



## *Mastering Recovery*

Rooted in the Steps



Practicing the Principles

*With Barry Lehman*

**Issue 6.05 - July 29, 2026**

### **The Freedom to Serve**

Last week I ended with an “ouch!” moment.

It was when I realized I was facing some old issues in my own recovery while talking with others about theirs.



I responded to that awareness with discipline.

- I prayed.
- I reflected.
- I journaled.
- I kept coming back to it instead of running from it.

I simply kept returning to the practices that have brought me this far.

I kept looking around and listening deeply for what I needed to hear- awareness and mindfulness of self.

That's the ongoing practice of steps 10-12. These are the steps of freedom.

Because I am sober and in recovery,  
I am now able to more freely participate in life.  
Freedom is the freedom to become more than I was.

 **But That Was Only the Beginning- Of course!**

So, as I read Shane Parrish's weekly newsletter, it did not surprise me that he wrote:

- *Acceptance is not surrender. It is the moment you stop wasting energy on what is already true and start using that energy to **decide what to do next**.* {emphasis added.}

Awareness and discipline can lead to the freedom of deciding how best to use my energy to do the next right thing.

What then did I learn from these several weeks? Or more clearly, what did these several weeks produce in me?

I kept coming back to the age-old phrase from 12-Step groups:

- *If you are stuck or not sure what to do next- start by helping someone else.*

That's the principle of service.

### **Living Recovery:**

Last Friday evening I was out of town and found a local AA meeting.

No surprise, the theme was helping others.

It was a fun meeting, lots of positive energy.

- Don't judge, just serve. Serve, no matter what. Carry the message.

And your service isn't just with people in need of recovery. It's about life.

There's a famous line from St. Francis which I adapt:

*Carry the message, and if necessary use words!*

Perhaps it's both.

- Do **and** say.
- Act **and** reflect.
- Explain **and** help.

That's why I was out of town in the first place. I had been the Friday afternoon speaker at a treatment center 200 miles from home.

I had shared in words the power of the Promises of AA by telling my story and giving (I hope) clear, understandable experiences.

Sitting in the meeting a few hours later, I realized I had gotten out of myself and

served others.

It must have worked because I was feeling the freedom and hope I had come to share.

### **Practicing the Principles:**

How long do we practice recovery?

We practice it until it begins flowing naturally into the lives of others.

Then we keep practicing because, well, that's how we become more than we have been.



### **A practice for the week:**

If you're feeling stuck this week, or even if you're not, don't spend all your energy trying to figure it out.

Instead, ask one simple question:

#### **Who can I encourage today?**

Make a phone call.

Write a note.

Listen to someone's story.

Offer a helping hand.

Then notice what happens—not only for them, but for you.

Sometimes the next step in our own recovery begins by helping someone else take theirs.

### **A Closing Thought**

As I drove home from that treatment center, I realized something.

I had gone there hoping to encourage others.

Instead, they had reminded me why I keep practicing these principles myself.

Recovery doesn't simply help us stop drinking.  
It gradually changes the way we participate in life.

Service is one of the clearest signs of that change.

And that leaves me with another question.  
If practicing these principles changes the way I live...

### **Who am I becoming?**

We'll begin August by asking what happens to us when these practices become a way of life.

That, I think, is where recovery becomes more than something we do—it begins shaping who we are.



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## **Upcoming Conversations and Events**

Practicing the principles *is what the monthly MasterClass* is all about.  
Practicing- and growing forward.

**Wednesday, August 5 at 12:00 pm  
CDT.**

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# Master Class

*With Barry A. Lehman*

**I'm interested.**



***Back issues of the newsletter*** can be found at: **Newsletter Hub.**

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