



**#2.38 - March 22, 2023**

**Values and Purpose: Session #5**



## **Endurance, Spirituality and Acceptance**

We are at Session 5 already. I hope it has been helpful.

Looking back here are 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 (Session 4)
  - 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)

Ericsson and others point out that it is not always easy to keep at it. It can get boring, or difficult, or we get just plain tired of it. That's why he also talks about why it has to be enjoyable and not drudgery; it has to have an element of fun and it has to be interesting. We can always be learning or experiencing something new. We don't have the time in a six-week series like this to dive more deeply into things like balancing easy and hard, or the whole idea of getting into "flow," several of the essential underpinnings of mastery.

What then keeps us going at recovery? Or anything else for that matter? Where do we find the endurance to do it when it's boring, or difficult? There are many ways of describing it, but I believe it's found in purpose based on what is often called "spiritual." At this point some will stop reading and place this into the non-scientific side of the recovery field. If that's you, just wait a few paragraphs. I am not

going to get into the actual ongoing debate between “spiritual” and “traditional” ideas of “religious.” I am not going to say you have to use the word “God” and turn it into “**Good Orderly Direction**” or “**Group of Drunks.**” If that works for you, go for it.

But, for many reasons, including the understanding of the connections of body, mind, and spirit, I believe “spiritual” is a very integral part of who we are as humans, well beyond the traditional understandings of religion and religious. My short definition is:

- Spirituality is the part of us that connects us with other people, larger communities, and the greater world around us. As such it
  - Feeds our lives with the possibilities of meaning and purpose and
  - Provides us with the opportunities to be part of things which are greater than any one of us as individuals.
  - When we discover the power of the spiritual within and around us, we learn how to live a life that is always moving toward renewal and hope.
- Having a “spiritual awakening” to me means the opening of meaning and purpose, a sense of direction, and living the values that are important to us.

The Marines (yes, the Marines) have used a spiritual fitness guide developed by the U.S. Navy. ([Assessment LINK](#)) Their definition is shorter than mine:

- Spirituality may be used generally to refer to that which gives meaning and purpose in life. The term may be used more specifically to refer to the practice of a philosophy, religion, or way of living. Spirituality has two primary expressions: human and religious. \*[See note]

I shy away from the word religious in order to expand the idea. It is the idea of the actions and connections we make with the greater world. Do not get bogged down in the definitions and debates. As always, remember that what I am presenting in these six sessions is but a very brief overview of a deeper and broader process: mastery applied to values and purpose. Here we are simply discovering the basics. We then can spend a lifetime discovering the joys of living by our values with meaning and purpose.

That’s what Ericsson means by endurance. That is the ability, motivation, and focus to keep practicing what we believe is important. It is what keeps us moving when we feel uncertain or stuck. It is having the willingness to ask for help and support from family, friends, mentors, sponsors. It is taking the inventory needed to know what is important and how to do it.

Endurance comes when a life of meaning and purpose is an ingrained habit. In these six sessions we are looking at what some of those habits can be for you.

\*[Note: I am aware that there is debate about the use of this on constitutional grounds since it does mention traditional religious practices as part of the assessment. I have tried to keep my focus on the non-religious elements with my definition of spiritual. I am also aware of the debate on whether 12-Step programs are “religious”. I think it is important for each of us to find our own

“spiritual” understanding. It is easy to get bogged down in these debates. Avoid them if you can.]

## Journal Prompts

Take time each day this week to review the seven spiritual assessment questions below from the [Navy/Marines Spiritual Fitness Guide](#). Be honest- and be focused on where you are right now. As you look at each question, look at

- How you are doing *overall* right now and are you doing better or worse than you were in the past few months? and
- Which *one* are you doing well at and which *one* needs work?

### *A Spiritual Self-Assessment*

1. How am I engaged with my life's *meaning and purpose*?
2. What's my level of hopefulness about *my life and future*?
3. How am I at making good *moral decisions*?
4. How am I engaged with *family, friends, and community*?
5. How good am I at *forgiving self and others*?
6. Am I respectful of the *attitude of other people*?
7. What is my engagement with my *core values*?

## Goal/One Thing

Looking at your spiritual self-assessment what is the one thing you can practice this week that will help you in your spiritual example? As always, do not try to work on all of them. They are, of course, connected. But stay focused and practice that daily.

For example, if you are having the greatest difficulty with forgiving yourself and/or others your *one thing* this week could be to become aware of when you are holding resentments. Then decide what you can do to leave that resentment behind. It could be doing something supportive of yourself or the others. It could be saying the serenity prayer. It could be writing it down and throwing it away. Find what works for you. What is the *one thing* that can help you be more forgiving.

## Week's Practice

One word to practice this week is *acceptance*. That is one of the two most significant attitudes to cultivate, nurture, and grow. It is (among many things) the ability to acknowledge things the way they are at the moment. It is part of the skill of mindfulness- non-judgmental awareness of what is happening.

Practice acceptance this week.

**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

**If you want to go quickly, go alone.**

**If you want to go far, go together.**

- African Proverb



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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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