



Reflecting on Sober Life

I'm nearly a year sober, so I think it's a good time for me to reflect on the past year. I'll keep my background brief. I was in active addiction for 16 years. I found MA last year while my supply was low and it would be difficult for me to get more without going to some pretty drastic lengths to get it. I had tried to quit over the years with varying amounts of success. The longest patch of sobriety was for 15 months when I was pregnant with my first child.

Addiction to marijuana made me very ill in a lot of different ways, and as I venture further into my recovery, the more I can really see how much of an impact smoking weed had on my life.

I googled Marijuana addiction and found the MA website. I found a meeting and attended it the following evening. I stopped smoking after the second meeting I attended. I cried as I was absorbed by the raw honesty people shared and nodded furiously in agreement with everything I heard about their experiences.

I took it as a sign that there had to be another way to live, and these people looked as though they had found it. Within five days I found a sponsor and shortly after started the steps. I lived in such fear, guilt, and shame before I found the program. Now I am finally in a place where I have a much healthier relationship with myself and those around me.

I have written out some of the benefits of being sober and working through the Twelve Step program has had on my life...

I am much more reliable now. I stick to things that I say I'm going to do more often. I do more with my children now. I make plans to go out with them and stick to them.

My expectations of myself are more realistic; I'm not as "all or nothing" as I was. I don't often use a crutch to manage my emotions; I pray on it or talk to someone about how I'm feeling. I take care of my health more and prioritize it.

I don't wait for things to get bad anymore; I am able to recognize my warning signs earlier and begin using my coping strategies much quicker. I don't think I'm a failure, and I do not hate myself.

I spend more time being present in the moment. I'm free of crippling guilt from smoking/drinking. I have saved a lot of money: paid for a holiday and put money in savings.

My paranoia and anxiety is far less. I'm not in fear of losing my job, getting arrested, or having social services involvement. I have more courage when difficult situations arise and am far less "reactive." I have more energy and am more motivated in general. My house is cleaner and tidier.

I am less insecure and preoccupied with how I look. I feel more secure in my relationship with my partner. I have healthier boundaries in all my relationships.

I have far less resentments and am able to hand them over to God when they do arise. I am far more grateful and far less self-pitying. It's so freeing! I positively reframe

things naturally and with ease most of the time. I am more honest in my interactions with others now.

I am more easily able to say what I want and what I do not want. I have more confidence that it is perfectly acceptable to say those things. I people please a lot less and am kind without placing myself in vulnerable positions.

I am happier a lot more often than I am not. I eat healthier and don't restrict my diet as a form of maintaining "control." I have not self-harmed for months or even thought about it.

Overall I am content in what I have in life. I have real friends now and make time to maintain those relationships. But I don't try to be friends with everyone in an attempt to feel better about myself or flirt with others. Have a clearer sense of who I am as a person.

I can more easily express how I feel in ways that are understood. I ask for what I need instead of waiting for others to guess. I appreciate that I can help others, but it is not my responsibility to "fix" anyone or problem solve for them.

I am more personally accountable for my actions now. I am less worried about material items. I do not need to receive gifts in order to feel loved or valued by others.

I have a relationship with a power greater than myself, and it brings me such comfort and relief – knowing I am not alone and not in control frees me up to enjoy my life.

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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Accepting I am an addict and that this is not a bad thing and doesn't mean I am a bad person. It means I have an illness that has symptoms I need to be aware of and treat.

I have made some amazing friends through the fellowship, people who really understand my journey, who are incredibly kind and supportive.

I'm excited now to see what another year will bring, although remembering to take it one day at a time, as this illness can be deceptive.

I have learned it's so important that I remember to keep treating the symptoms and that I am not alone. The program has changed my life, and I am grateful for this every single day.

~ Hannah S

A God of My Understanding

*When I was small
I knew it all.*

*And as I grew
nothing was new.*

*There was no luck
with only a duck.
I tried to call
in the midst of it all.*

*But I was stuck
in so much muck.
It all turned blue
then I found glue.*

*I heard a call
and that was all.
It must be you
in all that blue.*

*As I recall
I knew it all.
Then I knew that it was you
... that was with and
within me all along!*

~ Mariska P

Leaning on Fellowship in Seasons of Change

Fall is in full swing in New England (or District 22 for you fellow marijuana addicts). Yes, the seasons are changing, the leaves are turning and falling, and the weather is getting colder. Life is changing for me too. Through seasons of pain I was called to grow and take on new endeavors.

My intuitive thoughts are often subtle at first, and then they get louder until I can't bear not listening and taking action. The last several months have led me to make changes in my recovery, career, and personal life.

I knew a change in my job was needed for months, which was scary. For me, my pothead ways die slowly. I prefer to seek comfort, and change is anything but comfortable. It requires work. It forces me to get vulnerable and live in the space of 'not knowing.' My survival instincts despise not knowing. We are designed to predict and avoid danger. Change seems dangerous.

Recovery taught me to fear less and lean into what scares me. What I fear most is often what I must go through to grow. Not listening to my intuition was making life challenging, and after stewing in it, I did what I know to do. I dug deeper into my program. It filled my spirit and got me through a hard time. Yet, there was still an underlying dread around going to work everyday.

My therapist asked if I could apply the same "one day at a time" philosophy to finding a new job, and I said, "yeah, I can do that." And that's what I did. I put in daily action and let my Higher Power manage the results. After a couple of months, I found a new role and my partner and I are moving into a new place. I'm getting settled into my new job, and life is getting full. All this change is bringing up my emotions

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and fears all over again. I question my motives and ask if I made the right choice. I worry about what will happen if it doesn't work out.

In October, the Annual New England MA Fall Foliage Hike was planned in the midst of all of this. Taking a whole day out for fellowship during this busy time felt difficult. I went anyway. A dozen people attended, enjoyed nature, shared donuts, and drank apple cider. I embraced old friends and made new ones. I got to witness the program of recovery working in other people's lives.

Fellowship was precisely what I needed. My heart was full, and my mind was at peace. I suggest you seek solace in the fellowship in the coming months as the days get shorter and the nights get longer.

As my good friend Dennis always says, "We're better together."

~ Grateful Member of District 22

Memories and Gratitude

Tomorrow it will be thirty-three years since the day I got clean and sober. This calls for me to reflect a bit on what it was like before. I was so different from the way I am now, and it really seems like a very long time, so I have to slow it down and quiet myself a bit to really remember.

What I did on that day weed-wise seems pretty unimportant. What does seem important is to remember that I was an addict using every day, and that marijuana seemed so impossible to get away from. I used marijuana desperately, and I used it a lot, everyday, throughout the day and in every possible situation. I didn't enjoy anything about it at the end, and I was mortified at who I was when I looked at myself in the mirror; I remember crying a lot after getting home from work each day because I couldn't resist the urge to get high and my life was a flat mess.

One day (October 5th, 1989)
something gave me a tiny bit of

hope, and I decided to go to a 12 Step meeting after work. This is what got me on the path of recovery. A little while into 12 Step meetings, a dear, dear friend in recovery pointed out to me that there was a place especially for marijuana addicts like me. I found a Friday MA meeting in Glendale California, and then I found a couple more I could make it to on other nights of the week.

I worked hard in recovery right from the start, doing all of the things that we do (service, steps, meetings, and fellowship). Eventually a few people asked me to help them, and this was a tremendous gift, and very important I think as to why I've made it so far. So all-in-all, there is nothing special about my story, but I am part of another story that is special – the story of all of us who are on this path together. Tomorrow when I wake up, I will focus on gratitude. Promises have come true, and keep coming true, one day at a time.

Thank you,
~ Dr. Joel G

Please Get Involved – MA World Services Committees Need You!

Newcomer Support: (minimum of 6 months of clean time required) General committee work of responding to support requests; Subcommittee for drafting training materials on responding to support requests; Subcommittee for facilitating future workshops for newcomers and sponsors

Literature: Subcommittee to work on *Stories for Life with Hope*, 4th edition; Subcommittee for revising the pamphlet on Detoxing from Marijuana to include brief introduction to CHS & CIP

Public Information: Social media subcommittee needs help managing content for Instagram and Facebook; Website Redesign Subcommittee

Hospitals and Institutions: General committee work of sending materials and providing support to individuals and meetings within hospitals and institutions

Conferences and Conventions: Convention handbook; Conference Agenda Committee; 2023 Convention Planning Committee

Policy and Procedures: Special Worker Review Process Subcommittee; writing Conference Agenda items

Outreach: General outreach work; Subcommittee re-writing the New Meeting Starter Kit; Representation and Accessibility

Finance: Finance handbook for Districts; Milestone Chips Subcommittee

Internet: General internet work to maintain the website and work with the PI website redesign committee; new App development

Correspondence: Communications subcommittee for the *Carry the Message* newsletter

If you are interested in any of these committees, please contact the Trustee of that committee. You can find their contact information on the MA Website at: marijuana-anonymous.org/contact-us

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
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Step and Tradition of the Month

Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow MA members.

Celebrating 209 Years of Sobriety!

District 2

Mariska P 9/30/1987 35 yrs

Ralph D 10/1/2019 3 yrs
Susan C 10/9/1986 36 yrs
Kevin H 10/19/2015 7 yrs

District 27

Erika R 10/12/2021 1 yr
Beth F 10/17/2022 6 yrs

District 5

Az 9/30/1986 36 yrs
Mike G 9/28/2015 7 yrs
Eissa E 10/10/2020 2 yrs

District 12

Luigi P 10/14/2016 6 yrs

Independent & Virtual Meetings

Dr. Joel G. 10/06/1989 33 yrs

District 11

Erica S 7/21/2021 1 yr
Bailey M 8/10/2021 1 yr
Mikayla T 8/12/2020 2 yrs
Stephen W 9/5/2016 6 yrs
Kyle M 9/12/2012 10 yrs
Becky C 9/22/2014 8 yrs

District 16

Gary G 6/22/2022 1 yr

District 22

Rachel C 10/13/2015 7 yrs

District 24

Edwin L 10/11/2021 1 yr

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