

# Mastering Recovery

A Newsletter on Long-Term Sobriety



**#23 -- December 8, 2021**

## **YOU Can Do This**

You **CAN** do this!

You Can **DO** this!

You Can Do **THIS!**

**But not alone!**

### **What I'm Thinking**

*One of the great gifts of long-term recovery* is the knowledge that we have choices. Sure, we thought we did when still using, but we learned the hard way that this was an illusion. The cravings, the thoughts, the places we went- all worked against us and our use of "willpower." Every time we said, "I'll only have one" we believed it. "I'll quit tomorrow" was never an empty promise, until tomorrow came.

*Each of the words highlighted in this week's title* changes the emphasis of the phrase. Read it a couple different ways, emphasizing a different word. You'll get the picture. But we must not overlook the last line. This is not something to think we can do all by ourselves. **You** does not mean you and you alone, however.

*This week's quote, "Environment is stronger than willpower"* is both a reminder of the negatives- and positives- of our environment.

*First, to put ourselves into environments where temptations, memories, cravings, and peer pressure is dangerous.* Will power is not an unlimited strength. We get worn down by the tension of maintaining it. The negative, using-inspiring environment can be stronger than the power to just say no.

*Second, though, to put ourselves in positive, supportive environments* is to allow us to build on the strength of others. That keeps us from depleting our will power. It also allows us to build new habits and thoughts that rewire the brain circuits. Going to meetings, having a sober-supportive group of friends, taking care of ourselves in body, mind and spirit, is an essential addition to our own will power.

*As December's sometimes hectic pace* is added to the ongoing questions of the pandemic, don't try to do your healthy recovery activities alone. Take the

time to nurture you and your positive environments.



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## **Facing Challenges - Building Recovery**

- List some characteristics for you of:  
Healthy Environments such as:  
Safe- physically and emotionally  
Allows for growth as an individual  
Gives you options, not a "one way only" approach  
Positive and accepting  
Supports recovery, honesty, etc.  
*[Add your own]*  
  
Unhealthy Environments such as:  
Heavy peer pressure to conform  
Emotionally charged  
Strong negative memories and associations  
Expects you to remain as you are  
Heavy "follow the leader" approach  
Undermines recovery, honesty, etc.  
*[Add your own]*
- Changing your Environments  
It's not possible to avoid all unhealthy environments. One key is to minimize the contacts to what is necessary. Another is to establish your own internal boundaries.
  - Make a list of some of your negative environments.
  - What can you do to minimize the negative influences if you are not able to totally avoid that environment?
  - Who can be a friend, mentor, coach, sponsor, who can help you think about healthy ways to be in that environment with compromising your values and health?

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## **Picture and Quote of the Week**

**Environment is  
stronger than  
will power.**

-Paramahansa Yogananda



## **Choose Wisely**

### **Tools and Resources**

Brené Brown. If you don't know Brené Brown, you need to find her. She is amazing. Shame, vulnerability, and personal growth have been her calling for years. Her most recent book has just been published. I have not had the chance to read it, but what I have heard from her podcast makes it a must read.

Books:

**[Atlas of the Heart](#)** (just published)

**[Braving the Wilderness](#)**

**[Dare to Lead](#)**

**[Daring Greatly](#)**

**[Rising Strong](#)**

Podcasts (Spotify):

**[Dare to Lead](#)**

**[Unlocking Us](#)**

TED Talks:

**[The Power of Vulnerability](#)**

**[Listening to Shame](#)**

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and allows me to continue to share mastering recovery.

Thank you for the support!

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Anything you want me to talk about with Mastering Recovery?

[Email me.](#)

Watch for more information in the new year about what's coming soon.

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