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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Coach Michael Herbert's Ebook, a comprehensive guide to personal growth, transformation, and lasting recovery. With over 35 years of experience as a recovery coach, I am dedicated to helping individuals navigate their journey toward healing and transformation. In this ebook, we will explore how the principles and practices of the 12-step process can greatly enhance the foundations of recovery, providing valuable insights and practical tools for growth and transformation.

Throughout the pages of this ebook, we will delve into the six key parts of the recovery journey, each aligned with different steps of the 12-step process. From surrender and acceptance to mindfulness and spirituality, from self-reflection and awareness to building a supportive community, we will explore how these principles can be integrated into your life, creating a synergistic and transformative experience.

In the conclusion, we will reflect on the profound impact that the 12-step process can have on each part of the recovery journey. By incorporating these principles into your life, you can deepen your understanding of yourself, cultivate resilience, and embrace lasting change. I am honored to be your guide on this spiritually guided journey toward lasting recovery. Together, let us uncover the transformative power of the 12-step process and support you on your path toward growth, healing, and the support of a loving community.

For more information, please visit my website at www.coachmichaelherbert.com.

Michael Herbert CASAC, ICADC, CIP

Diet: Fueling the Recovery Engine – Part 1

Diet can be a scary word, but when I mention it, I'm not suggesting going on a strict diet. Instead, I invite you to examine your diet and consider what you are putting into your body. What are you fueling yourself with to help you get through the day, week, year, and your lifetime? If you're anything like me, when I think about making food changes, I tend to reach for unhealthy options like sweets. However, this approach never works out well, and I've tried it many times before. I don't need a final indulgence! What I truly need is a balanced and nourishing diet, which may not be as daunting as it seems.

Imagine a plate filled with vibrant colors, flavors, and nutrients, all working their magic in your body. Yes, my friends, a healthy diet can be a game-changer in recovery.

In the realm of recovery, we often overlook the impact that our diet can have on our overall well-being. A well-balanced diet provides our bodies with the fuel they need to navigate the ups and downs of the recovery journey. It can boost our energy, improve our mood, and enhance our mental clarity.

However, we must stay away from greasy fast food and processed meals, and instead, welcome delicious and nutritious options on our plates. Now, I must confess that I am no culinary expert or master chef. But I have a few simple strategies that have helped me improve my eating habits. First, let's embrace the power of whole foods. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins are the superheroes of the food kingdom. They not only provide essential nutrients but also bring flavors and textures to our meals. Let's say goodbye to processed snacks and explore what nature has to offer. Personally, I've found that using a Nama cold press juicer makes it easy for me to consume my daily fruits and vegetables.

We also can't forget the importance of hydration, my friends. Water, the elixir of life, plays a vital role in our recovery journey. It not only quenches our thirst and keeps us feeling refreshed but also helps flush out toxins from our bodies. So, grab your water bottle, raise it high, and hydrate! Personally, I've found the WaterMinder app helpful in tracking my hydration and daily liquid intake.

This is just the beginning of our recovery journey, and it's important to remember that a balanced diet is not only about physical health but also about nourishing our souls. Let's approach our meals with gratitude and mindfulness, savoring each bite as if it were a precious gift. And remember, a well-fed body is a happy body on the road to recovery.

The Foundations of Recovery: A Spiritual Journey – Part 2

Spirituality is like a compass that guides us through the maze of recovery, shining a light on our path when we feel lost. I am just a man with limits and flaws, and I don't always get it right. I also understand that there are many right answers to the question of spirituality, so I try to use what is working for me today and grow from there. What I am hoping to do is embrace the unique and beautiful essence of being and connecting with something greater than myself.

In the realm of recovery, we often hear about the concept of a "higher power." Now, this can be a tricky notion for some, especially if you're not a fan of the traditional religion that may have been taught to you growing up. As a kid, I believed in God, but I was bored with church and the idea of being good, as it seemed to require perfection. I didn't know that there was a difference between religion and spirituality, and spirituality was never taught to me. I also didn't know that God or a higher power could be nature, the universe, love, or even that little voice within that whispers words of wisdom. For me, my introduction to self-help or 12-step recovery helped me open up to other possibilities of spiritual connection.

I am no guru or spiritual master, but rest assured, I have a few nuggets of wisdom to share on this leg of our journey. First, let's embrace the power of mindfulness. By slowing down and being fully present in each moment, we can cultivate a deeper connection with ourselves and the world around us. One tool I use is meditation, which allows me to stop and do nothing for periods of time to gather myself, see another perspective, and connect. I personally use the Calm app and Insight Timer to support my meditation practice.

Next, let's explore the truth of gratitude. In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, we often forget to acknowledge the blessings that surround us. Gratitude is like a superpower that can transform even the darkest of days. So let's take a moment each day to reflect on the things we are grateful for, big or small. It could be a warm cup of coffee, a loving friend, or the beauty of a sunset. Embrace the joy that gratitude brings and watch your spirit soar. It's often said that a grateful addict or alcoholic will never use again, so for me, I keep gratitude at the forefront.

Spirituality is our second stop on this recovery journey, and let us remember that spiritual awakening is not a destination but a lifelong journey of self-discovery and connection. So approach it with curiosity and an open mind, knowing that we are not alone on this path. We have each other to lean on and share our experiences with. Together, we can find solace, strength, and inspiration.

Energizing the Body and Mind – Part 3

Starting an exercise routine can be scary for some. If that's you, starting slow is often the best way to begin. Others may feel ready to jump right in! Exercise doesn't have to be intimidating or boring. It's about finding what brings you joy and getting your body moving in a way that feels good.

The Power of Exercise on the Road to Recovery

In the realm of recovery, we often underestimate the power of exercise in our healing journey. I am here to remind you of its incredible benefits. Physical activity not only strengthens our bodies but also releases feel-good endorphins that can boost our mood and reduce stress. It can be a powerful tool in managing cravings and promoting overall well-being. Exercise helps me connect to a power greater than myself and supports my spiritual fitness.

My Fitness Journey (and how it can inspire yours)

Now, I must confess I have done some amazing fitness challenges: a 155-mile race across the Sahara desert, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, years in the CrossFit community... and staying active in general. But what works for me may not be your thing. I've made even the races, hikes, and group fitness courses my own by doing what worked for me, putting safety first.

Sometimes that meant not lifting as much, running as fast, or staying strictly consistent. I embraced modification and took breaks when needed. So, I'd say embrace variety or find what works for you and be consistent with that.

Discovering What Works

Exercise doesn't have to be limited to a monotonous routine. Explore different activities that pique your interest – whether it's dancing, hiking, swimming, or even gardening. Find what brings you joy and makes your body come alive. For me, I have a Peloton bike at home, a CLMBR machine, and the OXE 1Fit machine that I use alternately. And of course, I'm a regular walker.

Consistency Over Intensity

Next, let's prioritize consistency over intensity. It's not about pushing ourselves to the brink of exhaustion or comparing our progress to others. It's about finding a sustainable routine we can stick to, even when motivation is running low. Start small and gradually build up. Remember, every step counts, no matter how small. So let's take that first step together and watch our bodies and minds transform with each movement.

A Holistic Approach

As we end, let's remember that exercise is not just about physical health, but also about nurturing our mental and emotional well-being. So, let's approach it with kindness and compassion, listening to our bodies and honoring our limitations. And remember, we are not striving for perfection, but progress. Each day is a new opportunity to move, grow, and embrace the joy of being alive.

Emotional Healing and Self-Care Part 4

Emotional healing is a real challenge in recovery, especially in the beginning. However, it is also incredibly rewarding as it soothes the soul and allows us to develop self-love and compassion. It's not just about self-care rituals like bubble baths and massages, but rather about acknowledging our emotions, finding healthy outlets, and embarking on a journey of self-discovery. It's important to seek support from a therapist or coach during this process, as it can be difficult to navigate on our own.

Often in recovery, we focus so much on breaking free from addictive patterns that we forget to address the underlying emotional pain that may have led us there in the first place. Emotional healing is about creating a safe space within ourselves to explore our emotions, process our experiences, and cultivate inner peace and wholeness.

Having worked with and supported individuals on their healing journeys for over 30 years, I have a few ideas to share. First, let's embrace the power of self-expression. Find healthy outlets that allow you to express your emotions, whether it's through journaling, art, music, or even talking with a trusted friend. Give yourself the freedom to be vulnerable and let your emotions flow. It may be scary, but as they say, "Feel the fear and do it anyway."

Next, let's prioritize self-care as an act of self-love. It's not about indulging in extravagant spa treatments or shopping sprees, but rather about nurturing your physical, mental, and emotional well-being in simple and meaningful ways. Take time each day to engage in activities that bring you joy, such as going for a walk in nature, meditating, reading, or even taking a moment to breathe deeply. And remember, helping someone else is not only a kind act but also a way to be good to yourself.

As we conclude this fourth stop on our recovery journey, let us remember that emotional healing is a lifelong process with its ups and downs, twists and turns. It's not about reaching a destination of complete healing, but rather embracing the journey and learning to navigate our emotions with grace and resilience. Approach it with patience and compassion, knowing that you are worthy of healing and that each step you take brings you closer to wholeness.

Building a Supportive Community: The Strength of Connection – Part 5

Building a supportive community is a crucial aspect of our recovery journey. It's not just about finding a group of like-minded individuals (although that can be incredibly valuable!). It's about creating connections with individuals who uplift and inspire us on our path to recovery.

In the realm of recovery, it's common to feel isolated and alone. The core of the disease of addiction is often rooted in feelings of loneliness and isolation, leading us to believe that no one truly understands our struggles. However, please know that you are not alone and that there is a community waiting to embrace you on your recovery journey. It's about finding a tribe of people who have walked a similar path, offering empathy, wisdom, and encouragement when we need it most. Together, we can find strength and resilience in numbers.

I must confess that I am not a social butterfly or an expert in community-building. When I'm unsure, I embrace the idea of "fake it till you make it." I act as if I am comfortable until I warm up to a group or realize that it may not be the right fit for me at that particular time. So, I encourage you to embrace the power of vulnerability. In order to build authentic connections, we must be willing to open up, share our stories, and allow ourselves to be seen. It is in our vulnerability that we create space for others to do the same, fostering a sense of trust and understanding.

Next, let's prioritize active participation in our communities. It's not just about finding support, but also about offering support to others. Actively engage in group activities, lend a listening ear, and be a source of encouragement for others. Remember, we are all in this together, and by lifting each other up, we create a ripple effect of healing and growth.

Let's remember that building a supportive community is an ongoing process that requires patience, effort, and a willingness to show up for ourselves and others. It's not about finding a perfect group, but rather finding a group that accepts us as we are and supports our growth. So let's approach it with an open heart, an open mind, and a willingness to connect, knowing that together we are stronger.

Embracing Transformation: The Beauty of Change – Part 6

Transformation is like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, a magical process that takes us from one state to another, revealing our true essence.

Embracing transformation is not solely about a physical metamorphosis, although that can be a part of it. It's about embracing change, growth, and the journey of becoming our best selves.

In the realm of recovery, we often yearn for change, for an opportunity to break free from old patterns and create a new and fulfilling life. It's about letting go of what no longer serves us, embracing new possibilities, and stepping into a life of authenticity and purpose.

In my personal journey of recovery, I have experienced transformation through self-reflection, value clarification, turning dreams into reality, and personal development. I encourage you to take time to explore your values, dreams, and aspirations. Reflect on the changes you want to make in your life and the person you want to become. This introspection will guide you on your transformational path.

Next, let's embrace the discomfort that often accompanies change. Transformation is not always easy or comfortable. It requires us to step outside of our comfort zones, face our fears, and challenge our limiting beliefs. But it's in these moments of discomfort that we grow the most. Embrace the unknown, trust in your resilience, and know that change is a catalyst for growth and personal evolution.

As we conclude this chapter of our recovery journey, let us remember that transformation is a lifelong process, an ever-unfolding adventure. It's not about reaching a final destination of perfection, but rather embracing the beauty of growth and evolution. So let's approach it with curiosity, courage, and a willingness to embrace the unknown, knowing that we have the power to create a life filled with purpose, joy, and fulfillment.

Congratulations and thank you for staying with me on this spiritually guided journey towards lasting recovery. I hope that I have given you ideas and inspired you in this process. I encourage you to continue on your path of growth and healing. Remember, you are resilient, you are capable, and you are worthy of a life filled with love and abundance.

The Finale – The 12 Steps

The 12-step process, a cornerstone of many recovery programs, can greatly enhance and complement the six parts we have explored in our whimsical and spiritually guided journey toward lasting recovery. Let's delve into how each part can be enhanced by the principles and practices of the 12-step process:

1. Surrender and Acceptance:

The first step of the 12-step process emphasizes surrendering to the powerlessness over our addiction and accepting the need for help. This aligns with the themes of Part 1 – Surrendering to the Journey. By embracing the principles of surrender and acceptance, we open ourselves up to the transformative power of the recovery journey.

2. Self-Reflection and Awareness:

Part 2 – Exploring the Depths of Self-Reflection aligns with the fourth and tenth steps of the 12-step process, which involve a fearless and thorough moral inventory. The self-reflection and awareness cultivated in Part 2 can be deepened through the structured inventory process of the 12 steps, allowing us to gain insights into our character defects, patterns, and the impact of our actions.

3. Mindfulness and Spirituality:

Part 3 – Cultivating Mindfulness and Spirituality resonates with the eleventh step of the 12-step process, which encourages seeking through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a higher power. By incorporating mindfulness and spirituality into our daily lives, we deepen our connection to something greater than ourselves and find solace and guidance in our recovery journey.

4. Personal Growth and Resilience:

Part 4 – Nurturing Personal Growth and Resilience aligns with the continuous growth and development emphasized throughout the 12-step process. The steps provide a framework for personal growth by addressing character defects, making amends, and seeking spiritual awakening. By actively engaging in the 12 steps, we enhance our resilience and lay a solid foundation for lasting recovery.

5. Building a Supportive Community:

Part 5 – Building a Supportive Community is closely aligned with the fellowship and support system provided by the 12-step process. Through attending meetings, connecting with sponsors, and engaging with fellow members, we build a supportive network of individuals who understand our struggles and provide guidance and encouragement.

6. Embracing Transformation:

Part 6 – Embracing Transformation echoes the twelfth step of the 12-step process, which emphasizes carrying the message and practicing the principles of recovery in all areas of our lives. By embracing transformation and sharing our experiences with others, we become living examples of the transformative power of the 12 steps, inspiring hope and guiding others on their own recovery journeys.

In summary, the 12-step process can greatly enhance the six parts of our journey by providing a structured framework for surrender, self-reflection, mindfulness, personal growth, community support, and embracing transformation. It offers a roadmap for recovery, guiding us towards lasting change and a life of purpose and fulfillment. By incorporating the principles and practices of the 12 steps, we can deepen our understanding and application of the concepts explored in each part, ultimately enhancing our recovery journey.

Thank you for joining me on this spiritually guided journey towards lasting recovery. May your path be filled with growth, healing, and the support of a loving community.

Coach Michael Herbert

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CONCLUSION

The foundations of recovery, including diet, stress management, exercise, spirituality, creating a supportive community, and mental and emotional healing, are greatly enhanced by the principles and practices of the 12-step process.

Surrender and Acceptance, the first step, aligns with the theme of Surrendering to the Journey, opening us up to transformative power. Self-reflection and Awareness, explored in Part 2, align with the fourth and tenth steps, deepening our understanding of character defects and patterns. Mindfulness and Spirituality, emphasized in Part 3, deepen our connection to something greater. Personal Growth and Resilience, nurtured in Part 4, enhance our resilience and lay a foundation for recovery. Building a Supportive Community, explored in Part 5, aligns with the fellowship and support system. Embracing Transformation, the focus of Part 6, echoes the twelfth step, inspiring hope and guiding others.

In summary, the 12-step process greatly enhances the six parts of the recovery journey by providing a structured framework for surrender, self-reflection, mindfulness, personal growth, community support, and embracing transformation. It offers a roadmap for lasting change, guiding us towards a purposeful and fulfilling life. By incorporating the principles and practices of the 12 steps, we deepen our understanding and application of the concepts explored in each part, ultimately enhancing our recovery journey.

Thank you for joining me on this spiritually guided journey towards lasting recovery. May your path be filled with growth, healing, and the support of a loving community.

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