



Oh! What a Trip It's Been

I will never forget the first time I got high. I was 29 years old and in a new relationship with a wonderful woman, and we were looking to do something new and exciting.

We scored our weed, and after dinner, we got high. I don't remember everything about that evening. But what I recall as clear as crystal 25 years later is literally rolling on the floor in hysterics. We were laughing so hard and so uncontrollably that we literally peed our pants. It was an unbelievably wonderful feeling, and at that moment I fell in love with marijuana.

The next time we smoked, we did it before dinner, and the experience of eating food was so wonderful, getting high for dinner quickly became a habit. We soon discovered getting high and watching TV was an otherworldly experience. What was previously mildly funny became hilarious. Platitudes became eternally deep truths. The boring became enthralling. And so it became with all aspects of my life: Weed made it all so much better, the thought of doing anything straight became unthinkable.

It all happened so fast, and I was so blind to my growing dependence on the drug. Soon, doing almost anything – from making dinner to making love – became wedded to being high.

For years, I never thought of myself as an addict. Addicts smoked crack or banged junk. They didn't smoke a non-addictive and natural plant. I had a good job. I made good money.

I had a beautiful wife and lovely children. We lived in a great home.

But time and the inevitable collapse of my life soon made the truth impossible to ignore. The girlfriend I first smoked with had become my wife, but she did not become my drug buddy. My using was a source of constant friction and disappointment for her. I ignored her to get high by myself, and then lived in my stupidly-stoned private world.

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found I belonged.*

My relationship with my two lovely children suffered. My eldest once looked at my face and said in astonishment "Oh my god, your eyes are so red! What's wrong???" I felt like crying, but came to the absurd conclusion that I should avoid her when I was high, not avoid getting high when it was my duty to be a father. In my youth I was athletic and fit. But my health deteriorated to the point that I had trouble going up the stairs in my home. Once again, I drew an absurd conclusion: I needed to quit smoking? Of course not! I needed to sell the house and buy a bungalow.

Over the 17 years I battled my addiction, I drew any number of lines I would never cross with my using. And then I crossed them all.

I nearly killed myself in an accident that was caused by my being stoned out of my mind. When I surprised myself by surviving it, I smoked a joint to celebrate my good fortune. And then, twice more, idiotic decisions by my stoned brain caused other misfortunes that nearly cost me my life.

Slowly but surely, my thick skull was penetrated by two undeniable truths: I was killing myself slowly with this drug, and one more idiotic drug-fueled accident might kill me mighty quick.

I won't burden you with the details of my bottom. Suffice it to say, it brought me to the inevitable conclusion that one more moment of using and I would lose my wife, my children, my home and my sanity. I saw my life as I knew it falling apart, and I had my moment of clarity. I saw myself for what I was – a man with a raging and life-threatening drug addiction. I became determined to get clean. The problem was I had no idea how. I had tried to quit dozens of times, and each time I fell flat on my face, usually within minutes, or at best hours.

But this time was different.

Before, I always had some clever simple plan for giving it up: I'll flush it down the toilet and be done with it; I'll tough it out and use my

ANL's Purpose

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. MA is not affiliated with—and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

We are reaching out to districts to update the ANLP Liaisons and birthday lists. Additionally, district/group service representatives, including but not limited to those serving as ANLP Liaisons, are encouraged to stay in touch: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org

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will power; I'll avoid my stoner friends so that I won't be tempted; I'll just smoke on weekends but give it up entirely during the week. All these plans of my own making had failed. Fast and furiously.

This time, I surrendered to the fact that I had no idea how to get clean. I knew that I alone was helpless to deal with my life-threatening problem. So I reached out for help. I went to a meeting of NA.

Walking into that meeting was the hardest thing I ever did in my life. I was embarrassed and ashamed. But I listened to the stories of good and decent recovering addicts, and shared some laughs and some tears. And when that meeting was done, and I was unsure whether I would ever come back, a man from the meeting pulled me aside. He bluntly told me two things that were true but hard to hear: I was very sick, and the most important thing in the world was to go to meetings and learn from addicts who had found their way. He stressed the importance of 90 meetings in 90 days. This sounded fanatical to me at first, and in the past I would have dismissed him out of hand – he was a “crackhead” (albeit a former one, but still), and I was the successful professional. But this time I glimpsed the truth – He was successfully dealing with his addiction and was living an immeasurably better life because of it, and I wasn't and my life was a disaster. So I listened to him and in the next 89 days went to 89 more meetings, all of them at MA.

Rather than feeling ashamed at being in the rooms, I found I belonged. I was with soulmates and fellow travelers. I realized that far from being some strange marijuana freak, there were many people who shared my experience with the drug. They had wisdom to share, and I eagerly received it. Shame turned to pride. I was rebuilding my life and reclaiming joy and happiness.

After a couple of months of attending meetings, I knew I had to get a sponsor and work the steps. Having heard many people share many times, there was one man I knew I wanted to act as my sponsor. I asked, he said yes, and over the next year I was constantly amazed at all he did to help me through my suffering. In the world I inhabited before my recovery, people did things for their own personal reasons or for a fee. With my sponsor, humanity and compassion and goodness were reason enough.

I am now approaching 8 years of sobriety. The changes in my life from this program have been stunning. Rather than wallowing in anger and resentment, I am happy. Dysfunctional relationships with loved ones have become cherished. Rather than struggling to make it up the stairs in my home, I've taken to running marathons. Rather than hiding from the world, I embrace it. Life still has its challenges, and some of them are brutally hard, but with a clear head, serenity and the lessons I've learned from the program, my life has been blessed. ▲

~by Anonymous

A Miracle

"We find that if we give top priority to spiritual growth, it is less likely that self-will and character defects will pull us down." *Life With Hope - 3rd ed., p. 55.*

Through working the steps of MA with my sponsor and doing my best to practice the spiritual principles of the program, I've developed a relationship with my higher power that I never imagined was possible. For me, spiritual growth comes through the actions I

take to work my program: working the steps, calling my sponsor, fellowship, service, daily prayer and meditation, and reading the literature. I express gratitude to my higher power every day for recovery and for the blessings in my life, even when I don't always feel grateful.

Every morning I start my day by making conscious contact with God, and asking for guidance to do the next right thing. Sometimes my ego can get in the way, but I've learned

to apply faith and self-forgiveness to all situations and problems, and act "as if" everything will work out. Each time I take an action using spiritual tools of the program, my recovery grows stronger and I'm less likely to default to my self-will and more likely to act towards myself and others with kindness, love, and understanding. MA has not only given me freedom from marijuana, but also peace, serenity, and an ability to be of service to my fellow humans. What a miracle! ▲

~by Leslie F.

A Meditation on Getting Back to Serenity

"I love the saying: 'Our own best thinking brought us to our bottom.' When we try to manipulate others and situations to get our way, we are again resorting to our own best thinking. We figure if we can steer the bus in just the right way, we will get what we want and be happy and relieved of suffering. However, when our actions are based on self-will and ego gratification, even if we initially achieve what we want, the outcomes are often hollow and may have negative unintended consequences that become clear over time. If not aligned with the will of our higher power, our desires along with the means we use to get those desires fulfilled can lead to suffering for ourselves...and others.

The beautiful thing about recovery is that it provides us with basic principles that, much like a map, when followed lead to elegant, robust and long-lasting positive outcomes. When we make the principles of recovery our focus and act based on those, we no longer have to suffer from obstacles generated by our own best thinking. The principles of Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Love, Discipline, Perseverance, Spiritual Awareness, and Service as learned and practiced through the 12 steps are the keys. With these keys we align ourselves with the help and support of a power greater than ourselves.

So, when you are troubled and don't know what to do, pause, take a breath, and check in to see if you are being willful or trying to manipulate people and situations. Then smile and turn the situation over to your Higher Power. Ask God to reveal to you the recovery principle you need to focus on to get back to serenity. ▲

~by Anonymous



Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
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Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it..

Tradition Ten

Marijuana Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the MA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Celebrating 148 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Melina R. 9/19/2016 4 yrs.

District 4

Rob K. 8/13/2017 3 yrs.

District 5

Alex B. 9/7/2018 2 yrs.
Anthony 9/12/2017 3 yrs.
Michael S. 9/6/2019 1 yr.
Mike G. 9/28/2015 5 yrs.
Rick D. 9/12/2008 12 yrs.
Terry H. 9/7/1996 24 yrs.
Trés 9/20/2002 18 yrs.

District 7

Connie K. 9/24/2005 15 yrs.

District 11

Bill C. 9/15/2012 8
Kyker F. 9/18/2020 3
Mariska P. 9/30/1987 33
Stephen W. 9/5/2016 4
Stevie D. 8/19/2019 1

District 12

Michael C. 8/31/2017 3

Individuals

Dudi G. 8/12/2011 9

See your sobriety date here!

Allow us to publish your anniversary to celebrate! If your sobriety date has occurred, has not been published, and is not older than 45 days, please submit it in the format you see on the left. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liaison, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org