



My Plan Failed, So I Got a New One!

Though I grew up in a small coastal California town with a reputation for pot, I didn't smoke, drink, or take anything to change the way I felt until I had moved away to go to college, at 18 years old. The first time I smoked pot, I absolutely loved the way it made me feel. Everything in the world became so incredibly interesting: music sounded better, food tasted great, and doing nothing with my friends had never been so captivating.

Since smoking pot was so much fun, I figured out quickly I wanted to stay high as much as possible. I tried smoking before eating, playing music, watching TV, going to concerts, and after a little while got in to the habit of getting high before any of the preceding activities (along with many others), in an attempt to "enhance" everything in my life.

Slowly but surely I dropped some of the less immediately-rewarding activities from my life, such as working out, doing homework, going to class, doing karate, and so on. I left the house less and less, spent much less effort trying to maintain relationships with my family and friends, and became increasingly anxious and depressed, relying on pot to make me feel okay.

After a year and a half of smoking pot, this is what my average day looked like: I would wake up around 10AM, going back to bed again and again until I couldn't sleep anymore, finally getting out of bed sometime in the early afternoon. I told myself I would at the very least not smoke until nighttime, instead spending the day being productive (after countless failed attempts, I no longer promised myself I would stop for a few days, instead pledging to abstain just a few hours). Shortly after making the promise to not get high till the night, I would tell myself I could get just a little high right now, and that's just what I did - except I ignored my promises to stop after a few hits or one bowl. After getting high, I decided I could drink a little, cause I sure wasn't going to get any work done until I came down a bit.

And all of a sudden it was night- my promises to myself once again went unfulfilled. I wondered why despite my desire and efforts I just could not stop smoking after I started, or avoid taking that first hit! I sat alone in my room, crying, hating everything about myself, and wanting desperately to get out of the vicious cycle my life had become.

I decided one day I had to quit, at least for a little while, to get my life in order, and slow down my pot smoking and drinking a bit. I planned

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"I sat in my room crying... wanting desperately to get out of the vicious cycle my life had become."

A Breath of Fresh Air

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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👉 STEP RIGHT UP! 👈

A New Leaf is looking for its next Field Editor. ANL is a great way to serve the fellowship while getting to know the MA family worldwide. Join A New Leaf Publications today as ANL's next Field Editor. Contact us at the email address above.

Spiritual Awakening: Writing the New Script

I grew up in the rigidly defined world of military bases and Bible-belt communities. Our house was strictly regulated by my father who carried his rank of Master Sergeant home with him. Mother was a poor second-in-command and my sister held rank over me, the private third class little brother.

The fuel for this mini-economy was alcohol; my father drank it, and it energized the familial process, directing all activity in the home like electricity running

**"I was
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the machines of the factory. There was no "will" other than the authoritarian command of the bottle and here I learned, or began to learn, the meaning of the word "addict," which in Latin means "written." The script for the familial activity was written by a substance and the need for it; the same way a factory ceases to achieve its end without electricity. Our family functioned, found its direction, sense and meaning, through the endless emptying of the bottle.

According to the script, I rebelled and in this narrative, hence, became the source of the problem. I acted out the script and began smoking cigarettes and drinking as soon as I entered adolescence. But when I found marijuana I took the narrative

to a new level. For years while using marijuana, I was convinced I was "writing" my own life. My adolescent rebellion continued long after my father retired from drinking and began to live a different life. I, on the other hand, resenting that earlier life at home, was driven by that resentment to continue to live out the script long after I had moved away from home and become an adult.

Somewhere along the way I "hit bottom" and got tired of the story. I came to see, through a series of failed relations, the misery that ultimately results from addictive drug and alcohol use; that I had become my father.

This realization came to me not in a blinding flash, but slowly over years of painful recovery and relapses. After more than twenty years of the "revolving door" of relapse and recovery, it was that final relapse that convinced me to end my rebellion – humble myself, get a sponsor, and begin to work the Steps.

Somewhere in the process of working Step Eleven I began to understand what years of meetings had not taught me—or rather, what I had not been willing to learn; I no longer had to live out the script as a passive "written" person, an addict. Ironically, my rebellion had only further chained me to the family script. Only by humble submission to the will of a Power greater than myself would I at last have the freedom to write my own life. "Freedom," a poet once wrote, is merely "a chain whose links glitter more brightly." In the brilliance of this simple program, I, and so many more, are granted that freedom and power to write our lives over again.

Clif R.

Failed Plan, New One

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to taper myself down gradually, but seeing no other high in sight (I had run out of money, pot, and ways to get more short of robbing people), I took all the drugs I planned to taper with. That was the moment it became overwhelmingly clear to me I had lost the power of choice, and I needed to get help.

I went to a treatment center, with the impression that I would stay sober for at least a week, and then I could go back to smoking like a 'normal person'. To my (at the time) disappointment, I learned that I have the disease of addiction, and no matter how long I stayed sober, I would never be able to control my pot smoking (or drinking).

So I gave up. What else was I to do? I decided to try out the program the treatment center recommended, and started going to 12 Step meetings and got a sponsor. I started working the Steps, and something incredible happened: I lost the overwhelming obsession- that need- to smoke pot.

I feared when I got sober, life would be unbearably boring, because I was so used to smoking pot to "enhance" life. Not the case at all! Sobriety for me has been a process of complete reevaluation. When I was smoking pot, my life was centered on life being as

enjoyable as possible, as often as possible. If something wasn't immediately rewarding, it wasn't worth doing. In recovery through the 12 Steps, I have come to value relationships with others, progress toward personal goals, and helping others find recovery from addiction. My life has become incredibly rewarding for me; I have found meaning and 'purpose.'

Through working the 12 Steps, I have also learned to love myself. When I was smoking, I felt like I was the most pathetic person in the world. I had no confidence, was a failure at everything I set out to do, and always compared myself to others; I was never 'good enough.' I am no longer ashamed of myself. My depression and anxiety have left completely, and I have learned to accept aspects of myself I am powerless to change.

To sum it up, this is how I understand my recovery today: I came to rely on pot, because it made me okay with myself. My own 'plan' for life (smoking pot to 'enhance' life; selfishness, isolation) led me to a point of hopeless despair. Once I realized my 'plan' had failed, I became open to a new 'plan' – the 12 Steps of MA. I took the Steps, experienced the program working in my life, and have continued to gain faith in the Steps, in the program of MA.

Cameron P.

A Fresh Breath

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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 that was available and accessible. I was told I'd be able to reclaim the

**"...a God of
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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 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.

Decide to Tell Your Story - Act Now

a new leaf

Share Your Experience, Strength & Hope

"After all, we learn from each other's experiences; the more diverse our groups become, the more experiences we have to draw from." - Tradition Three

Your stories are a valuable addition to the diversity, mission and vision of our fellowship. Share yours today.

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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

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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.

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

“Trust God, clean house and help others...”

How have you “cleaned house” through the 12 Steps?

(Note: Submit by Thursday, April 17th, answers will be published in the May 2014 issue.)

Birthdays

Celebrating **242** 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
 Lewis 2/20/07 7 yrs.
 Meagan 2/20/12 2 yrs.
 Mo 2/2/05 9 yrs.
 Perry 2/15/13 1 yr.

District 3
 Sumo T. 1/24/13 1 yr.

District 4
 Erin M. 2/18/13 1 yr.

District 7
 Dene 1/20/13 1 yr.
 Howard T. 2/10/12 2 yrs.
 Keith G. 1/16/09 5 yrs.
 Lisa L. 2/1/90 24 yrs.
 Mark L. 2/1/90 24 yrs.

District 8
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 Milo P. 2/5/12 2 yrs.
 Zeus W. 1/17/83 31 yrs.

District 11
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 Guy E. 2/15/88 26 yrs.
 Harry H. 2/10/87 27 yrs.
 Lori B. 1/11/02 14 yrs.
 Rick V. 2/8/03 11 yrs.
 Su S. 1/26/05 9 yrs.
 Trisa A. 2/1/96 18 yrs.
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 Roger S. 1/14/13 1 yr.

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 Randy 2/1/13 1 yr.

District 19
 Richard M. 1/15/11 3 yrs.

KEEP COMING BACK!

