

# A NEW LEAF

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## Those Maddening Emotions by Jeff M.

Emotions. I didn't realize I had been doing such a fine job of stuffing them, until I stopped. I didn't know I could be so happy, until I became clean and sober. For a long time, I thought smoking marijuana would make me happy, but since I have been sober, I have been happier than I have ever been in my life. I have also been more depressed, joyful, frightened, excited, angry, and generally more emotional than I have ever been. It is similar to the old fable, Pandora's Box, as soon as you open the lid to the forbidden box everything, good and bad, comes out. Thank God, whom I have chosen for my higher power, that I have the program. A program that gives us some tools to deal with these emotions. A program that tells us to call our sponsor, call someone, anyone to whom we can share our feelings openly and honestly with; a program that gives us a place where we can share our feelings openly and honestly, meetings. In a meeting we can get the emotions out there into the open where they can no longer harm us. Let them go, for once you let go of the emotions they no longer have control over you and are much less harmful.

The one emotion that I didn't realize I had been stuffing the most, and the one that has surprised me the most, is passion. Not just THAT kind of passion, but that has been part of it. I mean a passion for life, a passion to live every moment to the fullest, a passion for the MA program, an overwhelming passion to do, to be. I was extremely lucky that for my first few months of sobriety I was involved in an outpatient program, I found out that feelings of anger, depression, and fear were normal. I found out that every recovering addict goes through these emotions in one form or another, at one time or another. In fact the grieving process we go through as addicts over giving up our drugs of choice, is very similar to the grieving process people go through when they get divorced. Therefore, the anger, depression, and self-pity are all very normal. What I wasn't prepared for was the passion, this zest for life I now have. For me there is nothing more enjoyable, very little more invigorating than watching a sunrise. The sun playing peak-a-boo with the morning clouds as it slowly rises out of the east. The golden orb of life slowly rising,

heralding a new day, another chance to do it right, a new day of the promises that are coming true in my life. Which is all from doing the footwork this program **REQUIRES** of us. The 12 steps are suggested steps, just like it is suggested that you don't stick your finger into a wall socket. The results will be about the same. If you stick your fingers into a wall socket, you may live or you may die. You don't have a choice in the matter. It is your choice to do the 12 steps to the best of your ability, or not, but if you are an addict, and you don't do them, you have a good chance of ending up back out there and doing more research on how long it is before you DIE!

What frightens me about this passion I feel for life, is that

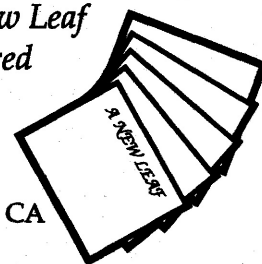
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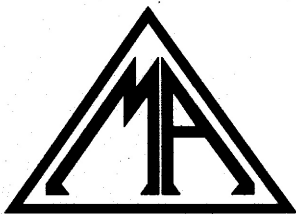
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## A NEW LEAF

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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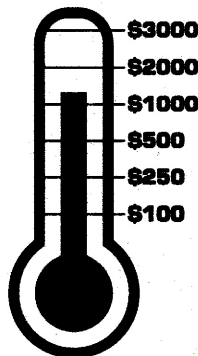
it is taking me away from everything I have known in the past, which in some cases may be good, but in this case, it is my life as I knew it. I had smoked all of my using buddies away. I didn't have any friends, except my friend, my lover Mary Jane. Therefore, when I came into the program and had to change all my friends, it was easy, I just made new ones in the program. So, when I was told that the only thing I had to change was everything, I didn't have a problem, because there wasn't anything, so changing everything was easy, until now. Now it seems that the few remnants of my old life that were good,

my house, my family, may require change, and that frightens me. Ah, another emotion, boy those pesky things keep popping up every where. Nevertheless, I know what I need to do, I need to face my fear, and walk through it. I need to pray, turn it over to God, and know that what ever happens will be exactly right for me. How easy that sounds, how easy that is to type, how hard that is to do. However, from past experience, I know it works, so I will keep trying. This is a program of progress, not perfection, and with each new sunrise, I make a little more progress.

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for more information about the convention visit our web site at:  
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## Jim's Story by Jim F.

Four years ago I would have never thought it possible that I'd be writing an article for the New Leaf. Like so many other MA members, I started smoking marijuana in the late sixties. I was, at the time, a member in good standing of a larger group commonly known as hippies. A common tradition of hippies

was to smoke pot. I was very good at this, in fact I turned a lot of people on for their first time. I thought it was a good deed.

Later, in the early seventies, I moved to California. I was twenty-four years old, so finding new connections was easy, and along with connections

## Jim's Story continued

were friends who also used marijuana. It was easy to fit in especially if you had weed. Two years after moving here from NYC, I met a young lady at work. After courting for a year we wed. and after getting married we wanted to start a family. My wife stopped smoking, just simply stopped. I didn't even entertain the thought of quitting, after all it was my best friend, my secret tool, a common thread in my life for so many years.

After my daughter was born we bought a house. Money was tight and buying marijuana was an expense we couldn't afford. So I grew my own. I grew marijuana for about a dozen years. I got better and better at growing strong weed. My wife would go nuts every year, especially in the early fall when the plants were huge. We couldn't have friends

over because of my special garden. I thought of this situation as her problem.

Finally, one day she said she had had enough and that she would leave with our daughter if I didn't stop growing dope. My wife said we could afford to buy whatever I needed. She had no idea how much I ingested, ate and smoked. (about an ounce every two weeks of high grade pot)

For the last three years or so of smoking I bought and dealt mid grade Mexican marijuana. It was a maintenance program. I was not getting the rush or highs I was so badly missing. Also the number of friends that still smoked got fewer and fewer, which led me to being more secretive and private, and I was scoring from people I wouldn't associate with otherwise.

I wanted to quit and I needed help. So I went to my first MA meeting. What a surprise, I met other people with a common problem. I wasn't alone. I wasn't as unique as I had thought. It has been two years since my last smoke. The miracle that I heard about in my early meetings actually happened. I'm going to meeting regularly, have a sponsor and have worked the steps. Early in my recovery, my wife was angry with me because going to meetings once a week was still me having a secret life, but in a short time she saw some recovery and became a big supporter of MA.

My wife came to the MA convention in Burbank with me this past year and met many of my friends from my local meeting in Berkeley and friends that I made at last years convention.

## ★ ★ Congratulations to Our Members ★ ★ Celebrating their Sober Birthdays! ★

### District 3

Dawn K. 11/22/96 3 yrs.  
Tami S. 11/15/96 3 yrs.  
Dustin P. 11/1/97 2 yrs.  
Ted Mc. 11/20/97 2 yrs.

### District 4

Tristen H. 10/4/98 1 year!  
David H. 10/30/96 3 yrs.

### District 6

Michelle 11/30/98 1 year!

Kris P. 11/22/98 1 year!  
Robin T. 11/16/97 2 yrs.  
Billy B. 11/9/96 3 yrs.  
Gerald F. 11/12/90 9 yrs.  
Michael P. 11/12/94 5 yrs.  
Terri R. 11/18/90 9 yrs.

### District 7

Michael A. 8/19/86 13 yrs.  
Steve G. 8/22/98 1 year!  
Milo 8/24/96 3 yrs.

Steve A. 8/28/95 4 yrs.  
Laurie Rae 9/9/96 3 yrs.  
Tommy O. 9/12/96 3 yrs.  
Kari 9/15/98 1 year!  
Jim 9/25/89 10 yrs.  
Sheri B. 10/2/83 16 yrs.

### Alabama

Eric F. 11/20/88 11 yrs.

## Jim's Story continued

That was very helpful because now my friends are also hers.

Life is good. I'm grateful to MA for giving me a chance at life again. My intuition about people and instances are more grounded. I find it easier to follow conversations, movie plots and football games. I don't have worries of being drug tested at work, or fear of a DUI by the

police. No longer having an outlaw life is really a relief. There are many other reasons to be thankful for being in recovery. I discover more reasons as I gain more clean time.

The main tool I have in recovery is the weekly meeting. As our closing prayer says, "we can do together what we could never do alone"

## The Roving Reporter

**Name a feeling/behavior that convinced you that you were powerless over marijuana.**

Erin O. dist 5, 13 years

Smelling a skunk and wanting to smoke pot.

Lee S. dist 4, 3 years

One time, my room-mates kicked me out of their house one week after I paid my share of the rent. (They didn't return my money) I had a great resentment against them. They also had a pot garden in their backyard. I thought about whether I should let it go and get on with my life, or call the cops and have them busted for growing pot. I did neither one. The addict in me took over, and I went into their yard and ripped off their plants!

Looking back on this, I recall my behavior which caused my room-mates to do what they did, and how resentments would have never built up had using marijuana not been such an important issue in my life.

Terry H. dist 5, 2 years

I had a tool shed in my backyard that I used for curing my home-grown buds. When I was out of weed I would pick peices of green (or maybe not green because I am color blind.) out of spiderwebs and off the floor and smoke them to get high.

Trisa A. dist 11, 3 years

I can think of two:

1. One day my boyfriend came home to find only a small amount of pot left from an eighth (in one day). I said, "I don't smoke all the pot to piss you off, I just can't stop". I didn't realize what I had said until after I got clean.

2. The scariest day of my Life. I was stoned and working on refinishing a rocking chair (which took me four years to finish), while my six month old daughter was in a play pen. She got a rattle stuck in her throat and was bluish purple when I picked her up. As I called 911, I kept thinking, "They're going to



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know I'm stoned and take her away (if she's not already dead)". I was able to remove the rattle and revive her breath before the paramedics arrived. After everyone left, I got stoned to calm down.

Connie P. dist 4, 16 months  
The feeling that I would never be able to stop smoking pot, and the behavior of stealing anyone's stash.

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