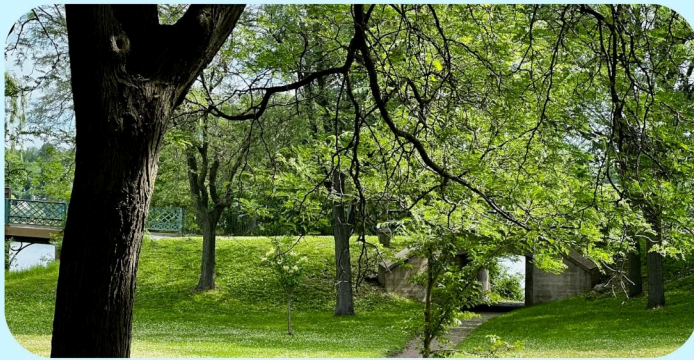




Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps



Practicing the Principles

With Barry Lehman

Issue 6.06 - August 5, 2026

A Lifetime of Becoming

I mentioned last week that I spoke at a treatment center two weeks ago. After my talk and a break, it was time to put me on the Hot Seat. A Q & A session.



One question was truly unique.

"When did you know for sure that you had experienced a spiritual awakening?"

I smiled.

I thought about someone who visited me while I was in treatment all those decades ago. As a fellow Christian, he quietly said,

"You'll be amazed how different Easter morning will feel when you get there five months from now."

He was right.

The Easter story of joy, freedom, and new life wasn't just something I believed that morning. It was something I was beginning to experience through my own recovery.

What a morning.

Looking back, I realize that Easter wasn't the moment I *became* spiritual. It was the moment I recognized that something inside me had already begun to change.

That change didn't happen by magic.

It happened through practicing the principles of recovery.

As I reflected on that question later, I realized the answer had actually been woven throughout my talk. I simply hadn't called it "spirituality."

For me, spirituality is the quality of my connections—

with myself, with other people,
with the world around me, and
with a Power greater than myself.

That's why one simple question can become a daily spiritual inventory:

How's my spirituality today?

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

As I finished writing this newsletter, I realized something. By the time you read it, I'll be 78 years old.

Birthdays have a way of making us look backward for a moment. But I've discovered that recovery keeps inviting me to look forward.

Not, "What have I accomplished?"

But, "Who am I still becoming?"

As I stay connected and continue reaching out to others, I discover something else happening.

I am becoming more willing.

Which leads me to another question that has been growing in my own life lately:

What is my Higher Power inviting me to become now?

 **Living Recovery:**

The spiritual posture of Step 6 is willingness.

"Were entirely ready..."

Ready for what?

Not simply to have defects removed, but to continue becoming the person I was created to be.

That kind of willingness doesn't happen by accident.

It is practiced.

Bill W. wrote about asking God to remove our defects of character. Sometimes I've treated that as though my Higher Power were a magician with a magic wand.

"Here, God. Just fix me so I can get on with my life."

That would certainly have been the easier, softer way.

Instead, my Higher Power has patiently invited me into a different way of living.

The practices I began all those years ago are still the practices that shape my life today.

- I go to meetings.
- I listen to - and play - music.
- I talk with friends—regularly. (Confession: Usually.)
- I read and write.
- I try to care for myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- These are the people, places, and practices that keep my spirit alive.

These practices matter.

Not because they earn me anything. Not because they make me more spiritual.

But because they help me stay open.

Every day I have another opportunity to become just a little more willing than I was yesterday.

Practicing the Principles:

Recently I came across a simple idea from author Austin Kleon.

He suggests a 30-day calendar called the "**Practice and Suck Less Challenge.**"

It made me smile.

I have a similar calendar for my trumpet practice.

Another one tracks how many steps I walk each day.

What if I created a simple calendar for my spiritual practice?

Not to become perfect.

Simply to remind myself to practice.

To become a little more willing today than I was yesterday.



**The secret of your future is
hidden in your daily routine.**

— Mike Murdock

A practice for the week:

Create your own **"Practice and Become"** calendar.

Each day simply answer with one word:

Today I practiced...

***Prayer. *Listening. *Patience. *Walking. *Music.
*Hope. *Kindness. *Rest. *Meetings. *Awareness.**

No explanation. Just one word.

At the end of the week look at the page.

What kind of person are those practices helping you become?

◆ **A Closing Thought**

You may have noticed that in this quarterly series I'm not moving through the Twelve Steps in numerical order. That's intentional.

I'm writing about long-term recovery.

Most of us have already worked the Steps. Maybe even numerous times.

Now we're discovering how they continue to shape our lives years—even decades—later.

July focused on Steps 10–12, the daily practice of awareness, discipline, and service.

Now we're circling back to discover how those same daily practices keep inviting us to become more willing, more humble, and more fully alive.

I've noticed that after years of recovery, the questions have changed.

As has Step 6.

I used to ask,

'What do I need to stop doing?'

More and more, I find myself asking,

'Who am I becoming?'"

Perhaps that's what a spiritual awakening really looks like.

Not one dramatic moment.

But a lifetime of becoming.



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



Do you like the newsletter? Forward it to a friend or colleague!

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