"Turn over a new leaf."

Every once in a while, it’s necessary to break away from old habits and start with a new beginning. That’s what it means to “turn over a new leaf”. But, when you pick a leaf up off of the ground, it’s tough to make that connection. As it turns out, that’s not where the expression came from.

The phrase “turn over a new leaf” is really another way of saying, “turn the page,” which makes a little a more sense. When you turn the page of a book, you allow yourself to experience something new, and you leave the pages already turned behind you. It just so happens that the first pages were made out of leaves—the leaves of the papyrus plant. People have been using some form of paper for nearly two thousand years. By the year 900, the Egyptians were manufacturing paper fairly extensively, and they had developed an advanced method for turning the papyrus plant into pages for writing. It’s from them that the concept of “turn over a new leaf” was created, and it didn’t have anything to do with a leaf that had recently fallen off of a tree. It refers to different kinds of leaves—the pages of a book.

Excerpt from: