

## Thoughts On Service

Marijuana Anonymous wasn't around when I got clean and sober, so I attended other 12 Step meetings. I had to put up with a lot of B.S. from alcoholics who didn't want to hear about my "drug" problem. A lot of recovery was being talked about, but not much about how people were living without using marijuana, and that was what I wanted to hear about. I went to another 12 Step group, but since I was a "laid back" ex-doper, it was difficult to identify with the meetings, which seemed a little too frantic for me. When I was taken to my first MA meeting, it felt like home

My life in recovery has been a series of commitments which have sometimes helped me when I reached those forks in the road of happy destiny (which I am skipping along, not trudging). Sometimes I reach a fork in the road and think, "This would be easier if I was high", and then I continue the thought and realize:

1. I really don't want to be HIGH, I just don't want the hassle. 2. I have made some commitments, in MA and my life, which I can't fulfill if I go back to pot.

The most important commitment which I have made is to do the best I can to do my part to see that MA is here for the next addict and the ones that come later. Everyone can help MA grow and prosper by becoming willing to help and take an active part. The first job I had in service was to greet people as they came into the meeting. You would be amazed at how much more "at home" a person feels when greeted at the door by a hug, a friendly face, and a nice "Hello".

My first sponsor told me that if I put one half of the effort into staying clean that I put into getting stoned, that I would succeed in my endeavor. So, I try to put more effort into service to MA. I think that all of us addicts need to search inside our hearts, pray to our Higher Power, and get our butts into Service. Good luck, I wish a happy and serene life to us all.

## Questions

I never understood how this fellowship came to be, or even maintain itself, until I got into service. How did it work? When I put my money in the basket, where does it go? How do we get chips? Who makes the literature? What's a district? What is World Services? Each week I went to meetings that had a room, chips, literature, and people responsible for the meeting.

To get a service position you don't have to be the most popular, have the coolest car, or even campaign for the position. My first commitment was as the literature person at my Friday meeting. I volunteered to take the commitment due to the fact that it was only temporary while the designated literature person was on holiday. Well, that person never came back and I was voted in. I wanted to be the very best and went a little overboard at first. That meeting then averaged from five to ten people. I not only had a Big Book and a Twelve & Twelve on the literature table, but two meditation books, ten bumper stickers, six bookmarks, and eight buttons!

My first District Service Committee meeting was overwhelming. That's where the representatives from each meeting come together once a month to hear and vote on new information about and for MA. Did you know the Group Service Representative is your meeting's group conscience? I could barely keep up with what they were talking about. After the meeting I pulled a friend aside and asked him if I was supposed suggest understand everything they were talking about at my first meeting? He laughed and said no and that I would catch on. I could not believe the organization this group had.

A lot of my questions now have answers. I understand that through unselfish responsible volunteers, this program continues to run. Tradition Eight in another program's Twelve & Twelve states, "Freely ye have received, freely give". Today I am working Traditions Two and Eight to the best of my ability.

**Australian Helpline 0403 945 083**

# Personal Stories of Service Commitments



## Marijuana Anonymous 12 Step Program for Marijuana Addicts

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These are some stories by a few of our members who have found how much being of service helped start their journey to recovery. Don't get the wrong idea. You can't do service in lieu of the Steps to get recovery. You can, however, let service start you on the road to sobriety, and from there you take the path of recovery.

## **You Can't Keep What You Have Unless You Give It Away**

The Marijuana Anonymous logo is a triangle with the letters MA inscribed in the center. The three sides of the triangle represent Unity, Recovery, and Service. Unity is the fellowship. Recovery is the 12 Steps and the spiritual principles of the program, and Service is generally described as our commitments to the program and to carrying the message of Marijuana Anonymous. These three aspects of the program are not mutually exclusive. The Twelfth Step and the Fifth Tradition say that I must carry the message to stay clean. Therefore, without Service, there can be no Recovery. Without Recovery, there can be no Unity, and without Unity and the fellowship, there would be nobody to be of Service to.

Service has been an integral part of my program since I got clean. The types of service commitments I have held in the program are many and have evolved as I have grown spiritually in recovery. My first commitment was as treasurer of a meeting that was only two months old. I had thirty days. My sponsor, who I had obtained just hours before, had started the meeting and was acting secretary, GSR, and treasurer. He asked me if I had any service commitments at which time I said no. He then nominated me. Everyone else said they seconded the nomination, and before I knew what was going on, my sponsor handed me the treasury and a treasurer's handbook, and said, "You are now the treasurer of the meeting, be here every week".

Yes, I was a victim of a "railroading". Probably a good thing too. Had I not been railroaded, I would have never committed. I was the type of addict that was very elusive. You could not pin me down to anything, especially not a commitment where I would be duty bound to show up somewhere once a week.

Since that time, I have held various service commitments at all levels. I have had the privilege and pleasure of representing my district at World Service Conferences, where I have participated in making decisions on how MA is going to carry the message of recovery throughout the world. Service to the fellowship has been an important part of my program, and has helped keep me clean. If I used, I would feel that I not only let myself down but also MA, as well as all my friends in MA.

## **Why Commitments Kept Me Sober**

After about two weeks of attending my first meeting, I was asked if I would do the cookies & coffee for a week. I don't remember exactly how, but I ended up being the refreshment person for the next six months. What that did was make me go to the same meeting over and over. Being that it was a small meeting, that meant I would have to share because of the size of the meeting. By sharing, I walked through that first fear, the fear of not sounding good and maybe not looking good. In sharing early on, I learned that I wouldn't be laughed at. I wasn't told, "You're wrong". I wasn't told, "That's stupid" or, "Don't come back". I was told, "Keep coming back", "We need you here because you're a newcomer" and, "We want you here". I learned that sharing helped remove the burden of guilt and fear I carried with me that was held in those dreaded secrets.

Also, by having made this commitment, it meant I was committed to going, regardless of whether I wanted to go or not. Looking back, sometimes I didn't want to go for me, but I didn't want to let you down, so I went for you. Funny how going for you did a lot for me. By going to the same meeting week after week, I started to get comfortable in the room. I was able to share more and more because I trusted you all more and more, thus helping me grow. I got out the negative things then and, by doing so, I didn't have "The Committee" in my head to deal with as much. Because of sharing and removing the power of "The Committee", that in turn allowed me to listen and find solutions to problems through the steps. This helped me start to get closer to my Higher Power, and that got easier as I got more spiritual through practicing the steps.

As more time went by, I got to be treasurer, thus keeping me coming back again and again. Between my refreshments commitment and being treasurer I went to that meeting 52 weeks in a row. I also learned about fellowship, due to my commitments, because after the meeting we would go out for coffee every week. There, I learned how to interact on a personal level. That let me get to know people better, grow more comfortable around them, and become part of the group. Basically, I got involved and I took direction from a sponsor. It was very important early on and helped me develop a good foundation for my program.

I've had a commitment of some kind or another from two weeks up until the present. I am still sober. I guess there is something good about commitments because the four people who followed me as refreshment person are also still sober.

Take on service, get involved, walk through your fear, become a part of. Don't listen to the 100 reasons your head tells you why you can't, and just... DO IT!

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