

STEP TWO

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step Two was our introduction to the principles of open-mindedness and hope. In Step One we confronted our addiction, admitting that we were powerless over marijuana and that our lives had become unmanageable. We were then left with two alternatives: to stay as we were and continue using marijuana until we died, or to seek spiritual help. Once we admitted our powerlessness, we had to find a power greater than ourselves by which we could live. We knew that our human will alone had never been sufficient to manage our addiction. We began to realize that only a Higher Power could help us.

When we came to meetings and listened to others, we identified with the insanity of addiction as described by the members of the fellowship. We began to grudgingly admit that we were selfish and self-centered too, just like the other addicts in the group. We were spiritually bankrupt and needed help.

We could now see that our marijuana abuse had continued long after we realized that we had a problem. We had continued using even as we became ever more resentful, isolated, paranoid, slothful, and desperate. No matter how great the need or the wish to stop, the thought of using eventually pushed aside all the reasons why we should. We always had to have a supply on hand and felt horribly guilty that we couldn't stop using. Our insanity was evident as we repeated the same behavior over and over, yet somehow expected different results. Some of

us even had bad experiences each time we smoked but managed to suppress them somehow...before we used again.

We came to realize that trying to fix our lives with marijuana hadn't worked. Marijuana had once seemed to be the most effective way to help us cope with the problem of living, at least temporarily. When we stopped using marijuana, we didn't automatically feel worthwhile and full of purpose. Our overwhelming feelings, character defects, and negative actions were still there. Sometimes they seemed even stronger than before, because we had no anesthetic to dull them. We were not problem users whose problems went away when we threw away our stash. When we stopped using, we found we had a problem with living; we were addicts.

We began to see the possibility that our beliefs about ourselves, formed while using, had been mistaken. We saw that our perceptions had been based in delusion. Some of us had withdrawn physically, with little social contact. Some of us had isolated emotionally, not allowing anyone to get close to us. And some had hidden behind a front of functionality, while in our hearts we felt trapped and incapable of controlling our using. Sometimes this front took the form of aggressive or defensive attitudes, sometimes of passive or indifferent attitudes. These were the symptoms of our disease. We had never before been able to find the power necessary to change.

At this point many of us found ourselves faced with a seemingly overwhelming dilemma. Our Higher Power had always been either ourselves or our drug. Now we were being asked to accept the existence of a new and greater power. Some of us said, "I won't believe." Some

said, "I can't believe." And some said, "I may believe in the existence of a Higher Power, but I have no real hope that it will help me."

People that will not believe in a power greater than their ego are threatened. We tell these people that MA doesn't demand anything. Those of us who did not want faith were reminded that there is no dogma in Marijuana Anonymous. It is not necessary to acquire a major God Consciousness to be able to cease using. All we need is to maintain an open mind and a hopeful heart. It is not necessary to say yes. It is, however, important to stop saying no. Observe the reality around you and the recovery taking place within MA. One only has to stop fighting.

"Higher Power" means different things to different people. To some of us, it is a God of an organized religion; to others, it is a state of being commonly called spirituality. Some of us believe in no deity; a Higher Power may be the strength gained from being a part of, and caring for, a community of others. There is room in MA for all beliefs. We do not proselytize any particular view or religion. In MA each of us discovers a spirit of humility and tolerance, and each of us finds a Higher Power that works for us.

Some of us think of the group as our Higher Power. After all, the group is more powerful than any of its individual members and, over the years, it has developed procedures and traditions, which work. Our groups have found a common solution to a common problem — something that had been impossible for each individual member to accomplish on their own. And practically everyone can easily and naturally draw strength and support from the fellowship. This minimum of belief is enough to open the door and cross the threshold. Once we are on the

other side, our belief and trust in a Higher Power broadens and deepens as we continue taking the Steps.

Although many of us came to the fellowship already believing in the existence of a Higher Power, we doubted that it would be of help since it had not helped us to stay clean before. When we were still using, we prayed each night to stop, yet awakened the next morning and used.

Some of us were just too smart for our own good. We thought we had it all figured out. We felt intellectually superior. "I can do anything I set out to do...Knowledge is power!" Yet we were faced with the paradox of our own addiction. Our best thinking brought us to our bottom. What we learned is that recovery from addiction requires resources beyond the capacities of any one individual addict.

Still others had become disgusted with religion. We could only see hypocrisy, nonsense, bigotry, or self-righteousness. But upon closer examination, we found blossoms of truth and beauty hidden among the thorns. We discovered that some of these arguments were simply devices to feed our own egos, actually making us part of the problem. They were ways of feeling superior. Ironically, we were the ones who had become self-righteous. It was time to open our minds.

Then there were those of us that came to the program still seeing ourselves as being very religious. Yet again, we too were faced with the question of why we had been unable to overcome the disease of addiction. Obviously our religion alone hadn't been the answer.

Gradually, as we listened to other recovering addicts, we became willing to do what was needed. We

came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Marijuana Anonymous gives us no definition of a power greater than ourselves. We practice spiritual principals, not religion. We have no theological doctrines. What we do have is a realization that we had never been able to stay clean on our own. We needed a Higher Power to do that. We realized that it would be arrogant to think there was no power greater than ourselves in the universe.

There is room in MA for all beliefs, or none. It doesn't matter if we are agnostic, atheist, or theist. We all have a place here. There is no conflict. For each of us, a power greater than ourselves is whatever we choose it to be. It can be any positive, powerful thing that we are comfortable with.

As we began recovering, we let go of convincing others what the Greater Power was, and instead focused on how to use that power in recovery. We had sane minutes, hours, days, and weeks. We either found the way to a new faith, or renewed our old one. We saw that a power greater than ourselves was doing for us what we could never do alone. We saw that force working in our lives and in the lives of others.

For Step Two, we had only needed to answer the questions, "Do I now believe?" or "Am I open to believing in a power greater than myself?" After that, we were ready for Step Three.