



Should I Stay or Should I Go?

As I most often do, I am starting with a disclaimer. When I write for *A New Leaf*, just like when I raise my hand and speak out at a meeting, I am sharing my own experience only; saying what's worked or has not worked for me with the hope that hearing about it might be of benefit to someone else. I did get clean and sober a fairly long time ago by most standards (1989). At that time there was no *Life with Hope*, no *A New Leaf*, and all-in-all MA was pretty much in its formative stage.

Like many people who I met at that time, I found MA after starting out in other recovery fellowships, and I made MA my home because marijuana was the nucleus of all my substance abuse issues (I am BTW of the "free from all mind-altering substances" kind of recovering addict). But, this is all just background information, not particularly what is calling me to share about today.

As long as I can remember I have been exquisitely sensitive, you know, an "egomaniac with an inferiority complex." Was this tendency part of what made me an addict, or did years of using make me feel that way? Who knows; but there have been a number of occasions where this propensity made me feel like bolting from a meeting, and sometimes even made me feel like leaving the fellowship and never coming back.

On one or two occasions I actually did bolt, and on one occasion that I now recall, it was not very graceful. I am fortunate and grateful that I did not relapse on either of these occasions and that I did keep coming

back. I should add right here that I am extremely grateful for the good friends who watched out over me and also whom I could call for their unconditional support. Larry, Teri, Flanagan, you know who you are!

Several times, including early in my recovery, I also witnessed others flee a meeting, sometimes followed out by caring others and sometimes not. Some of these people I never saw again. I guess my core belief is that we should be loving and kind to all our fellow members, because we all suffer. Sometimes when we are hurting the most we say and do the things we later regret the most.

Recovery for me, especially early on, sometimes felt as hard as being an addict in the throes of our disease. When I first came into meetings, I was an absolute wreck, my nerves were screaming and my primary crutch, which was marijuana, was no longer a solution that I had on the table. So here is my question, and it's a rhetorical question, so don't panic:

'Is it ever okay to get up and walk out of a meeting?'

For me that answer is a qualified yes – You may hear someone say there is a "rule" against this, but I do not believe that there is. I do however qualify that "yes" with the suggestion that having a backup plan is always a very good idea. A very good idea is to have contact info for people in the program who you know will be there for you to support you through moments of struggle and pain (especially if you actually contact them!). This has been my go-to tactic for years and years and

has saved my skin in a number of situations. Larry, Teri, Flanagan, you know who you are!

Let me also be clear; I don't believe that we should allow ourselves to be abused (including being hammered in cross talk or unkind critiques of our struggles after we have shared at a meeting). If it's better for you to get up and go, I believe that you should. From my experience having executed one good and one bad exit, doing these two things might make it easier:

1. No drama. Politely excuse yourself, or just get up and go. This may save you from having regrets and needing to make later amends.
2. Have a well thought out exit strategy. This might be having a friend or a sponsor to call, or another meeting or safe place that you can go to.

When you are vulnerable, having support and staying away from slippery places is probably a good idea. Okay, one more thing; don't be too hard on yourself! It is progress not perfection.

Lastly, I apologize if this sounds like sanctimonious advice or self-righteous preaching, I'm also reminding myself by writing this down. I want to remain with you, clean and sober, and each day growing a little bit more.

With you on that road,

~ Anonymous

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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What Is Time Anyway?

As my time has increased in sobriety – rotations of the planet and trips around the sun, my life has been a parade of experiences, an unfolding sequence of personal moments; moments of strength and clarity, as well as those of weakness, confusion, and doubt.

The path I am on has also brought me the immense good fortune to be around and get to know many other marijuana addicts who are with me trudging the road to recovery. They have brought me joy and inspiration and have had something to teach me from both their positive and their negative experiences.

I have remained clean and sober throughout my recovery, others have too, some have not, many have experienced pitfalls, and some have pulled through in the end. Some people who know me would say that my recovery is a miracle, but to be honest I'm not sure that's a word that genuinely fits into my vocabulary.

I will say in all earnestness that when I look back at all that I have made it through, I am overwhelmingly grateful. As is my custom, I'm saying all this to point out that all that I have are my own experiences, observations, and opinions, and I put them out there as always with sincerity, hoping to help another, but always with the caveat – take from it what you will.

So here it is, a question as old as recovery itself: Does it matter how much time you've got in sobriety, or is it "one day at a time"? My answer, as clear as I can be about it, is – yes, but also, no. The amount of time that I accrued in sobriety – 30 days, 90 days, 10 years, etc., really did matter to me, and I suppose, to be honest, that they still do. There certainly were times that these increments were protective barriers because I did not want to throw it all away, and even when at times my petty

and vain little ego wanted to not fall behind others that I saw myself as "ahead of" in some kind of way.

On the other hand, the quality of my recovery, that is to say my serenity, did not always equate with having more time. Serenity, which for me is something akin to contentment, can come and go on a daily basis depending on how much I remain honest and principled in my goings-on about the world. After all, it is progress, not perfection.

An attitude of loving kindness and of trying to understand are the goals that feel most important to me at this point in my recovery. A sarcastic "keep coming back" to an angry and confused addict early in their recovery, or a "you've got too many years and not enough days" to a more senior member who is opinionated, unpopular, or just plain hard to relate to are cruelties that I want to keep out of my mouth because I know from the worst possible meeting experience (the post-meeting suicide of an angry, hurting member) that cruelty is no virtue and can be dangerous all around.

Sometimes the best thing I can think to do when I encounter a member that strikes me as difficult, or angry, or struggling, is to shake their hand after the meeting, look them in the eyes and say "thank you" or "I'm glad that you're here" and mean it.

Buddha is alleged to have said to an angry man who he met along the road "you are so lucky to have all these difficult people in your life that can teach you so much about yourself." And know I'm feeling preachy, and I really didn't intend to. If you've read this far, I hope that something I have said has been helpful.

Respectfully,

~ Anonymous

Backyard Silence

So here we are again,
moving through a lot of
energy, as we have been
Creating space and time to
tap in.

Healing bowls on the
perimeter of my mat
The Communication,
Relationship, and Ascension
bowls to help me access the
wisdom within.

Heart and throat chakra
stones, one on each leg. The
sun setting as the crickets
hum.

The squirrels scurry in the
trees in a frenzy to gather
all the acorns before the fall
breeze brings each leaf slowly
and softly to Earth's surface.

And as I sit here in Silence,
I do the same. Going inward
myself.

Storing the abundance of
knowledge that the summer
has provided me —immense
growth.

I am a Tree.
So strong, leaves perked up
and reaching, outstretched
for Light.

Roots sinking deeper into the
Earth, where the Connection
is worth every bit of struggle
and challenge that happens
on the surface.

I am connected.
I am rooted.
I am Nature.
I am Spirit.
I am Love.

Nature's Intelligence,
alive inside of me —
emanating from me.

How this backyard is filled
with Life and Lessons and
numerous, consecutive cacao
ceremonies has reminded me
of all of this: Mother resides
within me.

A Gnosis that makes me
completely free to be Me.

I am ready to fly off this
tarmac into the Great
Unknown.

From a caterpillar
to chrysalis to a butterfly
drying out its wings.

She is ready...
Taking flight.
Flying off...
into Divine's steady breeze.

~Samantha D

YOU'RE INVITED! SPONSORSHIP Q&A SESSION

A panel of experienced MA sponsors will be available to...

- Address your questions
- Share experience, strength, and hope...
- Help you to become a sponsor or
- Help you become a more effective sponsor

Sunday, November 6

NOTE: Standard Time begins this day!
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM Eastern
12:00PM – 1:30 PM Pacific

Sign-in:

<https://bit.ly/SponsorshipQandA>

Meeting ID: 831 3207 5001

Passcode: 987952

QUESTIONS?

You may submit questions
for the panel ahead of time to:
newcomer@marijuana-anonymous.org

SUGGESTED READING

It is helpful to review information about
sponsorship before this discussion. You
can find it on the MA website at:

[https://marijuana-anonymous.org/
how-it-works/about-sponsorship/](https://marijuana-anonymous.org/how-it-works/about-sponsorship/)

HOSTED BY THE MARIJUANA
ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES
NEWCOMER SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The MA Daily Reflections Subcommittee Needs Your Help!

Living Every Day With Hope contains daily reflections
written by MA members for MA members and is nearly
finished. Please start reading it today and tell us what
you think! We are seeking your feedback by **November
1, 2022**. The draft will be submitted for approval at the
2023 Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conference.

Here's the link:

<https://marijuana-anonymous.org/daily-reflections/>

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

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Step and Tradition of the Month

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.

Consider discussing the Step and Tradition of the Month at your next meeting!

Celebrating 112 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Gary J	9/14/2021	1 yr
Kathleen M	8/28/2001	20 yrs

District 5

Alex B	9/7/2018	4 yrs
Anthony L	9/12/2017	5 yrs
Anthony Q	9/19/2019	3 yrs
Rick D	9/12/2008	14 yrs
Terry H	9/7/1996	26 yrs
Trés	9/20/2002	20 yrs

District 7

Andrew K	8/13/2021	1 yr
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District 11

Bill C	9/15/2012	10 yrs
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District 14

Johnny D	9/20/2020	2 yrs
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District 21

Londel J	9/18/2018	4 yrs
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District 23

James D	9/7/2021	1 yr
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District 27

Andrea F	8/23/2021	1 yr
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See your sobriety date here!

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 by the 16th of the month. You may tell your local GSR, ANLP Liason, or e-mail to: chiefs@anewleafpublications.org