



a new leaf

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Light of A Dark Night

One December night in 1972, I first smoked weed. I expected to feel intoxication and euphoria, but instead, felt nothing but dizziness and coughing. However, I was undeterred. I tried several times to get stoned, but it just wasn't taking. Then one night in February of '73, I decided I would smoke until I got stoned or died of asphyxiation. I filled a bowl, and inhaled deeply and repeatedly. Not much happened, so I smoked more.

By the fourth bowl, a warm glow enveloped me. I felt carefree and euphoric. (Marijuana DID INDEED take the pain away. Little did I know of how much more it would ultimately rob me.) THIS is what my stoner friends had been talking about. I couldn't wait to do it again. Everyone in my life now served a sole purpose: to facilitate my staying high. Everything faded and was replaced by ego run rampant and an addict's insatiable desire. I lied and stole my way through the ensuing years, going from job to job, quitting whenever coping with stress was required. My family and friends drifted away from me as so many distractions in my growing pursuit of marijuana.

When my stash was running low I morphed into a bitter, raging child. My tantrums were acute until I scored. Then I was my charming self again until my stash depleted and the insane cycle resumed.

I was growing more paranoid, withdrawn and isolated. I was miserable, hopeless, and afraid. I wish I could say I had an epiphany or got arrested or somehow came to my senses. How could I? I wasn't doing anything wrong. I wasn't hurting anybody. I was merely enjoying nature's way of staying high to which I was certainly entitled. My spending, my smoking, my ego, and my life were out of control and unmanageable. The insane part was I wasn't even getting stoned anymore. Instead of curing my perceived depression, my anxiety, self-hatred, and insomnia rose to an unprecedented level. My wife had had it. She told me to get help or she would be gone by the New Year.

My family and friends drifted away....

Last December, my moment of clarity occurred. I was on my way from Goodwill, (where I had spent \$20 on my wife's Christmas gifts) to my dispensary, where I spent \$150 on weed. The little piece of Divine inside me finally said, "enough". I was able to hear it. This, thank God, was my "bottom."

I entered my first MA meeting, desperate; sick physically, mentally and spiritually. God was as foreign as a life without marijuana. I was an atheist.

As soon as I sat down, the meeting chairman handed me a reading entitled "Who is a Marijuana Addict?" and hope was aroused in my THC-engulfed soul. As the meeting progressed, I watched people like me, except they were calm, confident and happy. They spoke of a joyful life being in service to their families, friends, and MA members, rather than themselves and their own morbid needs. (They described miracles and I thought, "Here we go, Bible-thumpers. Where's the part where they tell me, "you can have fun without being stoned?") But I was drowning and grabbing for any lifeline in my hurricane of selfishness and addiction. I got a welcome chip, a hug, and they said, "Keep coming back, it works if you work it and you're worth it." I somewhere found it in myself to hear that part. I started coming back. Soon my first miracle happened. My Higher Power lifted the compulsion from me. Mary Jane and I broke up: I had met someone else-me. It was my Spiritual Awakening.

My authentic self, held captive and silent all these years, was reborn. I began to look forward to the strength, experience and hope I was finding at meetings. Members were like me, only successful and happy. Slowly trust began to grow, self-loathing and ego to diminish. People knew my name and seemed glad to see me. I did things with sober adults and marijuana was no longer the center of my universe. Connection no longer meant dealer. Now it meant nexus: a fellowship of addicts in recovery.

As my days of sobriety increased, so did my confidence and sense of belonging. The group was my initial Higher Power. My life began to have a

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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.

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www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the newsletter tab.

Light Of A Dark Night

purpose other than smoking weed.

Petty problems no longer bedevil me. Bitterness and resentment have transformed into gratitude, raging ego into benevolence and my forty-year sickness into sobriety and service to my fellow addicts. I'm doing my best and letting God do the rest.

I remain clean by working the steps, going to meetings, listening to my sponsor, and praying to the God I understand.

I am amazed at the miracles occurring via my gift of recovery. I am humble, sober, and growing mentally, physically, and spiritually. I can honestly say that for the first time in my life, I like myself. I am trustworthy and trusting. Things are going to be ok however they transpire. Forty years of struggle have brought me to budding serenity and an affinity for whatever God has in store for me. My program has taught me, "Thy will be done." I no longer walk in fear. I was only waiting for this moment to arise.

John A.

Prayers From District 11

Prayer is how you tell the universe what you need; meditation is how the universe answers back.

Thank you for my sobriety, thank you for my freedom from pot, booze and other drugs.

Thank you for another day, for my breath, my sobriety and recovery, and my family and friends. Help me do your will today, whatever it may be. I am willing to love and be loved and to be of service. Thank you for your grace, mercy, love, support and kindness.

Thank you for all that I am, all that I have been, and all that I will be.

When I worked in an office building on the 9th floor, I got into the practice of remembering the third step every time I was in an elevator. Now I try to remember to do the third step every time I get in my car. I can never turn my will and my life over to my higher power too many times!

When my heart is breaking for my son, I light a Virgin de Guadalupe candle, gently cry, and sing "Let it Be". This brings comfort and gentleness of the spirit, knowing she will be an intercessor and my son will be well. I thank my Guardians and Archangels, and ask for their guidance and protection.

Gratefulness upon wakefulness.

We Recover



2013 MA Convention
Orange County, California
February 15 - 17, 2013

Registration Fees Between
August 1 and December 31, 2012:
Registration \$100 ~ Banquet \$50
Together \$140

www.ma2013convention.org

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition Nine

M.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Fellowship Fun & Fire

I have just returned from another fun and rewarding campout with my extended MA family. It left me tired and beat but spiritually revived. I am happily settling into the post-exhaustion wind-down relaxation spiral and am reflecting on the experience.

The dust and sweat are freshly showered away and I feel great. The pending work-world realities can wait. I'll glance back over the weekends activities so that others may get a glimpse and consider joining in on a similar activity in their area.

This trip brought us to a lovely creek-side setting under a tall redwood and fir canopy in western Marin county. Samuel P. Taylor Park is close to home and even closer to Point Reyes in Golden Gate National Recreation Area on the Pacific. It was warmer than normal and some of our party went out to the coast while others kept it simple closer to camp. We came together as a group, in recovery, helping each other, sharing meals, opening up and possibly shedding a mask or two to become a bit less guarded. We splashed in the creek and soaked up the sun; played Bocce and snoozed around camp.

Some of us here in district two have been at this for many years and it becomes easier and more comfortable each time. We strengthen and grow in relationship. Yet it is also a good opportunity to welcome the newcomers and get to know each other and have fun in a safe and relaxed setting. I had a chance to soften; to peel back the rough edges and practice staying in the present and be available to those around me.

For our members in early recovery the prospect of this type of trip may seem challenging or overwhelming. OK. But it is also a wonderful way to immerse yourself for a couple of days with like-minded people in a very supportive environment away from the usual routines. There is nothing quite like sitting in a

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Clichés - Worn Out or Tried and True

Some people look down on clichés such as “Just for Today” or “Easy Does It” as being overused and worn out and so they dismiss them. I think they miss the point. Clichés become cliché because they have timeless truth in them and they make priceless points. Just take that cliché and turn it into a slogan and use it like you would “Just Do It.” Make it into an affirmation. When repeated over and over, like a chant or prayer, it will quiet the mind and calm the emotions. I have found in clichés/slogans wisdom and truth I can count on and using them as tools is one of the ways the program works on me as I work it.

I'm over 16 years into a “Don't Use or Drink No Matter What/Just for Today” program and I have learned to never dismiss the power of those words. In my first year those two slogans were the main tools that helped me not use when I got cravings. Chanting “Just for Today” or “Don't Use or Drink No Matter What” always helped me make it one more day. Many times I prayed “Just for Today” over and over and over again because on that day I was so messed up and stressed out I didn't have what it took to put the Serenity Prayer together. I used those tools to keep me on track until I could make a call or get to a meeting and they have saved my sobriety more times than I can count.

I have used sobriety to open the door to recovery and by my second year I started working the 12 Steps with my sponsor. In my life, the Steps are major tools in an on-going inventory process that is one of the important parts of my recovery - my 12 step design for living. Recovery allows me to be willing to learn and grow. Willingness helps me be open so I can identify and let go of things that don't work for me anymore and embrace new ideas and ways of living sober that do work for me. Being willing and open helps me be honest in all my affairs

and of service to others. The “HOW” acronym (honest, open and willing) supports my (just for today) recovery and helps me work the Steps as an ongoing process which allows me to continue to find new and more positive ways to be myself.

The slogans always are part of the basic tools I use every day to continue to have a connection to a power greater than myself which I choose to call my spiritual connection. Through this connection I know the difference between self-care and being selfish and can practice taking care of myself in ways that are not at the expense of others. I don't have to be right and know how to admit when I am wrong, apologize and make amends appropriately. I even have a daily meditation practice that I actually do every day.

I go to meetings, call my sponsor regularly and I am of service. My first sponsor once told me no one can be too sick or dumb for the program to help them. However, she added, you can be too smart and always think you know better. I always want to “practice” the program and to be a “student” of recovery and “live on that plane of inspiration I have come to rely on,” (quote from AA Big Book). I never want to become so smart that I look down on or dismiss anything that can improve or save my life, even if it is considered cliché because the point is always the same - use your tools - stay clean and sober “Just for Today” and “Keep Coming Back!”

THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

*How has Step 5
benefited my journey in
recovery?*

(Please submit answers by
October 17, 2012. Or don't)

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District 17 Denmark

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District 18 Sacramento

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

For a complete listing of all meetings visit www.marijuana-anonymous.org

Fellowship Fun & Fire

circle around a blazing fire, away from it all but very much present with others who are warm and accepting, non-judgmental and loving. Exchanging our truths and exposing our shortcomings in the light of the fire and each other seems to generate trust and builds community.

We share tools of the kitchen and tools of recovery. We learn how to ask for and receive what we need. We give back as we become less selfish. Lovingkindness prevails. As the feeling of safety in fellowship grows so does our

ability to take new risks. Here we find faith in a power greater than ourselves. In fact we are surrounded by it. These are times to let the group love us until we learn to love ourselves.

We are practicing what we try not to preach, by example. We practice being honest. We explore and play and at the end of the day we wrap it up around the fire on into the night. Hope dawns.

Get up and do it again.
Tim V. District 2

We Recover



2013 MA Convention
Orange County, California

**February
15 - 17,
2013**

“Suite Chance” Drawing

Winner stays Two Nights for Free at the Hilton Hotel Irvine

(\$750 value - includes parlor suite, good for Friday and Saturday evening only)

\$10 per entry

Visit the Website and Enter as Many Times as You Like, Until November 30, 2012

Drawing on December 1, 2012

If You Already Booked Your Room and You Win, Keep The Reservation.

www.ma2013convention.org

Birthdays

Celebrating 152 years of sobriety in this issue!

Want your sobriety date published? Let your Bureau Chief know or see ANLP contact information on page 2. Bureau Chiefs are encouraged to submit Birthdays that: a) HAVE occurred, b) HAVE NOT been published and, c) are not older than 45 days.

District 2

Ari K. 7/3/96 16 yrs.
Conner. 8/?/11 1 YEAR!

District 3

Kristen C. 7/24/04 3 yrs.
Pam L. 7/23/01 2 yrs.
Dave G. 8/4/97 15 yrs.
Steve S. 7/5/97 15 yrs.
Matt P. 7/7/08 4 yrs.

District 5

Dave D. 8/22/09 3 yrs.
Monica 8/10/10 2 yrs.
Sean 8/4/11 1 YEAR!
Paul Z. 8/21/11 1 YEAR!

District 7

Bhavato 7/12/02 10 yrs.
Ganja Gary 8/5/07 5 yrs.
Terry 7/?/10 2 yrs.

District 8

Allison F. 7/21/09 3 yrs.
Nadia W. 7/24/10 2 yrs.

District 11

Mike W. 8/12/86 26 yrs.
Jeremy B. 8/28/10 2 yrs.
Duane H. 8/31/11 1 YEAR!

District 12

Tug C. 8/6/09 3 yrs.

District 13

Milinda T. 7/30/10 2 yrs.
Susie K. 7/28/05 7 yrs.

Washington D.C.

Steve L. 7/25/11 1 YEAR!

Raleigh NC.

Davy O'L. 7/18/87 25 yrs.

**KEEP
COMING
BACK!**