



## Mastering Recovery

*Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection*

With Barry Lehman

#5.27– The Light We Carry Into the New Year

December 30, 2025



### The Pause Between Years



The days between Christmas and New Year's have always felt like borrowed time to me.

The calendar says we're still in the old year,  
but something inside us has already started turning toward what's  
next.

There's often less urgency here.  
Fewer expectations.  
A quieter kind of honesty.

For many of us in recovery, this pause matters.  
It gives us room to notice what the year actually left in our hands —  
not what we planned, not what we hoped for, but what is truly ours  
now.



## **What Stays With Me is What I Carry**

For 2025 that which stayed and carried me was connections.

A word always at the edge between indelible truth- and trite phrase. It is an essential foundation for long-term recovery. I talked about that a few months ago here when I reflected on moving back to the Twin Cities. It was old and new connections that got us settled into our new apartment and helped us make adjustments.

A light for me and one I can share with others.

This past week reminded me of that and has lifted connection- and gratitude for the connections I have- into the #1 position of the light I carry into the new year.

Three days before Christmas my wife was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia and complications from other issues. Not the way we hoped to celebrate our first Christmas with the family nearby.

Yet because family and friends were nearby, some physically and many spiritually, there was and continues to be a light at the end of this year for us. A light that reminds me that I, too, can be part of living the grace and wonder of recovery. Through connections!

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that light is what breaks darkness apart. When I am able to let the light I have in recovery shine, I make a difference, just like many did for us in the past week.

## The Heart of the Week: A Different Wisdom

This time of year, we're often encouraged to reinvent ourselves. You know,

I resolve to do better or be better or exercise more or eat less....

Recovery teaches a different wisdom. Connections are what keep us on track.

Connections allow the energy of life to be shared.

We don't begin again by erasing the past.

We begin by **honoring what has carried us**  
and releasing what no longer needs to come along.

Light, in this sense, isn't about optimism or positivity.

It's about

- Clarity.
- Honesty.
- Direction.
- Connection.

It's knowing what helps us stay aligned — and choosing to keep practicing it.

## ★ The Recovery Lens

Long-term recovery isn't about dramatic turning points. They happen, of course, like my move to a new location after over 17 years. But through a lifestyle of long-term recovery, it's about carrying the light *we already have* into the changes and turns.

We have a steady illumination to guide our way. The kind of light that helps us:

- see the next honest step
- stay grounded when things feel uncertain
- move at a human pace
- choose rhythm over intensity
- trust process more than pressure

We don't need to see the whole year ahead. We only need enough light for the next step.

And that light is already present —  
shaped by everything you've practiced, endured, and learned this year.



### ✓ Taking a Step Beyond

**Before you tell your life what  
you intend to do with it,  
listen for what it intends to do  
with you.**

— Parker Palmer

### ✨ Reflection Prompt

**What light from this past year do I want to carry  
forward?**

**And what weight am I ready to set down so I can walk  
into the new year with more freedom?**

Let the answers be simple.  
Light travels best when it isn't overloaded.

### 🕯 Closing Reflection

Thank you for walking through December- and the past year with me-  
through quiet foundations, joy, peace, grace, and hope.  
As the year turns, may you trust the light you're already carrying.  
It's more than enough to begin.

— Barry

Email me. I always look forward to hearing from you.



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

