



You Don't Have to Go Out To Start Over

I was sitting in a meeting last St Patty's Day, 2017. We were celebrating with two friends reaching their 15 year milestone in sobriety. And I was thinking of using.

The thought came clear as a complete road-trip idea. Hey, I thought, I'll go to the beach, take my dog, get a new glass pipe, outfit the hotel room with fresh weed bought legally, and some vodka and fancy blueberry mixer. I knew the exact shop where I wanted to buy the pipe, and the glass blower whose piece I wanted. The whole thing showed up in my addict mind in an instant!

We need **YOU!**

IN STEP TWELVE, we take action to carry the message of recovery to the marijuana addict who still suffers. Listed below are a number of opportunities for you to participate in your own recovery while helping others. Please volunteer today!

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Produce the monthly ANL newsletter using Adobe InDesign and other tools. Use your design skills!
board@anewleafpublications.org

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Respond to incoming mail & email. Processes, packs & ships orders.

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What was happening!?! Oh dear, I'm in trouble. I knew it. I had no power against this beautiful plan.

This is how it happened. During that meeting, a woman I hadn't seen before was called on to speak. She shared how she had 5 ½ years of sobriety, and thought she could drink again. So she did. She was out for 5 years more. That night, she dragged herself back into a meeting. She had been struggling to get back, and trying to find recovery on her own. My mind snapped into reality during her share. I was trying to leave the program, and justify that maybe I could use marijuana again. It was my 5 year, 8 month milestone in recovery that night.

The next share was powerful as well. This person shared that some of us HAVE to go out in order to learn what we had in recovery and lost. I was on the edge of my chair. These women were both describing exactly what was going on in my own mind. I was one of those who MUST go out to learn more. I couldn't wait to get to the beach! The ecstatic feelings were already taking hold.

What I did next was the best thing. After the meeting, when I hugged my sponsor, I told her I was in real trouble. She couldn't believe it! I go to 5-6 meetings a week, I have a service position, I sponsor others, I am in the middle of the program.

The problem was, it was the middle of AA, not MA. I am a marijuana addict. I didn't drink like an alcoholic, and here I was telling myself, "I'm not that bad. Alcohol isn't my problem". (Ever heard that?)

My thoughts in the week leading up to that night were of romancing a past St Patrick's Day where I was one of the last ones standing at the end of a very long night of drinking and having fun. Other revelers were gone, and I was still standing at closing time. I don't even recall smoking weed that night.

After telling my sponsor the beach plan – as you can guess – I had some writing to do. I had to write that inventory of what I would lose if I went back out. What about the fellowship, the friendships, and the program would I miss? Here's the addict thinking: I believed I wouldn't miss a thing, because I would be back from this smoke fest on Tuesday! My employer would never know. I'd come back in and tell you about it. You would love me and take me back. We don't shoot our wounded, right?!?

I did do the writing, and I went to a meeting every night after that. I shared the struggle in every meeting, and after meetings as well. I was hanging on tight for about 21 days of insanity. It wouldn't lift!

I told an oldtimer with 29 years what was on my mind. She told me I didn't have to go out to start over. "What did you do in the beginning of recovery?" she asked. I went to go in 90. "Do it again" she said. I also worked Steps with my sponsor. "Do it again" she said. And just like in the beginning of my path to recovery, I simply said "OK". I gave up my own plan, and went with the plan outlined in those 12 Steps.

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.

District Bureau Chiefs

We will be reaching out to districts soon to update the District Bureau Chief list. Additionally district representatives, including but not limited to those serving as Bureau Chief are encouraged to stay in touch: editor@anewleafpublications.org

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Send articles/stories:
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Or they may be submitted online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org/story

You don't have to go out... Continued from page 1

What I did was realize that AA in a small town is not enough for my recovery. I must get back to Marijuana Anonymous. I looked on the MA phone app for the meeting schedule, and there I found the MA Phone Meetings. Wow! I called in and said I'm new to the phone lines, and they said "Hi, Welcome". I shared about the struggle – the intense struggle I was in. I could speak about weed and wanting the feel of that new glass pipe on my lips. Of going to the beach and lighting up for three days. They understood. You understand. You are marijuana addicts.

These phone meetings of MA have completely saved me through this near-relapse. I kept coming back. I called in every day. I shared the struggle, and heard others telling me about day 3, about day 41 and still detoxing, about coming in again after yet another relapse. I remembered what it was like. I remembered the powerlessness. Thank you, my fellows.

Because of the phone meetings, I have the support I need to stay clean and sober and be sane again. On

July 19, 2017, I celebrated a hard-won 6 years clean and sober.

Oh, that woman who came into the AA meeting that night in March? I've never seen her again. Whoever she is, she was my angel that night, and her message of relapse was delivered to this addict, loud and clear.

Keep Coming Back! You Don't Have to Go Out To Start Over! ▲

~Miriah S.

Always More to Learn

It's my freshman year of college, the phone is ringing, and I'm coked out of my skull. It's my older brother calling. He wants to know if I've spoken to our parents. He sounds weird. It turns out he's had a mental breakdown, and he takes a leave of absence from school. He ends up in rehab. (He gets sober at 19. In 2017 he'll have 17 years of sobriety.)

But I didn't have a problem. For a fleeting moment I compared myself to my brother and think maybe... but no, I didn't have a problem. A girlfriend could call me an addict and leave me crying on the street corner, but I didn't have a problem.

I started smoking pot in high school. I started smoking pot alone in college. And I started smoking pot everyday shortly after college. By the time I'm in my 30's I feel like I can't live without pot. Anytime I try to stop (mostly to bring my tolerance down so that I can get high again), I end up drinking alcohol every night instead.

I have uncontrollable rage. I scream at a coworker until I'm shaking. If I'm not stoned I'm usually pissed off. I tell my therapist that I just want to stop being so angry all of the time.

I smoke so much pot that I'm in a constant state of dehydration. I faint on several occasions, often hurting myself in the process. One

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Outreach Board

New Meeting Support Program:

The Outreach Committee invites *you* to engage in service by supporting new and independent meetings by participating in the New Meeting Support Program.

Did you know that thousands of marijuana addicts have no local access to in-person meetings?

Luckily, new meetings are starting up all over to increase access to the fellowship. As MA continues to grow around the world we find that many new meetings face challenges as they begin to build their foundation. In addition, many meetings operate without service sponsorship or other types of support because they are located in geographic areas that don't fall within an MA district.

We want to reduce the isolation by connecting these meetings with volunteers who can share their experience, strength, hope and service experiences. Volunteers are paired with a new meeting and provide correspondence (email or phone) with a contact person to discuss service topics, challenges and successes the new meeting is experiencing.

The Outreach Committee has set a goal of each District having 2 members joining the New Meeting Support Program. Please spread the word about this program so we can better serve and support MA's new and independent meetings. If you have questions or would like to volunteer please contact Aime or Drift at outreach@marijuana-anonymous.org

The MA World Outreach Committee invites members to join our committee!

The Outreach Committee supports the primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to marijuana addicts by facilitating correspondence with meetings and districts throughout the world. The committee will continue to facilitate international

growth and connection through communication. The function of this committee includes investigating ways to carry the message of recovery to marijuana addicts worldwide and to ensure that meetings and districts are aware of the support made available by MA World Services. If you have questions or would like to volunteer please contact Outreach at outreach@marijuana-anonymous.org

Correspondence Committee:

The Correspondence Committee is looking for volunteers!

***We want to
reduce the
isolation***

We are seeking additional volunteers with service experience and a working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Marijuana Anonymous to respond to support requests received through the MA 800 helpline and email inquiries. Volunteers will respond to calls that come in on the voicemail line with a goal of returning calls within 48 hours. If you have questions or would like to volunteer please contact office@marijuana-anonymous.org

Are you fluent in another language?

Many people across North America and the UK contact MA looking for help. However, the long-term goal of Marijuana Anonymous is to become a truly global support network, able to provide resources to suffering addicts in countries all over the world. In taking steps to reach this goal,

the Outreach Committee is looking to create a database of members who are fluent in languages other than English who would be able to help us bridge the communication gap. We are especially looking for Spanish speakers, as well as European language speakers. If you have questions or would like to volunteer please contact Outreach at outreach@marijuana-anonymous.org

Women's Town Hall:

The Outreach Committee is currently researching and developing an online Town Hall for MA's female-identified members. The Project Lead is seeking input, guidance and volunteers to develop this remote Town Hall for the fellowship worldwide. If you have questions or would like to volunteer please contact Lana or Drift at outreach@marijuana-anonymous.org

Motions Log Blurb

The MA World Policies and Procedures Committee is seeking volunteers to work on the MA World Conference Motions Archive Project. This is a wonderful opportunity for members of our Fellowship to delve into our fellowship's 28 year history stemming back to the 1989 Unity Conference.

An archive is more than a log of data and dates. Every item has its own story. Archives unlock doors to the past, and with your help this history can be made available to future generations of MA'ers. What a gift it is to take a peek into the work of those who came before, who graciously devoted their service to developing the bedrock of Marijuana Anonymous. Volunteers can take on as much or as little service work as they wish. Interested volunteers can get in touch by emailing ppcom@marijuana-anonymous.org

Always More to Learn
Continued from page 2

time I even smash my head open and need to get my face stitched up. But it never occurs to me to smoke less pot and drink more water. I was smoking so damn much that I couldn't hydrate fast enough.

*I quit alcohol.
I quit caffeine.
But don't you dare
try and take away
my pot.*

At 33 pot turns on me, and I get my first anxiety attack. Apparently trying to kill all of your stress and anxiety with multiple bong rips everyday doesn't work. After that anytime I smoke too much I get heart palpitations.

I quit alcohol.
I quit caffeine.
But don't you dare try and
take away my pot.

My family starts to get concerned. I have 3 brothers: 1 older and 2 younger. My brothers take turns, so that for 2 weeks straight, 1 of them calls me everyday.

At this point, my older brother has known how far my addiction has progressed for 2 years. He wanted an intervention 2 years ago, but was talked out of it by friends who knew I wouldn't have listened. I wasn't ready. He waited.

These programs are about attraction, rather than promotion. His sobriety and recovery were attractive. I was so proud of him: he was so strong and so brave. But I could never do what he does, I am not strong and brave like him. And he knows he can't force me to get sober. So he waits. And he's

there if I ever want to talk. And he loves me no matter what.

After my first anxiety attack (that landed me in the ER) he knew that I was ready. In my many talks with my brothers I have my first moment of clarity: pot is a drug, and I'm abusing it, and that's not healthy.

I vow to take 90 days off pot. I have the hope that one day I'll be able to smoke with friends, as a fun social thing. I'm not sure what will happen after 90 days, I might never want to smoke again, but I know that I have to try. I have to do something.

I face my first big fear: I tell my parents that I'm a pothead. They are shocked, they had no idea. They thought that I stopped smoking pot at 15.

I tell them my plan to stop smoking for 90 days. I tell them I'm not sure what's going to happen after 90 days. They tell me they think I should stop doing all drugs and alcohol and go to meetings, like my older brother.

My older brother goes to AA. I've been to meetings with him many times. (To support him, not for myself). He tells me about this thing called MA. He says maybe the meetings will help me while I'm on my break. He says maybe I should check them out.

He doesn't tell me what to do. Because if he did, I wouldn't have listened. He gives me a suggestion. I (thankfully) take his suggestion.

I white knuckle it for 28 days and then finally go to my first MA meeting. I'm too proud to take a welcome chip. I try to tell myself that I'm not like these people, I don't have a problem, I'm just taking a break. I try to deny that I immediately feel at home, that I keep hearing parts of myself in their stories, and that I've found my people.

When it's my turn to share I sob. I talk about how my life is

unraveling and I feel out of control. I talk about my first anxiety attack and how foolish I feel.

After my time is up, when I'm wrapping up my share, I have my second moment of clarity: I can never smoke pot like a normal person, and I can never smoke pot again.

After the meeting I call my older brother. I cry hard. I'm freaking out about step 9. I tell him that I can't ever smoke again. My recovery begins.

At first I go to 1 meeting a week. There aren't that many MA meetings in my area at the time, and I have a weird work schedule that doesn't line up well with MA meetings. I don't feel that I deserve to ask for time off to go to another meeting.

I don't know about the phone meetings yet. I don't know about H&I Commitments yet. Even though I'm sober from all mind altering substances, I don't feel comfortable calling myself an alcoholic. MA feels like home, and I don't want to go to any other 12 step meetings: they wouldn't understand, they aren't potheads, they wouldn't get it.

I'm living with a pothead roommate. I'm living downstairs from my dealer. And I'm barely hanging on with my 1 meeting a week.

The meeting collapses. It stops meeting. My older brother starts calling me everyday. He tells me a secret: all you need for a meeting is 2 addicts talking to each other, so our phone conversations are little mini meetings. And those mini meetings keep me sober and sane.

*I'm coming
2nd year. I've
and relapse a
destructive. I feel
farther along in my
doing it wrong. But
in meetings, I learn
my addict mind
call my s*

A new MA meeting starts up, rising from the ashes of the collapsed meeting. I ask the woman who starts it to be my sponsor. She says yes. I throw myself into working the Steps like my life depends on it, because my life DOES depend on it. I pass 90 days. I still don't want to smoke. I stay sober.

I tell the pothead roommate that I need to move out, I can't live downstairs from my old dealer. The pothead roommate never talks to me again. My sponsor helps me pack.

I move into a new pot-free apartment all by myself. I learn to be alone without being lonely. It's hard. I cry a lot. I fear that I'm going to be alone forever. Slowly, but surely, I hate myself less, I forgive myself, and I realize that if I end up single forever that's okay. Because I'm never truly alone: I have my friends and family that love and support me, I have the MA fellowship that always has my back, and I have myself.

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sponsor.

Around 6 months I start to go to more MA meetings. My boss lets me adjust my work schedule. I start doing more service: at the meeting level, at the local district level, and at the world service level.

I make mistakes, I find myself in conflict with other MA fellows, and I learn things the hard way. It's hard. It hurts. I cry a lot. I also talk about it with other fellows, my sponsor, my older brother, and my therapist. It takes me a long time, but I finally learn to let go of resentments towards MA fellows that hurt me.

Letting go of a resentment towards a person that has hurt you is very hard. First I need to forgive the

person for hurting me. That takes the longest, I can't rush it, I have to wait until I'm ready. I write a lot of letters that I'll never send. When I've finally forgiven them, then I can do a 4th step about the resentment. I can figure out my part, clean up my side of the street, and let that resentment go.

I finally admit that I'm an alcoholic too. I supplement my MA meetings with an AA meeting. By the time I hit my 1 year I'm working through step 9. By the time I hit 18 months I've finished working the 12 Steps (for the first time around).

I realize that I'm an over-achieving people-pleaser with co-dependent tendencies. I start to put myself first before others. I start to think that I deserve time for myself. I start to stand up for myself.

After being verbally abused by my boss for 2.5 years, I finally stand up for myself and get fired. I accept a new job on the same day I get fired. (Thanks Higher Power!)

When I sit down to do my step 12, and write out all of the service that I do, I'm shocked. I remind myself that if I don't fill my own cup, I have nothing to give to others.

I start to scale back my service to something more reasonable. I remind myself that I have nothing to prove. I start including, "help me know that I'm doing the best that I can and that is enough" in my daily prayers to my higher power.

Very shortly after hitting 1 year and 9 Steps, I start dating. After a few duds, I find a sober person who is kind and patient and amazing. He works a different program of recovery and I'm constantly humbled by how judgmental I can be about programs different from my own. I have to learn, again and again and again that everyone is on their own path, and even though it may be different from mine, it doesn't make it wrong.

We inspire each other to work stronger programs of recovery. We talk about our sober struggles and triumphs. He's the best person I've ever dated, it's the most communicative relationship I've ever had, and after 8 months of dating we move in together.

I've never lived with a partner before. It's terrifying, it's hard, and we fight. But we also compromise, we give each other space, and we talk through every single problem we encounter. It's beautiful and magical and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. And the reason that I'm here is because I worked the 12 Steps. I know that working the 12 Steps helped me heal from the inside out, helped me learn to love myself and accept love from others, and helped me accept and forgive myself. So I start to work the Steps again with my sponsor.

I'm coming up on my 2nd year. I'm squirrely and relapsey and feeling self destructive. I feel like I should be farther along in my recovery, or that I'm doing it wrong. But I am honest about it in meetings, I learn to recognize when my addict mind is talking, and I call my sponsor.

We
inspire
each other...

My older brother is in China now, but we still call each other. We talk about life and work and movies. And we always talk about something related to recovery. We still have our mini meetings. I hope we will always have them. We've always got more to learn. My name is Sarah and I'm a Marijuana Addict. ▲

~Sarah K.

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Wondering if smoking is getting in the way of your life?
Have years of clean time?

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(Complete a separate form for each attendee)

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Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
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Jason 10/29/93 24 yrs
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Kathy D. 11/4/03 14 yrs
Rich C. 11/2/98 19 yrs
Robert S. 10/20/10 7 yrs
Ron "The Gardner" 11/5/95 22 yrs
Shelby 11/15/15 2 yrs
Thievin' Dog 9/30/86 31 yrs
Trés 9/20/02 15 yrs

District 7

Charles H. 10/8/15 2 yrs
Shawna T. 10/3/12 5 yrs

District 11

Susan C. 10/9/87 30 yrs

District 13

Alex S. 10/29/15 2 yrs

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Dee 10/29/16 1 yr
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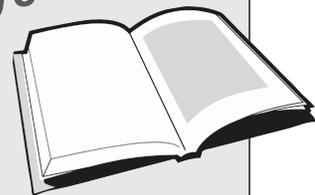
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From Life
with
Hope



Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to marijuana addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Mar-Anon is growing! Private chat meetings are held Mondays at 12pm Central Time. To request access, please email outreach@mar-anon.com and provide your first name, last initial, and your preferred email address. You will receive an email with login information. visit www.mar-anon.com for more information.