

Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman



#5.02- Foundation:
The Ground Beneath Us
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What I'm Thinking



Mastery doesn't begin with inspiration. It begins with foundation.
And foundation isn't just something we build once — it's something we
return to.
Again and again.

This month, I'm looking at the **Arc of Mastery**:

Connection. Foundation.
Flow. Freedom.
Purpose.

We'll explore how recovery becomes lived wisdom, not just survival.
Last week we summarized Connection.
This week we start building: Foundation.

The Secret of Success

Many of you know that I am a musician. I practice nine out of every ten days. Until I discovered the path of mastery, I would just practice whatever I felt like practicing. After 50 years, isn't that how it works?

Well, no. I learned ten years ago that in music we must never ignore the basics. The very basics.

Today, I begin every practice session the same way — with long tones and scales. I don't follow a strict, do-it-this-way set. I do utilize the foundation of long-tones, scales, and flow in every practice. At least 20% of my practice is in variations on them. Not because I'm stuck there, but because it centers me. It roots me.

That's what foundation is: not just the structure that got us started, but the deep alignment we return to over and over. In recovery, too, we can outgrow a rigid attachment to “doing it perfectly” — but we never outgrow the need to be rooted.

If we want to grow in our recovery — in our mastery — we need to start from somewhere solid. Not to be controlled by it, but fueled by it.

The Foundation in Long-Term Recovery

Last week I said that recovery changes over time. At least it should, if for no other reason than I change over time.

Foundation changes. Actually, the foundation itself doesn't change. It has to remain rooted, grounded, able to provide that solid footing where we feel strong and supported. It's context changes; the specifics remain.

- Sometimes it's the 12 Steps, practiced not rigidly but rhythmically
- Sometimes it's the values that now shape your yes and your no
- Sometimes it's the thing you return to when the noise gets too loud

Without foundation, we drift. With it, we move forward in alignment.

So What *Is* a Solid Foundation?

Not just structure. Not just routines. But the deeper traits and practices that sustain us over time.

Here are some of the essentials I've seen in my own journey — and in those who stay the course:

- **Honesty. Openness. Willingness.**
- **Humility. Forgiveness. Grace.**
- **Accountability. Vulnerability. Boundaries.**
- **Curiosity. Patience. Integrity.**
- **Daily rhythms that center and remind us — not just routines, but rituals.**

You don't need them all at once.

But which ones are **active** in your life right now?

Which ones are **missing** — or maybe just **quiet**?

Without foundation, we drift.

With foundation, we can move forward in alignment.

What's one foundation you'd like to return to this week?

Name the two of the above foundations that have been most important in getting to where you are today in your recovery?

How do each of these help you in your life in recovery?

Schedule a personal inventory time this week to reflect on these and how they help you this week.

✓ Taking a Step Beyond

The most important thing I do each day is to touch base with my foundation — physically, mentally, and musically.

- Yo-Yo Ma



Where to Go Next 🖐️

A Closing Reflection

Mastery doesn't begin with breakthrough. It begins with returning again and again to what grounds us — even when it feels small.

I don't outgrow scales. I approach them differently. I listen more closely.

I don't outgrow recovery, either. I live more deeply into it.

With practice.

That's where we move into Flow next week.

Thanks for being on the road with me. There's a lot more to come.

Explore More

Want a gentle tool to reflect on your own foundation?

Download the Foundations Checklist

— a simple one-page guide to help you stay connected and grounded.

Mastering Recovery



Foundations of Recovery: A Self-Check

What grounds you in long-term recovery?.

Use this guide to reflect on what grounds you today.

What's active in your life right now? What might need fresh attention?

The Essentials

Core Recovery Virtues (These anchor your heart and spirit)

- **Honesty** – With yourself, with others, with reality
- **Openness** – Willingness to accept new truths
- **Willingness** – Courage to act, even when uncertain
- **Humility** – Letting go of ego, staying teachable
- **Forgiveness** – Releasing resentments, especially toward self
- **Grace** – Offering and receiving what can't be earned

Grounded Mindsets (These shape your perspective and choices)

- **Curiosity** – Replacing judgment with interest
- **Self-awareness** – Seeing patterns clearly
- **Responsibility** – Owning choices without shame
- **Patience** – Trusting time and process
- **Consistency** – Small daily actions build strength
- **Integrity** – Aligning values and actions

Relational Anchors & Daily Practices (These keep you connected and embodied)

- **Accountability** – Staying tethered to truth-tellers
- **Vulnerability** – Letting yourself be seen
- **Boundaries** – Protecting time, energy, and priorities
- **Service** – Giving back as a form of grounding
- **Community** – Sharing mutual support
- **Daily Rhythms** – Prayer, movement, reflection, creativity



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Wherever you are in the journey- come back to what grounds you.
You're not alone.

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