



It Works, If You Work It (Reprinted from 3/2010 ANL)

I am Kathy, and I am a marijuana addict. My identity for almost 20 years was that I was a stoner, a hippie born too late, but trying desperately to catch up. My desire was to fit in and be a part of, not realizing that I was building a fortress of smoke around my heart and my feelings so no one could get in.

When I first entered recovery, that coping mechanism—keeping others at a distance—worked to protect me from my low self-esteem, but it also kept me from experiencing what others had. I slowly embraced the program, my sponsor and the fellowship. “...sometimes slowly...”

I was eight months sober before I asked someone to be my sponsor. I worked the 12 steps over three years. I took commitments because I wanted to feel special, like if I weren't there to do it, it wouldn't get done. I was a secretary, a coffee chick, and the District 5 events chair (this position was perfect at the time; I was the organizer, I made the decisions and I got the pat on the back). This worked for a while, until I was told, gently, that the meetings and the events would happen whether I was there or not... the commitment was to keep me coming back, to provide a sense of purpose and service where one did not exist before. I slowly lost the desire to be the center of attention, the one with the quick wit and the need for the pat on the back.

During the past year, I have made a real connection on my

spiritual path with my Higher Power, and yet, I still have that committee in my head – offering me opportunities to feel insecure and worthless, to doubt the direction my Higher Power is taking me, to be fearful of the unknown.

As a newcomer, I did not know what “it works, when you work it” meant. What was “it” and how was I supposed to work “it”? Up until this past Sunday, I still didn't really understand that phrase.

And then I attended the 2010 MA Convention in Portland. Over six years sober, working a program to the best of my ability, and I was frightened when I arrived at the hotel. Committee was screaming: “No one will recognize you”, “you don't know anyone here”, “you should just cut and run before anyone notices you” and “you're just going to embarrass yourself.” Right there at the check-in counter, I saw a familiar face that looked back and saw my familiar face, and smiled. I was still feeling out of place, but now I had a connection. During the convention I had several moments when I felt very “fish out of water,” very alone, and each time someone would come up to me to say hello and talked to me for a while, some who remembered me from last year, a few who only knew me through email, and some brand new folks, too.

Over the next 48 hours I attended the Meet and Greet, the Friday and Saturday speaker meetings, the Saturday women's meeting and a late open meeting, a Steps 6 & 7 workshop and an 11th Step workshop. While I ate breakfast Saturday morning, a woman I'd met the evening before sat with me, and talked. While I was

When Does it Get Easier?

I've been clean and sober from all mind-altering substances for over a year, and I've started to wonder when it gets easier. I attend several meetings a week, I have a sponsor, I work the steps. I even meditate and pray almost every day. I do all the recovery things that you're supposed to do—I work a strong recovery program.

And yet, life still isn't easy.

Life never was easy, especially when I was actively using. I was a hot mess: I was late all of the time, and I couldn't ever complete projects. I couldn't even take care of myself. My bills went unpaid, the dirty laundry and dishes piled up, while my relationships with friends and family disintegrated. I was losing my temper all the time while I was slowly but surely losing my mind.

Things felt especially hard when I stopped using, I was riding the struggle bus all over town. But things started to get easier with the more clean time I acquired. However each time I solved a problem, it felt like three new problems popped up out of nowhere. I would pause and take some deep breaths, make sure to take care of myself first, and then tackle the new problems.

I guess life never gets any easier. Life will always be difficult, challenging, and unpredictable. But now that I have a clear head I'm ready and able to face my fears and seize the day. Being clean and sober makes a difficult life feel easier. For that I am grateful. ▲

~ 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.

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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stories@anewleafpublications.org

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

A Life-Altering Moment

(Reprinted from 3/2010 ANL)

Hi, my story is long but I just want to share the incident that made me search for recovery. All my life I wanted and wished for death. I was not happy with the life I had and didn't know how to change it. I started smoking occasionally when I was 16 and then at 17 it became an everyday thing.

About a year and a half ago, I met the man of my dreams. He changed life to something I enjoyed. He showed me love and cared for me. He made sacrifices and compromises that I as an addict never saw. Our life was happy, or so I thought. Everything we did, I now see, was all around the use or acquisition of Marijuana. I ignored his attempts to show me his love and trust and ignored his pain that I was causing. I treated him just like my previous relationship partners treated me, as an object, a piece of property. He tried many times to help me see the error of my ways until one day, the worst thing I had done while with him came out. I had shared him and again used him



as a property. I had shared personal information to another person who I thought was a friend. Due to my addiction, the choices of friends I had made were based on the fact of their smoking. This "friend" divulged the information I had shared at the New Years Eve party.

At that point, my partner lost all trust in me. The promises I had made to keep it sacred (the information) was broken, and along with that promise, the person he thought I was also died.

I am now struggling to find who I am. I don't want to hurt another person in this manner. I know how painful it is to be put second to an addiction.

Today, I am learning to change my character and addictive personality. I want to make amends and I hope for the day that he will forgive me. I do this for my future. My life was bleak even when I smoked. I hold promise of a better life through recovery and new friends and connections made with people and not objects or substances. I pray that I am successful in this venture. I know God is on my side. I have a loving family that is very supportive and cares for me greatly. I am surrounded by people that support me and want to help in any way they can...for those that still smoke, I pray for them. Some day they will lose everything like I did when I lost the man of my life. I believe that there comes a time when the willingness to quit is triggered by a life altering moment. My moment was when I died in the eyes of the man I love. I will always regret the pain and hurt I caused him and I pray that when I try to make amends, he is able to accept my apology. Today, I take things one day at a time, knowing that with a clear mind and strong spirit, I will overcome what life throws at me. ▲

~ Rigoberto V.

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Learning to Love

I spent so many years
drowning in hate.
Swallowing salty mouthfuls
of crude and rude swill.

I filled myself up to the brim
with all the negativity
that I could swallow.
I was disgusted by my reflection.

It's no wonder that when
I tried to love another
I failed again and again
and again and again and again.

I'm slowly learning
to keep my head above water now.
Treading furiously
like my life depends upon it.

And my life **DOES** depend upon it.
All the hate I swallowed
was killing me from within.
I don't want to drown anymore.

It's not easy to learn new tricks,
it's even harder to learn to fly.
But I must, I must fly above the hate.
I must soar into love.

I must inhale love, and exhale and
inhale again. Let it flow through me.
I must breathe in love like my life
depends upon it. Because it does. ▲

~ Anonymous



It Works, If You Work It...

Continued from page 1

manning a table of Life With Hope books, a friend I'd made during last year's convention and two new friends chatted with me about program, life and experiences. At the beginning of the banquet, I had an unpleasant moment that turned into a God shot when I was seated next to a really nice fellow who used to live down near me. We knew many of the same people and had a very nice time. I also got a front row seat to hear the Saturday evening speaker.

I learned so many helpful things during the workshops and in the meetings that helped me to clarify my program and my connection to my Higher Power. Every time I was faced with a seemingly uncomfortable situation, I applied contrary action and was happily surprised.

On Sunday morning, I had to leave the convention before the final speaker, and for a while I was bummed about that—another opportunity to kick myself for poor planning (my mind is not a pretty place sometimes)—and instead I reflected on my experiences during the convention and I realized that I finally get that phrase “It works, if you work it.” I'd heard it shared by so many people, in so many ways—reading the steps, completing the steps, going to meetings—those were a part of it, but the real work was recognizing that the person I once was and the behaviors I still exhibit that I find objectionable or unpleasant can be replaced with behaviors I admire in others working their programs. Kindness, understanding, self-care, and restraint of tongue—these are some of the many principles I choose to apply today. Today I can grasp “It works, if you work it” and discover that I have been applying it for quite some time, I just didn't know it until now. ▲

~ Kathy B., District 5

Untitled

God has definitely made a miracle of my life, and in such a short period of time. Ever since I got on my knees in that stuffy old restaurant attic and recited the *Third Step Prayer* in front of my sponsor and several other men, my life has changed for the better. Every day I get a new opportunity to tap into a power greater than myself. For today, I am happy, joyous and free from marijuana addiction and compulsive overeating. ▲

~ Rashod B.

Outreach Update:

As members of the Outreach Committee we have the privilege of serving the communication and service-sponsorship needs of meetings as they develop group conscience toward becoming districts of MA. The meeting groups of both New England and Colorado have submitted agenda items to the 2017 Conference Agenda Committee seeking recognition by the fellowship as districts of MA World Services. It has been **so** rewarding to be in contact with members of these groups as they've been very active, hosting events and organizing regular “District” Service Committee (DSC) meetings.

Please check out their local websites:

- o ma-colorado.org
- o newenglandma.org

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

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

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Celebrating 209 Years of Sobriety!

District 5

Amanda	12/17/14	2 yrs
Anthony G.	1/29/15	2 yrs
Craig	1/10/13	4 yrs
Jeremy	2/9/14	3 yrs
John H.	1/10/13	4 yrs
Layne	1/18/10	7 yrs
Max S.	2/12/15	2 yrs
Melody C.	1/16/89	28 yrs
Nora	1/26/16	1 yr
Tony R.	1/1/04	13 yrs

District 8

NinaMarie F.	3/24/16	1 yr
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Formerly District 10

Suzy P.	2/14/05	12 yrs
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District 11

Dave C.	2/22/02	15 yrs
Paul G.	2/26/00	17 yrs
Donovan H.	3/6/00	17 yrs

GOT A YEAR? WOULD YOU LIKE ANLP TO
publish your sobriety anniversary?

Give your sobriety date to your local GSR and it will be forwarded to your Bureau Chief or e-mail
chiefs@anewleafpublications.org. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that
1) HAVE occurred, 2) HAVE NOT been published and, 3) ARE NOT OLDER THAN 45 days.

Maria S.	1/5/08	9 yrs
Steve M.	3/1/99	18 yrs
Guy E.	2/15/88	29 yrs
Rick V.	2/8/03	8 yrs

District 13

Rob Y.	2/11/14	4 yrs
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New England MA

Amanda	11/24/14	2 yrs
Ben	12/8/12	4 yrs
Drift	2/28/14	3 yrs
Kyle C.	1/31/16	1 yr
Lyndsie	1/27/16	1 yr
Sarah K.	11/1/16	1 yr

Share

your experience
Fellowship-wide with the readers of *A New Leaf*

tinyurl.com/MAconv2017

What have been the highlights of your MA Convention experience this year?

How did your MA Convention experience strengthen your recovery?

Did the MA Convention change your relationship with the MA Fellowship? If so, how?

Why did you decide to come to the MA Convention this year? Was your experience worth your expenditure of time and money?

What changes would you like to see implemented for future Conventions?

Submit your responses online—it's SO easy! tinyurl.com/MAconv2017

From Life with Hope

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.



Tradition Three

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.