

Crow's Caws: Tripping

I used to smoke pot. As a matter of fact, I adored pot. I was first introduced to it at the time I was coming out – close to twenty-five years ago. It was very useful to me at the time because I was a married heterosexual Air Force wife who needed a little loosening up to step over the line into radical lesbian feminism.

Frankly, I was terrified. I had a lot to lose including a husband I actually loved at the time and two young daughters who were waiting to see what I was going to do next. Pot helped me make the decision to join the revolution. I would spend hours fantasizing about non-violent lesbian takeovers with my buddies many of whom were also smoking pot. Not only did the weed help ease the pain of transition, it also helped me fit in with the girl gang.

“Mary Jane” was my best

Marijuana was my biggest fan. She adored everything I did, every thought that flitted through my frenetic mind, every word I spoke.

friend. I could fit her right into my back pocket. She helped me leap into relationships and leap out again. She taught me how to play with the big girls on the block who were having all the fun (swimming nude at city parks, dancing their tails off at women's festivals, reciting poetry to each other, protesting in the streets, making love ...).

MJ was also my biggest fan. She adored everything I did, every thought that flitted through my frenetic mind, every word I spoke. She erased all doubt and provided me with an unflinching wit. She helped me sidestep pain like a determined matador. She glued my life together. I was not just a social smoker.

And then we hit a brick wall. Every time I lit up to dissipate the guilt and shame of my actions, my fear intensified. I longed for my safe married life again. I needed a



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job, I wasn't sure who my friends were, and I was excruciatingly lonely. I was a train wreck. The trip was over.

But my spiritual journey began when I had to reach out for help. I had to admit I didn't have all the answers. I had to listen for a change – take direction rather than order everyone around. I had to sit still through the pain and feel. I had to let go of my old ideas and accept simpler ones like how to get through an ordinary day instead of entertain grandiose notions of delicious notoriety. I had to fend off depression, become financially responsible, take care of my kids, defer gratification, chop wood and carry water. I had to humble myself. I hated that.

Then I found a new freedom and a new happiness. As long as I strove to accept that life does indeed go up and down (a concept I refused to acknowledge when I kept getting high), then I could stay connected to the rest of the vulnerable human race. We can share our stories, we can laugh about our shortcomings, we can help each other out. My focus changed from doing everything I could to get my needs met to showing up for you to the best of my ability. This sounds like I'm trying to turn into Mother Theresa. Not a chance.

It's just that I'm now invested in staying connected to that part of myself that knows how to give, to feel compassion, to cheer people up. It's a daily struggle for me. I'm used to being a brat. Pot helped me to avoid being a co-dependent people-pleaser, but it also drove way too many decent folk away. I have to work hard not to get pissed off every time I don't get my way. I have to keep learning that being grateful for exactly what I have, even if it's damned uncomfortable, is the key to this new freedom. And then the new happiness just happens. ▼

Crow Cohen is a lesbian-feminist writer who lives in Burlington.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE ORGANIZATIONS:

SafeSpace, Women's Rape Crisis Center and Women Helping Battered Women

SafeSpace is looking for Volunteer Advocates to work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, bias crimes and discrimination. We are also looking for volunteers to help with fundraising and education/outreach events.

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- ▶ For information about volunteering at SafeSpace call 863-0003.
- ▶ For information about volunteering at WRCC call 864-0555 and for WHBW call 658-3131.

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