



**#2.9 - August 31, 2022**  
**Progress, Never Perfection**

## What I'm Thinking

*Too often we think of mastery as domination of a subject or becoming an expert. We may believe that if I practice enough, I will become great or even perfect at whatever I try. But one who has truly understood mastery will realize that perfection is unreachable. It's kind of like trying to get to infinity. When the fog clears at the end of your journey and you think you've finally reached the goal, you will discover a whole new world to move into and explore.*

*That's the ongoing work of recovery. It is the living, breathing embodiment of "progress, not perfection." It is why we keep practicing, discovering new ways, shifting our focus to something we have never seen before. And we have found a new direction, perhaps even after months of a plateau. It may have been an enjoyable plateau with lots of fun and interesting things. But it is not perfection.*

*Sometimes we may be tempted to give up at that point. "I've done enough; I'm better than I used to be and life is going in the right direction." Yet there is that nagging thought that maybe there's more ahead. "What if I keep on moving forward? What if I add another bit of practice or a new way of seeing life? What if I explore something I've always wanted to do?"*

*It's about then that we realize we want to keep growing, moving. We realize that it's not just about staying sober; it's about living life in new and never before experienced ways. *Atomic Habits* author, James Clear, sums up mastery in these two short sentences:*

- Mastery is not about perfection. It's about the process.

And the process of using mastery to grow and enhance recovery is truly a gift.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ben', written in a cursive style.

## Facing Challenges - Building Recovery

Digging deeper into how mastering recovery helps us keep moving



forward.

Your thoughts...

A couple weeks ago I sent out a survey asking for your thoughts on the ideas of acceptance and mastery. I am preparing for my presentation at this year's Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH) Fall conference. I wondered what your ideas or questions might be. I got excellent insights from you.

- *What would help you increase your acceptance and move you closer to where you want to be with the ideas of mastery?*
  - - Age- the older you get the less acceptance matters. Meaning the older I am the more OK I am with myself.
    - Daily reminders of what is going well
    - Faith
    - Getting verbal reminders from trusted friends/mentors that I realize I made the best actions/decisions toward my desired outcome and that's the best I can do. That feedback helps me move on
    - Having others validate the difficulty of accepting what needs to be accepted.
    - To do better at letting things go and not holding on to resentments.
    - When I become more confident in what I am able to accomplish in my current goals.
    - Insight or understanding of how acceptance will change my circumstances or experiences.
    - More gratitude; more practice. ☐☐
    - Not feeling guilty most of the time
    - Understanding the why behind the conflict;
    - For me the 3rd Step is the Key to Sanity and Sobriety - Acceptance is simply a part of turning over control of my life and will to God. I am not in charge, and I'm OK with that - is a functional definition of Acceptance.
- *What would give you a better understanding of mastery and recovery?*

- Defining "recovery" intrigues me,
- How we can always improve our decision-making skills
- I don't work with clients who need that (long-term recovery) kind of help but relapse prevention and/or maintenance is a problem area, fighting the boredom, and not knowing anything other than using lifestyle
- I'm wondering what you mean by Mastering long-term recovery?
- Identifying typical or common pitfalls at each step with work throughs.
- Outlining steps to acceptance
- The evolution of perspective about recovery in later stages of life.

What then, am I going to do with this? First, I will make sure to address some of these in my presentations this fall. Second, I will further explore ongoing ways to help others enhance their skills at mastery and the growth of acceptance. If you have further ideas on any of this let me know. After all, I am nowhere near perfection at any of this. But I'm moving, which is what is most important. 😊

[Link to a copy of the \*Mastering Recovery\* Roadmap](#) to download.

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## **Quote and Picture of the Week**

Most misunderstandings in the world could be avoided if people would simply take the time to ask, "What else could this mean?"

— Shannon L. Alder



**Just a shift in focus**

opens whole new directions.

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### ***Mastering Recovery Tools and Resources***

Here are current resources:

- *Mastering Recovery: Find a New Freedom and a New Happiness Through Long-term Recovery.* [Amazon link](#). (Kindle, paperback, hardback, and audio book)
- *Mastering Recovery: A Three-Week Journal to Start the Path of Mastering Recovery.* [Amazon link](#). (Paperback only.)
- **The Mastering Recovery web** pages. Go to the home page: [www.masteringrecovery.net](http://www.masteringrecovery.net)
- **The Mastering Recovery Facebook page-** [LINK to Mastering Recovery Page](#)
- The **Mastering Recovery Facebook group** A "private group" only those who are members, will be able to see and make posts. [Link to JOIN](#)
- **Newsletter Archive** of all the weekly newsletters. [Link to past newsletters.](#)

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