



Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps • Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman

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The Energy Continues to Move

● Surprising Recovery

As this year of Mastering Recovery comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on an unexpected lesson from Trumpet Camp.

It came from my teacher, Mr. Bob Baca in the direction he gave me for the next year of my growth in playing and music.



He wasn't talking about my range into the truly high notes.
He wasn't talking about endurance enough to play for hours.
He wasn't talking about fancy technique.

He was talking about energy.
Specifically, the energy inside a musical phrase.

Many musicians unconsciously treat a softer note as having less energy.

But great musicians know better.

The volume may decrease.

The energy continues.

The phrase continues.

And the music continues moving forward.

Even in a decrescendo or decrease in volume

Especially in a decrescendo.

That idea has stayed with me after camp ended.

Because over the past year I've discovered something similar about recovery, aging, and life itself.

From Early to Long-Term

A year ago I retired from Mayo Clinic.

At the time, I thought I was closing a chapter.

What I didn't realize was that I was stepping into a new season of questions.

- What does service look like now?
- What does growth look like now?
- What does recovery look like now?
- What does purpose look like now?

Much of Year 5 became an exploration of those questions.

Along the way I discovered that elder wisdom is real.

So is mortality.

So is uncertainty.

I discovered that wonder is still possible.

Growth is still possible.

Music is still possible.

Recovery is still unfolding.

And perhaps that is the greatest surprise of all.

For much of my life, I thought recovery was about learning how to stay sober.

Then I learned it was about learning how to live.

This year I discovered something more.

- **Recovery is also about learning how to continue growing.**

Recently I found myself struggling with a sticky valve on my cornet.

I cleaned it. I oiled it. I worked it repeatedly.

I did everything I was supposed to do.

Yet the problem remained.

Eventually I discovered something important.

The issue wasn't maintenance.

The issue wasn't effort.

Something was out of alignment. It needed to be changed.

The Heart of the Week:

Over the past several months we've explored humility, grace, forgiveness, hope, connection, practice, and the surprising ways recovery continues to deepen long after the crisis has passed.

Again and again, the same themes emerged.

Maintenance keeps recovery alive.

Practice helps recovery grow.

Growth changes us in ways we often don't notice until life places us under pressure.

And sometimes, when things feel stuck, the answer isn't more effort.

Sometimes something simply needs adjustment.

These aren't separate lessons. They're different ways of describing the same journey.

*The journey from
maintaining recovery...
to practicing recovery...
to living recovery.*

That's where this next year of Mastering Recovery begins.

Not with a new technique.

Not with a new program.

Not with a checklist.

But with a question raised by the last phrase of the Twelve Steps "to practice these principles in all our affairs.

What does that mean in practice?

What happens when honesty, hope, faith, courage, humility, awareness, and service become more than ideas?

What happens when they become ways of living?

Those are the questions we'll begin exploring in Year 6.

As I look ahead, I find myself less interested in certainty than I once was.

Less interested in having answers.

More interested in paying attention.

More interested in remaining teachable by asking the right questions.

More interested in noticing where the energy of life is still moving.

Because a musician never finishes musicianship.

A person never finishes recovery.

An elder never finishes wisdom.

The practice simply changes.

And perhaps that is one of the great gifts of long-term recovery.



**There is a vitality,
a life force,
an energy,
a quickening
that is translated through you
into action.**

— Martha Graham

That's what the *MasterClass* is all about. Practicing the Principles and growing forward.

**Wednesday, July 1 at 12:00 pm
CDT.**

Master Class

With Barry A. Lehman

I'm interested.

 **A Closing Thought**

The volume number in the masthead will change.

The role may change.

The season most likely will change.

But the music can continue.

The phrase can continue.

The energy can continue moving forward.

Perhaps that is what "*practicing these principles in all our affairs*" has been pointing toward all along.

Not simply staying sober.

Not merely maintaining recovery.

But allowing recovery to become part of how we live, grow, love, serve, and pay attention.

That is the journey we'll begin exploring in Year 6.

- One principle at a time.
- One practice at a time.
- One day at a time.

Until, little by little, recovery becomes less something we do and more something we live.



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