

The Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous

STEP ONE

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

Step One is about honesty, about giving up our delusions and coming to grips with reality. We had to look honestly at our relationship with marijuana and its effect on our lives. For some of us Step One meant honesty for the very first time in our lives.

Many of us spent years trying to control our use of marijuana. We justified our using and rationalized that we could control it. We may have vowed to use only on weekends, or to have only one joint a day. Some of us promised ourselves not to smoke until after school or work, or only when we were alone. Sometimes we tried using only other people's dope, not buying it for ourselves. We played games with our stash, gave our supply to friends, hid it in nooks and crannies that were hard to reach, or buried it away from home. All these efforts failed us. We learned that we could not control our using. Eventually, we returned to smoking just as much and just as often as ever, if not more. Some of us stopped using for a while, but we always started again.

We were living the illusion of control, thinking we could control not only our using, but also other people, places, and things. We spent a great deal of energy blaming

others for our problems. We held on to the fallacy of control. Most of us had long insisted that marijuana was not even addictive. After all, it was just a natural herb, which grew in many of our gardens. Our lives may have been a little frazzled, a bit out of kilter, but were they really unmanageable? Many of us didn't lose our jobs; our families hadn't deserted us; our lives didn't seem to be total disasters. We were living the fantasy of functionality.

Some of us hoped that people in recovery could teach us to control our using so we could enjoy it again. But we found otherwise. Some of us hung on to the delusion that someday we could use marijuana in a moderate and controlled way.

We were caught by the disease of addiction, ensnared in the insidious grip of marijuana. It was a best friend for years and then it turned on us. Gone were the days when marijuana lifted our spirits. Now it left us filled with grief. Gone were the days of insight. Now we experienced confusion, paranoia, and fear. No longer did marijuana expand our social consciousness. Some of us became delusional, living in our own private worlds. No longer did using pave the way to friendship. Many of us became withdrawn and isolated. We were too frightened, detached, and lethargic to reach out for friendship, intimacy, or love. Our need to get and stay high determined how we spent our time, and with whom. Our emotional lives had become flat or frantic. We were uncomfortable with our emotions and sometimes frightened of them.

We realized we were beaten many times, but couldn't stop. Sooner or later the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical disease overcame us, bringing us to

the depths of despair and hopelessness. In Marijuana Anonymous we discover the reality of powerlessness; surrender outweighs the illusion of control and becomes our only option for recovery. We are powerless over marijuana in all of its forms.

Until we admitted our powerlessness, denial kept us from realizing how unmanageable our lives had become. Our visions of achievement and our desires of being wise, loving, compassionate, or valued had remained mostly dreams. We rarely realized our potentials. We had settled for being merely functional.

Some of us went even further. We began to lose our mental faculties. We could not work. Our families abandoned us. Some of us were in danger of being committed to jails or mental institutions. More and more, we associated with dangerous people to ensure our marijuana supply. Some of us became victims of abuse; some of us became abusers. A few of us were derelicts. In spite of all this, we still had difficulty admitting that we could no longer manage our own lives! Powerless? We thought we were the center of the universe.

We had tried everything over the years to change reality, to no avail. In MA we at last found the courage to face the truth. We stopped practicing denial and became willing to face our disease. Having come to this moment of clarity, we could not afford any reservations about being powerless over our disease. The entire foundation of our program depends on an honest admission of our powerlessness over addiction and the unmanageability of our lives. We are, however, responsible for our own recovery.

Step One

Life With Hope

Step One was the first step to freedom. We admitted our lack of power and our inability to control our lives. We began to acknowledge how mentally, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt we had become. We became honest with ourselves. It was only by admitting our powerlessness in this first Step that we became willing to take the next eleven Steps.

Recovery does not happen all at once. It is a process, not an event. The process is set in motion the day we quit using or begin attending meetings. It begins with a real desire to stop using, with a genuine change in our attitude, with a soul-transforming realization that we are finally willing to go to any lengths to change our lives. When we admitted that we were marijuana addicts, that we were really powerless over marijuana, and that our lives had truly become unmanageable, then we began to realize how futile it was to keep trying to manage the unmanageable. We began to give up our arrogance and defiance.

Our complete surrender and a new way of life were essential to our recovery. In order to have any hope of rebuilding our lives, we simply had to find a source of power greater than ourselves and greater than our addiction. For that, we turned to Step Two.