



a new leaf

a publication of marijuana anonymous

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Other Tools

When I got clean, I learned that MA had a suggested set of tools which could help my recovery. At my current home meeting, the East Bay Sunday Morning Step Study, our format says "Every week we share about a 'program tool', which include Steps, Meetings, Literature, Sponsorship, Telephones, Slogans, Service, and Traditions."

After being clean for a while, I have had the gift to attend other 12 Step recovery programs. What an amazing discovery to learn that many programs have unique tools which address their unique issues, which got me to consider what unique 'tools' might specifically help marijuana addicts.

My first task was to identify trouble areas that might be specific to marijuana addiction, such as: memory, focus, organization, clutter, and fear of commitments, depression/action/being proactive/motivation, and finishing tasks. It may be useful to mention that I also have ADHD, which may exacerbate these problem areas for me, whereas not all potheads have any or all of these issues.

There are a few tools derived from the 12 Steps, but missing from the 'program tools' in my meeting format, which can be really helpful as part of a spiritual practice: meditation, prayer, acting 'as if', writing regular inventories and sharing them with someone, writing gratitude lists, and working with sponsees.

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Humility

We have found that most addicts come to the program with little or no humility. Unless we find a way to practice and develop this principle, we stand little chance of remaining clean and sober, much less of becoming truly happy.

– *Life With Hope*, p. 31

When I got to recovery, I had "humility" mixed up with "humiliation" and self-loathing. I thought I was a terrible person, and I thought that was humility. But our book also says that "to be humble is to be truly accepting," and it was this kind of acceptance that opened the door for my recovery to begin.

I am not a terrible person at all; I am a person with a disease called addiction. And more than that, I am not alone. Many others have come before, and many others will follow. Once I understood that my condition wasn't my fault and that I wasn't alone in my suffering, I had a new kind of humility that allowed me to accept where I was and, as the book also says, "calmly ask for help."

Once I got over thinking my addiction was my fault, I was able to see that the solution wasn't entirely my responsibility, and wasn't something I had to "figure out." The solution comes from the support of other people, from the Steps, and from my Higher Power. When I slip back into thinking I am a terrible person, this progress stops, and I run the risk of relapse.

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ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

How do you prepare for temptation when you will be attending an event where others will be using marijuana?

(Note: Submit by Saturday, June 17th, answers will be published in the July 2014 issue.)

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

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

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

Roving Reporter: Your Answers

How have you 'cleaned house' through the 12 Steps?

The first step of action, I learned from a sponsor, is Step 4. Step 4 is the beginning of the "march" in a new direction, but ironically, it involves going back to the future.

"Where there is no surgery, there is no healing" is something I heard a fellow member say when talking about this DISCIPLINE producing step. The "surgery", in his opinion, was the searching for the "exact nature of our wrongs". A thorough examination of our lives will allow us to be physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy as long as we "march on" to the following Steps.

Anonymous

How do you maintain a positive attitude when you are having a bad day?

I remind myself this is only a test and give thanks. After all, it could be much worse.

I know that everything happens exactly the way it's supposed to and I'm right where I'm supposed to be.

Paula

How has looking at my part in my relationships helped me solve my living problems?

Like every other addict who is not in recovery, my worldview was full of denial. In other words, I truly lacked the insight that is needed to lead a richer, fuller, and more productive life.

I have never examined my life to the extent that was needed to solve any of my problems. Plain and simple, I had no DISCIPLINE. Step 4 of MA is about thorough

examination of ourselves, which if done with Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness will produce the inner strength of DISCIPLINE.

Now that I have some DISCIPLINE (way more than I ever had when I was getting high) I am able to solve many of my living problems. I now know that if I want my relationship problems to be solved I need to do some hard work. I have to focus on my "part" in the problem instead of focusing on the part of the other person. That takes some DISCIPLINE.

With DISCIPLINE comes the understanding that some of my relationships will never be made totally right no matter how much work I put into them. With the same DISCIPLINE comes the understanding that if "I" work on the relationship chances are better that the other person will meet me half way at common ground. Having DISCIPLINE is having the basic set of tools I require to solve life's problems.

Anonymous

How do you apply faith in your everyday life?

Every morning I get down on my knees, head in hands.

I do the 3rd Step prayer every morning... offering myself to Thee.

Tim V.

I begin each day reading from a number of spiritual and recovery based texts, which frequently inspire me to journal or write several affirmations that carry me through my day. I sit in meditation for 12 to 21 minutes. But the very first thing I do each morning is thank God for another awesome day, then make tea.

Steve

Other Tools cont'd from pg. 1

My most important 'other tool' is an organizer. When I got clean it was a Franklin Organizer. Every year I would clear the out-of-date areas and refill it. It was an inspiring process because I'd see all that I'd done which I'd already forgotten about. Going through an old calendar for me is like a pleasant stroll down memory lane. I've switched from a paper organizer to a smartphone over the years. The advantages are the phone fits in my pocket, I can backup my data, and it's very integrated into my life. There are disadvantages to a smartphone; my wife saying I'm addicted to it, the distraction factor, free games & timewasters, need for electricity, and occasional tech challenges. But I have no doubt a smartphone is an excellent 'other tool' for potheads like me who have ongoing memory issues.

Another 'other tool' I've used is professional therapy. I was in therapy for my first 9 years of recovery. It was very inexpensive because I said it was drug-related so my medical insurance covered much of it. I found a great therapist who was also sober from a 12 Step Program. Even though I switched sponsors several times, I kept the same therapist. I worked through some of my 4th Step with the therapist, but I read my 5th Step with my Sponsor. I've heard it said that recovery is good for healing the spirit, therapy for the mind, and exercise for the body – put them all together and it's quite a powerful force. Speaking of exercise, this too has been a powerful 'other tool' of my recovery. I have benefitted from team sports, martial arts, a gym membership, and yoga. Additionally, exercise helps with sleep, self-esteem, and overall health. I read an article recently

that said how too much technology could cause depression and stress, but a walk outside can completely change a negative mindset.

Throughout my recovery, I've read self-help books and spiritual books. There is nothing in recovery which says spiritual growth stops after we get clean and do our 12 Steps– in fact, it's just the opposite; recovery opens a door to new spiritual growth.

At 5 years into recovery, I addressed my ADHD. I met with another ADHD friend from MA and we tried 'ADHD coaching' each other. There are books on ADHD

**“There is nothing
in recovery which
says spiritual
growth stops after
we get clean...”**

coaching but the basic idea is similar to sponsorship except we focused on our goals and looking at strategies to achieve them.

At 8 years in, I was invited by a bunch of male friends in recovery to join a men's group. I got a lot of benefit here too, and made some good friends, which were very helpful to me during a big breakup.

Another helpful 'other tool' is taking More Actions. The 'analysis paralysis' problem is bigger in MA than many other recovery programs. Many people share

Humility cont'd from pg. 1

But when I accept life on life's terms, get out of the self-centered and self-loathing patterns of old, and calmly ask for help – from the program, from my sponsor, from my Higher Power – then the gifts of recovery can flow once again.

“Today I will remember that I am not a terrible person, just a person with a disease, and that I am not alone in my condition. I am one among many, surrounded by love and support, and humility and acceptance are the keys to my recovery.”

Paul G.

“I should do this” or “I want to do this” but then don't do it. Why not? Fear, laziness, distraction. But we need to support each other to take significant actions NOW. Some actions, which may seem risky, but the risk is positive and growth-oriented, we need to do. There is nothing wrong with talking through these risks with our sponsor or friends, but we need to overcome our own fears.

As I'm writing this, I realize there are many more 'other tools' that have helped me besides my 12 Step recovery program, fellowship, and service commitments. But this is a healthy start.

I recently proposed at our DSC that we try these out at meetings. The DSC pushback was I needed to “try them out & see how they work.” Getting change in MA can be like pushing a boulder up a mountain. Many people say, “If it's not broken, don't fix it.” But what if MA needs some help to address marijuana addiction specifically? What if our recovery could be better if it were fine-tuned to address the side effects of chronic marijuana abuse? I say give it a shot!

Ari K.

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
www.madistrict2.org 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
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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 310.494.0189

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 626.869.6210

District 11 Portland
 PO Box 2012 Portland, OR 97208-2012 503.567.9892

District 12 North Bay, CA
 PO Box 2842 Petaluma, CA 94952 415.419.3555 or 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

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info@ma-kbh.dk

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www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

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

Birthdays

Celebrating
189
 years of sobriety!

District 2

Lucy	4/4/06	8 yrs.
Michael	4/8/07	7 yrs.

District 4

Chris L.	4/4/02	12 yrs.
Kat B.	4/10/12	2 yrs.
Krista D.	3/17/04	10 yrs.

District 5

David (Pyro)	4/12/09	5 yrs.
Erik	4/3/06	8 yrs.
Kelly	3/17/07	7 yrs.
Laura B.	4/21/04	10 yrs.
Liz	3/25/13	1 yr.
Paloma	4/8/12	2 yrs.
Reinhard	4/11/09	5 yrs.

District 6

Carol R.	4/20/91	23 yrs.
Chuck R.	4/15/04	10 yrs.
Jonathan R.	3/26/92	22 yrs.
Patricia S.	3/5/13	1 yr.

District 7

Robert B.	3/25/02	12 yrs.
Ryan W.	4/5/04	10 yrs.
Tom W.	4/12/91	23 yrs.

District 8

Bridget M.	2/25/13	1 yr.
Ella P.	3/27/13	1 yr.

District 11

Casey J.	4/14/13	1 yr.
Emily S.	4/20/13	1 yr.
Jared W.	4/14/13	1 yr.
Patrick D.	4/20/13	1 yr.
Paul N.	4/25/12	2 yrs.

District 13

Daniel W.	4/20/13	1 yr.
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District 15

Bobby	3/30/13	1 yr.
Roberta	3/1/13	1 yr.

Editor's Note: A special nod to this edition's 11 first-year sober anniversaries, including the 4/14 and 4/20 twins. Congratulations!

**KEEP
 COMING
 BACK!**



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.

**Tell Us
 Your Story**

ARTICLES WANTED

**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.