



# a new leaf

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### **Grateful In Recovery**

Gratitude is the touchstone of my recovery. It hasn't always been that way, though. I clearly remember, in the early days, a sense of irritation at HP when I would come up against something – usually some emotional obstacle – that I was having a really hard time with. I would ask HP, petulantly, why I had to have been made like this – to have this desire, this need, for something which, I had finally learned, was bad for me. As if HP was responsible for every facet of my character, and, besides everything else, as if there wasn't something to learn from the experience. I was not able to see clearly that the very fact that I was able to not smoke pot – even for one day – was something to be thankful for, the difficulty notwithstanding.

I've done a lot of learning since then, and have found ways to be grateful each day. It's no longer as difficult as it was. There are still times,

all these years later, when I have days when I have to consciously make an effort to remember that there is so much to be thankful for. When those times come along, I make a practice to list ten things, sort of like counting ten when you're really stressed – bad air out, good air in. I find it really helpful to look at the little things, rather than the big things. It helps, for some reason. Things like green grass, sunshine, fresh air, rain when we get it – notice the tendency to turn to nature. I feel that most of the things that make me ungrateful are sources of stress directly related to society and the stresses of working and dealing with civilization.

**I'm thankful  
for the  
responsibility...**

Soon these "little" things take their place as the awesome miracles that they are, and while they reduce me to a state of humility, they at the same time reduce my problems to petty momentary things. And I can then be grateful for the perspective this practice has given me. I'm again centered, and able to breathe.

Oh, it's not always that way, though. There are some really big things that are of vital

importance to me. Music, for instance. Music has, over the years, become such a central component of my life, and it's so easy to take it for granted. Music is everywhere, but do we hear it all? Sometimes it's necessary to consciously listen, and then I can be overwhelmed with how big music is in my life, how important, and how much it means to me emotionally and spiritually. I think how lucky we are that we live in a time when we can carry our music library around in our pocket. How cool is that? But mostly it's just the fact of music – the sound of eternity, to me – and, in my case, the ability to create music. It is truly a gift.

And if I were to start listing things, like reading, and film, and my friends, (and in my position in the program I can say truthfully that anyone whom I've been of service to I consider a friend of mine, whether they live in the next town or half a globe away) the list can just go on, and pretty soon I'm feeling really good, and not artificially, not as a result of putting a chemical into my body, as I used to do, but as a result of genuine appreciation for things that actually occur in my life, every day – apart from, and always following, the fact that I woke up this morning, breathed in my first conscious breath, was aware and thankful for the love in my life, and got on with my day.

# 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 reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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

## Grateful In Recovery

Big things stand on their own. Aside from the very fact of him, his presence in my life, my relationship with my kid would not be what it is if not for the lessons and improvement the program gave me. And indeed, we would probably not have had him if we had not gotten sober. But even if we had, I've seen too many examples of the poor examples using parents set over the years, and thank HP that He (whom I once referred to as Bernie) insisted that sobriety precede parenthood in my case. Every single day I'm thankful for the responsibility and the gift of my son, and if there's one reason that I would not change anything that has gone before him in my life, he's certainly it..

And of course there's service. Gratitude engenders service. It's not just because we feel we ought to when we take the coffee or the greeter or the literature commitment, or that our sponsor told us to. It's an innate feeling that we get that it's necessary to give back to the program which, in little or large, has saved our lives, emotional, physical, spiritual, whatever. It's the need to pour back into the eternal pool of resource some of our energy to keep the thing moving. It's the feeling that we owe ourselves back to something that gave ourselves back to ourselves.

Program taught me all this. It gave me the perception to realize that, if there comes along something that is tough to deal with, something to regret, something that

is negative, there is on the other scale a mountain of things that are easy to accept, to love, that are positive, that far outweigh what is momentarily making life look bad. I don't know why it's so easy to focus on the negative, and have to consciously make an effort to get perspective on it, and begin to feel again that everything is OK; I don't know if anyone without my emotional disease has the same problem, and it doesn't matter. All I know is that I have it, and that I'm so glad that I have a way to deal with it.

I love the fact that, for the most part, at meetings, when someone is finished with a share, they tend to end with some sort of thanks: "That's it, thanks." "Thank you for letting me share." "And now I'm rambling, thanks for listening." On my part, when I say thanks, what I mean to say is "Thank you for listening to my barely coherent, jumbled, fairly disconnected, but certainly heartfelt string of verbalizations which I can only pray make sense to someone out there." In other words, thanks for being there for me, no matter how hard it is for me to share. So I say to you – sincerely, and gratefully – for being there, for sharing my recovery, for being, even if you're only just reading this, a part of my life -- thank you.

**WE NEED  
YOUR  
STORY!!!!**

## Who We Really Are

Last week I celebrated my twelfth year of continuous sobriety. At the same time, I completed my Twelfth Step, almost. Writing this piece for the New Leaf is a part of my Twelfth Step. I want to say how working the program has changed my life.

There used to be two of me. One was inside. Almost invisible most of the time. Gentle, happy, generous, and timid. Occasionally I noticed him hiding there, but he didn't seem even a little bit interesting.

The other was outside. This was the one I had to deal with most of the time. Talkative, sharp, competitive, guilty. This second one was angry most of the time. He couldn't work steadily at all because he was always interrupting himself by feeling bad, feeling anxious, feeling sorry for himself. This is who I thought I was.

Before I could look at who I was, I had to learn what I was. This was the function of the first three steps.

- The First Step taught me that it was useless to yell at a bowling ball as it rolled into the gutter.

- In the Second Step, I began to wonder whether I really had lost my sanity.

- In the Third Step, I began to look for a sense of a power greater than myself. It was everywhere, I discovered.

These three steps introduced me to the idea that it might be better to see myself as not always in competition with everyone. Don't strive to be best, a fellow in another fellowship told me.

Strive to be second best. I loved that idea.

Then came Steps Four through Nine, where I spent six years listening to other people and also to the noises I myself was making. Without the first three steps I don't know if I'd have had the courage really to listen to those noises. I began to hear how scary my anger was. I began to understand what I was doing that made me feel guilty all the time.

One day I lost a camera my daughter had given to me. I realized I had lost it because I was angry at someone, and so I was distracted. Suddenly it hit me: I had lost my serenity!

This was a new idea to me. I had not known I even had any serenity till I lost it. Now I prayed for my serenity to return. And if someone should find the camera, it would be nice to have that back, too, I thought. But the serenity was the main thing. It was my first prize in this program and it is still the best one.

Gradually it has grown. The angry fellow seems to have gotten tired of me and left for other victims. The gentle happy child that was in there all along is now visible—certainly to me and often to others. Not every minute, to be sure.

For this we have the Tenth and Eleventh and Twelfth Steps. We practice the Tenth Step to stay aware of our shortcomings and to address them as soon as we see them. We practice the eleventh step to stay in touch with our higher power, so that we never are far away from the source

of our recovery. We practice the twelfth step to share with others how the program has given us back our own best selves.

Just before I came into the program, I had been very sick for a week, mostly in the hospital. A few years ago my daughter said to me, "I am so happy you did not die, because I would never have known who you really were." Neither would I have known. And I am still learning who that is.

Bob V.

### THE ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

*Why do we give spiritual guidance instead of direct advice?*

(Please submit answers by January 17, 2013)

### 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.

a new leaf

# marijuana anonymous worldwide

## District 1 San Francisco

www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

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PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

## District 3 South SF Bay Area

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## District 4 Western Washington

PO Box 17452 Seattle, WA 98107 206.414.9270

## District 5 Orange County

1439 W. Chapman Av. PMB#215 Orange, CA 92868 714.999.9409

## District 6 LA County No.

PO Box 2433 Van Nuys, CA 91404 818.759.9194

## District 7 LA County So.

PO Box 3012 Culver City, CA 90231 323.943.9228

## District 8 New York

PO Box 1244 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276 212.459.4423

## District 10 LA County East

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PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.221.7007

## District 12 North Bay, CA

PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 707.583.2326

## District 13 MA Online

www.ma-online.org

## District 14 London, England

07940.503438

## District 15 Long Island, NY

www.ma-longisland.org 516-568-5883

## District 16 Melbourne, Australia

24HR. info 0403 945 083 from overseas +61 403 945 083

## District 17 Denmark

info@ma-kbh.dk

## District 18 Sacramento

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

For a complete listing of all meetings visit [www.marijuana-anonymous.org](http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org)

# 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](http://www.ma2013convention.org)

# 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**

Entry Forms will be accepted until  
November 23, 2012

**Drawing on December 1, 2012**

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

[www.ma2013convention.org](http://www.ma2013convention.org)

(Cut here and mail to address below)

## “Suite Chance” Entry Form

Complete **Entry Form**,  
send a check or money order  
payable to **MA District 5 to**  
3553 Atlantic Ave. #176, Long Beach, CA 90807

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (for notification purposes ONLY): \_\_\_\_\_

# of entries \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10 = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed)

(Paypal does not permit raffles, drawing or lotteries)

# Birthdays

## Celebrating 144 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 1

Sam B. 11/11/09 3 yrs.

### District 5

Michael L. 10/29/90 22 yrs.

Jason 10/29/93 19 yrs.

James V. 10/29/98 14 yrs.

Dennis D. 10/28/11 1 YEAR!

Ron 11/5/95 17 yrs.

Kathy B. 11/4/03 9 yrs.

John G. 11/5/11 1 YEAR!

### District 7

Greg 10/14/94 18 yrs.

Rasta Ryan 10/13/10 2 yrs.

Deana 11/1/09 3 yrs.

Jane 11/10/10 2 yrs.

Penny LB 11/10/01 11 yrs.

Julian 11/8/11 1 YEAR!

Roy 11/1/09 3 yrs.

### District 8

Tim C. 10/26/08 4 yrs.

Mike M. 10/25/99 13 yrs.

### District 13

Brian C. 10/1/11 1 YEAR!



**KEEP  
COMING  
BACK!**