



Swept Up to Higher Ground by Higher Power's Fast-Moving Current (a story in two parts)

Unbeknownst to me, 142 days ago, my life was right on the cusp of the adventure I had recently been praying for. I had no idea that my adventure would arrive in the form that it did.

Life had felt quite circular for me in recent years. It seemed to be repeating with the same ingredients, year after year. I was coming to feel I'd run out of new ideas for what to do with it. I'd been thinking of travel again, and wanting HP to inspire me with an idea about "where to go?" Yet no message was coming, and an unsettling sense of "checkmate" continued to grow; to the point of feeling the arrival of a previously unknown, unrecognized fear.

A Neighbor's Slip

Around this time, a new neighbor moved in next door. After she discovered that I was an ardent fan of MJ, and had some, she soon dropped by for a toke. Little did I know at the time the significance of her "slip."

Nor did she mention she was "relapsing" with me on that fateful night, right there and then. At the time, I'd never even heard the word "slip", and had long taken a dim view with what little I knew of the Twelve Step program.

We had our toke together, which I noticed didn't necessarily improve the depth or breadth of our connection. Soon I headed for bed, continuing to reflect upon whether the toke was a positive experience. During my 30 years of daily using, I'd always been willing to honestly introspect whether daily use of MJ might be subtracting something from my life, as well as improving it. I'd attempted an objective investigation, without shame or judgment,

or even preconceived ideas, about addiction. I never went so far as to experiment with actual abstinence during all that time. I seemed to know I was not ready.

All I knew was that whenever I ran out, which was rare, the results were not good, to put it mildly. Within 2-4 days I'd fall into the throes of deep depression and angst, which sped up my diligent search for whomever could help replenish my stash, but most always I had calculated well enough in advance to arrange to never run out.

Within 2 weeks of our toke together, my new neighbor "disappeared" into two Twelve Step meetings per day, maybe more. She also gently told me that she couldn't drop by anymore to visit for a while, because she'd resumed sobriety and needed to guard her recovery from even the thought of using.

I didn't take this too personally, but I wondered why someone so long in the program would still need to be so careful. I hadn't known until then that she'd been in the program for many years; alcohol free for 25 years, but MJ

free for just 5. She helped me understand what a "slip" meant to her, and why even visiting my "smokeless" house would trigger her. (I smoked outside.)

Addicted to Meetings

I'd often thought, in those days and before, that it seemed foolish how people would trade one form of dependency for another; in this case, quitting weed but then needing to attend Twelve Step meetings everyday. "Or else!" Forever, it appeared. Were "these people" never cured of their urges? Didn't sound like real or deep healing to me.

Now I understand so much more--from the inside out. Now I also see how much I need the Twelve

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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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Swept Up to Higher Ground

cont'd from pg. 1

Step spiritual path, and a zillion MA meetings, and deep work with the steps, and the invaluable sponsorship that the program offers. It is quite clear for me now in sobriety that my recovery requires all of this daily; that it may be quite awhile until just attending 2-3 meetings a week could feel adequate to the task of staying sober. As for Step Work, I can already see how it will go on forever but I never do feel it as work. It somehow magically acts to liberate me from so many prisons in which I didn't even know I was residing.

Not until I'd reached about 30 days sober did I realize that it really is a very long (but rewarding) process, this "recovery." "Recovery" really means just that! I'd just up and quit one morning, unexpectedly, and by that afternoon I thought that maybe I'd struggle alone with unwanted emotional swings for a few weeks, then be done with the whole matter. Hah! Quitting was only the first prerequisite to enter the long recovery process, which now is completely, slowly, turning around my life after 30 years that was completely propped up with marijuana use.

I'd always felt as if MJ was "making my life work" rather than

slowly derailing it. I didn't realize that "going to" marijuana for every feeling--good, bad, or in between--was eroding my ability to do anything else. I had no idea that it would take so much inner work for me to accept the idea of "living life on life's terms."

Attraction Not Promotion

During the month after my neighbor's "slip," I'd ask her every now and then, "How was it going without marijuana?" She'd tell me several of the positive rewards she was gaining but never suggested I should hop onboard. I'd long had the misconception that all "12-Steppers" would proselytize, given half a chance. This had turned me off in the past. Her changes, and her ongoing open attitude towards our friendship and me made me curious. After a few weeks of inquiring about her well being, I asked to go with her to a meeting; by then she had resumed her Twelve-Step involvement for over a month. I'd begun to believe she'd found some genuinely improved well being and quality of life.

Soon I went to my first meeting. I was astonished at the open, honest disclosure and genuine

cont'd on pg. 3

8th Annual MA District 8

East Coast
Share-a-Day

Sunday, October 12, 2014

1:00pm-6:00pm

A FULL DAY OF RECOVERY & FELLOWSHIP

University Settlement
273 Bowery
(corner Bowery & Houston)

\$20 in advance - PayPal
visit events page:
ma-newyork.org/shareaday/



Swept Up

cont'd from pg. 2

support that all were offering each other in the fellowship. People seemed very dedicated and diligent in working their recovery, yet didn't condemn those who were still actively using, nor even the drug they'd been using before quitting. Very soon my outlook on the "12-Steppers" and the Program shifted dramatically.

One night after I'd attended a few AA and NA meetings, out of curiosity more than any desire to quit MJ, I decided to see if there might actually be a "Marijuana Anonymous." I was beginning to love and yearn for the honest, humble, deep self-disclosure that occurred in all these meetings. Since I wasn't an alcoholic, I couldn't share or learn quite as much as I sensed might be possible with those of my "own kind," the potheads, the stoners. Yet I had learned so very much about the program by then, how it works, and that it DOES work! I admired the sincere diligence and open honesty with which those in AA and NA applied themselves to their recovery and the value they placed on their sobriety! Huge! – Their number one priority.

Now I know why. I decided to look for MA; it only took 3 minutes on the Internet to discover that yes, there was such a thing as "MA!" I became rather excited, and instantly couldn't wait to read everything I could from the MA website, though still having no conscious desire to quit. That very night I began to read the many offerings and links on the MA site. When I got to the personal stories in the back-issues of MA's newsletter, "A New Leaf," I literally could not stop! Had I somehow written all these stories myself, and

forgotten that I did? That's how deeply I related with each story.

In each story I saw parts of my long journey of marijuana use. I couldn't read the stories fast enough. I was enthralled. I was also noticing the "recovery" part of these narratives. Previous to this moment, I'd had no idea that recovery was a "process" which involved actual growth, amidst the inevitable challenges, and that it offered a genuinely new life. Before this, I'd thought that the starry-eyed sober folks were

**“Had I somehow
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kidding themselves with great skill. How could anyone quit MJ and find it to be a better life, clean? Surely it must be self-deception, religious programming, and some kind of Twelve-Step hypnosis but I read on and on, until midnight and beyond. I felt a strange and rising thrill, as I was loudly laughing my way through many of the stories with sheer self-recognition! My laughing was almost giddy! I felt liberated without knowing why.

Having never seriously considered quitting MJ in thirty

years, nor that night, nor as a result of attending meetings recently, I had no clue I was becoming excited about a new page in my life--quitting marijuana! This turned out to be my Higher Power's answer to my previous prayer for a "new adventure!"

I'd kept my use a secret for so long, due to the stigma and likely judgment of others. I hadn't spoken freely about the real life of an MJ addict to anyone. Though I never had had shame or guilt, despite, or because of, having been deeply involved in spiritual teachings, practice, and groups for 40 years. None of the teachings ever suggested that shame and guilt were useful in growth or healing. I agreed, and still do but they did suggest that addiction might be a hindrance to growth. I quickly ignored that idea.

Anyway, suddenly I was reading about real people who were divulging the secrets of their life as marijuana addicts! Yes, I too had scraped bowls for one more hit. I saw "friends" just to get high. I, too, hid in the garage or my car for a toke. I toked at work while bored. I smoked when I was happy, inspired, or in depression; filled with anxiety or fear. When I pulled over by the side of the road, I toked just "because." A long road trip became easy, a long hike was enhanced, a long day was made more interesting when I was high. Yes, I was just like these fellow stoners, including many of the aspects of their inevitable "bottoms."

Trula B.

Read part two of Trula's
journey to Higher Ground
in the October edition of
a new leaf

marijuana anonymous worldwide

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

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District 18 Sacramento, CA

www.sacramentoma.org 916.341.9469

District 19 Toronto, Canada

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Birthdays

Celebrating
100
 years of sobriety!

District 1

District 2

Chris K.	8/12/96	18 yrs.
Clif	8/9/10	4 yrs.
Kathleen M.	8/28/01	13 yrs.

District 3

District 4

District 5

District 6

District 7

Alicia P.	7/18/10	4 yrs.
Heather T.	7/24/11	3 yrs.
Les G.	7/11/11	3 yrs.
Robin D.	8/10/08	6 yrs.
Russell R.	7/27/12	2 yrs.

District 8

Steve N.	7/5/11	3 yrs.
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District 10

District 11

Stacey S.	9/8/92	22 yrs.
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District 12

District 13

James R.	8/21/00	14 yrs.
Jim M.	7/28/06	8 yrs.

District 14

District 15

District 16

District 17

District 18

District 19



**KEEP
 COMING
 BACK!**

ANL wants to publish your sobriety anniversary. 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.

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

What do you do
 for fun
 in recovery?

(Note: Submit by October 15th, answers will be published in the November 2014 issue.)

STEP NINE

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

TRADITION NINE

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