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A NEW LEAF

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The things I dislike about smoking pot...

by Kimberly Anne

1. **Jonesing for more**—the minute I took my first hit, no matter what time of day it was, I wanted more and would smoke non-stop until bed.

2. **Revolving my entire life around when I was going to smoke next.** If I hadn't yet smoked that day - if I managed to wait until 5pm (when I was working a 9-5 and didn't get high during work sometimes) I wouldn't even be able to clean my car out in the parking lot when I got home because that would be 5 minutes more until I could get inside and start smoking.

3. **No motivation** - I rarely carried it with me so would revolve my life around staying home and smoking, then spacing out or thinking about things I should be doing.

4. **Numbness** - my pot abuse kept me in an abusive marriage for almost 2 decades. I used it to zone out, not think, not care.

5. **Hiding the smell** - I was always worried in public about who could smell it and tried to cover it up without realizing that EVERYONE could smell it all the time!!! I've noticed this with the people I know now who are stoners and try to cover it up. One day while I was at a volunteer job a lady I know told me she needed to run outside "to move her car" and when she came back she smelled so badly of perfume I almost gagged. It was close to when I quit so at first I just thought her perfume bottle had exploded in her car but then I hugged her and "woosh" I smelled the pot, which was not covered up by the perfume at all when I got close!!! Then I looked at her eyes and she was really baked. It's so funny, the denial we put ourselves through. When people smoke around me now, it smells awful to me.

6. **The company I kept** - I was friends with people BECAUSE they smoked. I thought I couldn't be friends with people who didn't smoke!!! I know now that the reason I did this was to justify my habit and also because I didn't want to hear sober people's opinions about me smoking too much. Even my stoner friends at times would comment on my ability to smoke anyone and everyone under the table. Not a good quality. I was also not very social with people who didn't smoke because I figured they would be intolerant of me going to their homes and needing to "step out" every hour to smoke. I declined many invitations to do things with non-pot smokers fearing that I wouldn't be able to "get away" and smoke.

7. **Smoking pot really did stop being fun** and more importantly I could never get high enough, no matter how much I smoked.

8. **Coughing** up gray, black and green phlegm every day and having to hide it.

9. **The way it made me feel** - hungry but never satisfied after eating, not motivated to exercise or take care of myself, being a slave to it, underestimating my addiction, being "asleep" for so many years of my life.

10. **The way it dulled my senses** - smell, sight, taste...

11. **The fact that I had a difficult time reading** when I was stoned because the words swam on the pages, and since I was always stoned...

12. **All my thoughts and worries about giving it up.** I thought I couldn't be creative, or be a good writer, I thought food wouldn't taste as good, I thought a sunset would not be as beautiful, I thought my boyfriend would leave me if I quit, I thought I would lose all my pot smoking friends (the ones I really love), I thought I would be boring if I didn't smoke, I thought I might turn to drinking hard core even though I've never liked drinking (and thankfully I haven't turned to drinking!), I also thought so many activities would be "boring" without it until I discovered mindfulness, I thought I would not be able to control my issues without it. I worried that whenever there was conflict in my life I would break down instead of lighting up.

I must say that my journey (which is not over yet) of saying goodbye to my bestest of friends maryjane has been one of self discovery. I have learned more about myself during this short period than I did in 20 years of smoking. I've turned to Buddhism, meditation, yoga, energy work, healing and helping myself and others and most recently raw foods. I taste things fully now, I see things differently, I am creative in a new and exciting way. I find menial tasks less daunting because they don't take as long to complete. I usually have no problem motivating myself, exercising, studying, learning, reading, waiting, cooking, making love, making friends, spreading peace, caring about the environment, working to change things that are important to me. My old pot smoking friends that I did not want to give up are completely understanding, non judgmental and completely support my decision.

The step of quitting is a scary one, I won't say it isn't. The detox was physically very unpleasant for me. But right now I can say with complete confidence that I am so glad I quit and I would do it again in a second and I have no intention of starting again. Some people can smoke once in awhile and not all the time without an "addiction" problem and that is awesome — I, however, am not one of those people and I'm OK with that.



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 necessarily reflect the opinions of Marijuana Anonymous as a whole.

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In faith I say...

by Kellogg B., District 10

I am an addict. Not an easy road and one that bleeds over to the ones I love and strangers whose faces I don't remember in my stupor of using and after I got clean. I hurt, lie and cheat others. Some addicts can steal, kill and ruin fortunes worthy of Gods be it materially, in relationships, or spiritually. I have arrested my disease where it is and that is as close as I can get to curing it is stopping it. Most importantly, though, I can safeguard my attempt to keep my addiction in state of arrest, and if I don't find relationships and intimacy, with friends, family, my Higher Power and fellow addicts, I stand no chance of ultimately arresting the disease because of its overpowering intensity. It sits in my mind like a splinter waiting and festering. I accept there will be neither magic pill nor silver bullet to extirpate it as I know my experience, memories, and the parts of my soul that started me down this path will never be overtaken by science nor do I wish them to. I must find God, a program and sanity. With these I will have the peace of mind required to objectively show up for life on life's terms and to subjectively have faith in the unconditional love abounding in the universe from a stranger's smile to parents' support to the passions that are the essence of my nature that God bestowed me with and I praise him, her, it for every day. Then why am I chemically dependent? I think my God's answer would go something like this: because there was no easier way for who you are and your soul to find humility, learn to reach out for help and experience my unconditional love for you. My purpose in life is to investigate why, do my part in the workings of God and keep none of my God's love for myself as the John Lennon lyric goes "the love you take is equal to the love you make." Humility is freedom, reaching out for and receiving help is the intimacy of God and the simplicity of unconditional love is the most complex and invaluable experience mankind can go through. The conclusions of all this only come from the great beyond. In this I have faith.



The Roving Reporter

For May the Roving Report asked, "If I were 'living' the program what would I be doing?" Here are what a few people had to say.

If I were "living" the program, I'd start my day with a prayer, read the book with daily reflections, read the reference page. Pray that I would do His Will, not mine. - Ruel T.

If I were "living" the program, I'd start my day with prayer and meditation, and share my experience, strength, and hope with the addict who still suffers. - Doug M.

Practicing the principles in all my affairs. - Danny G.

Steps, meetings, services and fellowship are my almost daily practice. - Jay I.

Taking better care of myself. However, I DO want to add that "living the program" is a day to day thing for me... sometimes minute to minute. So "living the program" is about the process, thank god. Perhaps a better way for me to ask myself this question is in the PRESENT TENSE, each morning and night: "If I AM living the program, what can I be doing right now that constitutes right action?"
Anonymous

Staying sober, serene and satisfied. Paul G., District 11

The thing we should be doing now is giving back to the program as it gave so much to us, by simply sharing at meetings our experience, strength and hope, sharing on our H&I panel or at the district level filling a position or writing for A New Leaf, some story or step. We should reflect inner strength when a newcomer is present to hear us and needs a little help! Of course it all starts with a closer walk with our higher power in our morning meditation and throughout the day. Ernest - District 5

NOT USING, PROGRESSING NOT PERFECTING, AND GIVING BACK WHAT HAS SO FREELY BEEN GIVEN TO ME. YELDARB, DISTRICT 13 AND 5

Living the program for me would include 4 things: going to meetings (average 1 per day), working the 12 steps with a sponsor, sponsoring other men through the 12 steps, and prayer and meditation to achieve a conscience contact with God. IF I do these things then I can face life on life's terms and for the most part practice these principles. Rich C District 13 (and Philly)

Being true to myself, and acting like a friend to myself and others. Working a good program involves having good personal boundaries, the ability to shrug off negativity, and lots of self-care. — Ari K

Living life on life's terms, to the best of my abilities, with love and support, via god's help, one day at a time. Kristin S.

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For June the RR asks, "What is the hardest thing to do sober that you used to do while stoned," and for July the RR asks, "What do you do for fun in sobriety?" Please submit your responses to your local bureau chief or email to anlp@marijuana-anonymous.org Thank you!

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If I were living the program, I would be applying the principals of the steps.

1. I will be honest with myself. It's continuing to admit that I am powerless. It calls me to surrender and let go of the illusion of control.
2. It's practicing the principle of hope in coming to believe that I can expect that my life can and will be restored to Wellness.
3. It's practicing the principle of faith. It's making a decision everyday to turn my life over to the care of a Power Greater than my ego. And once again, it calls me to surrender and let go to the illusion of control.
4. If I am living the program I will be courageous, I will look at my resentments which often arise out of pride, fear and insecurity.
5. I will practice integrity by being honest myself and another person. It allows me to express my grief, and frees me from fear and resentment.
6. If I am living the program I will be "willing" to be willing to let go of these things that block me from God and others.
7. If I am living the program I will be humble enough to allow a Power Greater than myself remove all the things which keep me from growing and be willing to accept forgiveness.
8. In living the program I try to practice these principles of Love and Forgiveness in looking at the incidents in which I have hurt or ignored other people.
9. I practice the principle of justice when I make direct amends, it frees me from shame, guilt and remorse.



BIRTHDAYS

Are you celebrating a birthday in the next few months? Or have you celebrated one in the last 30 days and not seen it in A New Leaf? If you live in a District area of MA, let your Bureau Chief know about it. If not, tell us! For contact information, see the box on page 2.

District 5

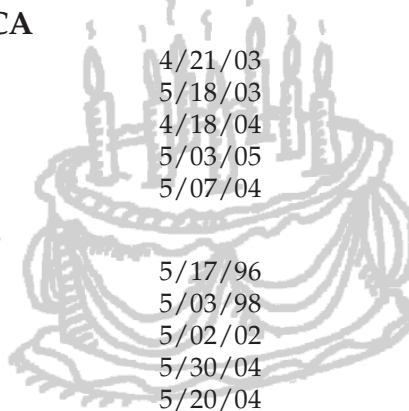
Charles	4/14/05	1 year!
Norm B.	5/30/83	23 years
Sean F.	5/11/02	4 years

Fresno, CA

Benny	4/21/03	3 years
Ethan S.	5/18/03	3 years
Abel	4/18/04	2 years
Joey	5/03/05	1 year!
Michelle	5/07/04	2 years

District 3

Lily E.	5/17/96	10 years
Steve W.	5/03/98	8 years
Ben S.	5/02/02	4 years
Brent W.	5/30/04	2 years
Kim	5/20/04	2 year



Celebrating 55 Years of Sobriety in This Issue!

10. I practice the principle of perseverance when I apply these steps and continue this inventory and practice all these principles in all of my affairs.
 11. If I seek to live my life by these spiritual principles I will ask for the help I need from the One Power that can grant me the power and the knowledge that will solve all my problems
 12. It is said as a result of taking these 12 steps I will have a spiritual awakening. And in turn, live the principles and carry the message to those who suffer.
- I can admit I may not be all the way there yet, but it is practice, practice, practice. It's progress, not perfection. It's not "if" I am living the program, it's more "since" I am living the program.
 Phantom Pothead