7

John C. 9/19/07 1 year!

Sherry H. 9/15/07 1 year!

Anita N. 9/5/07 1 year!

Dena S. 9/15/99 9 yrs.

Richie S. 9/1/91 17 yrs.

Gonzolo 8/18/05 3 yrs.

Bea B. 8/23/07 1 year!

District 8

Leah C. 9/15/06 2 yrs.

Jeff S 9/1/99 9 yrs.

Michael S. 10/23/01 7 yrs.

Mike P. 8/19/07 1 year!

David 9/22/97 11 yrs.

District 10

Kristopher T. 10/8/03 5 yrs.

Elizabeth 10/10/05 3 yrs.

Greg S. 10/25/03 5 yrs.

Richard 10/27/95 13 yrs.

Dan K. 9/1/07 1 year!

District 11

Jan D. 10/13/03 5 yrs.

Susan B. 10/9/86 22 yrs.

District 15

Ellen 9/19/04 4 yrs.

Gary 9/30/07 1 year!

Tom 11/11/07 1 year!

Grass Valley, CA

Diane C. 9/25/04 4 yrs.

Humboldt Co. CA.

DD O. 8/20/01 7 yrs.