



A NEW LEAF

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An Addict Finds Some Old Habits Die Hard

by Bill B., District 7

When I first joined MA I was told by many old timers that my life would change in many ways and that I might not even recognize it after only a few months of sobriety. This filled me with great expectations of the prospect of finally getting my life together and no longer being stuck with the rut of my stoner habits. However, I was also struck with the realization of losing touch with the me I've grown to love over these fifteen years of getting buzzed. Would I now become a completely different person?

Well, I've found that so far I still carry some old annoying habits along with some old enjoyable guilty pleasures:

-I still wait until I have absolutely zero clean clothes left before I do the laundry.

-I still sit with a bagful of Mother's Chocolate Chip Cookie Parade and de-

vor enough to go with at least two large glasses of milk.

-I still like to listen, with headphones, to Abbey Road, Wish You Were Here, and anything by the King of Herb... Bob Marly. Lights off, with no interruptions please.

-I still haven't dealt with the black hole that is my closet. Or for that matter, with the Mount Everest that is my desk.

-I still light incense and on occasion, wear patchouli oil.

-I still wear my Dead T-shirts. I've also found out about the AA/MA/NA group that meets at Dead shows; The Wharf Rats.

-I still turn to the Far Side first thing in the morning.

-I still see what's in MAD when I'm at the supermarket. (It still isn't as funny as it was when I was a kid.)

-I still stop everything and read

Sports Illustrated cover to cover when it comes in the mail.

-I still like listening to sports talk radio and to Mr. KFI. I've stopped listening to Howard Stern.

-I still am amazed at God's work whether I am hiking in the mountains, admiring the flowers and the trees, or walking along Venice Beach admiring the ocean. I just keep the "Oh Wow"'s to myself now.

-I still sign petitions for NORML. In fact I'm no longer paranoid that someone's going to get me if I do.

It seems that I do a lot of the same things now that I used to do when I was stoned. I guess the only difference is that now I do those things because I'm me, not because I'm stoned.

I also have a list of the things I don't do, now that I'm sober. And that list keeps growing longer every day. 

Can You Mix MA With Religion?

by Sanford G., District 6

Probably. Now that this question has been answered, I would like to share some thoughts I've been having about Forgiveness.

I am really a newcomer when it comes to this. I don't use it as much as it should be used. I've come up with some interesting intellectual stuff about it. Wanna read it? Of course you do.

If you take the prefix "for", you can easily see how it could come from "forth", which means "outward". When you take the next part of the "F" word, which is giving, it obviously means to give. Is it safe to say then that we have something similar to "outward give"?

You're probably wondering why an addict like me is talking about outwardly giving... but try to stay with me.

When we have been wronged, or think we've been wronged, we get angry. Maybe even get a resentment. Now, when we forgive the other person, or group, or whatever, we feel better. What does that take? For me it takes feeling. I have to outwardly give a feeling, instead of holding in a resentment. Maybe the feeling is compassion, or a sense of understanding, or empathy. It can be a number of feelings, even sadness.

What steps require forgiveness? I suggest that question as a topic for a discussion meeting. **BYE!** 

Thought for the Month

I love the pamphlet on meditation. I have been a daily meditator for over a year and a half (it took me over five years in the program till I could sit still and tolerate my babbling associative mind) and it has completely changed every aspect of my life and given me the serenity I always dreamed of and thought was impossible to have. The description of the mediation process is an enormous service to newcomers. I heard that Bill W. and Dr. Bob meditated one hour a day. As we know, those guys would do anything to stay sober - and imagine how unfashionable it must have been in the 30s and 40s! Morgan A., District 7



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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A Collection of Views and Opinions from Around the Fellowship

This month's question:

What do you remember most about your first MA meeting?

Abdol S., 9 years

That it was obvious from the people at the meeting that the program of recovery worked. This fellowship was open, honest, and caring. The principles of recovery were articulated meaningfully. Also, I felt very anxious and uncomfortable as a newcomer in Marijuana Anonymous.

Karie, 4 yrs. 6 mos.

That the person leading the meeting must have been a fly on the wall in my life, because they told my story. How could complete strangers have more of the same "insides" than my own family. And why didn't I know about this program sooner?

Gary, 5 months

The sense of hope I got from the speaker and the others who shared that night.

The fact that there were others who had a problem like mine and they had an answer for me - I wasn't alone.

Michelle (Mrs. Al) E., 5 years

I remember thinking that I had happened upon a family reunion - everyone was hugging each other. I remember feeling very frightened and awkward. I cried off and on throughout the meeting. I recall my disbelief watching people taking chips. And finally, I vividly remember Al 12 Stepping me during the break at the literature table. Or, was he 13th Stepping me? I'll get back to you on that one!

Anonymous, 1 year

I was looking for an answer to the question, "How can I possibly stop using?" I knew it was impossible. I didn't expect to find an answer, but I was desperate. So, I smoked a joint and went anyway. I found a roomful of people who's eyes glowed with happiness, health, and love. They all claimed to have been as screwed up as me when they started, yet they were clean now! So, I came back the next night with 24 hours clean. That's the miracle of this program!

Robert W., 83 days

Despite having a good experience at my first meeting, I was ready to walk out the door as soon as it was over. After I held hands with addicts I didn't know for the Lords Prayer, I headed towards the door as fast as I could. But before I could get out the door, someone called my name. I turned around and that person handed me a Big Book and said, "Keep coming back". A few hours later, I opened the book to the inside cover and was shocked to see that everyone at my first MA meeting had signed it, and left their phone numbers. I was so touched, and it helped me to keep coming back.

Bruce S., 408 days

I was apprehensive, especially concerning God, but saw that spark of vitality in everyone's eyes and decided to try to open my mind to the

hope of a better life. I felt like an outsider until someone came up to me after the meeting to chat. That emotional connection has kept me coming back ever since.

Joanne R-M., 6 years

Acceptance, a sense of belonging, and finding my 1st sponsor. It was a hole in the wall place, where love was overflowing. A room full of sober potheads (OK, a roomful is an exaggeration, I think there were 6 of us!) who had what I wanted, even though I didn't know what "that" was at the time.

Terry M., 2,409 days - one at a time

I didn't know it at the time, but at that first meeting I learned "how it works" which is, "We will love you until you learn to love yourself". At that first meeting, I cried for 45 minutes. I was held and told it would be alright, and it was.

Captain Kurt, 2 yrs. 2 mos.

I wasn't alone. When I walked in the meeting I was afraid and had no idea what to expect. I found people who thought the same as I did, and had done many of the same things while using as I had.

The Roving Reporter

Wendy C., 7 years

Relieved to find a place where marijuana was a "real drug" and not laughed at. Plus people looked like the people I had used with!

Joni W., 14 months

I had written down the street number, but not the street, and I drove up and down Ventura Blvd., looking for this number that didn't exist. All the phones in the area were broken. My car found the Saturday A.M. meeting and I believe that God drove me there. I felt like I was Home.

Dennis H., 20 months

I remember two people that received chips for relatively short periods of time, and how thankful they were to the program and to the people they had met that had helped to keep them sober. I now understand what they meant.

Jack D., 53 days

The friendliness of the people here. The comradeship of the members and how the members care about each other.

Brian A., 3 years

I remember being scared but at the same time feeling welcome. And I remember feeling at home when I heard others with the same stories and I had. The people were kind and helped me get through my fear of the "first meeting". Everyone said, "Keep coming back", so I did!

Wendy Joy U., 62 days

First thing was that I did not belong there! I was there because of a man I liked. Now, by the time the meeting ended, I was crying and had come to realize that I, more than anyone, really belonged in the meeting. I could completely relate to the shares I had listened to. I was blessed by that meeting.

Lance D., 53 days

Having a false facade. I wore leather pants, hand cuffs, leather cap, and a spiked collar. I was just a painful shell with no real hope of this program working for me. Came loaded.

Joellen J., 20 months

I was scared, but willing, and when I walked in everyone was happy. They all had this look in their eyes, something I wanted. Plus, it seemed I got more hugs that night than ever in my whole life.

Walking Thru Fear, With Faith

by Stacey S., District 6

Can I have faith and fear at the same time? That is the question I am asking myself today. I hear from others that if you are in fear then you can't be in faith. I disagree. I am going through a lot of fear at this time in my life but no matter what, I still have faith. The faith is that God will help me get through the fear. Sometimes I have to ask God to direct me on what

"I am still a person who wants to go from step A directly to step Z..."

action to take to get out of the fear. The same simple answer comes, "do what is in front of me." At times doing what is in front of me can be calling another addict to help me see what the next step is and then taking the action. At other times it is sitting quietly and meditating that everything will be all right.

I understand that when I close one door another door will open. When I am in fear, I have no idea where the

door is, let alone the key to open it. When faith kicks in, I don't care where the door is. What I need to know is what action to take to get me to the door. I am still a person who wants to go from step A directly to step Z and do nothing in the middle. Today I understand that is not how things happen and when I do what is

in front of me I suddenly realize that I have gotten to step B or C.

God works in ways I will never under-

stand even though I constantly try to analyze God's work. Miracles happen when I let God be in control. When I am in fear, I try to take control. Every time I take control I always end up having to turn it back over to God and have faith that I am exactly where I am suppose to be.

The best part about this fear/faith "stuff" is the longer I stay sober, the less fear I have and the stronger my faith.

Congratulations to our members celebrating their sober birthdays!



Bryan R.	Sep. 13	1 Year		
John M.	Oct. 2	2 Years	Michael K.	Oct. 18 4 Years
Joanne R-M	Oct. 2	6 Years	Hector J.	Oct. 19 6 Years
Joel G.	Oct. 6	5 Years	Kathy C.	Oct. 21 8 Years
Deryl W.	Oct. 6	5 Years	Diane F.	Oct. 22 3 Years
Tommaso	Oct. 7	3 Years	Ron M.	Oct. 22 5 Years
Ed A.	Oct. 7	7 Years	Phil N.	Oct. 25 2 Years
Albert J.	Oct. 8	5 Years	Sanford G.	Oct. 25 6 Years
Dauna W.	Oct. 10	2 Years	Randy F.	Oct. 25 7 Years
Roc Holiday	Oct. 10	2 Years	Jason L.	Oct. 28 1 Year
Richard A.	Oct. 10	5 Years	Michael L.	Oct. 29 4 Years
Rob M.	Oct. 15	1 Year	Sue E.	Oct. 30 5 Years
Flyin' Brian	Oct. 16	7 Years	Mel G.	Oct. 31 7 Years

A New Freedom

by Dan K. District 6

The other day at the close of my home group meeting, a fellow addict read The Promises from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Up to this time, I have attended hundreds of meetings and have heard The Promises (and read them) hundreds of times.

But this time was different. When he came to the line, "you will come to know a new freedom", I felt myself get choked up, and tears welled up in my eyes. I came to realize that God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. Today I know what that freedom is. Freedom from lying to myself about my addiction. Freedom from stealing from my family to pay for my addiction. Freedom from the isolation that had been a result of my addiction. Today marijuana does not control my life - God does! If I turn my back on my Higher Power now, I will surely go back to the bondage of active using. Thanks to God, the Program, the Steps, and the Fellowship, I have tapped into a power greater than myself, and I am FREE!!

Got Here Sideways

by Morgan A., District 7

I came into MA the way I do most things: sideways. I joined my first 12 Step program six months before I got clean and sober. It was a food program that required no alcohol and no sugar. By then I saw I was powerless over sugar, but alcohol and pot? No way. I couldn't see that marijuana was a problem - I don't think I ever would have - till I gave up wine and chocolate, because that was when my smoking increased dramatically. I was bumping into walls, spacing in business meetings, all the things I thought happened only to drunks. (I had the typical pothead's contempt for alcoholics.) I experienced what the Big Book calls "incomprehensible demoralization." Then I "happened" to hear about a new program called MA, or was it destiny kicking in? I went to an MA meeting and I haven't had to pick up a joint or a drink since. I have come to believe that God has a unique design waiting for each of us that can lead to our heart's recovery through sobriety, if that's what we yearn for.

Eating Humble Pie

by Bil N., District 4

I recently wrote a letter to a friend overseas, in which I told him about an amends call that I had been avoiding for a long time. The reason I stalled was not the fifty bucks I might have had to replace, but the unwarranted fear that my Higher Power wouldn't see me through this simple task. Although I'm not proud of my actions, I hope sharing this experience may alleviate the fears of someone contemplating an unpleasant amends.

The following is from my letter to Harry:

"I just made another amends to someone a week or so back. It was a former employer who I stole something from. I'm ashamed to say that this happened a couple of years after I got sober. I had a resentment against my employer - which isn't a very safe condition for me to be in. I basically went crazy for a minute and stole a bag of frozen shrimp that was loaded in my truck by accident. I tried to return it, but couldn't figure out a way to do it without getting caught. The stuff spoiled as I was trying to put it back, so I didn't even get to enjoy any of it!

I guess if all I had to do is go back to an employer, swallow my pride, eat some humble pie, and spend a few dollars... I've been let off pretty easy. The simple fact is: if I lose contact with God, and follow my own will, I'll eventually end up doing dope again. That's basically a death sentence, but one which nobody but myself can impose on me."

News Flash..... Convention Update!

Tentative negotiations are taking place with the Dream Inn Hotel in Santa Cruz for MA's first convention targeted for mid-January. Depending on the cost, we will move forward with plans for a convention there. If our planning committee feels this is too expensive, we will seek out a different convention site and date. Donations of time, money, and ideas are greatly sought by the Convention Committee headed up by BW in San Francisco. BW can be reached at (415) 929-8511. More news next month...

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