



**#2.37 - March 15, 2023**

**Values and Purpose: Session #4**



## **Healthy, Focused, and Moving**

Good to have you back! We are at the heart of developing mastery this week; we are beginning the second half of the series. This is when we begin to notice the new habits, deeper understandings, and a greater sense of self. No matter how well we were doing in recovery before starting a focused process like mastery, just the ongoing practice will have major impacts.

Remember the five steps of developing mastery from Anders Ericsson's book, *Peak*:

- Deliberate Practice (sessions 1 & 2)
  - Goals and plans
  - The One Thing that makes it easier
- Repetition (Session 2)
  - Regular schedule
  - Don't rush it
- Consistent Feedback (Session 3)
  - External & Internal
  - Discuss it with mentor, coach, sponsor, close friends
  - Be honest with yourself
- Focus (This session)
  - Keep the goal clear, specific, and always in front of you
  - Knowing what to look for as signs of a relapse process
- Endurance (Sessions 5 & 6)

Over the past few weeks we have taken an inventory of our values, which ones have been easier to follow, and which ones have caused some uncertainty, or even relapse concerns. Remembering that relapse begins with emotional and mental concerns long before the old substances become involved, it was important to name the ones that concern us. Healthy values are like the old example of a canary in a coalmine. The canary is far more sensitive to lower levels of oxygen than human workers. The canary was an early warning system. If the bird got sick or died, it was time to get out.

The values that we have more difficulty living up to will work the same way. As you review the values you dealt with in the last two weeks, you have a little better idea of which ones will potentially cause some issues. And they may surprise you. The longer you are in recovery, the more distant some of the old reactions have become. They may not even seem like symptoms any more.

Doing the same exercises as you are, I found the values that are the most difficult maintain. I was surprised. I looked back at a number of incidents over the past 10 years, one as recently as a few weeks ago. I saw a pattern for the first time that connected all these together. It starts under the *honesty* heading- and it deals with my *identity*- who I am, how I perceive myself, and how others perceive me. When I'm worried about other people's opinions or when someone doesn't find me to be as wonderful and wise as I like to think I am, I can become angry- symptom #1. I also become afraid that they won't like me- symptom #2. I feel hurt- symptom #3- for example, when someone unfriends me on Facebook. That is all really under the general value of openness with the value of *acceptance*, of others and myself. The result is *willingness*, the 3rd general values, is impacted and my *serenity* goes out the window. I become sleepless, restless, obsessing on the person or issue. Here's how I, in my good nerdy style, would summarize it using the values grid from previous weeks:

### Values of Recovery

<u>Honesty</u>	<u>Openness</u>	<u>Willingness</u>
Accountability	Gratitude	Empower others
Integrity	Acceptance	Generosity
Identity	Community	empathy
Self-care	Spirituality	Servant leadership
Mindfulness	Compassion	Serenity
		Equality/justice

Impacted Value: Identity      Impacted Value: Acceptance      Impacted Value: Serenity

Symptoms: Anger, fear	Symptoms: Hurt, not accepting others	Symptoms: Sleepless, restless, obsessing
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This surprised me because I had never put it together like this before. I was not aware that these were connected or that they had any connection to my values in this particular way. I knew these all had significant impacts on my serenity and therefore my recovery. One time when I was talking about this with my wife, she finally asked just one simple question: "Are you thinking of drinking?" It was and remains one of those eye-opening spiritual moments. "No," I answered. "Not yet."

This is an important mindfulness exercise. It helps us uncover the symptoms and signs that are our individual unique path that can open the doors to relapse behaviors. They trigger old stuff with the disease thinking, and then the old living patterns get hooked. Sometimes we even discover that the vulnerable value is one that we thought we were best at. And, at least for me, I find the danger to the other values unsettling. In my example above, my self-care, compassion, and generosity to others is challenged.

This is the way we continue to develop our skills of mastery, as we practice the techniques of our own unique recovery. We will find that we are able to keep moving forward in our honesty, openness, and willingness to do what is important. We will find that the times and places where we get stuck at points in our practice are fewer and further between. We will also begin to know that we will reach stuck points. Times change, we change, new issues arise that we have never dealt with before. As we develop in our mastery process skills, we will be able to deal with them more effectively. When you get stuck, you will also know that you are on the edge of growth. New freedom and serenity are ahead.

### **Journal Prompts**

Here are some of the signs or symptoms of being stuck, or of a value being challenged. As you review the list, note if you have been experiencing any of these over the past three sessions. That would not be unusual. You are taking a big step as you have been digging. I would guess that you have found ways to address them. These are warning signs, but not signs that you are stuck. There are others that you already knew were your own stumbling blocks. For this week just note the ones that have been most difficult for you in the past.

- **Restless Irritable Discontent (RID)**
- **Hungry Angry Lonely Tired (HALT)**
- Isolating Sad Hurt Ashamed
- Judgmental Obsessing Sleeplessness Sleeping too much
- Change in eating habits Can't focus Denying that something's wrong
- Feeling you have your disease licked
- Others you have experienced \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Goal/One Thing**

The One Thing for this week is to stay focused and keep moving forward.

This week I will maintain my recovery focus by \_\_\_\_\_. I will watch for the times when I have difficulty with any of the symptoms above and talk with a mentor, coach, sponsor or friend.

### **Week's Practice**

It is important to regularly celebrate what is going well. It keeps us aware that we *are* still living in recovery. It reminds us that we continue to be successful at building a lifestyle of sobriety, serenity, and hope.

Each day this week, reflect on one thing that helped you maintain your recovery that day. Be grateful. Take a moment to reflect on how well your recovery is working. Keep your balance positive.

**Note:** Again, I would love to hear from any of you who have been working on these Values and Purpose directions. Send me an email at [barry@balehman.com](mailto:barry@balehman.com) with any reactions, ideas, suggestions, and questions. Thanks! and have a good week.

[Link to PDF version of this newsletter and lesson.](#)



## Facing Challenges - Building Recovery

[Link to blueprint.](#)

- Other new resources coming later this year to the Mastering Recovery family:
  - For professionals working in the field of substance use disorder:
    - How to begin to work with clients on the very basics of mastery without scaring them away.
    - This could include developing training programs, continuing education webinars, or coaching.
  - For individuals in long-term recovery:
    - How to navigate the difficult transitions in years two through five.

I want and need your ideas and feedback.

- Send me an email at [barry@balehman.com](mailto:barry@balehman.com)
- Schedule a one-on-one Zoom at the link below.

Here is a link to schedule a one-on-one Zoom session with me over the next weeks. That can be a way to look at the ideas you may have or questions you would like to work on.

<https://calendly.com/barryrecovery/zoom-call>

Any questions, please email me. I hope we can find a time to connect and see how this can fall into place.

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

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

**The key to keeping your balance is knowing when you've lost it.**

—Anonymous



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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.) Free [PDF Link](#)
- **Mastering Recovery: The Basics.** Online webinar at Teachable. [Link to enroll](#).
- **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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