



The Joy of Commitments

“Go to meetings, get a sponsor, take commitments, and keep coming back” those words resonate as resoundingly today as they did when I first heard them nearly 5 years ago, upon entering the rooms of MA I suspected that I was powerless over marijuana and what had begun as a dalliance, a flight of youthful fancy in an attempt to cultivate an image of cool as an impressionable teenager had blossomed into a full blown addiction after 44 years of near daily use. Through the wonders of the internet (thank you Google) I came upon the Sunday Night Woodland Hills, CA “keep off the grass meeting” and although I did not know it then, my life would be forever changed just by saying “yes.” As I sauntered in the door, trying to look as inconspicuous as possible, (no easy task at 6 ft. 4 in. 265 lbs) I was immediately greeted by a couple of beaming, glad handing guys who introduced themselves, welcoming me warmly, instructing me as a “newcomer”, to sit down, listen, and don’t be afraid to ask any questions at the break should I have any.

A gentleman, (over time I found him to be precisely that) who identified as Mike F. led the gathering that night and told a harrowing tale of his journey as an addict, that I instantly found compelling, alarming and relatable, thus alleviating any edge of anxiety or apprehension that I might have arrived with. Having taken a newcomer chip moments before, I was approached by a couple of men who introduced themselves and asked me how long I had been sober (barely one day) and what had brought me to the room that evening? After explaining a brief

litany of maladies both mental and physical that I felt were a direct by-product of my pot use the two members of the fellowship who had engaged me Mickey T. and Mark I. uttered that important refrain;

“Are you prepared to do whatever it takes to stay sober, and will you take direction?” My answer was a passionate yes and I was led to the literature table where I was handed a meeting schedule, some introductory literature about the program and then those magic words: “Go to as many meetings as possible, get a sponsor, take a commitment, and keep coming back”

‘Newbie’ that I was, I was clueless as to what a commitment was and what taking one entailed, and why it was so important that I take one. It was immediately explained to me that MA operates by the contributions of its members be they physical, spiritual, or financial and without the fully concerted efforts of the fellowship, the program and most importantly, the local meetings would cease to exist. Coffee doesn’t make itself, chairs don’t just magically appear at the onset of a meeting, and put themselves away at the end etc, and most importantly by taking a commitment, dedicating oneself to the group provides a reason and the initiative to come back every week. You are an important cog in the wheel of a machine that relies on your participation and presence in order to function every week. Pothead flaking not accepted here.

I volunteered for the room setup commitment at that very first meeting, and kept it for the entire

From Misery to Acceptance

Hi, I’m Sabrina and I’m a marijuana addict. I have spent most of my life as an outsider, often relishing it because it allowed me to feel I was better than those around me (which let me pass judgment on people I was afraid wouldn’t like me before they had the chance), sometimes despairing of the way it kept me separate from others, but finally accepting it as a part of who I was. This acceptance allows me to embrace my own value and to see that an outsider’s point of view can actually belong of the stream of life when take my focus away from my outsidersness and cast it on what it lets me bring to the table.

Early in sobriety, I would spend days-- as I had while wasted-- wallowing in my own misery. Mostly I hated being so miserable, but there was also a recognizable comfort in the sheer saturation of my torment, and I knew that it was as close as I could get to being stoned. This deep self-interested pit of despair that let me be oblivious to everything around me. Even though it felt like familiar ground, it would become unbearable, and I would fantasize—in a way I never had while using—about killing myself. It was the same every time, I could see the revolver in my hand, the black handle, the blue-grey metal; I could feel the weight, imagine the tilt I would hold it at, slightly down and away, catching a faint reflection of the window. I knew where I would be sitting, where I would place the barrel against my head. But every time I got to the trigger, I would remember that once I pulled it, I would be dead, and I didn’t want to be dead, I just wanted quiet in my head.

ANL's Purpose

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. MA is not affiliated with—and does not endorse or accept contributions from—any outside enterprise.

District Bureau Chiefs

We will be reaching out to districts soon to update the District Bureau Chief list. Additionally district representatives, including but not limited to those serving as Bureau Chief are encouraged to stay in touch: editor@anewleafpublications.org

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The Joy of Commitments...

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six-month term with a perfect record of attendance. The following night I signed up as one the greeters for the Monday night Sherman Oaks "Newcomers Meeting" which proved to be a great way for me to introduce myself to members of the group in an effort to forge new relationships, breaking the bondage of isolation that was characteristic of my and (as I have come to find) many others addiction. Eventually the cake commitment followed on Tuesday night, then literature at Sunday's meeting and with each one, my bond with the fellowship got stronger and friendships that are the backbone of my MA existence nearly 5 years later flourished.

Today, I continue to attend 3 meetings per week. I have a commitment at each one, and I have been fortunate at one time or another to act as a secretary at all of them. I currently sponsor some men, and stress to any and all the 'joy of commitment' and the positive effect that it has had on my sobriety, the fellowship as a whole and how this small selfless act has solidified my participation in the program of Marijuana Anonymous. It works if you work it. ▲

Ed E

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To Solve The Problem

Ice cream was made to solve the problem of crying children.

Cars were made to solve the problem of tired horses.

Phones were made to solve the problem of worrying mothers.

Books were made to solve the problem of retired storytellers.

Toothpicks were made to solve the problem of bad first impressions.

Marijuana was made to solve the problem of reality.

12-Steps were made to solve the problem of reality.

Jared N, District 6

On behalf of the ANLP Board and the other volunteers who work on our newsletter, we would like to thank all of our subscribers for your patience as we continue to catch up on past issues and improve upon our processes and overall aesthetic. We hope you appreciate the progress. Again, **THANK YOU!**

Share Your Meditative Inspiration

Learning to Pray and Meditate (Step 11)

Our literature suggests that we can adapt the prayers associated with the steps to make them more personal and relevant to our own individual recovery. I wrote this prayer recently and have found it helpful in connecting with my higher power and the principles of the program. If it's useful to you, you can fill in the blanks to make it your own!

Today, I pray for acceptance of what is. I am grateful for the measure of freedom from addiction I have been granted today. I remember and pray for others lost to addiction and to all those currently suffering. I pray for them and acknowledge the obligation I have to them to live the free life they cannot. I seek joy, compassion, and connection to my community today. I remember _____ and _____, and I pray for _____ and _____.

I seek to acknowledge and transmute my frustration and resentment toward other people into compassion. I pray for a deeper understanding of our shared humanity and for help remembering that we are all imperfect and incomplete; that other people's harmful acts are driven by the same fears, inconsideration, and selfishness I experience; and that they too are wounded and doing the best they know how. I pray for help and persistence in this ongoing effort to understand and find understanding for other people, especially those I resent.

I seek to remember that I have been invested in and shaped by many people, including family, friends, sponsors, and teachers. I am committed to honoring this love, care, and support by seeking humility and effectiveness in my actions today. _____, _____, _____, and _____ - thank you for your role in shaping the person I have become and for your ongoing guidance as I grow into the person I will be.

I seek to notice and acknowledge the suffering caused by institutional and societal injustice and inequality. I remember _____, _____, _____, and a seemingly endless list of names and groups whose unnecessary suffering echoes in the current moment.

I seek to honor the memory of these casualties of human fear and indifference; my fallen comrades who did not survive their addictions; and my ancestors, family, friends, and other teachers and benefactors. Today I offer these hands and this voice to all of you and to the unseeable and incomprehensible force that binds us together.

These breaths are not mine alone. Please help me to see you and allow you to carry me as I go out onto the path you have laid out for me. Please guide me toward compassion and love, and away from the selfishness, self-seeking, and other shortcomings that arise from my attachment to the illusion that I am an individual actor, whose needs and interests are in conflict with others.

Help me to live in harmony with my true nature and, in turn, with others and the environment we share.

_____ ▲

Enjoy! Dan F (Portland)

From Misery to Acceptance...

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At some point, I realized valuing my misery wasn't doing me any good. I knew that I would always have the capacity for sadness, but I needed to embrace my capacity for joy. When I shared my depression, some people around me said, "this too shall pass." Aside from the frustration of wanting it to pass right that instant (and wanting to punch them in the throat for the pithy response crap), I realized I could not believe that I would ever be happy again. I could remember moments of happiness, but when I was miserable, I was incapable of imagining I would feel it again.

I am not sure how I came up with my idea (maybe from my therapist's description of maniacal happiness, that crazed high propelled by an underlying, subconscious, fearful knowledge that one can't be that happy forever) but I realized that even though I couldn't believe I would be happy again when I was miserable, I was capable of remembering I would suffer again when I was happy. So when I felt happy, very gently, I would remind myself that happiness would pass as well. And when I say gently, I mean it: I was careful not to rob myself of joy. I spoke as if whispering in my own ear, "I know you carry the seed of fear that this will end, but that is human. Just take a breath and enjoy this. Sit comfortably in this moment of happiness, treasure it, and remember that it is not a constant state of being."

This approach actually achieved two things, and the first, while deeply beneficial, was incidental; my happiness began to lose its maniacal quality, and I was able to see all of its details and conditions more clearly, and to relish them more calmly. The second was a desired outcome; even though I could not overcome my misery head-on, the knowledge of impermanence bled into my desolation, and I was able to see the details and conditions more clearly there as well. Which was good, because by then I had realized I didn't want to escape the world any more. Seeing how I contributed to my own pain was an invaluable step toward joining the stream of life. ▲

Sabrina

Marijuana Anonymous Worldwide

For a complete listing of all meetings visit
WWW.MARIJUANA-ANONYMOUS.ORG

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About Birthdays

Stay tuned as we update our process for gathering and listing birthdays.

UPDATE!

Windows phone, tablet and PC users can now install the MA Mobile app. Just as for iOS and Android, search the Microsoft store for "marijuana anonymous" or use the links at www.marijuana-anonymous.org.

From Life with Hope



Step One

We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on MA unity.

MA Daily Meditation Book

The Literature Committee continues its **call for your writing** as we compile a year's worth of daily meditations focused on recovery from marijuana addiction. The writings should be approximately 250 to 500 words.

What would you want to read on your sobriety birthday?

The earliest submissions have a good chance of being printed on your recovery birthday. If you feel so moved, send in more than one. Looking for inspiration? Take a look at daily meditation books from other fellowships or take a look at the sample at: www.marijuana-anonymous.org/meditations. Find an inspiring quote to kickstart your creativity. Go for it...Write yours today! **Send your submissions to:** stories@anewleafpublications.org