

that was what my new “cool” friends were into. The next three years were filled with many highs and lows, and everything seemed so superficial, including my friendships. This made me sad and depressed. I believe this was my “rock bottom.”

I realized I could not live this way. There was one problem: I could not stop the routine of using drugs. It took being arrested twice, losing my license for two years, and my lawyer suggesting Twelve Step meetings before I walked into Marijuana Anonymous.

Since then, my attitude and actions have changed and so has my direction in life. I do see a future in water polo. Luckily, I haven’t killed my chance in athletics. Hopefully, I haven’t killed all those relationships I damaged while I was using drugs. Either way, I know that my first priority is staying sober and keeping a clean head. Keep Coming Back. It works if you work it.

MY LOVE OF POT STARTED the first time I got stoned. I was 14. The first time I smoked pot I didn’t see the point, because I didn’t feel high. I’d been drinking for a year already and I liked alcohol. The first time I did feel stoned from weed, I dropped the bottle and picked up the pipe. That was the beginning of 2 years of hell. Since I thought my parents were idiots, I could “act sober” around them.

For the first few months, I didn’t think pot controlled my life because I didn’t smoke like everyone else. I just smoked on occasion. Once I got to high school, I saw getting high as a great opportunity to make friends. I eventually got into the stoner circle, but I never felt a part of that crowd, because I didn’t smoke like them.

My parents knew what was up. My 1.6 grade point average was a big clue that I had something more important to do than homework. When I got caught dealing, my parents decided to raid my room. They found everything but the pot I had on me. I didn’t care. I smoked out the day after I got caught. So, I

was busted. Big deal. I promised to go to MA, but I really didn’t intend to stay sober. I didn’t want to be in a room full of addicts, because I thought I could stop anytime I wanted to. I just didn’t want to.

Soon after, I was caught shoplifting. My mom and dad came and picked me up. Another slap on the wrist. I stopped getting high for about 2 months, but when I started again, it was like I never stopped. My home life was awful. I was in a constant battle with my parents and my little brother was being hurt as a result of my selfishness. I thought I was the only person in the whole world.

I was using every day when everything finally hit the fan. My dad broke my guitars, so I ran away. I was caught one week later in Santa Barbara. I vowed never to use again. I told my parents that I had a problem, and I needed help. I came into MA a week later. Since then, I haven’t smoked pot once. I have noticed a vast improvement in my life, and it can only get better. So, if you are new, the best advice I can give you is read the literature, get a sponsor, and take a commitment. But more importantly, KEEP COMING BACK, because your life is still worth living.

We have found hope for the future in Marijuana Anonymous. Some of us have better relationships with our families. We have done better at school. We have found true friends, not just those who only hang out when there is weed. We have found the support of other marijuana addicts in MA.

Recovery is possible for people of all ages in Marijuana Anonymous. We cannot guarantee that we will never encounter situations where people are using. But, being clean and sober and working the Twelve Steps can help strengthen us against people and situations which may try to draw us back. Our stories portray the pain of addiction as well as the hope that comes from a drug-free life.

Stories by Teens



MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

A Twelve Step Program of Recovery
for Marijuana Addicts

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There are more teenagers in Marijuana Anonymous today than at any time in the past. We come for many different reasons—parents tell us to come, the schools or the courts send us, some of us come on our own. A few of us have smoked pot for years, others only a few months. Many of us question whether we really are marijuana addicts. Some of us think we have not used long enough to be addicted to marijuana.

The symptoms of marijuana addiction are varied, but some are very obvious: ditching school, getting high before, during, and after school, dropping out of school, lying to our parents, etc. It does not take years to develop into a marijuana addict. It can happen very quickly. Peer pressure often plays a part in the process; some of us smoke pot to feel more comfortable in the presence of a certain person or crowd. Only you know if you are a marijuana addict. MA is here for any person, regardless of age.

This pamphlet contains stories written by teens.

THE FIRST TIME I SMOKED WEED was during the summer before 8th grade. I was really curious to see what it was all about. I had a few hits, but didn't really get stoned. Later, I smoked some more. I got so high I didn't even know what was going on. The next chance I got to get high, I jumped on it. The more I did it, the more I liked it. I loved the way pot played with my head.

Finally, I got caught. I was grounded for a while, but I went right back to it. That happened over and over until my parents decided to put me in a chemical dependency program. I managed to still smoke pot on the day furthest from my drug tests. I tried all those purification concoctions, but my dad eventually found out.

I was still determined not to let anybody rob me of my "God-given rights," so I continued to smoke bud and got "dirty" drug tests. My grades weren't really suffering so I saw no reason to stop. I kept getting into more trouble.

Finally, disaster struck. I was caught at school. My hearing to determine whether I am expelled or not happens very soon. My eyes have been opened. Getting caught once can ruin your life. I'm taking my 30 day chip today and I hope to get many more chips. By staying sober, I am getting all my privileges back. As for school, I hope to be allowed back in. My only job is to stay out of trouble.

IAM 16 YEARS OLD. When I was 11, I started smoking cigarettes because of a friend. At age 12, I started getting into alcohol and hanging out with gang members. At 13, I started smoking marijuana. At 14, I started doing hard drugs. I pulled a knife and swung at my dad. Luckily, I missed. I love my dad because he is the person who brought me into this world. I didn't realize that if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here.

When I was using, I had a lot of problems. Me and my dad got into a fight. We were hitting each other. The cops came. I tried to jump over the wall in my backyard. The cops grabbed me, and handcuffed me. My mom and dad had to decide whether to send me to juvenile hall. My mom said yes but my dad said no. I was released but that didn't stop me from using drugs.

When I was in the 7th grade, I got arrested for possession and use of marijuana. I was kicked out of school for a year. After that year, I didn't go back. I was kicked out by my parents. After 4 years of life on the streets, I was hanging out with my homies, getting drunk and doing dope every day.

Now I have been drug-free for almost a year. I finally came back to school. I am succeeding in school and life. I realize now that doing dope is not cool. I want to finish high school and go to college. I want to be an attorney. I hope my story touches somebody's heart, and I hope that whoever reads it will realize that doing drugs is not the way to go.

IAM A 16 YEAR OLD recovering marijuana addict. Like most teens, I went to MA for my parents mainly. I knew I had a

problem; however, I didn't really want to stop. Honestly, I didn't want to have real feelings again.

My parents put me in an outpatient program. The program made me go to one meeting a week. I chose MA because marijuana was my drug of choice. In MA, I learned about calling people for help.

At 30 days, when I took my chip, I was ready to be sober for myself. I knew if I didn't do it for myself it wouldn't mean anything and I could go out and use again. At 60 days, I decided to learn the Serenity Prayer and get a sponsor. I thought I didn't need a sponsor, didn't need to work the Steps. Staying clean would be enough. Now that I have a sponsor, I see how important she is. When I have a good day, she is happy for me. When I have a bad day, she tells me it is OK and makes me feel better. After 103 days clean and sober, I graduated the outpatient program.

I still have bad days. The people in MA comfort me. Bad days make me realize I need to thank God for the good days and not take them for granted.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON becomes an addict? Someone popular, with a lot of friends; or someone who is different from the rest, estranged from the popular crowd, with only a few friends, or none at all? The point I am trying to make is anyone can become an addict.

The only way that I figured this out was by becoming an addict myself. I used to be a guy who was always in the popular crowd. Right before high school began, I started being shunned by most of my friends. I had never lived with the fear that I had no friends, so I did almost anything to keep the two good friends I still had. One of the things I did was try pot for the first time. This was a big change from the way I lived when I was younger. I was an athlete, and the last thing I thought I would get into was drugs. Drugs prevented me from being the best athlete I could be.

I entered high school, where smoking pot was "cool." I continued to smoke pot because