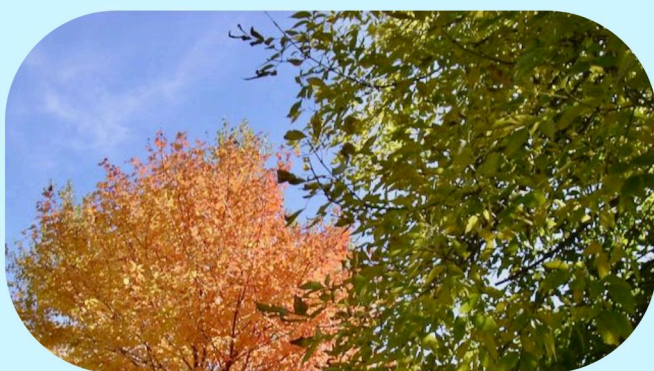




Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps



Practicing the Principles

With Barry Lehman

Issue 6.14 - September 30, 2026

Squirrel ... 🐿 !

At my age, a completely new thing ran across my yard the other week.

Couldn't miss it when it first ran across the yard, skittering quickly.

I saw the motion as I was working. A squirrel. Nothing unusual, except this one made me look twice.

It was a white squirrel. Yes, a truly albino squirrel. Pink ears and feet, all white fur. Suddenly an ordinary afternoon became something I hadn't expected when the day began.

Paying attention. Naturally. As a habit.

That's what practicing the principles is all about.

Practice → rehearsal → everyday living.

We started by talking about practicing principles.

But principles practiced repeatedly become more than things we remember to do.

They become ways of seeing, responding and living. **Paying attention.**

And it's what we've been working with here since the beginning of July.



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

Like noticing the squirrel.

- I apologize when I've screwed up.
- I become willing to change.
- I tell the truth.
- I trust.
- I hope.
- I recognize what I cannot control and still steer where I can.

When we practice the principles, we *become* more than we were before. We return to the same principles and steps, but we aren't the same when we return to them.

Because along the way, we have accumulated something.

Thirty-eight days, thirty-eight months, thirty-eight years. It doesn't matter. Recovery begins accumulating resources almost immediately.

And doesn't stop.

That skilled sailor we met last week. He had assets.

The boat. Companions. Knowledge learned. Experience from previous storms.

Likewise, recovery assets exist **within us, between us, and around us.**

What do I have available today that I didn't have when I entered treatment?

Not possessions. Resources for living.

Relationships.

Recovery experience.

Spiritual practices

Meetings and communities.

Family and friends.

Music and writing.

Memories of having survived uncertainty before.

Service, resilience, and the ability to ask for help.

Plus things less obvious:

Attention. Curiosity. Wonder.

...  **Living Recovery**

It was just a squirrel running across the yard.

Almost nothing- just another squirrel.

Except it wasn't.

The unusual is still showing up. There are still things I've never seen before.

Recovery gave me more than sobriety.

Recovery has helped me build resources for living.

That's what three months of *Practicing the Principles* has really been about.

We thought we were talking about what we **do**.

We ended up discovering something about what those practices **build**.

There is a name for much of what I'm describing:

Recovery Capital.

The personal, relational, community, spiritual and other resources that help support recovery and a meaningful life.

Practicing the Principles:

Practice of the week:

What do I already have that helps me live my recovery today?

Name three.

What have I developed through recovery that I may no longer even notice?



**How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.
What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.**

-- Annie Dillard

A Closing Thought

What started in July as practicing principles has brought us here.

Practice *builds* something.

Next week, we'll begin looking at what we've built—and what we can continue building.

But right now there may be something moving outside your window.

Pay attention.



Upcoming Event: Next Wednesday

The *MasterClass* is all about
Practicing the Principles
and growing forward.

**Wednesday, October 7 at 12:00 pm
CDT.**

Master Class

With Barry A. Lehman

I'm interested.

The Beyond Sobriety Master Class is a conversation, not a lecture. I bring a topic and some prompts; you bring your experience, questions, ideas—or simply yourself.

There's no preparation needed and no requirement to speak. Come join the conversation about what it means to keep growing in recovery.



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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