



Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman

#5.31-Living in Tune

January 28, 2026

What I'm Thinking

Life in Tune with Grace

Over the past few weeks, we've been moving slowly and deliberately through the wideness of life—not trying to master it, but learning how to stand within it.



We began by naming the vastness itself: the promise, the possibility, and the overwhelm that come with being alive. We noticed how easily that vastness can fragment us—into roles, responsibilities, and expectations that quietly exhaust us.

Then we turned toward connection. Not as rescue or advice, but as companionship. *Before you cross the street, take my hand.* The crossing remains ours—but connection steadies us as we move.

Last week, we stayed with serenity—not as a calm feeling, but as a way of remaining oriented when life happens anyway. Serenity, as recovery teaches it, doesn't require life to settle down. It grows as we learn to live inside what is.

This week, everything comes together.

Integration, at this stage of recovery, isn't about adding anything new. It's about letting what is already true settle into place.

Joseph Campbell once wrote:

"The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature."

That image stays with me.

Not striving.

Not conquering.

Not believing the right things.

But **attunement**.

In recovery language, this is what Step Eleven points toward— a willingness to listen. To seek alignment rather than control.

Spirituality, at this stage, is not about belief.

It's about living in tune with grace, not in competition with life.

In other words, it's another form of integration.

Not:

- belief statements
- doctrine
- striving for enlightenment

But:

- listening
- alignment
- care
- grace-in-motion
- discernment-in-action

This is where the practices of recovery stop feeling like tasks and begin to feel like a way of inhabiting life.



An Old Word, at the Right Time

Sitting in Twelve Step meetings is normal for me. Sometimes I'm there simply to listen. Other times, I find myself paying closer attention, almost as if I'm listening for guidance in the words of others.

Recently, I've been more distracted in my own life and recovery than usual. I've written about some of it here before—illness, life becoming more challenging, energy dropping, cold weather, and the weight of events around us in Minnesota.

There have been very few times since those first couple of years in early recovery when the message felt so clear and so necessary:

Pay attention.

I hear it differently now than I did then, but it's the same invitation—finding the grace and hope I need by staying present.

At that meeting, one person after another spoke about their feelings, their experience, their strength, their fears, and their hope. That kind of flow doesn't happen often. There was no single theme, no agenda—just honesty.

I kept listening.

It was all I could do.

I had no new words.

And sometimes it isn't a new word that's needed.

It's an old word, heard in the right moment.

Toward the end of the meeting, one man reached into his pocket and pulled out his AA coin. He turned it over and read the words out loud:

Unity. Service. Recovery.

The three core legacies.

The foundation of the fellowship.

And there it was—right in the middle.

Service.

Not sitting in my own fear or distraction.

Not trying to fix or figure everything out.

But turning toward someone else.

Extending my hand.

That was the attunement I needed—not effort, not insight, but alignment with what has always held me.

The Heart of the Week:

Integration isn't about doing more of the right things.

It's about living in time with the grace that's already at work.

This kind of living doesn't make life smaller.

It makes it coherent.

Earlier this month, I shared a simple self-intervention on Facebook and LinkedIn. It was a way of pausing, re-orienting, and reconnecting when things feel off-center. A reminder that we don't have to solve life in order to live it.

I gathered that reflection into a simple PDF, available for anyone who wants something steady to return to when life feels unsettled. Not to get ahead. Just to

come back.

Click Here
for free PDF of the 7-Day Self-Intervention

★ The Recovery Lens

Long-term recovery is not a straight line of improvement. It's a deepening relationship with reality—learning when to act, when to wait, when to speak, and when to stay quiet. As serenity grows, so does discernment. And discernment, practiced over time, begins to look like wisdom.

This is why companionship still matters. Why reflection matters. Why spaces like **Circles of Hope** continue to be part of the container—not as programs to complete, but as places to pause, listen, and stay in tune together.

I'll be holding a **Circle of Hope** next Wednesday, **February 4 at noon CST**. It will be a space to pause together and reflect on what January has surfaced.

For my planning purposes, [here is a link](#) to let me know you are interested in this **Circle of Hope**.

🐟 Reflection Prompts

You might sit with one or two of these as January comes to a close:

- Where do you notice moments of alignment in your life right now—even small ones?
 - When have you felt “in tune” rather than in control?
 - What would it mean to live this coming month with a little less striving and a little more attunement?
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heartbeat match the beat of
the universe, to match your nature
with Nature.**

— Joseph Campbell

A Closing Invitation

January hasn't been about arriving anywhere.

It's been about learning how to stand where we are—connected, oriented, and held.

As we move forward, the invitation is simple:

Keep listening.

Keep aligning.

Keep living in tune with grace.

That, too, is mastery.

That is recovery.

And that is spirituality, lived.

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