



# High Minded Souls

ESSAYS ON THE NEW WORLD OF LEGAL CANNABIS  
FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Susan Boskey

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*essays on the new world of legal cannabis  
for health and wellness*

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*Cannabis sativa* L.

W. Muller.

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**Disclaimer:** The information and opinions shared in this book are for informational purposes only and not intended as medical advice or instruction. Nothing mentioned or illustrated is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis

## Forward to *High Minded Soul*

“We’ve come a long way Baby!”

The cannabis world of today is light years away from the marijuana days of the 60’s and 70’s! Back then, a whole generation of teens and young adults were introduced to fun and mind-altering experiences with cannabis and a host of other psychedelic substances. I feel strongly that these experiences changed the trajectory of my life and the lives of many others in the Baby Boomer generation in both subtle and dramatic ways.

This current decade of legalization of cannabis is spreading across the country like wildfire and marks a similar period of expansion and dramatic change for individuals and our society at large. Cannabis legalization is a true *grass roots* phenomenon.

For those of us who came of age during that era, it was a time of exploration, expansion and breaking out of old ways of seeing the world around us. It was a time of war as well as economic and social uncertainty and we questioned where we belonged in a culture that didn’t reflect our changing values. We wondered about the health of the planet and our children as we donned golden handcuffs. A familiar theme reverberates again in today’s world.

Eventually, the demands of adult life, work, raising children and frequent relocation took over and for many, cannabis took a back seat if it remained in our awareness at all. It was simply too unpredictable, unavailable and felt too dangerous to pursue an illegal substance. Nevertheless, there was an on-going underground passionate pursuit by those who sensed that cannabis was important for the health of many. I am grateful to all of them and the sacrifices they made for a cause greater than themselves.

Fast-forward to today. To understand what is happening - that includes looking back at history – we can now look forward to a better future with the help of cannabis. What is this sacred plant? Is it a placebo, medicine, drug or an herbal supplement for health and wellbeing? For one thing, the old name of marijuana is being phased out and “cannabis”, which is its authentic name, is taking precedent. A whole new vocabulary is emerging, and it can be somewhat daunting to take it in and to make sense of it.

Cannabis use today is complex and rapidly expanding all over the world. One of the last counts I read is that over 180 million people worldwide are using cannabis in one form or another for a plethora of reasons and the fastest growing demographic are those of us over the age of 55, the Boomers.

With this growth of use comes an exponential increase in confusion, misinformation, and contradictions, along with accounts of cannabis' positive influence in the lives of people of all ages, backgrounds, life challenges and life-threatening illnesses.

In fact, it was a significant health crisis that led me to seek help in this new world of legal cannabis when most everything else I tried was not helping. I was losing so much ground in both my physical and mental health that I feared for the premature loss of my life. My energy was diminished to the point that it felt like I was running on empty.

In June of 2017, cannabis came along at just the right time. It turned my life around so quickly that within three days I felt an unmistakable benefit and regained hope that I would begin to heal. It's now over two years later. Looking back, I know that cannabis is playing a significant role in supporting my health and wellness each and every day. I am one of the fortunate ones to have such a significant shift so quickly. For others it can be a more gradual process, yet no less helpful.

The impact of that first experience using a modern cannabis oil extraction was life changing for my physical and mental health as well as for my work life. Having been in adult education for decades (personal and spiritual growth), it made sense to educate my fellow baby boomers about this amazing plant.

After having lost touch with each other for over 20 years, author Susan Boskey and I reconnected in a cannabis dispensary and realized we both had come to this new world of cannabis with a shared mission: to educate and support others in discovering the far-reaching benefits of cannabis.

Susan has a quest for knowledge and research about cannabis that inspires and educates me on so many levels. This collection of essays is a treasure chest of information that addresses many of the compelling questions that I hear in my role as a cannabis educator and consultant. As I continue to seek helpful information for health and wellbeing using cannabis, these essays are a significant resource.

I am so grateful for Susan's commitment to address the many pros and cons of cannabis use alongside the political and socio-economic factors that both support or inhibit the emergence of cannabis use into our mainstream culture. She understands that the road of discovery is changing daily as new laws, research and new benefits of cannabis use flood the consumer markets both locally here in Washington State (where it is legal for both medicinal and adult use options) and beyond.

Her articles span areas of influence that as consumers or potential consumers we need to navigate in order to comply with the law (see Essay #21: Medicinal Cannabis: Harry Anslinger

and the Legal Challenge) and at the same time have informed access to the health supporting properties of this remarkable plant (Essay #3 More than a Medicine: Cannabis is a Portal to New Scientific Discoveries).

In her three-part series that dives into the complex world of CBD vs. THC (#14, 15, and 16: The Anxiety Epidemic: Pharmaceuticals and CBD) and the controversial and even contradictory publicity that surrounds the competing markets of hemp vs. cannabis (#23 One Step Closer: the Legal Expansion of Industrial Hemp), Susan provides foundational information.

Wherever you are in your relationship with cannabis - a newcomer or a seasoned consumer - there is information here that can help you fine tune your exploration of this magnificent plant. Regardless of your reasons for delving into the transformative potential of cannabis, Susan and I support you on that journey. From our hearts to yours, we echo, "May your days be good and long upon this earth." (Apache Blessing)

Nancy Southern, BFA, MSW  
Cannabis Educator

## Introduction

*"It is beyond my comprehension that any humane person would withhold such a beneficial substance from people in such great need simply because others use it for different purposes."* – Steven Gould, American science fiction writer and teacher

Shock could barely describe the look on Karen\*'s face at that moment. It was a breathless moment out of time on a sunny Northwest summer day sitting in her doctor's office. She was beyond devastated. Hard to imagine this mother of grown children living out her happily married life as a woman of faith and a successful, hardworking jeweler now having to face this: a stage 2 cervical cancer diagnosis.

I live in the same community in Washington State as Karen and her family and we are friends. Washington State has been a legal cannabis state since 2012 for both medicinal and recreational adult-use - lucky for her. On a subsequent summer afternoon, Karen called and said she and her husband wanted to speak with me. I walked over and we chatted outside under the shade of their huge cedar tree, surrounded by her flourishing flower and food gardens.

I could hardly believe my ears when Karen soberly relayed what the doctor had said and how her life was turned topsy turvy in the blink of an eye. Then she asked me - and they both wanted to know -what I thought about using cannabis and its prospects for healing cancer.

I shared everything I knew: the scientific evidence about cannabis killing cancer cells in both the Petri dish and in animal studies as well as the unconfirmed possibilities and naive assumptions. Sworn to secrecy about her upcoming battle with cancer, I struggled to wrap my mind around the journey ahead for Karen. I truly love and appreciate this family.

Wisely, Karen gave herself the gift of time. Wondering and praying if proceeding with the standard treatments of chemotherapy and radiation treatments was really for her. She understood chemo and radiation's potentially debilitating impact over the course of treatment and that in some cases this protocol does more harm than good. After a couple of weeks of deliberating and weighing her options, she chose to go with the standard treatments - much to her family's surprise.

Unlike many people who are actively treating a disease or illness and consider cannabis a last-resort medicine, Karen sought out the plant right away. She was fiercely determined to come out the other side of treatment cancer-free for the long-term. Her naturopathic doctor cheered her on by encouraging her to: "Do everything!" She definitely did.



We discussed her cannabis intake and dose in consideration of her medical protocol. Every evening Karen dosed with a 1:1 (equal amounts of THC and CBD) FECO extract (Full Extract Cannabis Oil) in a syringe, originally referred to as RSO (Rick Simpson Oil).

\*Karen is not my friend's real name. I change clients' names throughout my essays to protect their privacy.

Having been cannabis-free for virtually decades, Karen did not want the 'high'. With dosing being largely trial and error when it comes to using herbal plant medicine, she decided to go with a pre-bedtime dose. She hoped to not deal with possible psycho-activity during the day and chose to start with one rice-size length of oily paste squeezed from the syringe into a spoon containing a small amount of melted coconut oil.

Wowzer...talk about blowing your mind! No way was Karen able to sustain that high of a dose, even at night. We spoke regularly about how she might adjust the dose over the course of treatment. Because she disliked the taste of the cannabis so much when sipping it off a spoon, she not only discovered her tolerable daily dose but also how to take her dose by putting it into a capsule to swallow.

Her resolve to navigate and stay the course impressed me greatly and I'm not easily impressed.

That was just the beginning of her commitment. She dove into the deep end of introspection, reflecting and listening with all honesty. Traversing her interior path of meditation and listening she encountered anger - anger about the state of the world her 14 grandchildren would inherit.

Karen knew, and told me, that this deep well of anger inside her fed her disease and would have to go. Her decision made, she instead leaned more into her faith, replacing the anger with love coming to her from many sources. She felt "hopeful" as she walked through an unbelievably difficult and life-altering experience physically, mentally and spiritually.

The months of treatment dragged on and Karen had more good days than bad. At last the end of the grueling and painful routine of radiation treatments was in sight. However, she had to have a couple of extra sessions of targeted radiation; a ghastly grand finale.

Done!

Fast forward six months at a follow-up appointment, her doc tell her, "I wish all my patients did as well as you. I don't need to see you for another year." She chose to not tell him she also used cannabis. Her determination drove her to achieve the victory of her life. At this writing, it's been two years that Karen has been cancer-free. She continues to take 1/2 gram daily of FECO every evening.

Karen shared her 'silver lining' with me about her bout with cancer: "it was an opportunity to become introspective and discover what it means to be true to myself . . . learning to say 'no' and not push myself. And I released the anger that simmered deep in my soul". Her purpose going forward? She's committed to slow down and remember to do whatever it takes to reset her inner calm.

Hopefully you recognize from Karen's story how cannabis might help you restore your health from an unwanted condition of body, mind or soul. Even with hard scientific evidence, still many people still wait too long and consider cannabis only as a last resort.

Think about it. Who wouldn't want to get better by administering a non-toxic herbal remedy with a medicinal dose that had little to no side effects? Plus, when used in conjunction with a pharmaceutical drug, as with certain chemotherapy products, cannabis is synergistic; it actually increases the benefit of the pharmaceutical. [\[1\]](#)

Cannabis' respectability grows in this new era of legal cannabis. Yet despite the fact that there are now 33 states and DC that have made 'medical marijuana' legal for Americans, at the time of this writing, an exceptionally high number of people remain under the spell of the 'reefer madness' stigma.

Only the lack of knowledge of cannabis' use for health purposes throughout human history and stigma-generated fear stands between the plant and more people being able to receive its health and wellness benefits.

Yes, cannabis is definitely medicine, but it is also more than medicine. Scientists have proven cannabis to be an exact biochemical match with at least two of our body's own biochemicals anandamide and 2-AG which activate a recently discovered physiological meta-system: the endocannabinoid system (ECS). The endocannabinoid system regulates every bodily system by ensuring balance (homeostasis).

The phenomena of cannabis mimicking our body's natural process has opened a portal of unprecedented access for medical researchers to learn more about the complexity of the human body. The cannabis interface with the ECS is a step towards more discoveries about what it takes to maintain the health of this system which, in turn, regulates the entire body's balance of health.

I wrote the essays in this book because I am a long-time alternative-health practitioner/advocate and want to help dispel the subtle - and not so subtle - fearmongering lies and half-truths about cannabis. I also want to empower all who are interested in exploring the benefits of cannabis for their healing and long-term wellness. Knowledge (and clarity) is power, once again.

Why trust me?

My credentials precede me but not in the conventional sense. I'm a Woodstock Festival alumni :- ) who has partaken of the herb on and off for decades since then. I know of what I speak. I began my adventure into alternative health in 1969 working in a health food store in Chico, California called Etidorhpa (backwards for Aphrodite). I studied everything I could get my hands on, changed my diet and incorporated healing practices such as Do-in and macrobiotics. For several years I was the sole practitioner of a private health practice that helped people detoxify and restore gut health.

After years of abstaining from smoking cannabis, I was curious and started researching the plant, digging deep into studies about its versatility and benefits. Inspired by what I learned, I leapt into a rigorous educational course offered by the Holistic Cannabis Academy. Several months later I graduated and was certified as a Holistic Cannabis Practitioner in 2018.

I proceeded to set up shop to help clients restore their health with the medicinal use of cannabis. Together we find the best strain, dose and delivery system to address their issues. My clients receive a personalized care plan; it's never one-size-fits all.

I also offer my clients a lifestyle program to complement their cannabis use plan. Cannabis is only one of any number of supportive components for regaining and sustaining good health, so we explore nutrition, supplementation, chiropractic, etc.

I am convinced that conventional medicine has reached a point of diminishing returns, exceeding its vital role in society. Research of the World Health Organization (WHO) cites that 60% of health factors relate to one's lifestyle choices. [\[2\]](#) Anecdotal evidence shows that many people who have suffered conditions of the body and mind remedied them by lifestyle changes coupled with cannabis use. Why not do what you can do for yourself before running to the doctor? That said, there's a time and place for the ER!

The cacophony of external pressures North Americans deal with on a daily basis may have led to what writer, Charles Hugh Smith calls, "the burnout nation". Stress, social anxiety, exhaustion, depression, bullying and suicide have become the normalized rather than understood as the exception. It is this arena that I am most interested in because it affects the culture at-large.

The following 27 essays are offered in no particular order. They reflect my education and ongoing insights from April 2018 - May 2019. Topics illuminate the evolving role of the ancient cannabis plant during these frontier-formative years of gaining legal status and acceptance in American culture.

I penned each essay deliberately as bite-sized morsels giving voice to various aspects of the cannabis conversation. I explore everything from legality issues to scientific evidence, physical and mental benefits of cannabis use and why cannabis outranks alcohol for relief and relaxation. I speak to the dark side of cannabis as well - which many advocates ignore – perhaps incentivized by commercial interests. A couple of the essays are a series of three, as noted in the Table of Contents.

Many of the essays cover the reasons and remedies for the epidemic of mood disorders. Doctors and health practitioners alike realize how unaddressed mental/emotional anguish can morph into disease processes. The hope is that the conscious use of cannabis, both preventatively and to address symptoms, can support meaningful changes that lead to a felt-sense of body/mind wellness. Re-inspired new lifestyle habits and practices can restore a new outlook on life.

We each have more power over our wellbeing than we've been led to believe. I see cannabis as one of many gifts from the Great Creator to benefit all those who choose to use it wisely.

May you benefit greatly from the medicinal use of cannabis, joining the millions of inspired, high-minded souls. Renewed hope, meaning and good health make life worth living, adding value to our life and to the lives of those around us.

[1]

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/caryophyllene%20and%20radiation:%20https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25398831>

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4703222/>

## Lifestyle Wellness Rx: a Prescription



Most everyone seems to understand 'Rx' as something to do with getting and filling a doctor's prescription, yet it has a broader meaning. The symbol comes from Latin and is defined as "recipe" meaning "to take". Though I am not a doctor, Lifestyle Wellness Rx arrives on the scene none too soon to offer a vital prescription (recipe) as an antidote to our culture's general malaise.

Every generation experiences its own "cultural prescription" [\[1\]](#) which, for most, is 'taken' without question.

Today's cultural prescription in the "developed" world appears to be largely dishonest, self-absorbed, controlling and unaffordable. Increasing numbers of people are dealing with stress, depression, anxiety, debilitating illness and suicide. Just about everyone knows at least one person who has lost hope and is suffering greatly.

My view is that when we unwittingly accept and 'take' today's cultural prescription on every front, as regards food, social and financial expectations, Internet use, interpersonal communication, etc., we also may bear their side effects of physical, mental, financial, relational, social and spiritual dis-ease.

Published studies and articles share the fact that one's lifestyle can be a breeding ground for a variety of ills including (but not limited to) migraines, obesity, social anxiety, depression, diabetes and even cancer. For instance, this article published April 27, 2018, "Do YOUR lifestyle habits put you at risk? Fewer than half of Americans are aware of what they can do to prevent cancer"[\[2\]](#)

Lifestyle Wellness Rx offers antidotes to the potential negative outcomes of passively accepting today's cultural prescription.

The Lifestyle Wellness Rx prescription/recipe is holistic in view and administration, addressing the *whole* person beyond presenting symptoms. Where does cannabis come in? Cannabis is an ancient herbal plant, now legal medicinally in over half of the United States. As a versatile, non-toxic and beneficial plant proven to have little to no side effects, it has been a versatile ally to humans throughout history.

Containing over 100 different known chemical compounds, cannabis can affect a variety of different health conditions both physically and mentally. Used consciously, it can be a helpful

component of a wellness plan. Cannabis exists to help you jumpstart your long-term journey to health and wellness.

It takes courage to be well.

Those who are determined to be active participants in their own wellbeing, despite societal demands and personal challenges, can benefit from a true holistic prescription to restore body, mind and soul.

[1] <https://www.amazon.com/Controlling-People-Recognize-Understand-Control/dp/158062569X>

[2] <https://www.anticancer.news/2018-04-27-do-your-lifestyle-habits-put-you-at-risk-fewer-than-half-of-americans-are-aware-of-what-they-can-do-to-prevent-cancer.html>

## Holism, Health and Cannabis



Holism is about the big picture; it relates to the theory that nothing happens in a vacuum. When seeking answers to a problem, holism puts the emphasis on the 'whole' rather than the parts.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines holism as:

*The theory that parts of a whole are in intimate interconnection, such that they cannot exist independently of the whole, or*

*cannot be understood without reference to the whole, which is thus regarded as greater than the sum of its parts.*

And when holism is about health:

*The treating of the whole person, taking into account mental and social factors, rather than just the symptoms of a disease.*

Another way to think about holism is by using the analogy of systems both natural and manmade (i.e. an ecosystem, a health system, a family system, a solar system, etc.). A system is a complex 'whole' with a clear boundary; there is an outside and an inside. The content inside a system (weather, animals and plants) is made up of interrelated, interdependent parts that both reflect and are affected by the overarching context within which they exist, (for example: an ecosystem).

Whenever the whole of something produces an outcome greater than any of its parts could accomplish individually, we call this interaction of the parts synergy; i.e., a thunderstorm or the music of an orchestra.

### Holistic Health: Treating the Whole Person

The approach of the traditional Western medical system has taught us to recognize health from a reductionist, not holistic perspective. We go to the doctor to get relief from certain symptoms or for a specific part of our body or physiological system.

Millions of people get positive results using this Western medical model and it can provide great value. The only problem is that this model considers - almost exclusively - just the health

of the body. When it comes to mental health, the typical response is to prescribe antidepressant medicine.

Why is this a problem?

Humans are complex beings. We have emotions, a body, a mind and a soul that all interact in an intangible relationship to a macro reality beyond ourselves and beyond our control. Our wellbeing is impacted by influences of family, community, country, ecosystems and the world at large.

A holistic approach to health and wellness addresses the reality of these multiple interrelated and interdependent aspects that influence how we experience ourselves. A difficulty with any one of them can affect everything else.

For this reason, the focus of holistic health care is put on the whole person and not the issue or disease. For example, stress, anxiety, and depression can arise from any number of circumstances and manifest as physical symptoms. It's all connected.



According to a September, 2017, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national survey, The American Psychiatric Association (APA) reported that antidepressant use had gone from 1 in 50 people 30 years ago to 1 in 9 between the years 2011 and 2014: evidence of the rise in mood disorders.

Why the increased use? If nothing happens in a vacuum, an honest assessment of one's lifestyle regarding home, relationships, finances, work, exercise, diet, etc. is absolutely essential. Seeking the root-cause issues makes a difference for long term, sustainable wellbeing.

### **Cannabis and Holistic Health**

The medicinal use of cannabis is a world apart from its adult-use cousin. With regards to dosage, the saying is: Start low; go slow. Treatment is never one-size-fits-all; everyone's situation is unique.

Similar to the complexity of humans, cannabis is a complex plant of the plant kingdom with over 100 known cannabinoids. Historically, the whole of the ancient cannabis plant was used as a tonic to beneficially impact someone's overall condition as well as symptom management.



The whole cannabis plant used medicinally provides a synergistic or 'entourage' effect that can prevent and relieve a wide variety of adverse conditions.

The traditional Western medical model and holistic model of health each have their place. When we explore the versatility of medicinal cannabis uses, we can benefit greatly from informed self-care.

## More Than Medicine: Cannabis is a Portal to New Scientific Discoveries

The ancient cannabis plant continues to benefit humans and animals while exceeding expectations of its medicinal efficacy. How so? Cannabis is more than medicine; it is a portal to



new scientific discoveries for health and wellness.

I believe 21st century traditional Western medicine has exceeded its optimal place in our culture. For example, in this era of legal cannabis alongside the widespread use of pharmaceutical drugs, cannabis is often

referred to as another drug, which is misleading. It is only a drug when the pharmaceutical industry extracts individual compounds from the plant and turns them into a pharmaceutical drug, such as Marinol.

As plant medicine, cannabis helps to alleviate many conditions. CBD alone has garnered new respect for the plant and its multiple health benefits. This is promising news but only a small part of what cannabis brings to the table.

Two of the over 100 known chemical molecules of the cannabis plant, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) happen to be a perfect biochemical match with the body's own chemical molecules: Anandamide and 2-AG. Anandamide and 2-AG are critical components to a recently discovered meta-system of the body, the endocannabinoid system (ECS). Until Israeli scientist Raphael Mechoulam and his team discovered the ECS in 1992, no one knew about or understood how cannabis couples seamlessly with the human body, nor that such compatibility was the function of this previously unknown physiological system.

The discovery of the ECS changed everything.

Cannabis aside for the moment, Mechoulam and his team determined the ECS to be a genetically coded molecular signaling (communication) system that regulates the homeostasis (balance of health) for most every other physiological system of the body. All mammals have one. The ECS functions in a lock and key fashion binding the body's own chemical molecules (keys) to the system's superstructure of receptors (locks), also protecting against the negative impacts of stressors.

Medical researcher Ethan Russo, MD, discovered that the ECS has a quality of “tone” which can become weakened with age. Due to the body's build-up of toxins over time, the ECS can become deficient and lose effectiveness, which makes someone more vulnerable to disease processes. In other words, the ECS could use some help.

We already know that the quality of ECS “tone” can be strengthened by substances and processes such as eating leafy greens, omega-3 foods and supplements and cocoa, as well as moderate exercise, meditation, acupuncture, chiropractic, cranial sacral therapy and probiotics.

To restore ECS tone, cannabis provides one of the most effective boosts to the this system due to its chemical match with Anandamide and 2-AG.

The cannabis interface with the ECS is a step towards more possible discoveries about what it takes to maintain the health of this system which, in turn, regulates the health of the body. This interface has given medical researchers a portal of unprecedented access to explore and learn more.

Perhaps one day we will be able to measure and monitor our ECS tone in order to help maintain it at an optimal level. This is just one of the ways the ancient cannabis plant adds value to the quality of human life on earth.

## The Choice to Heal with Cannabis



Most of us go to the doctor's office when we are feeling ill. We get checked out and maybe go home with a prescription for antibiotics or some other kind of pharmaceutical drug along with advice to lay low and rest. Access to modern Western medical healthcare increased for the average family with the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).

However, healthcare means different things to different people. Natural healing was well known throughout North America until around 1847. In fact, back then my great, great grandfather ran an apothecary in New York City and sold natural remedies. I discovered this because of a letter he wrote to a friend found in our 150-year old family Bible.

The trend away from natural remedies began with the establishment of the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1847. The Rockefeller Foundation was then founded in 1914 by Standard Oil owner, John D. Rockefeller Sr., and continued to redefine health care by educating doctors away from old, "alternative" natural remedies.

But natural remedies are not "alternative", as marketing would have us believe. The use of natural remedies as an approach to healing went underground due to the medical establishment model of the AMA and the Rockefeller Foundation. Now many of us are questioning that model.

Nonetheless, it takes courage to think and act independently regarding our health because it goes against the grain of society. Even so, more and more people recognize how their lifestyle choices directly affect their experience of health: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Myself among millions, we choose lifestyle modifications and the therapeutic use of herbs and vitamins to maintain good health, using the medical profession only when indicated. Not as a last resort, but also not as our only resource.

Lest we forget, cannabis is an herb and not a drug as defined by the DEA. In the herbal world, it is known as a stand-out adaptogen herb because of its proven medicinal value for so many different ailments including chronic pain and stress, insomnia, migraines and mood disorders. Choosing natural remedies to maintain health - including cannabis - is a choice to learn about how plants have healed humans for generations and millennia with less toxicity and side effects than most pharmaceutical drugs.

## Cannabis Kills Cancer Cells



Until recently, chemotherapy, surgery and radiation have been the standard of care for anyone dealing with cancer. Some of these treatments are poisons that impede the efficacy of the immune system by destroying healthy cells along with cancer cells indiscriminately.

The good news is that cancer patients have gained the scientific seal of approval when it comes to using cannabis for symptom management of chemotherapy and radiation side effects. It reduces nausea and helps to slow down and/or prevent [muscle-wasting syndrome](#), the cause of 20% of deaths in cancer patients. When need be, it is also used for palliative care.

The big scientific news is that the most researched active cannabis components, THC and CBD, have been found to *kill* cancer cells in laboratory experiments. Without killing non-cancerous cells, this response is specifically true for certain cancers and at certain phases of the cancer-cell life. The potential is very encouraging.

However, since cannabis remains classified by the US Government as a Schedule I drug of "no currently accepted medical use", there is a dismal lack of funding for further research. Thus the hopeful information about cannabis killing cancer cells in laboratory in-vitro and animal studies is not enough.

Though human-study research is yet to offer more needed peer reviewed results, many people have testified on different websites (social media, Facebook, twitter, reddit, etc.) as to the healing power of cannabis to rid them of cancer. With so many people making this claim we remain left on our own to determine if all the anecdotal evidence adds up to empowering information or not.

A handful of medical doctors in the U.S. already integrate cannabis therapy into some of their treatment plans for cancer patients. The nuances of finding the best dose for such patients are limited by the research deficit but definitely possible through trial and error.

We find a further step in the validation of cannabis' medical value as the US Government's National Cancer Institute (NCI) reports that cannabis 'may' kill cancer cells. [See question #6.](#) Leading institutions from around the world are providing medical documentation that breaks down the precise mechanism by which THC and CBD target cancer cells.

For example, a new review in the British Journal of Pharmacology examines CBD's potential in the direct treatment of cancer: [Cannabinoids may have a vast array of anti-cancer effects](#), July 18, 2018, Wiley, British Journal of Pharmacology (2018).

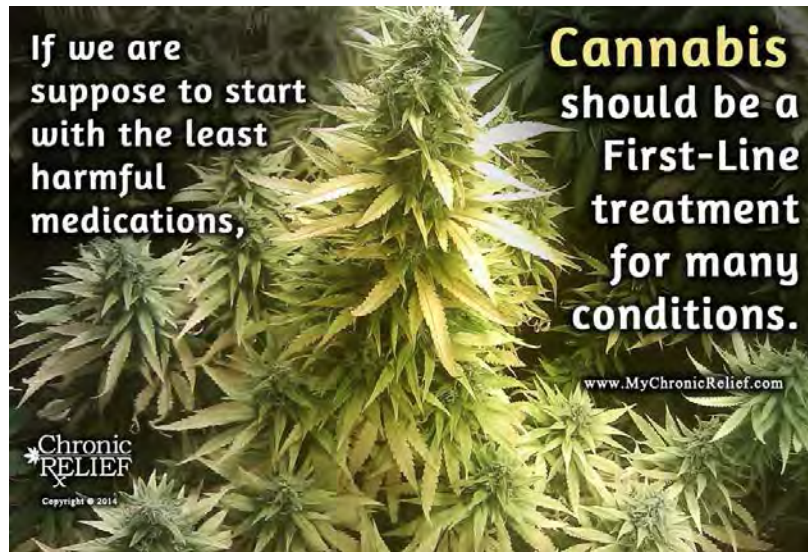
Spain's Doctor Christina Sanchez describes the bio-chemical process of cancer-cell suicide with cannabis in [this short video](#). Don't miss it.

Dr. Allan Frankel, MD, is one of the foremost doctors in the U.S. using cannabis with his cancer patients. Here's a [2019 podcast interview](#) with Dr. Frankel.

I look forward to the day when human research studies will be adequately funded to give us ever-more precise data about using cannabis as an anti-cancer agent.



## Cannabis: First-Line *Not* Last-Resort Medicine



Who knew? In my previous article, "Cannabis Kills Cancer Cells" I lay out the scientific evidence provided by in-vitro and lab animal testing. The general public needs further assurances in spite of this evidence.

What's needed next is funding for human research studies to shift cannabis' cancer-healing potential to an expanded

evidence-based reality.

For cancer patients, cannabis use is already effective to reduce nausea and vomiting during chemo and radiation therapy. Many doctors recommend it to their patients. Even so, most people consider cannabis only as a treatment for side effects or as medicine of last resort. This is a huge mistake.

In November 2018 I met a lovely family after they hired me to find cannabis medicine to help their mother who was dealing with stage four colon cancer. She had been diagnosed that August and had surgery to remove the cancer from affected areas. Afterwards, she chose not to follow up with chemo and radiation.

By the time I got involved, which was more than two months later, their mom had lost 40 pounds and was experiencing some serious effects of the cancer. I heard from her daughter, a week after she started on the cannabis, that the family had chosen to begin Hospice care. This was really sad for me to hear.

The lesson? Don't wait.

The 80+ year old U.S. law federally establishing cannabis as a Schedule I drug (of supposedly no medical value) has had a major impact on how many people still think about this plant: most marginalize it as *a prohibited substance rather than a natural medicine*. To take full advantage of this natural medicine (without the many serious side effects of pharmaceuticals) we must stop considering cannabis as a *last-ditch* attempt.

I believe the time for cancer patients to begin using cannabis is when they are first diagnosed. In some cases, cannabis actually has the synergistic effect of accelerating chemotherapy's cancer-killing results. As far as I can tell - from my own anecdotal evidence - the sooner a cancer patient adds cannabis to their protocol, the greater are the possibilities for remission.

We can begin to empower ourselves with the truth about cannabis once we ditch the fear. What we find is a world of honest, science-based education including how to use cannabis medicinally via an array of products and their multiple methods of dosage and delivery.

*"Based on thousands of years of use, anecdotal reports, and extensive research, we know that cannabis is one of the safest medicines: it is impossible to consume enough to produce a fatal toxic effect in the body." ~ Americans for Safe Access website*



## CBD to the Rescue



*"It really puzzles me to see marijuana connected with narcotics dope and all of that stuff. It is a thousand times better than whiskey. It is an assistant and a friend."* ~Louis Armstrong, American musician, 1901-1971

Cannabidiol (CBD) is everywhere today in health news. It has made cannabis respectable. As one of over

100 chemical molecules in the cannabis plant and one that is non-psychoactive, CBD is a current stand-out in the cannabis family.

It wasn't always this way. After 81 years of prohibition since the 1937 Marihuana Tax Act and the more recent 1970 Controlled Substances Act, CBD ushered in a renaissance of acceptance for "the sacred plant" (so-called in India). This acceptance is growing despite continued federal designation of cannabis as a "Schedule 1 drug" in the same category as heroin with criteria of: no accepted medical value, not safe for medical use, and highly addictive.

Starting at some point in the 1930's everything "cannabis" was lumped into the basket of "evil weed", vilified for properties that produced psychoactivity in the brain. Given the negative spotlight put on its use by Black musicians and Hispanics in New Orleans and New York, it was considered a menace to white folk. It was also seen as a danger to the young, seducing them into the drug culture. [1] Panic over the plant was so palpable that acknowledging cannabis as a plant of many beneficial uses (as it had always been) didn't stand a chance.

That was then and this is now. Evidence-based science of the U.S. Government's PubMed peer-reviewed publications clearly establishes credibility regarding the many beneficial properties of and uses for CBD. First discovered in 1940 by an American chemist, Roger Adams, [2], the cannabidiol molecule was more fully understood when Israeli scientist, Rafael Mechoulam, isolated it in 1963. [3]

In a report of the February 2013 issue of The British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, CBD is cited as *"an anti-inflammatory, anticonvulsant, anti-oxidant, anti-emetic, anxiolytic and antipsychotic agent, with the potential for the treatment of neuroinflammation, epilepsy, oxidative injury, vomiting and nausea, anxiety and schizophrenia, respectively."*

The CBD molecule is also neuroprotective. It protects the brain from certain disease processes and degeneration while regulating neurotransmitter function. This benefit to the brain is what caught the attention of the government and, in 2003, led to their (whose?) procuring U.S. Patent No. 6,630,507.



CBD alters and lowers the overall psychoactive effect of THC and is additionally considered a potential remedy for some psychotic disorders and certain conditions such as PTSD and depression. Plus, it is documented to help with arthritis, diabetes, alcoholism, MS, chronic pain, antibiotic-resistant infections and osteoporosis in women.

Thinking CBD is too good to be true? Think again.

The reason CBD (and other cannabis molecules) helps a number of different health conditions is because of its interface with this essential physiological system of the body: the endocannabinoid system (ECS). Every mammal has one. It is a signaling (communication) system that regulates the homeostasis (balance) of every other physiological system of the body. However, due to toxic build-up in our bodies over time and accumulated stress the ECS can become deficient, lose effective functioning and lead to disease processes. CBD helps to reduce ECS deficiencies by modifying the way ECS receptors' bind to various cannabinoids introduced to the body.

A developing problem is that many people now believe CBD is the good part of cannabis and THC is the bad part because of its psychoactive effects. This could not be further from the truth. Yet such thinking is easy to understand due to the stigma on cannabis. We've also been conditioned by a more reductionist type of healthcare system - one drug for one organ or bodily system – to think of a remedy in isolation of its holistic, original plant context.

Throughout ancient and modern history and until its prohibition, cannabis was valued holistically, as both hemp and 'marijuana'. Medicinally, the *whole* of the plant was used to ensure a synergistic and beneficial impact on a person's overall, general condition beyond symptom management. Called the entourage effect, the interaction of the THC, CBD, and other equally beneficial but less understood chemical molecules, accounts for why medicinal cannabis offers relief to a wide variety of conditions.

Those of us helping others use cannabis for healing are forever grateful to CBD for opening the door to the opportunity to provide deeper education about the *whole* cannabis plant and its inherent healing properties.

## **CBD Scammers: *not all CBD is created equally***



Is hemp-derived cannabidiol (CBD) oil the new snake oil? Definitely not! Yet by the way some websites are marketing it, that's a legitimate question.

The cannabis industry and others call the unrestrained and exuberant marketing of legal marijuana the "Green Rush". Excitement - and sometimes greed - supersede the consideration of including

basic and vital information for consumers.

Recently when I read an online advertisement for one hemp CBD product, I was incredulous at seeing a blatant factual error. The ad began by saying that there was no THC in their hemp-isolate product, and then went on to say in another paragraph that their CBD was full spectrum.

You can't have it both ways.

A hemp CBD isolate and a full-spectrum-hemp CBD are two different forms of CBD. Either it's a CBD isolate (stripped of the other cannabinoids leaving only CBD) *or* it's a full spectrum, whole plant product, which means the CBD includes small amounts of other cannabinoids, including trace amounts of THC (.3% or less).

This misrepresentation of CBD is not only misleading, it's offensive and counter-productive to the rest of us in the industry who are committed to pulling cannabis out of the dark ages of social stigma. We stress the importance of accurate information and a level-headed approach moving forward.

Oh well. That said, another friend shared this experience: he went to a health food store looking for CBD and left empty-handed, overwhelmed and confused. He could not figure out what features he should be looking for to get what he needed.

I literally spent days researching different hemp-derived CBD oils to find a product that met my strict criteria that I would feel great about recommending to my clients. Since it is now possible to get various CBD products at retail stores, knowing what you are getting is more important than ever.

Here's what informed my criteria:

1. **Where was the hemp grown?** A lot of hemp comes from China and from Europe. I prefer domestically grown hemp **because it's easier to trace details about how it was grown.** There is no USDA certification for hemp, but many growers spell out their growing practices and note if it is non-GMO grown, which is important to me. Many companies don't publicly reveal this information. Next!
2. **What extraction process is used?** Most popular right now is what is called CO2 extraction, which is safe and works well to extract the oil from the plant. However, one of the drawbacks of CO2 is that it strips out some of the other beneficial cannabinoids and terpenes in the process. I prefer the ethanol extraction method because it leaves more of these in a product. [\[1\]](#) Next!
3. **Was the CBD oil 3<sup>rd</sup>-party tested in a lab and for what?** The hemp variety of cannabis is known as a bio-accumulator that sucks up toxins from the soil. This is good for the soil but bad for the consumer. For example, the heavy metal cadmium, which is a pollutant to the soil, has been shown to be all but eliminated by growing hemp [\[2\]](#). However, we do not want cadmium and other heavy metals in our bodies, or pesticide residues. The fact of bioaccumulation in the hemp plant makes it critically important for the purchaser of CBD to know without a doubt that the oil has been 3<sup>rd</sup> party tested for purity. Online sellers will often state what lab they used and even have a PDF of documentation for individual batches produced showing exactly what's in the product. Many do not. Next!
4. **Is it an isolate or a full-spectrum product?** As previously mentioned, there are both isolate and full spectrum hemp CBD products. They each play distinct roles in improving health. Isolates are for more intense, targeted high dosages to remedy a particular health issue, while full spectrum (using the whole plant) is optimal for the overall experience of wellness. Full spectrum has also been proven to be highly effective for many specific health issues. [\[3\]](#) Next!
5. **What is the price point?** The price range depends on how much is in a bottle, the quality of the product, and the company. Prices can range from \$12 to over \$100 for similar amounts. I first look for the features listed here and then compare prices.
6. **Is the company only in it for the money?** I also evaluate the ethics of the company from the way they share information on their website. Are they just out to make a buck or are they truly interested in helping people? This is essential because it impacts a company's commitment to quality . . . or not.

I hope this helps. It's worth the time to do your research when it comes to getting a quality CBD product.

## Cannabis Yin and Yang: A Bimodal Herbal Remedy

As far as I can tell, nothing in life is ever all one way, either good or bad. Think: people, politics, places, technology . . . and cannabis, for that matter. It seems to me that we have entered a phase where black and white thinking/opinions about people, politics, places, technology and cannabis, etc. is cast in stone. No exceptions and no shades of grey. (Has it *always* been this way?) Yet:

- 'Good' people have been known to become murders.
- A handful of politicians attempt to stay true to acting 'for the people'.
- Gorgeous tourist destinations still dump human waste into the ocean.
- Technology appears to have a negative impact on social skills.
- Overuse of THC can lead to psychosis or Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS).[\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)



In the world of herbs and herbal remedies one characteristic that identifies the cannabis plant is that it is 'bimodal'. Bimodal means its effect depends on how the plant is used. When used medicinally via micro-dosing, you get one effect and when used (usually overused) for years, and/or using a high percentage of THC, you get another effect, which can lead to psychosis or CHS.

Most people have never learned this fact that cannabis is bimodal. The three recent, scientifically-based articles, above, tell the story of the dark side of cannabis. What is interesting, however, is that as evidence of the symptoms and causes are clarified, black-and-white thinking may be applied as further evidence of the 'evil weed'.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Shakespeare wrote in, *As You Like It*, something that speaks to human nature: *ROSALIND: Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?*

Since cannabis has two different modes of affecting users, this fact changes the conversation. The focus shifts from cannabis good or cannabis bad to a personal inquiry: Why do some people choose to over-consume cannabis and/or go for the products with the most THC while others do not? Where does personal responsibility enter the equation? Asking and answering these questions exonerates cannabis from the good/bad conundrum common to many and instead puts the emphasis squarely where it belongs - on the individual and how they use it.

Check out this [3-minute video](#).



## Cannabis for Health: Not Ready for Prime Time



Something surprising showed up for the 2019 Super Bowl. The organization called Acreage Holdings with John Boehner (former US House Speaker) on the Board of Directors, submitted a 30 second commercial expressing the underestimated value of families across America having access to 'Medical Marijuana.' It was not a commercial for any particular brand. Shocking!

Perhaps needless to say, the commercial was rejected by the Super Bowl powers that be. The NFL was not about to go against the dictates of the U.S. Federal Government; they know precisely on which side their bread is buttered.

A writer for Forbes Magazine, Mike Adams, said that the commercial does not represent what is actually happening with cannabis in the U.S. right now and I agree. He asserts that it is what's known as 'adult-use' (Think: getting high) that is exploding across the nation, not medicinal use.

Yup, that's the truth.

The writer also cites a recent Wall Street Journal Op Ed, "If Weed is Medicine, So is Budweiser" written by Dr. Peter Bach, a pulmonary physician at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. His claim is that if alcohol, like cannabis, helps someone experience less acute pain, both being intoxicants, then "if weed is a pain reliever, so is Budweiser." [\[1\]](#)

Ah, I see his point but don't think so.

Here's where I think his comment is coming from:

I highly doubt most people realize that it is the liquor control authority in each of the legal 10 states and DC for adult-use, that also regulates cannabis.[\[2\]](#) In other words, the folks that brought you Budweiser, now bring you your cannabis. And many of us know how easy access to alcohol has turned out for some of our friends and family.

As far as I can tell, ever-increasing revenue is the one and only thing such regulating bodies have in mind. So the more stoned you stay the richer liquor and cannabis control boards get from the often exorbitant taxation on retail products (37% in Washington State, for example).

Translation? Using cannabis for health, Medical Marijuana, (the government name, not mine), just doesn't make the big bucks, and apparently for its continued credibility stigma.

No problem!

A silver lining grows exponentially as we speak. Those of us who understand cannabis as a plant of many healing benefits, are creating our own parallel universe: a sphere of influence, worldwide, made up of collaborative practitioners and users sharing and updating everything we know about all the ways to use the plant for non-toxic healing of the body, mind and the soul.

Trust me; it's way, way different than alcohol.

[Here's](#) the Acreage Holdings commercial that got rejected for the Super Bowl.

## No Contest: Cannabis vs. Alcohol



Hands down, cannabis comes out on top despite the ever-present stigma that rears its ugly head even in legal adult-use states. Alcohol use, however, is way more popular and widely accepted, culturally.

In this information age boasting huge amounts of data, it appears that easy-to-access facts about the risk factors of both cannabis and alcohol don't really matter. Something else does.

Here are some reasons why I think the hard facts are overlooked. Behind the risk factors of both cannabis and alcohol lies the assumed social reasoning, especially, but not limited to the significance of peer pressure.

### Cannabis

- Cannabis in all its forms is still illegal federally; classified as a Schedule I drug with no medical benefit in the same category as heroin and maligned as a 'gateway' drug.
- The mindset of cannabis as the 'evil weed' began in the 1930's with the movie *Reefer Madness*, was seared into the public perception and passed down through generations.
- Even more recently cannabis has been portrayed as having more risks than benefits.
- As a result people fear for their sanity and reputation and do not want to risk being labeled a stoner by those who are important to them, yet willfully uninformed.

### Alcohol

- Alcohol is more of a social lubricator.
- Alcohol in many cases confers social status.
- Joining-in relieves others for any guilt they may have about drinking.
- Alcohol is a huge money maker for restaurants, sporting and other social events.

Peer-reviewed scientific studies have had a lot about alcohol, since there are more data points for alcohol studied over a longer period of time. Note that the information below regarding cannabis often references regular and/or heavy adult-use, not medicinal use. Medicinal use applies the principle of utilizing the smallest amount to get the greatest health benefit: Less is more.



ISSUE	CANNABIS	ALCOHOL
Death and Premature Deaths	"Most people who overdose on marijuana/cannabis run no risk of dying from the toxic changes in their normal body function." [3]	"3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol; this represents 5.3 % of all deaths (globally)."[1]
Cancer Risk	Does not increase risk for cancer.[5]	The US Department of Health lists alcohol as a carcinogen no matter what level of use.[7]
General Loss of Health and disability	Heavy smokers run the increased risk of stroke and heart failure. [9]	"5.1 % of the global burden of disease and injury is attributable to alcohol. The harmful use of alcohol is a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions."[1]
Addiction Potential	Marijuana Use Disorder. "A 2016 survey found that about 4 million people 12 and older meet the classification for a marijuana use disorder. [4] It is said that a disorder does not always indicate addiction.[10]	Overall, alcohol use disorders rose (between the years of 2002 and 2003 and then from 2012 to 2013) by almost 50%, affecting a projected 8.5% of the population during the first research period, and 12.7% during the second. That's almost 30 million Americans actively struggling with alcohol abuse. "[11]
Driving Impairment	There is substantial evidence of a statistical association between cannabis use increases the risk of motor vehicle crashes by 83%. [2]	A blood-alcohol level of 0.05% increases the odds of an accident by 575%. [12]
Violent Crimes	When both spouses frequently used marijuana study findings showed they were at the lowest risk for Intimate Partner Violence. [15]	"About 3 million violent crimes occur each year (US) in which victims perceive the offender to have been drinking." [13] A link has been found between alcohol and violent behavior. [14]
Memory Loss	Consistent with heavy recreational marijuana use. [16]	Short-term loss is related to blackouts. Long-term heavy drinkers show some level of cognitive impairment.[17]
Mental Health	"...likely to increase the risk of developing schizophrenia, other psychoses, and social anxiety disorders, and to a lesser extent depression."[5]	Can increase anxiety and stress and lead to aggression. [6]
Healthcare Costs	"The difference between healthcare costs for Canadian drinkers vs. weed smokers: \$20.50 per year per toker vs. \$165.11 per drinker."[18]	"The difference between healthcare costs for Canadian drinkers vs. weed smokers: \$20.50 per year per toker vs. \$165.11 per drinker." [18]

World Health Organization 2018 [\[1\]](#)  
Drug Use and Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes. [\[2\]](#)  
National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teachers: Drug Facts Chat Day – Marijuana [\[3\]](#)  
National Survey on Drug Use and Health (US) [\[4\]](#)  
The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research [\[5\]](#)  
Alcohol and Mental Health [\[6\]](#)  
Alcohol as a Carcinogen [\[7\]](#)  
Marijuana Use Associated with Increased Risk of Stroke, Heart Failure 2017 [\[9\]](#)  
The Difference Between a Substance Use Disorder and an Addiction [\[10\]](#)  
Remarkable Increases in Alcohol Use Disorders [\[11\]](#)  
Drug and Alcohol Crash Risk [\[12\]](#)  
NCADD – Drugs, Alcohol and Crime [\[13\]](#)  
The neural correlates of alcohol-related aggression 2018 [\[14\]](#)  
Couple’s Marijuana Use ... [\[15\]](#)  
Memory and Marijuana [\[16\]](#)  
Alcohol and Memory Loss [\[17\]](#)  
Cannabis, Tobacco and Alcohol Use in Canada [\[18\]](#)

To date most who are uninformed consider medicinal cannabis and adult use of marijuana as one and the same. This could not be further from the truth. Though all who use cannabis, no matter the amount, may be self-medicating, it is the level of awareness and conscious size and administration of the dose that catalyses the medicinal constituents for healing.

In the final analysis and with all of the above being true, a 2015 scientific report ranks cannabis way better than alcohol when it comes to risk factors.[\[19\]](#) The facts matter to some of us.

## The Rise of Depression and the Cannabis Response



Are you experiencing depression? If so, you are certainly not alone. Millions of Americans are plagued by this mood disorder. A recent article shared new statistical details about how depression is on the rise in the U.S.

Apparently the diagnosis of depression increased 33% between years 2011 and 2014.<sup>[1]</sup> Previously, The National Center for Health Statistics reported that

antidepressant use jumped 65% in 15 years between 1999 and 2014: from 7.7% of Americans to 12.7% for those 12 and older, twice as high for women than men, and 19.1% for those 60 and older. <sup>[2]</sup>

“Universal depression screenings” are happening more routinely, and so depression is no longer in the closet: people are talking about it and treating it . . .with pharmaceutical drugs.

I am left to wonder the reasons *why* this depressive state has grown by leaps and bounds? I believe asking 'why' matters. For one thing, a whole lot that has changed in the world since January 1, 2000. Quite frankly, it's enough to make anyone depressed. Here's what I can recall:

- September 11, 2001
- The Patriot Act
- Ongoing terrorist attacks both domestic and international
- Mass murders at public schools
- Increasing opioid addiction and deaths
- Multiple wars in the Middle East
- Natural disasters: fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, flooding, blizzards and droughts
- The Japanese Fukushima nuclear disaster of 2011
- The economic crisis of 2008
- Overvalued/overpriced real estate
- Earnings that don't match the cost-of-living
- Student-loan debt
- Increased homelessness
- The divisive presidential election of 2016 and presidency of Donald Trump

Additionally, this list does not include personal challenges most of us experience from time to time.

Pharmaceutical companies appear to be the big winners. Though most of the antidepressant-package inserts warn of one or another side-effect, pharmaceutical antidepressants are the ubiquitous 'go to' solution coping mechanism for depression. Additionally, besides side effects, many people report difficulty getting off antidepressants when they are ready to do so.

Depression is linked to increased neuro-inflammation of the brain and inflammation, a precursor to many disease processes.

Enter therapeutic cannabis.

Cannabis is known to reduce inflammation and holds great promise in studies about depression.[3] Due to its chemical molecules, especially THC and CBD, actual healing, not just the masking of symptoms, can occur to restore deficient areas of the brain and immune system. [4] It is non-toxic, cost-effective and has little to no side-effects whatsoever.

*"...the team analyzed data from Strainprint, a mobile application cannabis users can use to track changes in symptoms after using different doses and cannabis chemotypes. Overall, self-reported symptoms of depression decreased by 50 percent."* [5]

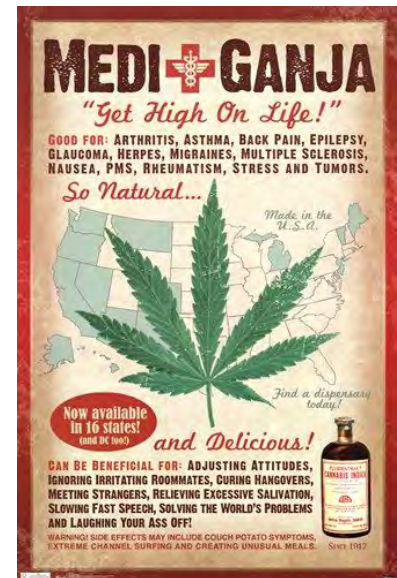
So why don't more people try cannabis medicinally before heading down the pharma trail? I suggest there are three reasons:

- The stigma promoted by the Reefer Madness movie propaganda of 1936 and subsequent 1937 Marihuana Tax Act
- The preference to trust medical doctors and what they prescribe
- A general lack of knowledge about how to use cannabis medicinally.

A friend of mine used cannabis medicinally to help her recover from depression after nothing else worked. She said that it gave her back her life, which inspired her to share her experience with others and become a cannabis educator.

I believe that the multiple devastating events of the 21st century radically changed the world from what we once knew - disorienting at best and depressing at worst. That said, it is still absolutely possible to take flight from depression and become emotionally and mentally strong through it all with the assistance of responsible, therapeutic cannabis use.

The world may not change in ways we prefer but we can.



## Empathy for People Who Treat Depression with Cannabis



*Don't judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes."* ~ Cherokee proverb

In my previous essay, *Depression on the Rise and the Cannabis Response*, I reported on how the diagnosis for depression rose 33% between 2011 and 2014, some possible causes for it and how cannabis used therapeutically is helping people.

From personal experience, there is no doubt in my mind that taking personal responsibility for one's circumstances and choices in life, without assessing blame, is essential when it comes to truly overcoming depression. I believe this to be especially true even when circumstances are clearly beyond our control.

We are all affected in one way or another by the world in which we live, both locally and globally. Our challenges don't necessarily make us a victim but depression might set in as a result of a pervasive sense of powerlessness to make the changes we want and need.

Cannabis is the answer to heal depression for some.

The different views about if cannabis is the answer, or not the answer to treat depression, is natural and to be expected given its 80+ years of official stigma in the U.S. Everyone is welcome to their opinion yet the general tone in the public sphere so often is about who's right.

Socially we seem to have become tribal. Each side defends and sells their "truth" as absolute. Defensiveness and name-calling ensues. No one listens. Each side digs in. Whoever can control the conversation is the perceived winner. Enemies are made. I'm so tired of this.

The alternative?

When we can listen to someone else's take on a topic, such as healing depression with cannabis, we learn a whole lot about that person. The misconception is that by really listening to someone they obviously must AGREE with them. Yet active listening does not include having to agree.

The purpose of listening, as I see it, is to connect with another human and what's important to THEM, that which may be absolutely alien to you, the listener. It is an expression of empathy that transcends our own cherished beliefs and focuses instead on the recognition that we all have them.

The hope is that we learn to accept (beyond liking) different perspectives from our own and resist the temptation for ours to prevail. Real listening opens the door to caring and caring opens the door for someone suffering to be heard and gain a connection they've been missing.

Is cannabis the answer to healing depression? Or is it not? These are personal questions requiring personal answers. Like life, it's never a one-size-fits-all proposition.





## The Anxiety Epidemic, Pharmaceuticals and CBD: A Three-Part Series



Last week I read an article: Anti-anxiety Meds Could be Next U.S. Epidemic. [\[1\]](#) I think a better title would have been: Anxiety: a U.S. Epidemic.

How do we know anxiety is of epidemic proportions? We know because statistics reveal a dramatic bump in the number of benzodiazepine prescriptions between years 1996 and 2013.

*“Anna Lembke, MD, of the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine in Stanford, California, and colleagues note that between 1996 and 2013, the number of benzodiazepine prescriptions filled by adults increased by 67%.” [\[2\]](#)*

I’m guessing the number of “benzo” prescriptions has continued to increase. Why? For several reasons.

1. There’s the issue of over-prescribing by doctors who get the hard-sell from their pharmaceutical reps. It’s a vicious cycle all about the almighty dollar, in my humble opinion.
2. Getting off benzos puts people at risk of intense withdrawal symptoms, possible seizures, and even death, according to public health officials. This keeps people re-filling their prescription.
3. We live in an age of fear about not meeting expectations regarding: education, work, and personal goals of appearance, finance, health and relationships.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 2018 surveyed 1000 adults about their anxiety. It showed that the national anxiety score rose to 51 on a scale from 0 to 100 [\[3\]](#) which was a five-point jump from 2017. The greatest area of increase was indicated as paying bills, and the group with the biggest increase in anxiety was Baby Boomers with a seven-point increase over 2017 scores.

Since it appears to me that anxiety has been normalized in today’s 1<sup>st</sup> world societies, I will highlight reason #3 above. I believe societal expectations in this technological/information ego



have risen to a fever pitch, one beyond what it means to be human. Instead we now also pit ourselves against artificial intelligence (AI).

Being human includes a spectrum of commonalities despite the many obvious differences. We all have beliefs, opinions and feelings. We want to be safe. We make mistakes. We forget. We over-commit. We need rest. We're not always healthy in body and/or mind. We age. We get overwhelmed. We have a unique experience of family and culture. We tend to conform to peer pressure. We compare ourselves to others. We get distracted. We have expectations. We are social. Perfection in the human form is a utopian dream.

The Oxford English Dictionaries define anxiety [\[4\]](#):

*1 A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.*

*1.1(Psychiatry) A nervous disorder marked by excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behaviour or panic attacks.*

*2 (with infinitive) Strong desire or concern to do something or for something to happen.*

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), anxiety falls into three categories:

- Generalized anxiety disorder includes symptoms of excessive and uncontrollable worry that can include muscle tension and irritability.
- Social anxiety disorder, AKA social phobia, is about being seen in a negative light in social situations. People with social anxiety disorder fear judgment, embarrassment, rejection, etc.
- Panic disorder is when someone has repeated, uncontrollable panic attacks that can include a pounding heart and intense fear or worry of an outcome ahead.

NIMH cites risk factors for anxiety as:

- Shyness, or behavioral inhibition, in childhood
- Being female
- Few economic resources
- Being divorced or widowed
- Past and/or present exposure to stressful life events
- Anxiety disorders in close biological relatives
- Parental history of mental disorders
- Elevated afternoon cortisol levels in the saliva (specifically for social anxiety disorder)

To feel anxious is totally normal at different times in our life in small, infrequent doses when we must be 'on'. But as a steady diet living life from one crisis to another . . . not so much. In Part II, we explore the pharmaceutical antidepressant solution.

## The Anxiety Epidemic, Pharmaceuticals and CBD Part II

### *Anti-Anxiety Meds: Lifesaver or Scary Prospect?*



Hands down the pharmaceutical industry has cornered the market when it comes to helping people manage symptoms of various anxiety disorders.

Statistical evidence proves the notable increase in the number of anti-anxiety meds prescribed for emotional and mental pain as pharmaceutical profits soar. Without a doubt,

these meds have been a lifesaver for many.

But is it *all good*?

Ah. . . no not really. Studies and product inserts reveal the story of the dark side. The decision to pop a tried-and-true benzodiazepine (benzo), tranquilizer, or the more recently prescribed for anxiety, antidepressant pill, is not the casual one we assume. Rather it is a somewhat scary prospect requiring one to take the good *with the bad*.

Pharmaceuticals act to mask the natural function of a particular bio-chemical process in the body and brain to reduce or limit negative symptoms. They do not, and are not formulated, to heal the root cause.

Some of the benzo meds prescribed for anxiety disorder are:

- Xanax (alprazolam)
- Klonopin (clonazepam)
- Valium (diazepam)
- Ativan (lorazepam)

Benzos are meant for short-term use. According to the FDA, their misuse comes on the heels of the opioid epidemic, causing both physical and psychological dependence and difficult withdrawal symptoms while worsening pre-existing depression. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse the risk of a fatal overdose is up to 10x more likely when a benzo is combined with an opioid; overdoses involving benzos quadrupled between 2002 and 2015. Additionally, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reports that the deadly drug, fentanyl, has been found in Xanax. [\[1\]](#)

Tricyclic antidepressants (TCA) and serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) prescribed for anxiety disorders include:

TCA	SSRI
Amitriptyline	Citalopram (Celexa)
Amoxapine	Escitalopram (Lexapro)
Desipramine (Norpramin)	Fluoxetine (Prozac)
Doxepin	Paroxetine (Paxil, Pexeva)
Imipramine (Tofranil)	Sertraline (Zoloft)
Nortriptyline (Pamelor)	Vilazodone (Viibryd)
Protriptyline (Vivactil)	
Trimipramine (Surmontil)	

A recent Canadian study found the SSRI type of antidepressant disrupts many functions of the brain's natural regulation. Though SSRI's can help depression by retaining serotonin longer in the brain, they also disrupt serotonin's natural ideal function. The study also cited that study participants taking both the TCA and SSRI types of antidepressants evidenced increased risk of early death.

*"Bottom line: the analysis found that taking antidepressants raised the risk of dying prematurely by 33 percent over those not taking antidepressants. Antidepressant users were also 14 percent more likely to have a heart attack, stroke or other adverse cardiovascular event."* [\[2\]](#)

Do the benefits outweigh the risks? Me thinks not.

Despite scientific evidence, most people still make pharmaceutical drugs their "go-to" for alleviating anxiety disorders. The marketing arm of the pharmaceutical industry is so ubiquitous that it drowns out 'alternative' non-toxic medicine solutions. The funny thing is that alternative medicine is actually not alternative at all. In fact natural medicine, including healing with cannabis, existed for centuries prior to how we humans began to think about 'scientific' medical practices and drugs.

Thankfully, a lifestyle approach to dealing with an anxiety disorder can often get to the root cause of the problem to provide a long-term solution without worrisome side effects. Though conventional medicine and pharmaceuticals do have their usefulness, they can also cause more damage than good.

Why don't more people go the natural route? I think for several reasons or a combination thereof:

1. They have no idea about other ways to genuinely get relief.
2. They do know but prefer to gamble with their health because they want fast action.
3. They want insurance to pay.
4. They trust what medical doctors tell them more than anyone else.

Think about it: evidence-based cannabis used medicinally, particularly formulas that are CBD-rich, are alleviating anxiety disorders for many as we speak. More to share in Part III of this series. Stay tuned.

## **The Anxiety Epidemic, Pharmaceuticals, and CBD Part III**

### *Cannabis: Real Relief for the Adventurous*



*"We are not humans having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience." ~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin 1881-1955*

Modern society is so far down the rabbit-hole that we can easily forget *who we are*. Anxiety sets in when we want to measure up to standards of others or to "the good life" that the media and advertisements promise.

Does consumption equal wellness? Do we have the right clothes, beliefs, education, car, home work-out coach, therapist, partner, cell phone, apps, job, political affiliation, hairstyle, social media friends, etc.? The list of must-haves and the anxiety over needing to consume them only seems to grow.

### **A Sign of the Times**

These days the image we project appears to be what matters most to endear more social currency than our likely less-illustrious reality. Behind the façade of unaffected coolness anti-anxiety pharmaceuticals lurks the epidemic truth of emotional and mental anguish, our own

and others'. Such performance may be socially and financially expedient in today's politically correct world but comes at a high cost to the intangibles of personal integrity, genuine wellbeing and interpersonal trust.

At least publically, material splendor and excess is held up as the ultimate symbol of success. As something that is promoted to be envied, the spike in anxiety comes as no surprise. How is this like when greed and covetousness began to poison the Roman Empire? Do we now also traverse the downside?

### **Getting Real with Ourselves**

Whenever materialism is understood as the empty shell it is in the grander scheme of things, it opens space for something else to happen. The focus can shift from being in service to all that boosts our image to tending to can boost our true health and wellness.

As we heal, one-by-one we get honest with ourselves and transform our personal pain beyond simply masking it. Each of us becomes a building block towards the creation of a more honest culture. What if the Golden Rule replaced a zero-sum game of winners and losers defining success by the accumulation of material goods alone?

### **Cannabis is a Plant Ally**

CBD, and other cannabinoids administered in micro-doses, can have a profound and long-term effect in both reducing and healing anxiety with little to no side effects.

It's a scientifically proven fact. Cannabinoids, (particularly CBD), can improve anxiety by increasing serotonin in the brain and also via neurogenesis, the production of new brain cells in the hippocampus. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) Precise dosing for anxiety is on a case-by-case basis.

Perhaps equally, if not more, important is the profound psycho-spiritual impact cannabis can affect when used for this purpose.

Here's why: The filters through which we view and live daily life can fall away and open us to see from a different (10,000 foot view) perspective. Intuitive intelligence kicks in beyond our familiar ego structure to help us see and know things about our life that we may not have considered; things that may help us to understand ourselves or a situation we may want to change. All this as therapeutic cannabis use opens a window to our true nature.

Anti-anxiety pharmaceuticals are only useful for short-term immediate relief, in my view. Actually solving the personal issue of anxiety is something else altogether; in many cases it is not as much a medical problem as it is the territory of self-reflection regarding our life choices. It takes courage.

Cannabis used medicinally is one of nature's prescriptions to help heal anxiety from the inside-out. As we turn our backs on and loosen the zombie-like grip of commerce over personal expectations manufactured for us, we can recover the health of our soul and commit to a life worth living.

*It's time to learn a new face to the whole world wide human race*

*Stop the money chase - lay back, relax and get back on the human track*

*Stop racing toward oblivion - oh, such a sad, sad state we're in*

*And that's the thing - do you recognize the bells of truth when you hear them ring?*

~Leon Russell, Stranger in a Strange Land

## Medicinal Cannabis: One Way Towards a Transcendent Ethic



In 1983 I had the privilege of co-producing the last leg of [R. Buckminster Fuller's](#) national speaking tour at the Marin County, California, Civic Center titled, "Only Personal Integrity is Going to Count." Sadly, just a few months thereafter, I was attending a joint memorial service for both Bucky and his wife, Anne, on the same day I was originally scheduled to attend their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Fast-forward several decades, and the

title of Bucky's talk seems more like it might be a Saturday Night Live (SNL) skit mocking personal integrity, given how much civil discourse today has devolved into adolescent name-calling and character assassination. Why is it that personal exchanges, especially in public, are increasingly fraught with emotional violence, though rarely identified as such?

That said, in addition to personal integrity, another enduring concept I learned from Bucky was about systems thinking: the importance of seeking and finding the root cause of a problem in order to find the most efficient solution.

What does any of this have to do with the medicinal use of cannabis, you may ask?

In my three-part series, *The Addictive Society and Cannabis*, I take a peek behind the curtain of our culture and share what I find to be the big-picture premise that we live in an "addictive society" of dualism, dishonesty and control [1]. Considering for the moment that we DO live in such a society, I believe most North Americans are in serious need of acknowledging the truth of its addictive nature in order to effectively recover from its myriad issues.

Though lots of smart people see the same mechanisms operating behind the curtain as I do, seeing has not served to diminish the suffering. The medicinal use of cannabis may be one answer, not only for personal recovery, but also for advancing a quality of awareness among more people who are about to think beyond the fray of culture wars and social media. In an externally-focused and materialistic society, insight and introspection might just be a counterpoint tipping the scales for the good.



I personally have used cannabis in this manner for its transcendent benefit and have experienced: “the marvel that is beyond doctrine.” [2] A minimal dose of a CBD-rich product with equal amounts or less of THC can provide a window to and sense of the “infinite transcendent.” [3] \* No religious beliefs are required, neither are they an obstacle to experiencing this needed respite from life’s everyday mental gymnastics and concerns.



My perspective is this: a genuine remedy for a society in denial must start one-by-one in the realm of the personal soul, not in the realm of politics. Some find higher truth in religion, others find it in moments of insight and/or connecting with nature.

I envision a day when a critical mass of people, who, by use of medicinal cannabis, or otherwise, individually arrive at the same conclusion of our connectedness to something other than the preferences of personal ego; the realization that we are all downstream from that 'something larger' beyond our control.

This is where the Golden Rule comes in.

My hope is that the political sphere would transform as a result of this vision made manifest one person at a time. Victimhood would be replaced by personal responsibility and a personal motivation to relate with others from our shared humanity *outside of our differences*: beyond the zero-sum game of winners and losers. The endgame of domination and control would inevitably die a natural death.

However, if history has anything to do with it, my vision of peaceful co-existence may never come to pass as an overarching reality. Even so, individually each of us can do the work of ‘turning ourselves around’ and infuse increasingly-larger doses of good will, caring and openness into our personal sphere of influence.

As far as I can tell, a transcendent ethic that translates to personal integrity does exist; it's there for the realizing.

\* Disclaimer: This option would apply only to those living in legal medical-only states or legal medical and adult-use states and is absolutely not recommended to anyone as a first THC experience. Remember: Go slow. Start low.

## The Addictive Society and Cannabis: A Three-Part Series



*This is the first of a three-part essay about the contextual influences modern society has on mood disorders and addictions, 2) the risks of buy-in, and 3) the possibility of soul renewal via (but not limited to) therapeutic cannabis use.*

### The Addictive Society: Part 1

*"We live in a society bloated with data yet starved for wisdom. We're connected 24/7, yet anxiety, fear, depression and loneliness is at an all-time high. We must course-correct." ~Dr. Elizabeth Kapu'uwallani Lindsey*

The "addictive society"<sup>[1]</sup> is the elephant in the living room. Mood disorders and addictions are part of a larger conversation. Yet we tend to miss the overarching societal 'space' when only focused on individual issues, like depression and anxiety or opioid and social-media addictions.

What exactly is this context?

People and cultures historically function as part of a psychological framework, making sense of their particular time and place. Usually we don't address or understand it as a whole until many years later once an overview on an era can be viewed from the distance of time.

As such a society can become the backdrop where people living there unwittingly succumb to addiction or suffer mood disorders. I believe that is the case today as we witness the rise in the number of antidepressant prescriptions and suicides.

How does society trigger people towards these actions?

Might it be a complex web of public (government) and private (corporations) promoting, marketing and advertising information, products and services 24/7 - a surround-sound cacophony of targeted messages designed to shape public opinion and an ever-stronger consumer mindset?

Some call it propaganda and it's certainly nothing new.

Commerce is essential to society; yet, over time, psychological concepts and strategies developed and continue to be applied aggressively in order to expand consumer consumption - nowadays a critical component of a healthy economy. Every day I believe we are manipulated by 'irresistible' products and services selling us supposed answers to: social status, safety, winning, the right image, having the best, looking good, gaining an edge, keeping up with your neighbor, excellence, or being the first, etc.

Many take the bait. Many suffer as a result. How did we get here?

We have Edward Bernays of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. to thank for his contribution to the psychological underpinnings of sales and marketing. Interestingly, he was also the nephew of the well-known psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud.

Like his uncle before him, Bernays agreed with the concept of the predictability of the human unconscious when it came to the human and psychological motivations of self-preservation, security, aggression and sex. He became wildly successful in his PR and advertising career by using this information to full advantage.

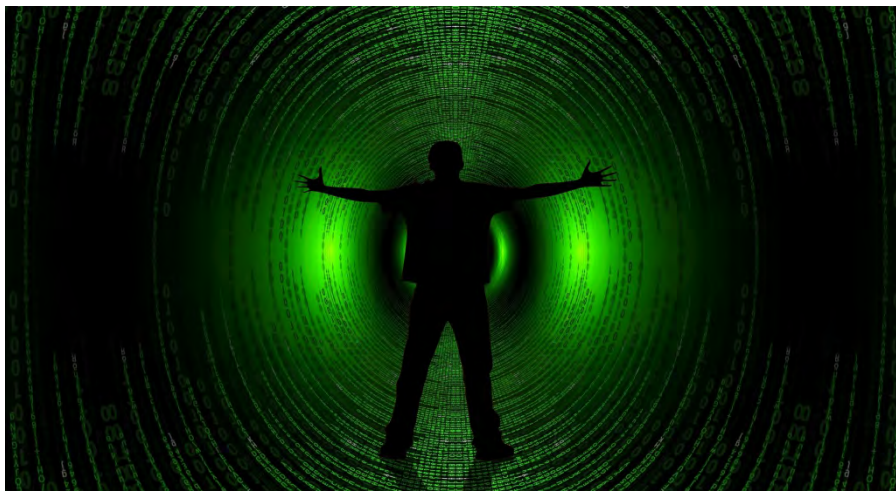


Due to Bernay's efforts on behalf of the pork industry in 1915, bacon became a mainstay of the traditional breakfast. In the 1920's he made smoking fashionable for women by calling cigarettes "torches of freedom" to advance the tobacco industry, and then established fluoride as indispensable to dentistry in the 1930's (a waste product of aluminum) for his client, Alcoa Aluminum. (2) His efforts were just the beginning.

Watch this video that says it all: [Be Inspired](#)

## **The Addictive Society and Cannabis Part II**

*Buy-in to the Addictive System at Your Own Risk*



**MORPHEUS:** *"The Matrix is everywhere; it's all around us, here even in this room. You can see it out of your window, or on your television. You feel it when you go to work, or go to church, or pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth."*

**NEO:** *"What truth?"*

**MORPHEUS:** *"That you are a slave, Neo. That you, like everyone else, was born into bondage. . . kept inside a prison that you cannot smell, or touch. A prison for your mind. Unfortunately no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself."*

In the end, it's practically impossible NOT to buy-in to the addictive system (AKA the Matrix) at some point in our lives, or in one way or another. All around us, it can hijack how we think, feel and behave.

I learned a principle in the 1970's that has stuck with me: *context generates content*. In this instance, the addictive system of modern society is the context (container) generating the content telling us what is real, what is conspiracy theory, what we need to own, have and do. As context, those writing society's script perpetuate its agenda when we blindly accept the meme being passed down to us.

External forces exert enormous influence on what we believe about the world, ourselves and others. How we self-identify and express ourselves comes not only from our family but also from accepting what we repeatedly see and hear. Defaulting to an identity projected on us by others, albeit from the educational system, religion, or the media, for example, an authentic connection to ourselves might elude us.

Though addictive systems function almost always invisibly, it is possible to see them. Hint: The core pillars that prop up and hold these systems in place are black or white thinking, dishonesty, the illusion of control, dependency and self-centeredness.[\[1\]](#)

From substance abuse to process addictions, i.e. spending too much time on technology, or too much shopping, these addictions can originate from a sense of powerlessness. Mood disorders, including being over-stressed, are also indicators of buy-in to a system that wants to addict you to it.





Those of us who live with anxiety (and PTSD) function daily in crisis mode when no crisis actually exists. This has become much more the case since events of 9/11 and the subsequent over-dependency on cell phones keeping moment-by-moment tabs on our loved ones.

Those of us disabled by depression do not always know why we are depressed even as we conscientiously address personal issues. Antidepressant medicine may not be of much help when only looking at the personal problems and not seeing the elusive contextual factors and the impact of a fast-paced, addictive system.

Those of us for whom retail therapy is more than occasional in an attempt to feel better find out how short-lived the 'high' actually is. No purchase and no number of social media 'friends' can ever become the substitute for an inner experience of wellbeing and inspiration.

Kudos to each and every one of us genuinely committed to acknowledging and addressing any sort of addiction that has had us in its grip. I leave you with this to consider: If you address only problematic symptoms in isolation of the multi-faceted impact the addictive system may be having on you, you may still overcome a particular addiction but fail to identify the Matrix's insidious grasp on your mind.

## **The Addictive Society and Cannabis Part III**

### *The Possibility of Soul Renewal*



*"The spirit is one of the most neglected parts of man by doctors and scientists around the world. Yet, it is as vital to our health as the heart and mind. It's time for science to examine the many facets of the soul. The condition of our soul is usually the source of many sicknesses." — Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem*

The addictive system of the addictive society, discussed in Parts I and II, is ubiquitous; pure nature provides the only real respite. Not only is this system everywhere in the modern world

but it is also unlikely to become non-addictive any time soon. Why? Commercial and political interests perpetuate a largely self-serving environment for the purpose of increasing the benefits to them of mental buy-in and consumption of every kind.

The love of money is at the root and greed appears to be the seed.

Throughout human history economic and political platforms have rarely been praised for their integrity. No matter how much we might otherwise hope, what the powerful few impart to us is that which will best line their own coffers; truth, sanity and peace pale in comparison. This, according to my 35 years of research of the various systems of the world (economic, health, educational, military, social, financial, etc.). Though my own findings only scratch the surface of history, I see clearly now.

The addictive system with its plethora of must-have information, products and services has mightily won over the hearts and minds of the population at large, but at what price? “The maze of senseless behaviors woven into the world” [\[1\]](#) reflects the rampant sickness of the soul suffered by many.

Recovery from soul sickness and its many manifestations of substance and/or process addictions, or mood disorders like depression, anxiety and PTSD, etc., is often recovery from the system itself. Once our eyes are opened to the extent of soul sickness in the world, we can: begin to see through the lies, admit our powerlessness over the progression of an addictive system, and get honest with ourselves. [\[3\]](#)

Getting honest with ourselves is essential to wellbeing and a process that does not always 'feel-good'. It begins by acknowledging the ways in which we have allowed our thoughts and behaviors, and ultimately, our identity, to be co-opted by beliefs proffered by external forces. Such self-reflection opens space for insights that can help us reclaim any lost connection with our conscience.



Therapeutic cannabis use is one way to ignite the process of going deeper and getting honest with ourselves. Valuable insights and a genuine shift in perspective can be gleaned. As a giant step outside the mind of the addictive society, it can also help physiologically by restoring internal deficiencies of the endocannabinoid system that make us more vulnerable to addictions and mood disorders.

Refreshed by an empowering new lens, those who choose this particular path make strides towards soul renewal, rediscovering their deepest self from the inside-out. Awake and aware, life bursts with new meaning and opportunity.

*"It is always quietly thrilling to find yourself looking at a world you know well but have never seen from such an angle before."*— Bill Bryson, *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*



## Medicinal Cannabis, Harry Anslinger and the Legal Challenge



Who wants to be branded a pot head in our drug-test economy? No one I know. It's a costly label garnered from a stereotype of those who abuse cannabis but don't think they do.

The 'evil drug' mental construct placed on cannabis officially dates back only 81 years in the United States. One man, Harry Anslinger, made it so.

### The Birth of Drug Wars

Back in 1930 Harry Anslinger became the first commissioner of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Narcotics which we now know as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The unverified story goes that he initially did not oppose what was then called, marijuana, at all. "There is no more absurd fallacy regarding harm to people and its provocation to violence," he said. That is . . .until he became the commissioner.

Prohibition for alcohol was soon to end and so it appears that perhaps Anslinger chose to lump marijuana in with heroin and cocaine for the sake of maintaining his job security. He held the position of commissioner for a record 32 years.

In a radio address to Americans he asserted that "Indian Hemp" was a danger to young people making them "slaves to this narcotic, continuing addiction until they deteriorate mentally, become insane, turn to violent crime and murder."

Despite pitiful little scientific evidence for his claims, Commissioner Anslinger craftily sensationalized marijuana and disparaged African Americans and Latinos, in particular, as those leading the way of self-destruction. He succeeded in scaring the bejeebers out of American parents, in particular.

His all-out efforts generated the fantastical context for the 1936 movie, *Reefer Madness*, to further terrify the American population. As the person who drafted the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937, [ [1](#) ] his dramatic testimony before Congress no doubt greatly helped to influence its passing. The rest is history.



Anslinger found a significant ally in William Randolph Hearst, of the Hearst media empire, who readily provided the platform and gave voice to Anslinger's 'anti-Indian hemp campaign'. [ [2](#) ]

Some say Hearst partnered with him so as to protect his own lumber-enterprise interests against potential competition from industrial hemp.

### **The Medicinal Cannabis Challenge Continues**

To this day cannabis is a Schedule I drug along side of heroin and others which are stated to have “no currently accepted medical treatment use in the U.S.” Yet this official statement flies in the face of the very same government’s understanding of the plant’s evidence-based benefits. Pure hypocrisy.

How so, you may ask? In 2003, U.S. Patent No. 6,630,507 was granted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.<sup>[3]</sup> It is a patent for the potential use of non-psychoactive plant cannabinoids found in cannabis sativa, cannabidiol (CBD). The stated purpose in the Patent of the CBD is to protect the brain in case of damage and degenerative diseases.

[Here is a link](#) to a video called, *The Life She Deserves: Medical Marijuana*, created by the Brookings Institute in Washington, DC. What more evidence could there be than the amazing recovery for the girl in the video. Cannabis is a plant, for goodness sake. Here’s what Willie Nelson says about it:

*“I think people need to be educated to the fact that marijuana is not a drug. Marijuana is an herb and a flower. God put it here. If He put it here and He wants it to grow, what gives the government the right to say that God is wrong?”*

## News Flash: Cannabis Wins in 2018 Midterms



Slowly but surely the legalization of cannabis is growing across the United States. In my mind, it will inevitably become legal federally but it is anyone's guess as to when that might happen.

Three of the four states (Michigan, Utah, Missouri and North Dakota) that had cannabis reform on their ballots had a win. North Dakota is the only state defeating its cannabis proposition which was to add adult recreational use to its already-active medical marijuana laws.

Michigan now has the distinction as the first mid-western state to legalize the adult recreational use of cannabis, and overall, will become the 10th state to do so.

Both Missouri and Utah join the ranks of states allowing medical marijuana via their approved ballot measures. This means that now people in 32 states plus DC will have access to cannabis for medical purposes. However, the many veterans who suffer from PTSD remain forbidden to access medical use even if they live in a legal-medical state. At this point it looks like they will have to wait until cannabis is legalized federally, despite the facts of its superior effectiveness for this ailment.

Missouri will allow doctors to recommend cannabis as they see fit with no set list of qualifying health conditions.

*"Thanks to the unflagging efforts of patients and advocates, Missourians who could benefit from medical marijuana will soon be able to use it without fear of being treated like criminals."* Matthew Schweich, Deputy Director of the Marijuana Policy Project

Utah's medical marijuana laws will be more restrictive given its recognition as a traditionally conservative state. Their Proposition 2 measure bans smoking of cannabis for medical purposes but does allow vaping for those who meet the qualifying health conditions listed for use.

Once again we see that the scope of how legal use and implementation varies from state to state. This patchwork will remain until the federal government takes cannabis off the list of Schedule I drug of no medicinal value. It's an idea whose time will come.

## One Step Closer: The Legal Expansion of Industrial Hemp



Let it be known that the cultivation of industrial hemp, a non-psychoactive variety of cannabis, is now possible for every state of these United States. This, with the passing of the Unified 2018 Farm Bill, December 2018, championed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). The Bill is said to have been signed with a pen made from hemp.

The summary for Title X - Horticulture under subheading, "Other Provisions" reads:

*"Hemp Production: Amends the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 [\[1\]](#) to allow states and Indian tribes to regulate or follow a plan established by the Secretary to regulate hemp production that includes locations of hemp production, sample testing for THC concentration, sample inspections of producers, and disposal of plants that are out of compliance."*

The welcome news regarding industrial hemp laws does, however, come at the price of heavy regulation. According to section 10113 of the 2018 Farm Bill, an interested state's plan for industrial hemp cultivation must first be run by their governor and top law enforcement official.



Once the plan has buy-in from these top officials, it then must be submitted for further approval from the federal Secretary of USDA. In states that do not pro-actively submit a plan to license and regulate hemp cultivation, the USDA will create the plan for them via a regulatory program by which any future plans for industrial hemp must comply.

Section 12619 of the 2018 Farm Bill finally removes hemp derived products from federal classification as Schedule 1 drugs. But technically, since cannabidiol (CBD) is a chemical compound of the cannabis plant, it is still *not legal* federally.

The good news is that the legality of shipping CBD and hemp derived products throughout the US (i.e. interstate commerce) is now A-OK; whereas it had been murky at best due previously to its Schedule 1 status. As long as a hemp product, per federal law, contains .3% of THC or less, interstate commerce is now entirely legal.

Hemp, no longer lumped in with its historically 'evil twin', marijuana, has been somewhat vindicated. Hemp farmers will be treated like any other farmer. Additionally, new supply chains for CBD can begin from plants grown in the US instead of how so much of the hemp sourced for CBD oils has been coming from Europe, and unwittingly also from China.

The economic viability of hemp has long been understood in the USA. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew hemp on their land. It has been and continues to be used for fabric, paper, food, building materials, and of course, medicine, with some more recent uses as bio fuel and health and wellness products.

“In 1942 patriotic farmers, at the government’s requests, planted 36,000 acres of seed hemp.” This quote is from a 15 minute video called, [Hemp for Victory](#).

I believe this latest Farm Bill takes us ever closer to the inevitable, full federal legalization. We appear headed in that direction.

## Seniors are Doing It!



Perhaps *not* your grandparent's pain med, 'medical marijuana' is quickly becoming a favorite go-to medicine for Baby Boomers and those ever-more elderly. Getting to this point of medicinal use, however, has been quite the long and windy road given how the U.S. Government stigmatized the cannabis plant back in the 1930's culminating with the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937.

Sadly, we are living out its impact today.

American society as a whole is documented to be pretty much stuck in the dark ages when it comes to understanding the use of medicinal cannabis to reduce chronic pain, anxiety, stress, insomnia and depression in old age with little to no risk or side-effects.

How much more evidence do we need regarding how pharmaceutical drugs are killing people before we wake up to natural remedies that have been there for us throughout human existence on earth?

September 2018 the University of Michigan published a study entitled: *"One in four older adults prescribed a benzodiazepine goes on to risky long-term use."*<sup>[1]</sup> In the second of my three-part essay, The Anxiety Epidemic, I mention, how when benzodiazepines are combined with an opioid drug, overdoses *quadrupled* between 2002 and 2015. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) states that the deadly drug, fentanyl, has been found in Xanax.

Doctors know that "benzos" are for short-term use though long-term use has become epidemic. In March, 2018, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) cited: "More than 30 percent of overdoses involving opioids also involve benzodiazepines." Yet the beat goes on as 9% of the 65 and over crowd are prescribed Xanax, Klonopin and Valium without a second thought, according to the U of M study. One has to wonder what these providers are thinking when they make such meds refillable long-term.

In my mind much of this has to do with the fact that some Medicare programs offer steep discounts on prescription drugs to suffering seniors on a fixed budget. Natural medicine, on the other hand, is an out-of-pocket expense, and something I will address at another time.

Just the other day, a 92 year old former client told me she still takes Xanax to get a good night sleep. She wants to use cannabis but wants it to work like a drug, and does not seem concerned about the addictive quality of Xanax or its effect on her waking wellbeing.

Yet many Baby Boomers, especially those who smoked marijuana back in the day, are giving medical marijuana a chance. They are not waiting for The Powers That Be to give them the green light. Life is short and seniors want to live active lives.

Science shares a great deal of evidence regarding the benefits of the cannabis plant for the older and elderly, including the potential overall reduction of pharmaceutical drug use.

[2] Several enlightened MD's in the country teach their older patients how to use medical cannabis effectively; yet, the medical profession, generally, trails behind available scientific evidence per federal keeping cannabis an illegal, 'Schedule 1 drug of no medicinal value. '

I recall in the 70's marijuana was promoted as something that killed brain cells - effectively putting the fear of God in users and potential users. That said if this happens at all, it likely only happens to those presenting with a Cannabis-Use Disorder (overuse/abuse of cannabis).

Instead of the 'killing brain cells' myth, today, scientific cannabis studies inform us that the active molecules in cannabis have helped to increase memory in older mice [3] which they say may or may not translate to older humans. Also, science has discovered that cannabinoids, particularly CBC (not CBD) used therapeutically, may actually regenerate and restore brain cells, [4] which is additional potentially encouraging news for the older-senior brain.

We already know for a fact that cannabis is an adaptogen herb with the power to enhance the endocannabinoid system (ECS) found throughout the body and tasked with the function of restoring deficiencies and imbalances, including deficiencies of the ECS system found in the brain. As the ECS is re-established to full functioning, it fulfills its primary role: the rebalancing of physiological systems in order to increase the overall experience of health and wellbeing.

Not surprising, the senior demographic is one of the fastest growing when it comes to accessing medical marijuana. [5] [6] It is an idea whose time has (finally) come.





## Cannabis for Seniors: Don't be Afraid of a Little Psychoactivity



As a Certified Cannabis Practitioner and Lifestyle Coach I often speak with seniors like myself. I can honestly say that most are very interested to learn about cannabis and how they might use it medicinally for their various aches and pains.

Some seniors will tell me about how they have had to deal with debilitating side-effects from taking pharmaceutical drugs and don't ever want to go through that again. They are hoping cannabis will be different. Others are simply curious.

Good for them, I think. Many seniors are open to trying something new. In the next breath, however, almost inevitably I will hear, "But I don't want to get high."

Seniors who take a stand against not wanting to get high typically fall into two categories: Either they have never taken a puff of marijuana in their entire life, or they have and overdid it, big time, as many Baby Boomers did.

I get it.

Today we have options. Cannabidiol (CBD) offers many health benefits. The emphasis on CBD is largely due to its non-psychoactivity.

However, as a health practitioner, I find it incorrect and limiting to restrict oneself to CBD only when sincerely interested in using it for health and wellbeing.

For example, many people have developed the mindset of: CBD good -THC bad - which could not be further from the truth. When studied as the medicinal plant it is, cannabis is understood for its many beneficial compounds.

There are best uses for the many different compounds included in the plant, including for THC which has been proven as an:

- Anti-convulsant and appetite stimulant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Anti-anxiety

Plus, adding just a small amount of THC does NOT equal psychoactivity but DOES give the user the benefit of the whole plant, known as the entourage effect.

In keeping with the title of this essay, however, I believe a little psychoactivity can increase the quality of life for senior. Besides THC's physical benefits, its value as an anti-anxiety medicine cannot be overstated.

How so? Therapeutically administered cannabis with some amount of THC allows us to briefly step outside of our everyday (default) pattern of thinking. With a bigger-picture view of our life's issues and concerns, we discover the opportunity to consider a different way of looking at them. Why not get a new perspective and welcome sense of mental and emotional relief from everyday concerns that calms us down?

It's possible and I know because people tell me.

Plus, when THC is used responsibly in a formula with CBD, the CBD has the biochemical affect of making the THC less disorienting and much more manageable. That said, each individual must find their own 'sweet spot' of what works for them. At the time of this writing, 10 states and DC have so far legalized THC for adult use, 33 and DC for medicinal use.

Oh, and by the way, laughing more once a 'little' high might also be just what the doctor ordered!

photo credit: Ben Gurion University

## Cannabis Use Disorder



Cannabis is a very good and ancient medicine that can help and heal many ills. Yet nothing, including cannabis, is ever all one way. When its plant properties are used carefully, cannabis heals but when over-used/abused it can totally ruin someone's life and the lives of others around them.

The ancient Greeks had a saying: *"Nothing in excess."* In the 15th century, Paracelsus, a Swiss physician, scientist and mystic said:

*"All things are poison, for there is nothing without poisonous qualities. It is only the dose which makes a thing poison."*

The difference between medicinal and adult-use is like the idiom about comparing apples to oranges; they are not the same.

Dysfunction is not uncommon when it comes to the abuse of food, exercise, sex, work alcohol, Internet use, pharmaceutical drugs, gambling, etc.

*"... to be classed as an addiction, any such behaviour should comprise a number of key components including overriding preoccupation with the behaviour, conflict with other activities and relationships, withdrawal symptoms when unable to engage in the activity, an increase in the behaviour over time (tolerance), and use of the behaviour to alter mood state. Other consequences such as feeling out of control with the behaviour and cravings for the behaviour are often present. If all these signs and symptoms are present I would call the behaviour a true addiction."* [\[1\]](#)

A mostly unspoken cultural agreement in North America, that *more is better*, renders the act of over-consuming as normal behavior. Add to this the overt rise of stress, anxiety and depression in a challenging social, financial and political climate and you get the perfect storm of people falling off the deep end.

The person who is always looking for a way to calm themselves down using over-consumption of their favorite substance or process, at same time avoids identifying and addressing the core personal issue that keeps them enslaved to it. As a result many suffer the consequence of

subsequent insidious physical and mental and emotional symptoms that erode the quality of their personal and relationship health.

It's no different with cannabis. When partakers smoke all day long and/or use cannabis containing a high percentage of THC, they can stumble down the slippery slope to a 'cannabis use disorder.'

I have personally known, and known of, cannabis addicts who did not have a psychological sense of 'who they were' unless they were high. Their deepest identity was tied to the visceral experience of cannabis intoxicification. Their alter-ego led to the ruin of their marriages and left others behind to pick up the pieces in their wake.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsWywhATzBc>

### **Recreational Dispensaries**

The rise of the recreational dispensary in states where cannabis is legal contributes to the dark side of Cannabis Use Disorder, as far as I can tell. It's as if, for those so predisposed, legalization equals a green light to either begin or resume over-consumption.

Recreational dispensaries naturally underplay the dark side, much the same as do liquor stores. Sales people, the budtenders, no matter how proficient and educated they are in the cannabis space, encourage repeat business and multiple purchases. After all, every business needs to make a profit.

My direct research from working part-time in a dispensary informed me that most sales, (adult-use and medical combined) in the part of Washington State where I live, are 70-80% adult use (recreational) and 20-30% medicinal. A marketing manager for three local dispensaries told me he thought it was more like 95% adult use and 5% medicinal.

To be fair and contrary to popular belief, most dispensaries in this state are not high rollers. On top of the state sales tax of nearly 9% there is a 37% tax on cannabis products not to mention other Washington State Initiative I-502 taxes specifically for retailers. Who rakes in the big money? The Washington State Government - they make the rules AND collect the taxes.

We humans, once again in the final analysis, are at choice as to why and how and we use cannabis, like anything else, for that matter. In my view the optimal use for cannabis is responsible moderation for wellness and healing of the body mind and soul.

## Cannabis Reprimand and Reality



*"Almost everything you think you know about the health effects of cannabis, almost everything advocates and the media have told you for a generation, is wrong." [\[1\]](#)*

Yes, this is from a February 2019 article by writer, Alex Berenson, author of the article: Marijuana, Mental Illness and Violence. He tells us, among other things, that in the past he "covered the pharmaceutical industry for the New York Times."

At least he said, "*almost everything*," while his article is every bit the scathing rebuke of all things cannabis. My first impression after reading it from beginning to end was thinking about the saying: the pendulum swings. What I mean is, this sort of reporting on cannabis is bound to happen especially given the abundance of one-sided reports on the Internet about cannabis miracles.

In my view as a certified cannabis practitioner, marketers of cannabis products, especially CBD, are doing what marketers always do; they stretch the truth and avoid anything possibly 'negative'.

However, my job is to educate and empower my readers and clients by providing the whole story and not just the story that is commercially correct. Once I realized how the pendulum was swinging, I went back over the writer's specific claims, interestingly absent of verifiable citations. Some of his claims were true and other's false. Oh, and don't forget that the writer likely was hired and paid to represent the explicit views of the article's publisher, Hillsdale College.

Here are some direct quotations from the article along with my responses.

**Claim:** "Cannabis users today are also consuming a drug that is far more potent than ever before, as measured by the amount of THC—delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, the chemical in cannabis responsible for its psychoactive effects—it contains."

**True but cannabis is not a drug;** it's a plant. Even so, due to hugely increased potency, it calls upon the individual to learn to use cannabis with these high amounts of THC, very judiciously. Most people tend to over-smoke and do not acknowledge that they might be.

**Claim:** "They've told you marijuana has many different medical uses. In reality marijuana and THC, its active ingredient, have been shown to work only in a few narrow conditions."

**False.** Check out this research document called, Practical considerations in medical cannabis administration and dosing, 2018 by Dr. Ethan Russo, MD, board-certified neurologist, psychopharmacology researcher, and Medical Director of PHYTECS, a biotechnology company [2]

**Claim:** "In reality, like alcohol, marijuana is too weak as a painkiller to work for most people who truly need opiates, such as terminal cancer patients."

**Likely false.** You can read this excellent 2018 article by Lynn R. Webster, MD. Here's an excerpt: "There seems to be a correlation between the availability of medical marijuana and a slower rise in the increase of prescribed opioids. While it can't be proven the two are related, the association is strong. The Rockefeller Institute of Government has found that, in states where patients have access to medical marijuana dispensaries, Medicare patients use 14.4% fewer opioids." [3]

**Claim:** "Research on individual users—a better way to trace cause and effect than looking at aggregate state-level data—consistently shows that marijuana use leads to other drug use."

**Both true and false.** Is it the substance or is it the individual? "In other words, does the drug cause people to make poor choices for themselves, or are certain people primed by genetics, their environment, or both to make unhealthy decisions?" [4]

**Claim:** "Most of all, advocates have told you that marijuana is not just safe for people with psychiatric problems like depression, but that it is a potential treatment for those patients."

**True (Berenson thinks otherwise).** Not only have there been many scientific studies showing the causal link between relief from depression and cannabis [5] but I also have a friend who swears that using cannabis therapeutically shifted her out of depression into seeing and acting on new possibilities.

**Claim:** "People with schizophrenia . . . when they use drugs, their risk of violence skyrockets."

**True.** Though studies such as this one [6] do show the correlation, the idea that schizophrenia can be caused by a cannabis use disorder alone, remains unproven. [7]

**Claim:** ". . . studies showing marijuana use is a significant risk factor for violence have quietly piled up."

**It depends.** What it depends on is how high a dose someone has taken and possibly what else they have combined it with, leading to impulsivity and possibly psychosis when vulnerable to mental illness. However, used therapeutically and/or responsibly, not abused - not a risk factor for violence. [8]



**Claim:** "In 2014, people who had diagnosable cannabis use disorder, the medical term for marijuana abuse or addiction, made up about 1.5 percent of Americans."

**True.** Cannabis Use Disorder continues to be on the rise. [\[9\]](#)

In closing, nothing in life is ever just black or white. Shades of grey reflect reality. Cannabis, like anything else, including food and screen time, can and does get abused; risk is real. However, cannabis also heals. Mr. Berenson's article left out (besides citations) the significant factor of personal responsibility when it comes to cannabis use, and for that matter, to most every aspect of our lives.

## Conclusion

Today's renewed recognition of cannabis' value to humans confirms the fact of its value throughout the history of human life on earth. Now, we the people are empowered by the recent scientific discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) and its proven role in establishing and maintaining the balance of health and wellness. Its physiological significance cannot be overstated.

Prohibition regarding the use of the cannabis plant still exists since the U.S. Government has not changed it as a Schedule I drug 'of no medical value'. However, as of this writing, over half of the states and D.C. have made cannabis legal for medicinal purposes, and the 'shift in the wind' goes deeper while 10 states and D.C. legally permit adult-use. The momentum continues.

As a result, many of us realize that we have more control over the state of our health than we have been led to believe; increasing numbers of people now take their health into their own hands by learning to use cannabis wisely. In the final assessment it is all about discovering the many nuances of the cannabis plant and how, as an affordable, non-toxic alternative with little to no side-effects, it can help reestablish the optimal balance of health for your body, your mind, your emotions and your deepest self, the soul.

Additionally, since cannabis is a bimodal herb, its effect depends on how it is used. Dosing is everything. Learn how to dose for health and wellness and you and your loved ones receive many benefits. Use too much, too often and the opposite is true.

No longer considered as only a medicine of last resort, and yet even as first-line medicine, cannabis alone is typically not enough to establish long-term health and wellbeing. Lifestyle change are critical to closing the gap and breaking through to an overall, elevated-life condition.

