

Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman



#5.09 – Freedom – Living the Steps

August 27, 2025

What I'm Thinking

All month we've been exploring how the Twelve Steps evolve as we grow: truth deepens, forgiveness expands, and connection transforms.



This week, we close the arc with a return to something simple, but profound. We are:

Living the Steps.

Not only studying them.
Not just practicing them.

Living them—daily, freely, imperfectly—into the rest of our lives.

This is when recovery becomes a living, daily rhythm. It is when

- The **Foundations**,
- practiced in **Flow**,
- turn into **Freedom**.

Purpose and hope lead toward a recovery lifestyle—more honest, more open, and more free than we ever thought possible, even in the pink cloud days of the early recovery years.

In this we discover a profound and life-altering truth:

 **“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”**
— Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

This week’s steps teach us how to live in recovery, not just perform it.

Step 10 – Return

Step 10 reminds us that freedom isn’t perfection.

It’s the willingness to notice when we’re off... and come back.

Returning to what works and building on it.

Not with shame.

Not with fear.

Just... back.

To the practice of spiritual balance—again and again.

Wait! Didn't I have Step 10 in last week's listing for **Flow**?

Yep! In essence it is the bridge between **Flow** and **Freedom**. As we practice Step 10 we are also building the honesty and freedom with ourselves and others that moves us into a new way of living. As that continues to work within us, we are ready to live in the maintenance of our new lifestyle.

And that means continue to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admit it. But, in line with this week, we are ready and willing to listen.

And that takes us to:

Step 11 – Listening

Step 11 reminds us that recovery is not just what we do,

but how we listen to the deeper voice beneath our habits, fears, and plans.

It invites us to pause.

To pray or sit in silence.

To ask not just, “What should I do?” but, “Who am I becoming?”

This kind of freedom doesn’t rush.

It waits. It listens. It trusts.

And (after listening- as well as before doing more listening) freedom prays for the power to live in the will and action of our Higher Power.

(Wow! These steps are just as full of insight and growth as the other 9!)

✨ Step 12 – Purpose in Motion

Step 12 is not a reward. It's a rhythm.

It tells us that the gift we've been given is not ours to hoard.

We carry the message because the message carried us.

But in long-term recovery, Step 12 is more than service.

It becomes **purpose**—the unique way your life speaks healing into the world.

That might look like:

- Sponsorship or outreach
- Creativity or leadership
- Parenting or presence
- Or simply walking the world with humility and light

This is **freedom**:

Not escape. But meaning. Direction. A way of life.

🌀 Living the Steps: My Year 5 Theme

When I look at this year—year five of *Mastering Recovery*—the thread that runs through it is this:

Living the Steps.

Not mastering them once and moving on, but returning to them as companions. Mastery is getting better at what's important to us.

Not climbing higher and faster, but going deeper with meaning and direction. Not building a new system because we've finished the old one, but nurturing a more honest way to live.

The truth is, I don't believe the Twelve Steps were meant to be completed.

I believe they were meant to be inhabited.
This is what this year is about for me.
And it's what I hope the future holds for you.



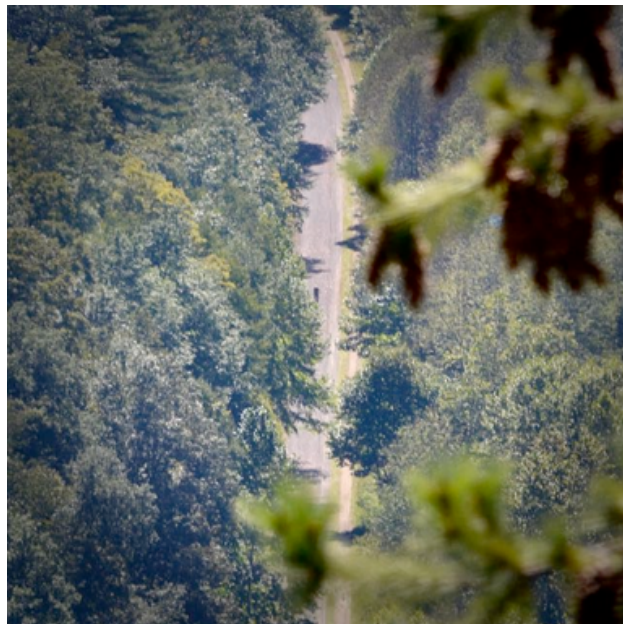
Reflection Prompts: Freedom in Practice

- **Where in your life are you learning to return—gently, without shame**
 - How does Step 10 live in you this season?
- **What helps you hear your inner voice or Higher Power more clearly?**
 - What practice might invite you to listen again?
- **What does “carrying the message” look like in your life right now?**
 - How are you already living Step 12, maybe without even naming it?

Taking a Step Beyond

Freedom is not the absence of commitments, but the ability to choose—and commit myself to—what is best for me.

— Paulo Coelho



💡 Looking Ahead: From Freedom to Hope

As we shift into September, we'll begin a new series on **The Power of Hope**.

Because here's the thing:

You can't walk forward into freedom unless you believe there's something worth walking toward.

Hope isn't just how we start recovery.
It's how we keep recovering—through dryness, doubt, and distance.
It's how we live the Steps when no one's watching.

So next week, we begin again.
You don't want to miss it.

P.S.

The Deeper Recovery Mastermind

The Living Steps: Taking the 12 Steps Further
Begins in September.

The Mastermind is a 3-month experience for those ready to live the Steps more fully.

Small group. Honest conversation. Real transformation.

👉 [Visit the Coaching & Connections Hub](#) to explore more.

➡️ SOON Starting next week...

☀️ *Freedom & Hope*
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Do you like the newsletter? Forward it!

Wherever you are in the journey- come back to what grounds you.  
You're not alone.

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