



Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps • Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman

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Skills I Learned Without Naming them

● Surprising Recovery

There are a few sentences I find myself using now that I don't think I would have used years ago.

At least not easily.

And certainly not without some internal debate.

I was reminded of them while reading one of Louise Penny's Three Pines mysteries.

Her character, Armand Gamache, comes back to four simple sentences—ones he suggests lead to wisdom:

- I was wrong.
- I'm sorry.
- I don't know.
- I need help.



There's nothing complicated about them.
Which may be part of the problem.

They actually are quite common phrases.

But we often don't hear them with the sincerity Gamache meant when quoting them. They are toss-offs easily used to stop conversations.

My wife and I used to joke about marking the calendar anytime I would use one of these type of statements.

It would probably have been a mostly blank calendar.

I don't remember consciously deciding to start using these.

No moment where I thought:
"This is what recovery looks like."

But somewhere along the way...
they started showing up.

From Early to Long-Term

"I was wrong."

That one used to take some effort.

Not always outwardly—but internally.

A quick explanation. A quiet defense. A need to balance the scales just a little.

Now?

Not always easy.

But simpler.

Cleaner.

Sometimes even immediate.

"I'm sorry."

Not as a strategy.

Not to smooth things over.

Just... because it's true.

"I don't know."

That one may have taken the longest.

There was a time when not knowing felt like something to fix.

Now it feels more like something to allow.

"I need help."

Still working on that one.

But I notice I say it earlier than I used to.
Which may be the whole point.

The Heart of the Week:

I don't usually think of these as "recovery skills."
They don't feel like techniques.
They feel more like... ways of being that have quietly worked their way into
everyday life.

A conversation goes differently.
A moment passes without escalation.
Something that used to take effort... doesn't.

And if I stop long enough to notice it,
I have to admit—
I don't think I would be living this way without recovery.

Not because I learned these sentences.
But because something in me became more willing to say them.
These are foundations of healthy, long-term recovery.

I noticed it again when I was preparing for the small MasterClass last week.

Not in anything I planned to say— but in the kinds of things that tend to come up
when people begin to talk honestly.

It's rarely complicated.
It sounds more like:

"I don't know." "I think I was wrong." "I'm not sure what to do next."

And in those moments, something real begins.

This is one of the quieter surprises of recovery:

- The things that matter most often show up as small, simple choices—
repeated often enough that they begin to feel natural. Nothing dramatic.

No breakthrough moment.
Just a few sentences...
that somehow change everything.



I was wrong. I'm sorry.

I don't know. I need help.

-Armand Gamache in Louise Penny's
Three Pines novels.

A Closing Thought

You may already have a few quiet surprises of your own.

You might not call them recovery either.

But if you listen closely this week,
you may hear one of them show up
right when you need it.

A Quiet Next Step

If this kind of shift is something you've been noticing in your own life, I'll be opening a small, paid 5-week **Mastermind** soon—just a few people, exploring what it looks like to live recovery at a deeper level.

If you're interested, you can simply reply below and let me know.

I'm Interested



**A special
Shout-Out**

The MARCO Summit in Eagan, MN, on May 4 and 5 was nothing short of extraordinary. I haven't been to a conference with this much energy and excitement in a long time.

A wide range of individuals and organizations shared history and ideas that made me glad to see this work expanding. Peer Recovery Specialists have become an important part of recovery in Minnesota, and, if the summit was any indication, there are many successes and innovations ahead.

Great job!

The mission of MARCO (*Minnesota Alliance of Recovery Community Organizations*) is to educate, advocate, and mobilize resources to grow the community-based recovery movement across Minnesota.



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Relevant Recovery.

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