



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

October 2013

Vol. 23, No. 10

There Was Hope for Me

I found recovery through an intensive outpatient program at Kaiser. The first meeting explained addiction and cross-addiction in a way that has greatly served me throughout the years. There were probably about 10-15 of us all sitting in a circle. As we said our name, we shared what addiction we were there to get help with. As everyone shared I quickly saw we were all very different, or so I thought.

One person was a pill popper, another was a gambler, another an alcoholic - which I did not believe I was at the time. As the counselors talked about addiction, I came to see we were all the same. We each had an ache inside that we were trying to numb or escape. We each sought something that we thought made us act and feel like less of a failure. And when we found our "drug of choice," which could be a behavior or a substance, we all came to a place of obsession about it and a compulsive desire to act on it. We were all caught in that cycle of obsession, compulsion, guilt and or emptiness, and back to obsession with something that seemed to work for a time in the past but which came to demand increasing intensity with fewer "results."

Once I became aware that it was the motivating factor - the desire or need for an escape, a numbing or a so-called compensation - that signaled whether I was doing or taking something "addictively," I soon came to realize I had cross-

addictions. I could tell when I was eating, not because I was hungry, but because I was obsessing on something I thought would "fix" me and make me feel better. I saw how I played out addictive patterns in relationships. I could clearly see that alcohol was a bigger problem in my life than I previously thought.

And the thing about being

*"I opened my mind
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an addict is - there's so much denial to break through. I was expert at minimizing the negative consequences. I had so many justifications for why I needed or "deserved" to indulge or "self-medicate" with pot, alcohol, food at times, and romantic relationships. I could deny enough to keep repeating the cycle but at that meeting I could no longer deny that it was no longer working. And I definitely understood the meaning of "incomprehensible demoralization" though I may have never even used those words before.

When I heard that, I knew I "belonged" there, that these others

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She Turned Against Me

So this is that dreaded moment... I'm done: No more pot. No more life. No more fun. How can I survive the pain? Don't you know that my whole world revolves around marijuana? She is my lover, my best friend, my one true constant companion, and the only entity in my life I can count on to be there for me, just me - ME!

And yet in all honesty, to give voice to the "other" - she has turned against me. Where I once enjoyed gales of laughter and silliness, I now experience fear, self-loathing, and emptiness. Where once I stood "taller than" and proud, I now sit still and alone, trapped in inertia so thick, so real, that I am paralyzed. Where formerly I saw myself as powerful and controlling my own destiny, the "you can't tell me what to do" side of myself... I now experience impotence and insignificance.

This is not to say I am at peace or happy with my realizations. I can't imagine a life without Mary, a life without getting stoned and flying higher, seeing colors brighter, having music sweeter - or feeling so dead inside and hopeless... This is my lot in life after all, why change it now?

Except for one thing - one thing giving me hope. I went to one of those ubiquitous damned recovery programs expecting failure. Despairing, and full of dread for the inevitable loss of life and self, and I heard something I did not expect: That life could and would be fun again, that relationships could and

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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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Send all articles, inquiries and correspondence to:
anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org
or submit online:
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
and click on the [newsletter](#) tab.

A New Leaf
P.O. Box 6482
Torrance, CA 90504

IN SPIRIT OF SERVICE

"We do not have any governing authority, but we do have informal rotating service committees" (and commitments). Give freely of what you have found. Choose service to A New Leaf.

Time to Exhale

I find myself almost holding my breath, waiting to hear the 'pop' I've recently been told to expect as I near my 5 year mark. You know the sound of my head coming out of my butt.

I didn't even know it was there, frankly, until I could feel myself starting to lose ground on that slippery slope of old patterns of behavior. That familiar path where I allow my shitty committee to divert emotional, spiritual and physical energy to my phuck-et bucket. Because trust me, that's something I'm really good at. I'm better at self-sabotage than I was at being an active addict. Even in my most professional peak of being a pothead, I'd occasionally slack off and sleep, or dry out, due to supply issues, but rain or shine, strung out or dry, I could always find a way to be cruel to myself. I could have just sparked with a bag in front of me and still wonder where my next score would be.

I wasn't "high," I was spiritually bankrupt. Feeling more "low," alone, and miserable than anyone else could have ever made me feel. So when does a person hit their bottom? I've heard it said: whenever you stop digging. So for the most part, I've stopped digging, but I didn't forget how.

Every so often I forget to be grateful and relapse emotionally into control and expectation. As an addict I became an expert in compartmentalizing and so there can be imbalances in my program where I'm really great at having a healthy professional life, because that's where I've done the work, but when it comes to romantic interpersonal skills, for example, I allow the yeah-buts to rule the day.

Yes, I've had a spiritual awakening and my Higher Power means, among many other things, that I have never nor will I ever have to walk alone. I've learned that doing what I love for those that I love is a source of joy for me.

As an addict I'm easily able to find pleasure, it's external and it's fluctuating. I didn't know until I could actually feel emotions, that what I was actually seeking was joy, which comes from within. That it's something that I can recall with a thought and it doesn't cost a thing.

So why do I allow my shitty committee to divert me from my goals when I know deep down that my life is infinitely better now? Why do I have difficulty some days in letting go of unhappiness? I think a good portion of that comes down to acceptance and getting real about what living in the solution, instead of the problem, means to me.

I've learned misery is almost effortless. There's a formula for it and I can do it in my sleep. Recovery, I've heard recently, is a recipe. There are some ingredients you need such as working a program, having a sponsor, working with sponsees, having fun in sobriety, living with gratitude, etc. These are all great, but I've got to have some Good Orderly Direction as well if I want it to rise.

One of the many great things I've learned is that "We are all unique examples of how the program works, each of us with our distinct gifts to share. We take these steps for ourselves, not by ourselves. Others have gone before; others will follow. We recover" (Life with Hope pg. 69).

So instead of holding my breath, all I need to do is exhale, let go and let God! And take it one day at a time.

Chris H.

Turned Against Me

cont'd from pg. 1

would become deeper and more meaningful, that I could gain self-love and self-respect and feel an ever-growing sense of purpose. A world with a God of my own understanding who would love and accept me and hold my hand as it led me through the darkness to light was available and accessible. I was told I'd be able to reclaim the places, people, and things that had become so inextricably tied up in my pot use. I would reclaim me.

This is my story and that is my hope, and I'm finding daily that is also my truth. I am so grateful for

“I have restored and renewed senses of self, purpose, and belonging.”

MA, so grateful for our fellowship and the love and support of my fellow potheads. I am no longer alone. I no longer hate myself. I have restored and renewed senses of self, purpose, and belonging. And most importantly - and I never could have imagined saying this before walking into these rooms - I have a growing relationship with my beloved Higher Power. I cannot name Her, Him, It, or Them - whatever... I just know it. I feel its benevolent presence every day - one day at a time. Gratitude is slowly replacing self-absorption - I can breathe freely at last. Aaahh!

Steve S.

Hope for Me

cont'd from pg. 1

knew the same inner state I was in. I didn't want to belong, but it gave me hope. I opened my mind to trying what was working for so many others in my same situation or even worse. If it could help them, maybe there was hope for me.

I jumped into a few fellowships to learn what I could about addressing the addictions I had identified. MA was my "home group" as I knew that if I slipped with pot I'd be back to the other vices immediately, too. I discovered that it was possible to have fun sober. I went on campouts, to pool parties, and every event I could to build new memories and good times clean and sober. I no longer felt so isolated. I heard stories from others that made me laugh as I could relate! Someone else would collect every crumb of pot that fell on the carpet, along with some carpet fuzz because the need was inexhaustible. Someone else scraped their wooden pipe for resins to smoke to the point of burning holes in it. I knew these new friends "got it." I knew they could relate and they wouldn't judge me. Instead, they did their best to help and support me on this new journey of recovery. I carried the phone list with me everywhere. I remembered once calling three people off that list until someone answered, from a payphone outside of a liquor store I was ready to go into and buy booze from.

I was gonna give recovery that small chance to win "three tries" and I'm going in. To hell with all this! My emotions were coming up BIG TIME in early sobriety after years of numbing out. Luckily the third time was a charm and a fellow MA member talked me down so I could walk away. That was one of many little "successes" as

I used the suggestions and tools of the program and stayed clean and sober "one day at a time." I celebrated 15 years of recovery on June 1st. I have on my refrigerator the reminder that we get "a daily reprieve, based on our spiritual condition," and remember I have only this day I'm in to get through. And that being of service, working a program, and fellowship all serve to strengthen my "spiritual condition." It's like a savings account - the more I give to it, the more I have to get me through "life's hard times." I am very grateful for the life I have today that never would have been possible in my using days. The Promises are REAL, but we do have to work for them. So I "Keep coming back!"

Trudie G.

MA To Go

Our Fellowship now has an official recovery app: MA Mobile. The smartphone-tablet app is free and is available for Android in the Google Play Store, where it is easily found by searching for "Marijuana Anonymous." A version for iOS is currently in development.

The app features GPS-enabled meeting search, all MA literature, access to our online forum and MA Online (District 13) meetings, and a marijuana sobriety counter. Visit Google Play Store to read about additional features.



Scan to install for Android

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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

MA World Services
PO Box 7807 Torrance, CA 90504 - 800.766.6779
www.marijuana-anonymous.org
email: office@marijuana-anonymous.org

District 1 San Francisco
www.ma-sf.org 415.325.4785

District 2 East Bay
PO Box 20484 Oakland, CA 94620 510.287.8873

District 3 South SF Bay Area
PO Box 551 Saratoga, CA 95071 408.450.0796

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
PO Box 94400 Pasadena, CA 91109 626.583.9582

District 11 Portland
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 631-647-0768

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, CA
www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

District 19 Toronto, Canada
www.matoronto.org 647.201.9161 or 416.999.2244



Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Tradition Ten

Marijuana Anonymous has no opinions on outside issues; hence the MA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

How do you carry the message of recovery to other marijuana addicts?

(Submit by November 17th, answers will be published in the November issue.)

Birthdays

Celebrating 170 years of sobriety!

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.	7/23/96	17 yrs.
Clif	8/9/10	3 yrs.
Kevin V.	7/21/85	28 yrs.
Matt N.	7/25/11	2 yrs.
Monica	7/27/09	4 yrs.
Sheila	8/10/89	25 yrs.

District 4

Soren H.	7/7/11	2 yrs.
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District 5

Cassie	9/13/09	4 yrs.
Mari	9/3/11	2 yrs.
Terry H.	9/7/96	17 yrs.
Trés	9/20/02	11 yrs.

District 7

Karina D.	8/27/12	1 yr.
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District 8

Evan F.	9/15/03	10 yrs.
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District 11

Bill C.	9/15/12	1 yr.
Brenda G.	8/10/12	1 yr.
Cindy T.	9/2/12	1 yr.
Duane H.	8/31/11	2 yrs.
Jeremy B.	8/28/10	3 yrs.
Kyle M.	9/12/12	1 yr.
Marshall T.	9/9/09	4 yrs.
Stefan H.	9/15/02	11 yrs.

District 15

Gary F.	9/29/07	6 yrs.
George P.	8/25/10	3 yrs.
Judd J.	4/13/02	11 yrs.

KEEP COMING BACK!

