

Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman



The Power of Hope: A Deeper Recovery Mini-Series

#5.13 – Hope Becomes Purpose: Living Forward

September 24, 2025

What I'm Thinking

We started this month by saying that hope isn't always easy.

It *is* often radical. Or quiet. At times defiant.
But hope — real hope — doesn't just help us hold on.



Eventually, it invites us to move forward.

To ask:
Not just *what do I want?*
But *how do I want to live?*

It often arrives from unexpected people or places.



Hope As a Bridge ...

A number of years ago, my co-counselor was handed a card as a way of saying "Thank You" for the work she and I had done for the patient. It read:

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

-Emily Dickinson

✨ ...To a Broader Experience

I have often used that quote in the intervening years as a way of describing the hope that we share- and receive. The image of hope as something alive, a bird, that comes to me from outside me and finds a place in my own soul. It is there with a song that never stops. No words. Perhaps even silence.

It carries me from where I am now to where I can be.

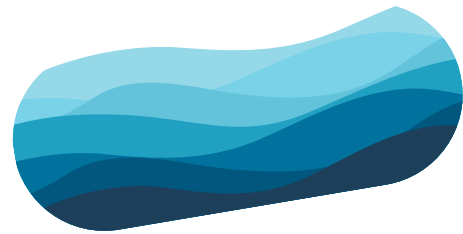
This is the bridge of **hope becoming purpose**.

Not purpose as achievement or grand vision —
but purpose as **direction**.

As orientation.

As the quiet knowing:

- “This is who I’m becoming.”
- “This is how I want to live my life.”



That shift doesn’t happen all at once.

It unfolds — especially in long-term recovery — as we begin to realize that sobriety itself isn’t the end goal.

The hope changes as we change. Grows. Shifts. Evolves into who we are called to be by that which is greater than we are.

But it’s the hope that is at the foundation of purpose and meaning.
What comes next is a different kind of freedom.

Not freedom from the past, but freedom to live into the present — and build the future.

DEEPER RECOVERY



LIVING THE STEPS

🕒 Reflection Prompts

- What’s one way your hope has changed you?
- What’s one part of your life that now feels aligned with purpose — even if you never planned it that way?

Hope as Practice

Over time, hope becomes less of a feeling and more of a practice.
It shows up in your actions. Your commitments.
Your calendar. Your prayers. Your choices.

Using my language for the path of mastery, it is found in the flow of a life lived with the lifestyle of recovery. It is something that we have practiced enough that it is a natural part of us.

Sometimes we have to dig a little to find it.

Especially in difficult times.

But, however dimly, we can still feel hope's movement within us.

- It is radical hope that knows we will get through this day or time.
- It is direction when the fog of uncertainty covers us.
- It is carried in connections:
 - people, places, things- and memories.

It moves us forward as we discover who we are, who we can be- and why!

It becomes a kind of grace —
not something you chase, but something you align your life around.

And when you do that, you stop needing to ask whether you're "on the path."
You *become* the path.

We are connected in the movement of hope.
And connection is what sustains recovery.



And It is Still recovery

Taking a Step Beyond

**"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -
— Emily Dickinson**



Looking Ahead: Toward the Heart of Recovery

Next month, we turn toward the deeper currents beneath long-term recovery— the ones that keep us grounded, growing, and fully human.

October has five Wednesdays. The first four newsletters will follow the arc of my upcoming MARRCH Conference talk – some of the pillars of recovery:

- Connection
- Forgiveness
- Humility
- Grace

Not as abstract ideals, but as lived experiences. Together, they form the deeper foundation of recovery – and they prepare us for what’s coming next.

Mastering Recovery isn’t just about stability or staying sober. It’s about living fully – with purpose, with freedom, and with others.

We’ll invite you into the evolving Mastermind, and continue building this journey together.

For now, just know: You’ve come this far.
There’s still more ahead. And it matters.



Awakening The Church to Address Addiction *A Virtual Conference*

Thursday, October 23
10 am - 6 pm CT

[LINK for more information.](#)



I will be exploring the heart of long-term recovery with my talk:

Connection, Humility, and Grace
Wednesday at the annual MARRCH Conference.

[Register today.](#)

I partner with



The Center of Addiction
and
Faith.



Relevant
Recovery



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



Do you like the newsletter? Forward it to a friend.

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