

Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman



#5.20 – Living in a New Universe
November 12, 2025

🍂 Grace as Transformation

What I'm Thinking

Change is seldom dramatic.

Most of us don't notice it happening until we look back and realize we've been walking through new terrain for some time.



Grace is like that — quiet, steady, persistent.

It doesn't demand attention; it simply keeps working, reshaping our inner world one small act of willingness at a time.

When we first step into recovery, we imagine grace as rescue — something that pulls us out of the pit. But as we grow, grace becomes something subtler and more enduring.

It begins to rearrange us — the way light slowly redefines a room as the sun rises.

One day we notice: the same morning coffee tastes better, the same face in the mirror carries more kindness, the same world feels somehow larger. The shift isn't in the world; it's in our seeing.

Grace doesn't just save us. It changes how we see everything. It gives us new eyes for the life we already have.

A Spiritual Awakening in Real Time

As I sat in my own treatment one afternoon, still wondering what it all meant, the Dean of a nearby seminary where I had taught a course, stopped by to see me. He was sober and wanted to share his experience with me.

As a Christian pastor myself, his greatest bit of wisdom to me was:

Wait until Easter. You will never believe how different it will be.

Four months later, with the tradition of my church, I was in our local cemetery to celebrate resurrection. I watched the sun rise as we sang a hymn.

The Dean had been correct. It was different; I was in quiet awe and wonder. I later described it simply:

I had been asleep. I was now truly awake for the first time in years.

★ Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps... — Step Twelve

That line isn't just a statement of progress — it's a declaration of perception. It says, *Look what grace has done. Now look where it's taking you.*

A spiritual awakening isn't about perfection; it's about awareness: My life is different now. I see the world differently. I am awake.

Grace shifts perception from scarcity to wonder. The awe we once felt only in rare moments becomes built into how we notice life.

That awakening isn't about religion; it's about relationship — with ourselves, with others, and with the world that once felt hostile or indifferent.

We begin to sense a sacred thread connecting everything: pain and joy, effort and ease, giving and receiving.

And from that awareness flows gratitude — not as duty, but as natural response. The same connection that saved our lives keeps them expanding.

Reflecting Together on Staying Grounded in Busy Times

In last Wednesday's *Circle of Hope* we talked about how easily we confuse activity with aliveness. One person said,

"Boredom may be the signal I've drifted from groundedness."

That struck me — how often we label stillness as boredom, when it might be grace calling us back to awareness. Sometimes what feels like emptiness is simply space opening up for something new to grow.

Another reflection extended the idea:

"Not-busy does not mean doing nothing. It may mean purpose."

That's a quiet kind of transformation — when grace teaches us to measure our days not by how much we've accomplished, but by how present we've been. In that shift, purpose stops being about motion and becomes about meaning. It's one of the surest signs we're already living in a new universe — we've stopped running, and started listening again.

It means we are experiencing the presence of grace.

Grace Leading to Gratitude: The Bridge to Community

Grace doesn't isolate; it integrates.

Once it takes root, it refuses to let us stay alone in our transformation. It keeps pulling us outward — toward service, humility, and belonging.

When grace changes us, we begin to notice others more deeply.
We see the quiet struggles, the familiar hungers, the same desire to be whole.
And something inside us says, *Go share what you've found.*

That's Step Twelve in action — passing on what was freely given.
Grace opens the door, and gratitude holds it wide for someone else.

Recovery grows not through grand gestures but through small acts of shared humanity: listening, mentoring, forgiving, inviting.

✨ Reflection Prompt: Noticing the New Universe

- *Where have I noticed quiet shifts in how I see the world or myself?*
- *What relationships or situations look different because grace changed me?*
- *How might I share what's been freely given — one simple action this week?*

Grace and gratitude will meet you in the doing.

✓ Taking a Step Beyond

Grace means you're in a different universe from where you had been stuck, when you had absolutely no way to get there on your own.

— Anne Lamott



Catch the wind! Then share it through what you do.

◆ Circles Connection

"We don't see change while it's happening. We see it when grace gives us new eyes."

In the **Circles of Hope**, we witness that truth together.

One person speaks, another nods, and suddenly grace becomes visible — not as theory but as lived experience.

Each story becomes a mirror, reflecting the quiet transformation happening in us all.

No one stays in a new universe alone; we learn to live there together.



Shared Wisdom

- "Boredom may be the signal I've drifted from groundedness."

Safe Spaces

- "Sometimes we run to stay ahead of being tired."

Connections

When life gets busy, what helps you stay grounded?

Wednesday November 19 @ 7:00 pm CT



The theme for the month:
Staying grounded when life gets busy.

[Link to register.](#)

Thank you for continuing to walk this path with me.

Recovery is never static; it's a continual awakening — one that deepens every time we pause long enough to notice grace at work.

If you're looking for a place to see that grace together, join a **Circle of Hope** this month. We'll gather on **Wednesday, Nov 19 at 7:00 p.m. CT** for *Staying grounded when life gets busy*.

Sometimes the universe grows a little larger when we show up together.



Do you like the newsletter? Forward it to a friend or colleague!

A stylized blue ink signature of Barry Lehman.

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

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