



Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps • Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman

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Master Class

With Barry A. Lehman

If it's not yet noon CT on June 3,
you can still join this month's
MasterClass.

This month's theme is:

***When Recovery Feels Flat:
The Hidden Challenge of
Long-Term Recovery***

[Click Here to get the link.](#)

When Flow Doesn't Happen

● **Surprising Recovery**

Last weekend I played a concert with the brass band.

It wasn't one of those magical performances where everything clicked.

I never really felt centered. Focus was elusive. Flow never seemed to arrive.

Yet the concert still happened.

The notes were there. The phrases were there. The entrances were there. Not because I was inspired.

Because I had practiced.

This is not a musical miracle story:

"I practiced hard, felt great, and had a wonderful concert."

Instead, it's:

"I didn't feel great. I wasn't at my best.

But the practice was there when I needed it."

That feels much closer to real life.

When flow didn't show up, practice did.

That sounds like long-term recovery.

From Early to Long-Term

We often talk about recovery as if it depends on feeling and awareness and connections.

Yes. Those matter.

But sometimes they don't show up on schedule.

And when flow doesn't show up, practice does.

Many of us assume long-term recovery eventually settles into maintenance.

You figure out how it works by

- going to meetings,
- listening to your sponsor,
- working with others.

But occasionally something surprising happens:



- a meeting affects us again,
- a conversation reaches us,
- gratitude returns,
- music returns,
- connection deepens,
- tears come unexpectedly,
- hope quietly reappears.

That's what I've been looking at in the last month- being aware and ready for the surprises.

That's when we catch ourselves growing.

Not through dramatic breakthroughs.

But through ordinary moments that suddenly feel alive again.

Especially if:

- you unexpectedly found yourself practicing in the meeting,
- becoming aware of a principle in real time,
- and realizing growth was still happening.

The Heart of the Week:

A person I had never met showed up at the meeting. They weren't newly sober, but they were working on growing their recovery in new ways.

Prior to the meeting starting, they were explaining about some events that had a physical impact on their recovery and life in general.

"I can play this video for you to show you what was happening."

And a response from one of the other people- a regular:

"No. That's good."

A moment of uncomfortable silence and the original speaker said "okay."

The meeting began with all the normal readings; we did the normal process we follow for the meeting. We reflected on the readings and our past week's sobriety.

After everyone had spoken the regular who had stopped the earlier discussion spoke again.

He looked at the visitor and made an immediate and direct amend.

Yes, the person making the amend was me.

I said to them and the others around the table that I had no conscious thought about why I cut the pre-meeting conversation short.

Why I was, in essence, rude and uncaring about something the other person wanted to share.

I admitted that.

Out loud.

The other person smiled. They knew what I was doing.

Working Step 10

Practicing honesty, willingness, and other principles embedded in the program.

Even when recovery was lost and I stepped away from all that was essential to me, I knew what had to be done.

When flow didn't show up, practice did.



**We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act,
but a habit.**

-Aristotle

A Closing Thought

One of the surprises of long-term recovery is that growth doesn't always announce itself.

Sometimes it appears in a meeting.

Sometimes in a conversation.

Sometimes in an amend we never expected to make.

We think recovery is happening when we feel inspired, connected, grateful, or spiritually alive.

But often recovery is happening long before those feelings arrive.

It is happening in the practices we have repeated over time:

honesty,
willingness,
humility,
service,
gratitude,
and connection.

We practice them until one day we discover they have become part of who we are.

When flow didn't show up, practice did.

And perhaps that is one of the deepest surprises of all.

Next week I'll explore another surprise of long-term recovery:

the recovery skills we use every day without even calling them recovery.

Sometimes the principles we've practiced for years begin showing up in ordinary life in ways we no longer recognize—

until we stop and take a closer look.



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Relevant Recovery.

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