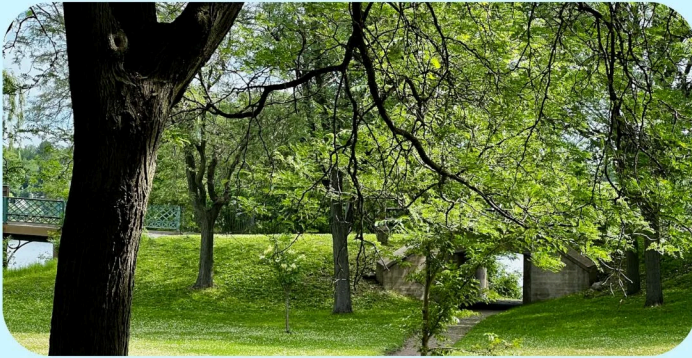




Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps



Practicing the Principles

With Barry Lehman

Issue 6.07 - August 12, 2026

Take Your Umbrella ☂

Last week I ended with a question:

What is my Higher Power inviting me to become now?

That was Step 6.

Willingness.

Being open to the possibility that I am not finished becoming.

This week was supposed to give me an opportunity to explore that question with others at the MasterClass.

Except the MasterClass didn't happen.

Somewhere in all the IT details, I made a mistake.

I apologized. I practiced Step 10.

I had expected the MasterClass to give me insights for this week's newsletter. Instead, I got silence.

Maybe there's a lesson in that.

Expectations. Anticipation. Maybe even a little control.

Are these some character defects?



 **That's Only the Beginning- Of course!**

I've often wondered why Step 6 speaks of "defects of character" and Step 7 of "shortcomings." I've usually assumed they were simply two ways of saying the same thing.

Lately I've wondered if long-term recovery allows me to hear shortcomings somewhat differently.

At an AA meeting the other week, the youngest person in the room was 67. We found ourselves talking about change. Aging. Life not being what it used to be.

That conversation stayed with me.

At 78, I have limitations I didn't have at 58.

I don't have the same energy.

My body doesn't always cooperate.

There are things I can't do as easily as I once did.

The limitations aren't character defects. But they can expose some very familiar ones.

I want control. So I become impatient. Then I resist change.

I refuse help because I ought to be able to do it myself.

Aging simply gives them new places to hide.

That's why I still need humility.

Many years ago my wife and I knew someone who was very proud of an organization they belonged to. Especially its emphasis on humility.

One day they summed it up perfectly:

"When it comes to humility, we're tops!"

Living Recovery:

The ego can attach itself to almost anything.

Sobriety, spirituality, service.

Knowledge and sponsorship.

My understanding of recovery as the right understanding.

I become proud of how humble I am.

Or I can decide I'm worthless. Nothing.

The lowest thing on earth.

I'm the best whale poop on the bottom of the ocean—and nothing is lower than whale poop on the bottom of the ocean.

I'm the best at being the best...
or the best at being the worst.
And I'm still at the center.

That's not humility.
Humility isn't thinking more highly of myself than I ought to think.
But it isn't thinking too lowly of myself, either.

Maybe humility is becoming right-sized.

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Sometimes I treat my Higher Power like an all-powerful magician. Say the right words and God will do it for me.

God, remove my impatience and my fear.
God, remove my need to control things.

It's a little like walking outside into a rainstorm and praying:
"God, please don't let me get wet."

And God says:
Take your umbrella.

The rain is real.
My limitations are real.
Life has changed.

At 78, I'm not going to suddenly become 58 again because I prayed hard enough.
Humility begins by accepting that it's raining.

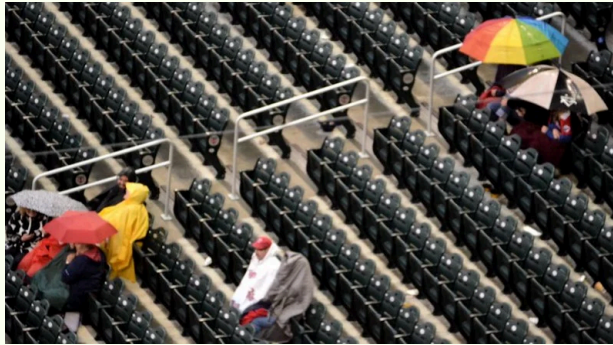
What do I need in order to walk through the rain?

Practicing the Principles:

- Maybe today the umbrella is asking for help.
- Maybe it's slowing down.
- Maybe it's listening instead of teaching.
- Maybe it's accepting somebody else's way of doing something.
- Maybe it's admitting I made an IT mistake, apologizing, and moving on

I don't have to decide I'm terrible. I don't have to defend myself.
I made a mistake. I apologized. Now what?

The longer I live, the more I realize that I know less than I think I do.



A practice for the week:

Once each day this week, notice a place where you don't have to do it all yourself.

Ask:

What umbrella is available to me right now?

- Maybe it's asking for help.
- Maybe it's listening.
- Maybe it's accepting a limitation.
- Maybe it's admitting you were wrong.
- Maybe it's simply letting someone else hold the umbrella.

Then do one thing:

Step underneath.

◆ A Closing Thought

And that's part of who I am becoming:

A person whose humility doesn't end in a better understanding of myself. Nor does it call me to be able to stand in the rain- and get wet.

Becoming right-sized helps me see myself more clearly. But it also helps me see the people around me—and how the way I live affects them.

Just practice being right-sized.

You may even discover there's someone else standing there with you.



Upcoming Conversations and Events



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

Email me. I always look forward to hearing from you



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