

Life Design: Outsmart Addiction

A Personal 28-Day Plan

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CLINICAL & SAFETY NOTE

Life Design Recovery is educational and spiritually supportive. It does not replace medical care, therapy, or clinical treatment.

If you are at risk for withdrawal (especially from alcohol or benzodiazepines), do not detox alone. Withdrawal can be dangerous. Seek medical supervision.

If opioids are part of your story, medication-assisted treatment (MAT) can be a life-saving, evidence-based option. Support and treatment can work together.

If you are in immediate danger, thinking about harming yourself, or experiencing a mental health crisis, call your local emergency number. In the U.S., you can call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

This workbook is designed to be used alongside support when needed—clinician, pastor, sponsor, group, trusted friend, or family system.

THE LIFE DESIGN SERIES

Life Design was created for people who want to build a life they don't want to miss. Whether you're working on your own recovery or walking alongside someone who is, these books offer a practical, step-by-step approach that meets you where you are. You can work the Life Design process privately at home, with one or two trusted people, in community groups, or a combination.

Real change lasts longer when it's chosen, not forced.

That belief is also the heartbeat of motivational interviewing—an evidence-based counseling approach built on respect, autonomy, and practical support that helps people find their own reasons and readiness for change. Life Design isn't about secrecy, and it isn't about exposure. It's about building the right kind of support for you—support that helps you stay honest, steady, and connected.

How to Use This Series -Understand the purpose for each book

The **Life Design Series** helps people interrupt addictive patterns and build a steady, meaningful life they don't want to miss. Grounded in faith, trauma-informed care, and practical recovery tools, the series replaces shame with clarity and isolation with connection. It focuses on sustainable daily practices, relapse-response skills, and dignity-first identity—so change is possible even on hard, low-capacity days.

Book 1: Life Design: Addiction Is Not Smarter Than You is the foundation book for people who feel trapped in the cycle and need a clear, steady path that doesn't rely on shame or willpower. It explains how addiction works as a learned pathway in the brain, why shame fuels relapse, and how to respond to cravings and high-risk moments with wisdom instead of panic.

The book walks readers through practical recovery essentials—finding a real “why,” building decision rules for hard days, planning for triggers, reducing access, repairing trust without self-destruction, and creating a calm emergency plan for the next 24 hours when things feel urgent. It emphasizes staying connected (because community outsmarts addiction), returning quickly after slips, and rebuilding a stable life through consistent steps over time. Chapters and appendices are designed to be usable even on low-capacity days, with quick takeaways and emergency tools

Book 2: Life Design: Outsmart Addiction: A 28-Day Self-Paced, Home-Based Recovery Plan is the companion workbook that turns clarity into daily rhythm. Built as a 28-day, self-paced program, it guides the reader through repeatable daily structure—short teaching, reflection space, connection, a small action step, body-based stabilization, and a re-anchor reminder for hard moments.

It's explicitly not a test of worth or willpower; it's an invitation to return to dignity, connection, and a life worth showing up for. The workbook is organized around a “Recovery Pathway Map” (Dignity → Clarity → Protection → Repair → Life), so readers always know what helps next without overthinking. It also reinforces a simple Return Loop for setbacks—**Re-anchor → Stabilize → Rebuild → Reconnect**—so relapse becomes information, not identity, and the reader learns to return faster and gentler

Book 3: Life Design: Why Addiction Lies is for the people who love someone struggling and want to help—without getting pulled into chaos, confusion, or enabling. This book explains why lying often becomes part of addiction—not because someone is simply “bad,” but because addiction protects itself through secrecy, distortion, and denial. You’ll learn how to recognize the difference between the person and the pattern, how to respond without overreacting, and how to stay compassionate while still telling the truth.

You’ll receive clear language, boundaries, and practical scripts for hard moments—so you can say **no** to addiction while still saying **yes** to the person. And just as importantly, this book helps you protect your own life: your peace, your relationships, your home, your future.

This book is also for anyone ready to take an honest look at how they use lying—small or large—to camouflage their own patterns. Because life design requires truth. And the goal is not just stopping harm—it’s building a life you don’t want to miss.

One Last Word

We don’t heal in isolation. But we also don’t all heal the same way. Life Design helps you build support that fits your life—and a future you don’t want to miss

DEDICATION

To those who are tired of fighting themselves.
To those who love someone who is struggling.
To those who keep returning, even when it's hard.

This work is for you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work exists because of the countless individuals and families who trusted me with their stories.

I am grateful to the clinicians, pastors, recovery professionals, and friends who walk alongside people in addiction with humility and courage.

I am grateful for those who have worked hard in their recovery and have been able to build a life they do not want to miss, and work every day to protect themselves and those they love from the destruction of addiction and never forget from where they came.

And to those who struggled, relapsed, returned, hoped, served, loved, and sometimes did not make it home—your lives mattered. You are not forgotten.

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Life Design Recovery is a 28-day, self-paced workbook designed to support real change through daily rhythm, not pressure.

Each day includes:

- a short teaching
- space to pause and reflect
- a connection practice
- a small action step
- body-based stabilization
- a re-anchor reminder for hard moments

You do not need to read ahead.

You do not need to complete this perfectly.

You are encouraged to go slowly.

Some people complete this in 28 consecutive days.

Some take longer.

Some return to certain days again and again.

All of these are valid ways to use this book.

This workbook is not a test of willpower.

It is not a measure of your worth.

It is not meant to replace professional care when needed.

It is an invitation to return—to dignity, to connection, and to a life that feels worth showing up for.

Begin where you are.

THE RECOVERY PATHWAY MAP

Over the next 28 days, you will move through five recovery areas. You do not have to master one before moving to the next. This is not a test or a ladder. It is simply a map you can return to when you need to remember what helps next.

DIGNITY <i>Begin with worth.</i>	CLARITY <i>Name the pattern.</i>	PROTECTION <i>Build a fair fight.</i>	REPAIR <i>Return + reconnect.</i>	LIFE <i>Choose your best life.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not the pattern. • Shame is not the engine. • One honest step counts. • Belonging is medicine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it make sense. • Cravings are information. • Notice triggers + warning signs. • Map the on-ramp. Build an off-ramp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce access. Reduce friction. • Change people, places, routines. • Stabilize first. Then decide. • Choose one non-negotiable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth without collapse. • Repair is a rhythm: truth + consistency. • Boundaries protect what matters. • Steady steps over speeches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work life: one small step. • Service + meaning. • Joy + private life. • Two rhythms for next 30 days.
<p>THE RETURN LOOP (ALWAYS AVAILABLE) RE-ANCHOR → STABILIZE → REBUILD → RECONNECT <i>A hard moment is information - not your identity.</i></p>				

HOW TO USE THIS MAP EACH DAY

- Read the day slowly.
- Answer the prompts. One true sentence is enough.
- Do the practices: connect, body care, and one small action step.
- If it gets hard, use the Return Loop - then come back. Repeat any day.

DAY 1 — We Begin

Dignity Before Change

TODAY'S FOCUS: Begin with dignity. We separate identity from the pattern and move toward connection—one honest step at a time.

Today we begin.

Not when you feel ready. Not when you feel strong. Not when you finally have the perfect week behind you.

BEGIN RIGHT HERE

We begin right where you are.

If you are reading this in the middle of an addictive pattern, part of you is already tired. Tired of the promises. Tired of the internal negotiations. Tired of waking up and trying to be someone else before you even get out of bed.

- Maybe you're tired of the secrecy.
- Maybe you're tired of how quickly your life can shift from "I'm okay" to "I don't recognize myself."
- Maybe you're tired of the loneliness.

And still... here you are.

That matters.

You don't pick up a book like this unless something in you still wants life.

Not perfection. Not a flawless story.

Life.

Before we talk about strategies, habits, boundaries, or plans, I want to begin with the foundation this entire work rests on:

YOU ARE NOT THE PATTERN

You are not your addictive pattern.

KEY TRUTH: The pattern may be powerful. It may be costly. But it does not define you.

The pattern may be powerful.

It may be costly.

It may have taken more than you ever wanted to give.

But it does not define you.

- It is not who you are.
- And it does not get the final word over your life.
- Addiction says nothing about how much God loves you.
- And it says nothing about how much you love God.

I have walked with people whose love for God surpassed many, and they still struggled deeply. Some found freedom on this side of heaven. Some did not.

But they were never unloved.

They were never unusable.

They were never outside of belonging.

DIGNITY BEFORE CHANGE

So we begin with dignity.

Because if you start this journey with shame as the engine, you will either hide or perform. And both of those lead back to the same place.

Shame does not heal you.

REMEMBER: If shame is the engine, you will hide or perform. Healing starts with dignity.

Shame only makes you smaller.

This is one reason many people can “know better” and still stay stuck. Knowledge isn’t the missing ingredient. Most people already know what addiction is doing.

What is missing is often identity.

When a person believes, deep down, “I’m worthless,” they live like nothing matters. When a person believes, deep down, “I’m broken beyond repair,” they stop trying to repair.

But when a person begins to remember, “I am very good... I am loved... I belong... I can return,” something changes.

Not all at once.

But enough to take the next step.

This book is not here to win an argument about whether addiction is a disease or a choice. It’s not here to label you.

It’s here to help you face what is happening in your life with clarity and compassion, and to build something stronger than shame.

Not with pressure.

- With dignity.
- With the truth that you are more than this.
- With the truth that God meets you in the real.

You don’t have to clean yourself up to come close.

GOOD NEWS: Drawing near is the beginning. You can come as you are.

Drawing near is the beginning.

ONE SENTENCE COUNTS

If you can only offer one honest sentence to God today, that counts.

“God, I’m tired.”

“God, I don’t know what to do.”

“God, help me want life again.”

Or simply:

“God, I’m here.”

That is enough to begin.

CONNECTION MATTERS

Now let's talk about connection.

Because addiction does something specific to relationships. It creates chaos. It erases intimacy. It builds distance. It teaches you to hide behind walls that you never wanted to live behind.

And you're tired of the loneliness that comes with distance.

- You miss people.
- You miss closeness.
- You miss being able to be fully seen without fear.

That longing is not weakness.

It's part of your design.

You were built for belonging.

So we begin with this understanding: **you are not doing this to “prove your worth.”**

- Your worth is not on trial.
- You are doing this because you want your life back.
- You want to rediscover what you love.
- You want to reconnect with purpose.
- You want to honor your body.
- You want to show up for the people you love with steadiness.
- You want to be able to look in the mirror without flinching.

That desire is not something to dismiss.

It's a door.

And today, you walked up to it.

Quick Check (no pressure): What brought you to this page today?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm tired of the cycle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm scared of where this is going |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I miss myself / my life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone I love is hurting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I don't even know—I just need help |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What brought you to this page—what's the real reason?
- What is one thing you miss about yourself?
- What is one part of life you want back?
- When you picture your best life—your good life—what do you see first?
- If shame has been loud lately, what is the sentence it repeats?
- Now answer this gently: if shame was wrong, what might be true instead?
- Write one honest sentence to God: “God, I want...”
- Now write one sentence that feels even more honest: “God, I’m afraid...”

DEFINE SUCCESS

As we begin, I don't want you to get over-focused on the outcome.

Outcomes matter—but if you chase the outcome, you can miss the gift of what's happening day by day.

I also don't want success to become a weapon you use against yourself.

Perfection creates hiding.

So before you go any further, we're going to set your compass.

Below are a few examples. If one fits, borrow it. If none fit, write your own. What matters most is that your definition helps you move toward life, not toward self-hatred.

- Some people define success as freedom.
Success is living with growing freedom—more honest days, fewer hidden days, and a life that is increasingly mine again.
- Some define success as identity.
Success is shame losing its authority over how I see myself. I can tell the truth without collapsing.
- Some define success as connection.
Success is staying connected—to God and to people—especially when I'm struggling.
- Some define success as stability.
Success is building daily rhythms that help my body and mind settle so I can choose wisely.
- Some define success as purpose.
Success is moving toward purpose and service—becoming someone who shows up for life again.
- Some define success as returning.
Success is how quickly and gently I return when I have a hard moment—without spiraling into punishment.

Here are a few guardrails that matter.

- Success does not require perfection.
- It does not require you to never struggle again.
- It does not require earning love.
- It does not require doing this alone.
- It does not require immediate trust from others.

Now write your own success definition in one paragraph.

If it helps, begin with:

“When I finish this book, success for me would look like...”

Starting definition to borrow (or write your own below):

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Freedom — more honest days, fewer hidden days, a life increasingly mine again |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Identity — shame losing authority over how I see myself; I can tell the truth without collapsing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Connection — staying connected to God and to people, especially when I’m struggling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stability — building daily rhythms that help my body and mind settle so I can choose wisely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Purpose — moving toward purpose and service; becoming someone who shows up for life again |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Returning — how quickly and gently I return after a hard moment without spiraling into punishment |

My definition of success (one paragraph):

FINAL THOUGHT...

One day at a time.

Step by step.

Day by day.

Hour by hour

Minute by minute.

DAY 2 — Addiction Does Not Define You

Separate identity from behavior. You are still you.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Separate identity from behavior. Tell the truth without becoming the worst thing you've ever done.

A SHIFT IN HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF

Today we're going to make one of the most important shifts in this whole journey. Not a shift in what you do.

A shift in how you see yourself.

Because addictive patterns don't just take over choices. They try to take over identity. They whisper, "This is who you are," until it feels like you don't have a "self" outside the pattern.

And if you start believing that, shame becomes permanent.

You stop fighting for yourself because you stop believing there is a "self" worth fighting for.

NAME WHAT'S TRUE

Addiction does not define you.

KEY TRUTH: You can take responsibility for behavior without surrendering your identity to it.

It is something you have struggled with. It is not who you are.

There is a difference between identity and behavior.

REMEMBER: Behavior is what you did. Identity is who you are beneath the struggle—still valuable, still capable of change.

Behavior is what you did, what you chose, what you repeated, what you returned to. Identity is who you are beneath the struggle—your design, your value, your ability to love, your capacity to change, your purpose, your belonging.

Addictive patterns want those two things to collapse into one.
Shame wants those two things to collapse into one. **But today we separate them.**

CLARITY, NOT DENIAL

This is not denial.

This is clarity.

You can take full responsibility for behavior without handing your identity over to it. You can tell the truth without becoming the worst thing you've ever done.

THE LABELS WE CARRY

Some people have lived so long under shame that they don't even realize how often they introduce themselves internally as a label.

- "I'm just an addict."
- "I'm the screw-up."
- "I'm the disappointment."
- "I'm the one who can't get it together."

Those labels may feel honest, but they are not the full truth. They are the shame-truth. They are the narrowed-down version of a whole human being.

GOD SPEAKS TO A PERSON

God does not speak to you as a label.

God speaks to you as a person.

ANCHOR: God is not confused about who you are, even when you are.

And God is not confused about who you are, even when you are.

So today, we begin practicing a new inner language.

Not fake. Not fluffy. Not denial.

Just true.

- You are a person who is learning how to live again.
- You are a person who is learning how to choose again.
- You are a person who can return.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- Shame is loud and I feel labeled
- I'm trying to be honest without collapsing
- I want to separate who I am from what I've done
- I feel stuck in "this is just who I am"
- I'm willing to practice a new sentence today

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When you think about yourself, what label shows up first?

- If you were completely honest, what is the harshest name you call yourself internally?

- Now answer this: when did you start believing that name?

- Who spoke it first—someone else, your own shame, your addiction, your history?

- What do you think that label has cost you?

Now let's separate identity from behavior.

- Write one sentence that names behavior without naming identity.
For example: "I returned to an old pattern," not "I'm a failure."
- Write one sentence that names identity without denying reality.
For example: "I'm still a person of value," not "I'm fine."
- Now write this sentence and finish it:
"God calls me..."
- If that feels hard, write:
"God, I don't know what You call me, but I want to learn."

CONNECT

Connection helps identity heal.

With God:

Take one quiet minute and ask:

"God, who am I beneath this struggle?"

Then sit long enough to notice what comes up—words, memories, feelings, resistance, even silence.

If it helps, speak this out loud:

"God, teach me how You see me."

With a person:

If you have someone safe, let them support your identity—not your performance.

You can text something simple like:

“I’m working on separating who I am from what I’ve done. If you think of something you genuinely value about me, would you tell me?”

That may feel vulnerable.

Vulnerability is part of repair.

If you don’t have someone safe, that’s okay. We’ll build connection as part of the journey.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m working on separating who I am from what I’ve done. If you think of something you genuinely value about me, would you tell me?”

ACT

Today’s action is to practice identity language in real time.

Once today, when shame shows up, pause and replace one sentence.

- If shame says, “I’m hopeless,” you say, “I’m learning.”
- If shame says, “I always ruin things,” you say, “I’ve had hard moments, and I can return.”
- If shame says, “This is just who I am,” you say, “This is a pattern, not my identity.”

Shame sentence to replace (do it once):

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | “I’m hopeless” → “I’m learning.” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | “I always ruin things” → “I’ve had hard moments, and I can return.” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | “This is just who I am” → “This is a pattern, not my identity.” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Write my own replacement sentence. |

My replacement sentence:

BODY CARE

Identity repair is not just mental.

Your body carries shame too.

Today, do one small thing that **communicates respect to your body**.

Stand up and roll your shoulders.

Take ten slow breaths.

Step outside for two minutes.

Put your hand on your chest and say, quietly:

“I’m here. I’m still me.”

That may feel strange.

Keep going anyway.

Body respect:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ten slow breaths |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Step outside for two minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stretch shoulders / unclench jaw |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hand on chest: “I’m here. I’m still me.” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other small act of care |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If today becomes a hard moment, you don’t have to punish yourself.

If you lose traction, you don’t have to collapse into identity shame.

If you want a deeper dive on identity, belonging, and design, revisit the sections you’ve written on identity formation and the “very good” design theme.

- This is not proof of who you are.
- This is information.
- A signal.
- A pattern showing itself.
- An unmet need surfaced.
- And you can respond with care.

If you return to an old pattern, don't punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: If I lose traction, I will re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you want a deeper dive on identity, belonging, and design, read *God Made You, And He Does Not Make Junk*, free on Kindle Unlimited and available on Amazon.

DAY 3 — Belonging Fuels Growth

Healing grows in connection. You were never meant to do this alone.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Healing grows in connection. You were never meant to do this alone.

NAME THE LONELINESS

- One of the first things addiction does is make you feel alone.
- Sometimes you're alone because you've pushed people away.
- Sometimes you're alone because you don't want anyone to see what's really happening.
- Sometimes you're alone in a room full of people.

WHY ISOLATION IS DANGEROUS

Addictive patterns thrive in isolation.

KEY TRUTH: Isolation makes shame louder, cravings stronger, and choices harder.

Not because you're bad.

Because isolation makes shame louder, cravings stronger, and choices harder.

BELONGING FUELS GROWTH

So today we're going to talk about belonging.

Not the kind you have to earn.

Not the kind you have to perform for.

The kind that reminds your nervous system it's safe to be human.

The kind that helps you breathe again.

Belonging doesn't fix everything overnight.

But belonging changes the conditions inside you.

And when the conditions change, healing becomes possible.

WHEN PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND

You might read that and think, "I've tried connection. People don't understand." That may be true.

- Some people won't understand.
- Some people will love you but still be confused, afraid, or angry.
- Some people will want to help and won't know how.

MORE THAN ONE BRIDGE

That's why we're going to widen the idea of support.

- You need more than one bridge.
- You need more than one place to be honest.
- You need more than one safe voice speaking truth into your life.

Connection to God matters.

Connection to people matters.

Connection to your own body matters.

And connection to purpose matters too.

ONE HONEST CONNECTION

Today, we start with the simplest form of belonging.

One honest connection.

One step toward being known.

Because secrecy keeps you sick.

REMEMBER: Secrecy keeps you sick. Being known helps you heal.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel alone, even around people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I've been hiding / minimizing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I want support but don't know where to start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm afraid of being a burden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm willing to take one small step toward being known |

CONNECT

Connection to people matters.

Connection to your own body matters.

And connection to purpose matters too.

Today, we start with the simplest form of belonging.

One honest connection.

One step toward being known.

Because secrecy keeps you sick.

And being known helps you heal.

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When you feel the most alone, what do you usually do?
- What do you wish someone understood about you right now?
- What is the hardest part about letting people in?
- What is the fear underneath it?
- If you could have one kind of support during these 28 days, what would it be?

CONNECTION MATTERS

Belonging is built with small, repeated moments.

With God:

Take a quiet minute and picture God near you without disappointment.

If that feels hard, don't fight yourself.

Just tell God the truth.

"God, I don't know how to believe I'm still loved."

Then breathe. Then sit long enough to let your body notice the moment.

With a person: Today you're going to take one small step toward connection.

Today's connection step:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Text one safe person: "Could you check in with me once this week?" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Answer one call / return one message |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Look up one meeting or support space and write the time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Attend one meeting (in person or online) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: a small step toward being known |

My connection plan for today:

ACT

Today, do one "belonging action."

Make it small.

- Send one message.
- Answer one call.
- Sit with someone for ten minutes without pretending you're fine.
- If you're isolated, your action can be this:
- Look up one local or online recovery meeting and write down the time.

Not forever. Just one. You're building bridges.

My belonging action today:

BODY CARE

Belonging isn't only emotional.

Your body needs signals of safety too.

Today, choose one small regulation practice:

Step outside and take ten slow breaths.

Put your hand on your chest and say, "I'm here."

Stretch your shoulders and unclench your jaw.

Let your body feel the difference between tension and release.

As you do, say quietly:

"I'm allowed to be human."

Body safety signal):

- Ten slow breaths outside
- Hand on chest: "I'm here."
- Stretch shoulders / unclench jaw
- Slow walk for 5–10 minutes
- Other small regulating practice

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If today is a hard moment, do not punish yourself.

Isolation will try to convince you that you are alone and stuck.

That's not truth.

That's the pattern trying to protect itself.

If you feel yourself losing traction, treat it as a signal.

Information. A clue about what you needed.

Then respond with care.

If you return to an old pattern, don't punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect. The most important word in that sentence is the last one. Reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: If I lose traction, I will re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

FINAL THOUGHT...

This is also a good day to begin identifying your “people bridges”—the safe places you can return to when shame gets loud.

DAY 4 — The Life You Don't Want to Miss

Desire points to what matters. It can become direction.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Desire points to what matters. It can become direction—toward a life you don't want to miss.

RELIEF IS A REAL DESIRE

Addictive patterns don't begin because someone doesn't want life. They begin because someone wants relief. Peace. Rest. Quiet. Confidence. Escape from pain. A break from carrying so much.

DESIRE IS NOT THE ENEMY

There is nothing wrong with wanting those things. What becomes painful over time is when the thing that once helped starts taking more than it gives.

A DIFFERENT QUESTION

Today we're not here to argue with what addiction has done for you. We're here to ask a different question.

What kind of life do you want to be living?

- Not someday.
- Not when everything is fixed.

What kind of life do you not want to miss while you're still here?

KEY QUESTION: What kind of life do I want to be living—not someday, but starting now?

THIS IS ABOUT ALIGNMENT

That question matters because many people living with addiction already have “a life.” They may have work. Responsibilities. Relationships. Even good things.

And still, something inside feels disconnected.

Still, the pull exists.

So, this isn't about appearances.

It's about alignment.

REMEMBER: This isn't about appearances. It's about the direction your life is moving.

It's about the part of you that wants meaning, purpose, passion, and connection. The part of you that wants to wake up and know what your life is moving toward.

THE PART OF YOU THAT WANTS LIFE

That part of you is not gone.

- It may be quiet.
- It may be tired.
- It may not trust you yet.

But it's still there.

Today is about listening to that part again.

ANCHOR: That part of you may be quiet or tired, but it is still there.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel numb or disconnected from desire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel grief about what I've missed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel longing, and it scares me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm ready for one small alignment step |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I don't know what I want yet—and that's okay |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When you imagine a life you don't want to miss, what do you notice first—emotion, image, longing?
- What has addiction helped you cope with?
- What has it protected you from feeling?
- What has it quietly cost you?
- What parts of yourself feel smaller than they used to?
- What parts of life feel farther away?
- Finish this sentence without editing it:
“I don't want to miss...”
- Now finish this one:
“I want my life to have more...”
- Now write one honest sentence to God:
“God, help me build a life that feels worth showing up for.”

CONNECT

Desire becomes clearer when it's shared.

With God:

Ask one simple question:

“God, what matters most to You about my life?”

You don't have to hear a clear answer.

Even sitting with the question shifts something inside.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence from your LET'S GO DEEPER.

“I'm realizing I don't want to miss ____.”

You don't need advice.

You just need to be heard.

If you don't have someone safe yet, write that sentence down and keep it.

You are still practicing connection.

Connection step:

- Share one sentence from LET'S GO DEEPER with a safe person
- Write the sentence and keep it somewhere visible today
- Pray the question: “God, what matters most to You about my life?”
- Other small step toward being known

My connection step today:

ACT

Today's action is a small alignment.

Choose one thing that supports the life you don't want to miss.

Ten minutes.

Not performance.

Not perfection.

Just presence.

Movement. Creativity. Reading. Repairing something. Being outside. Serving someone. Making something with your hands.

Let your action say: I'm paying attention to my life again.

Small alignment:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Movement (walk, stretch) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Creativity (write, draw, make something) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Repair (clean one small thing / send one repair message draft) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Nature (step outside, sit in sunlight) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Service (small kindness) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

What I chose today (and when):

BODY CARE

Your body carries desire and fatigue.

Both deserve care.

Today, do one thing that communicates respect to your body's future.

Eat something that strengthens you.

Hydrate slowly.

Rest for ten minutes without numbing.

As you do, say quietly:

"This body carries my life."

Body respect:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Eat something that strengthens you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydrate slowly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest for ten minutes without numbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gentle stretch / breath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other small act of care |

What I did today:

RE-ANCHOR

If today stirs longing or grief, that doesn't mean you're failing.

It means something alive is waking up.

If you lose traction, don't punish yourself.

Notice what came up.

- Treat it as information.
- A signal.
- A clue.

Then respond with care.

If you return to an old pattern, don't punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect.

And come back to this question:

What kind of life am I choosing to build?

RE-ANCHOR QUESTION: What kind of life am I choosing to build today?

FINAL THOUGHT...

Desire becomes safer when dignity and connection are in place.

Day 5 — Make It Make Sense

Understanding brings relief. Relief makes change possible.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Understanding brings relief. Relief makes change possible.

THE HIDDEN BURDEN

A lot of people living in addictive patterns carry a hidden burden.

It's not only what they've done.

It's the confusion.

- “How did I get here?”
- “Why can other people do this casually and I can't?”
- “Why do I keep returning to something I swore I was done with?”

If you've asked those questions, you're not alone.

And you're not weak for asking.

MAKE IT MAKE SENSE

Today is about making it make sense.

- Not so you can label yourself.
- Not so you can argue about whether addiction is a disease or a choice.

This book isn't here to win that debate.

We're here to deal with what has happened in your life and what your body and brain now demand.

Because when people understand what is happening inside them, shame loses power.

KEY TRUTH: Understanding reduces shame. Reduced shame increases steadiness.

And when shame loses power, you can begin making steadier choices.

WHAT YOUR BRAIN LEARNED

Here's a simple truth.

In addictive patterns, the brain learns fast.

It learns that a substance, a behavior, a rush, a hit, a purchase, a win, a connection, a screen—whatever your “thing” has been—can change how you feel right now.

Relief becomes the reward.

Escape becomes the reward.

Numbness becomes the reward.

And the brain, doing what brains do, starts building a pathway.

The more that pathway is repeated, the more automatic it becomes.

KNOWING VS URGENCY

That's why you can “know better” and still feel pulled.

Knowledge lives in one place.

Urgency lives in another.

WHEN LIFE FEELS FLAT

This is also why early recovery can feel strange.

Some people expect that once they stop, they should feel normal right away.

But many people don't.

- Many people feel numb.
- Flat.
- Restless.
- Irritated.
- Bored.
- Anxious.
- Sometimes even depressed.

That doesn't mean something is wrong with you.

It often means your reward system is recalibrating.

Your brain has been receiving intense highs and intense relief.

When that stops, ordinary life can feel quiet in a way that feels empty.

That can be terrifying if no one told you it might happen.

NORMALIZE THE SEASON

So today we normalize it.

We name it.

And we refuse to build scary stories about it.

This is a season.

REMEMBER: Numbness/flatness can be part of recalibration. Don't build scary stories.

It is not your identity.

And it will not last forever.

REBUILDING REWARD

Today we're going to start building a different kind of reward.

Not artificial.

Not destructive.

Real.

The kind that comes from dignity, connection, purpose, embodied care, and a life you don't want to miss.

That is how the brain heals over time.

Not by punishment.

ANCHOR: The brain heals over time by replacement, rhythm, and returning—not punishment.

- By replacement.
- By rhythm.
- By returning.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- I feel confused about why I keep returning
- I've been blaming my character instead of understanding the pattern
- I feel flat/numb and it scares me
- Cravings feel urgent even when I "know better"
- I'm ready to map one moment without shame

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When did your pattern first start helping you cope?
- What did it give you in the beginning?
- What does it give you now?
- What does it take from you now?
- When you feel pulled, what is usually happening right before it?

- Have you noticed a numb season—flatness, lack of joy, or feeling “nothing”?
- If yes, what stories do you tend to tell yourself about that numbness?
- Now write one sentence of truth you want to remember:
“This is not proof I’m broken. This is my brain and body trying to recalibrate.”

CONNECT

Understanding becomes steadier when it’s shared.

With God:

Pray one honest prayer:

“God, give me clarity about what’s happening inside me, and give me compassion for myself as I heal.”

If you want, add:

“God, help me not build stories of shame around a season that is normal.”

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share this simple line:

“I’m learning that my brain is adjusting. If I seem flat or irritable, I’m not giving up—I’m recalibrating.”

That kind of honesty reduces misunderstanding.

And misunderstanding creates distance.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “I’m learning that my brain is adjusting. If I seem flat or irritable, I’m not giving up—I’m recalibrating.”

ACT

Today's action is to map one "pull" moment.

Not the whole story.

Just one recent moment.

Write three quick lines:

1. What happened right before I felt pulled?
2. What did I want to feel or not feel?
3. What did I do next?

No shame.

Just information.

A signal.

A data point.

A clue about what you needed.

MAP ONE PULL MOMENT: Write three quick lines. Keep it simple and honest.

1. What happened right before I felt pulled?

2. What did I want to feel or not feel?

3. What did I do next?

BODY CARE

Your brain heals faster when your body is stabilized. Today choose one stabilizer:

- Eat something with protein.
- Hydrate. Move your body for ten minutes.
- Take a short nap.
- Go to bed earlier.

Do it like you're building a foundation.
Because you are.

Stabilizers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Eat something with protein |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydrate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Move your body for ten minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Take a short nap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to bed earlier |

What I chose (and when):

RE-ANCHOR

If today brings a hard moment, don't punish yourself.

A hard moment is not a verdict.

It's information.

Feedback. A pattern showing itself.

An unmet need surfaced.

If you return to an old pattern, don't punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect.

Then come back to this:

Understanding is not an excuse.

It's a doorway.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Understanding is not an excuse. It's a doorway.

FINAL THOUGHT...

Understanding often comes in layers. If you find yourself curious about something you learn, dig deeper.

DAY 6 — Misuse vs. Addiction

Naming what's true helps you choose what's wise.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Naming what's true helps you choose what's wise—without shame.

CLARITY THAT REDUCES SHAME

Today we're going to clarify something that removes a lot of confusion and shame.

MISUSE VS. ADDICTION

Not everyone who uses a substance—or uses a behavior to cope—is dealing with addiction.

Some people are dealing with misuse.

Misuse means you're using something as a coping strategy in a way that compromises your life, but you still retain a lot of choice and flexibility. You may be able to lay it down and pick it up without losing yourself in it. It may still be harmful. It may still need to change. But clinically and practically, it isn't always the same as addiction.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT

- Addiction is different.
- Addiction isn't just "I do this too much."
- Addiction is when your body begins to demand more.

KEY TRUTH: If "just stop" were simple, you would have. This isn't a character flaw—it's a learned pathway and a trained reward system.

Your brain begins to prioritize the reward.

Your life begins to organize around it.

And even when you genuinely want to stop, you find yourself returning.

That's why addiction can feel so confusing. People will say, "Just stop." And you may think, "If it were that simple, I would have."

WHY SHAME MISSES THE POINT

This is also why shame is so damaging.

Shame assumes the problem is your character.

But the reality is often more complex. Your nervous system has learned a pathway.

Your reward system has been trained. Your body can feel like it's calling the shots.

And if that's what has happened for you, the question isn't "Why can't I be normal?"

The question becomes, "What is wise for me now?"

WHAT IS WISE FOR ME

- Some people can casually use and not lose themselves.
- Some people cannot.
- Your job isn't to judge yourself for which one you are.
- Your job is to accept what is true about you and build your life accordingly.

REMEMBER: Acceptance isn't giving up. It's redirecting your energy from fighting reality to building protection.

ACCEPTANCE IS FREEDOM

That acceptance is not a loss.

It's freedom.

Because when you stop trying to be the kind of person who can casually use, you stop fighting reality.

And you can finally put your energy into building a life you don't want to miss.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I can sometimes stop after a little |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Once I start, something in me demands more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Moderation has not worked for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm not sure yet, and I want clarity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm ready to choose what is wise (not what is ideal) |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When you use your substance or behavior of choice, what happens inside you?
- Do you feel able to stop after a small amount?
- Or does something in you demand more?
- Have you tried to moderate before?
- What happened?
- What are the promises you tend to make—and then break?
- When you return, what is usually the trigger—stress, loneliness, celebration, conflict, boredom, numbness?

- Write one sentence of truth:
“For me, casual use is (possible / not possible / I’m not sure yet).”

- If you already know it isn’t possible, write this:
“For me, casual use leads to losing traction.”

- Now write one sentence to God:
“God, help me accept what is true so I can choose what is wise.”

CONNECT

Truth becomes steadier when it’s spoken in safe places.

With God:

Ask: “God, give me clarity about what is wise for me.”

Then sit long enough to notice what rises—peace, resistance, grief, relief.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence:

“I’m realizing moderation may not be wise for me.”

You don’t need a long explanation.

Clarity is powerful.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “I’m realizing moderation may not be wise for me.”

ACT

Today's action is to write your "wise boundary" in plain language.

Not as a punishment.

As protection.

Examples:

- "For me, one is not one."
- "For me, casual use isn't casual."
- "For me, this leads to losing myself."

Write your own sentence.

Then write one practical step that supports it:

- "Because of that, I will remove ____ from my environment," or
"I will not go to ____ right now," or
"I will reach out to ____ when cravings hit."

Small. Specific. Doable.

WISE BOUNDARY: Write one sentence that protects your life—not as punishment, but as protection.

My wise boundary sentence:

One practical step that supports it:

Support step:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Remove access (stash/app/money channel) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoid one high-risk place/event for now |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ask one person to help me follow my boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Write a plan for cravings (who/what/where) |

BODY CARE

Acceptance becomes easier when your body is stabilized.

Today choose one stabilizer:

Eat something steady. Hydrate. Move for ten minutes.

Rest your eyes. Then say: “I’m choosing what is wise for my body.”

Body stabilizer:

- Eat something steady
- Hydrate
- Move for ten minutes
- Rest your eyes / take a short pause
- Other small act of stabilization

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you hit a hard moment today, don’t punish yourself.

This is a signal.

Information.

A pattern showing itself.

An unmet need surfaced.

If you return to an old pattern, don’t punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect.

Then come back to your wise boundary.

Not with shame.

With clarity.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: If I lose traction, I will re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect. Then return to my wise boundary with clarity.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If this day stirs grief, that’s normal. Acceptance can feel like loss at first. But over time, acceptance becomes relief—because you stop fighting what has already proven true.

DAY 7 — The Addiction On-Ramp

Understanding how it started helps you stop blaming yourself.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Understanding how it started helps you stop blaming yourself—and helps you build an off-ramp.

WHY WE LOOK AT BEGINNINGS

Today we're going to talk about beginnings.

Not because we're digging for shame.

Because understanding how addiction begins helps it make sense.

And when it makes sense, you can stop telling yourself you're just “crazy” or “weak.”

KEY TRUTH: Understanding is not an excuse. It's a map—and maps help you choose differently.

HOW IT CAN START

- For some people, addiction begins with curiosity.
- For some, it begins with pain.
- For some, it begins with trauma.
- For some, it begins with stress, anxiety, depression, or overwhelm.
- For some, it begins medically—after an injury, surgery, a prescription, a traumatic brain event, or a major life change.
- For some, it begins socially—belonging, environment, access, normalization.
- And for some, there's a genetic sensitivity that makes the craving response more intense, like the body is “allergic” in the sense that once it's in the system.

RELIEF BEFORE COST

Most people don't start because they want to destroy their life.
They start because they want relief.

REMEMBER: You didn't start because you wanted destruction. You started because it worked—until it cost too much.

They start because they want to cope.
They start because it works—until it costs too much.

MAP YOUR ON-RAMP

So today we're going to map your on-ramp.
Not to stay there.
To understand it, so you can build an off-ramp.

OFF-RAMP IDEA: When you know your on-ramp, you can prepare a response before the pull gets loud.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- My pattern started in pain or stress
- My pattern started socially / by access
- My pattern started medically (injury, prescription, life event)
- I feel shame about how it began
- I'm ready to map it without blame

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When did your pattern first become a pattern?
- What was happening in your life around that time?
- What did it give you in the beginning?
- What did it protect you from feeling?
- What are the top three situations that tend to pull you back in?
- Now write one sentence:
“My on-ramp usually starts when...”
- Then write:
“What I’m really needing in that moment is...”

CONNECT

Understanding deepens when you're not alone with it.

With God:

Ask: "God, show me the real need underneath my pattern."

Then sit long enough to notice what comes up—memory, emotion, resistance, grief, relief.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence:

"I'm learning my on-ramp starts when ____."

This isn't an excuse.

It's a map.

Maps help you choose differently.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: "I'm learning my on-ramp starts when ____."

If you want to share with someone safe, draft it here:

ACT

Today's action is to create one off-ramp.

Choose one common on-ramp trigger and write a response plan.

Example:

- "When I'm lonely, I will reconnect with ____."
- "When I'm overwhelmed, I will stabilize my body first: water, food, shower, sleep."
- "When I'm numb, I will move my body for ten minutes and then reach out."

Write one off-ramp plan that is simple enough to do.

Then do one small piece of it today—just to practice.

BUILD ONE OFF-RAMP: Choose one common trigger and write a simple response plan you can actually do.

My on-ramp trigger:

My off-ramp plan (one sentence):

One small piece I will practice today:

BODY CARE

Triggers hit harder when the body is depleted.

Today, choose one body stabilizer and treat it like protection:

Hydrate. Protein. Movement. Rest.

Then ask your body one gentle question:

“What do you need right now?”

Answer it with one small act of care.

Body stabilizer:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydrate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Protein / steady food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Movement (5–10 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest / early bedtime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ask my body: “What do you need right now?” and answer it once |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If today stirs up grief about how this began, let it be honest.

Grief is not weakness.

It's often the beginning of compassion.

And compassion makes change possible.

If you lose traction, don't punish yourself.

- Treat it as information.
- A signal.
- A clue about what you needed.

If you return to an old pattern, don't punish yourself—re-anchor, stabilize, rebuild the rhythm, and reconnect.

Then come back to your map.

On-ramp awareness is off-ramp power.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: If I lose traction, I will re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect. Then return to my map.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you feel stuck in “Why did I do this?” come back to this day. Most people discover their on-ramps in layers. The goal is not perfect insight. The goal is usable clarity.

DAY 8 — Cravings Are Information

Cravings are signals, not commands. You can respond with care.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Treat cravings as information. Learn what they're asking for, then choose what's wise.

WHAT A CRAVING REALLY IS

- Cravings can feel like an emergency.
- They can show up fast, loud, and convincing—like something inside you is demanding an answer right now.
- And when you're already tired, stressed, lonely, or numb, that urgency can feel unbearable.

But here's the truth: a craving is not a command.

A craving is information.

It's your body and brain asking for relief, regulation, comfort, escape, or connection—using the pathway it learned.

KEY TRUTH: Cravings are signals. They point to a need. You can meet the need without returning to the pattern.

THE THREE PARTS OF A CRAVING

Most cravings have three layers:

- A trigger (something happened)
- A feeling (something rose up)
- A request (something inside wants relief)

When you slow down long enough to notice those layers, the craving loses some of its power.

Because you're no longer trapped in urgency.

You're back in awareness.

REMEMBER: You don't have to win the whole day. You only have to get through the next 10 minutes with care.

Quick Check (choose what fits right now):

- My craving feels physical (restless, tight, urgent)
- My craving feels emotional (sad, anxious, overwhelmed)
- My craving feels relational (lonely, rejected, unseen)
- My craving feels like numbness (I don't want to feel anything)
- I'm not sure what it is—but I know I want relief

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When the craving shows up, what is it asking for—relief, rest, connection, numbness, confidence, escape?
- What happened right before the craving hit?
- What emotion is underneath it—stress, loneliness, boredom, conflict, shame, fatigue?
- If your craving could speak in a sentence, what would it say?
- Finish this sentence: “What I really need right now is _____.”

CONNECT

Cravings shrink when they are brought into the light.

With God:

Pray one honest sentence: “God, I feel pulled. Help me name what I’m really needing.”

Then take one slow breath and stay present for a moment.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, send a simple message: “I’m having a craving. I’m staying honest. Can you check in with me?”

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m having a craving. I’m not asking you to fix it—I just don’t want to be alone with it.”

If you want to send a message, draft it here first:

ACT

Today’s action is a 10-minute delay plan.

Not because 10 minutes fixes everything—

but because 10 minutes gives your nervous system time to settle

10-MINUTE CRAVING DELAY: Do these in order. Keep it simple.

Step 1–4 (check as you go):

- Water (slow sips)
- Protein / steady food (if you can)
- Move your body for 2–5 minutes (walk, stretch, shake out arms)
- Reach out (text/call someone safe)
- Breathe: 10 slow breaths
- Change location (different room / step outside)

BODY CARE

Cravings hit harder when the body is depleted.

Today, choose one stabilizer and treat it like protection:

Body stabilizer:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Protein / steady snack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Short walk or stretch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Shower / wash face |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early bedtime plan |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

- If you lose traction today, do not punish yourself.
- A hard moment is not a verdict. It is information.
- Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: This is information. I can respond with care.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If cravings feel constant, remember: intensity often comes in waves.

You don't have to outthink the wave—you can outlast it with small, steady actions. Many people return to this day again and again. That's not failure. That's building skill.

DAY 9 — Triggers and Pattern Mapping

Noticing earlier helps you choose wiser. A map creates off-ramps.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Identify your top triggers and early warning signs. Then write one simple if/then plan.

WHY TRIGGERS MATTER

- A trigger is not an excuse.
- A trigger is a signal.
- It's the moment your nervous system starts shifting toward urgency—often before you even notice.

Most people don't "suddenly relapse."

Most people lose traction in steps.

A thought. A feeling. A place. A conflict. A lonely hour. A body that is depleted. Then the pull gets loud.

KEY TRUTH: The earlier you notice, the more choices you have.

TRIGGERS VS. WARNING SIGNS

Triggers are often external:

- A person
- A place
- A paycheck
- A holiday
- A fight
- A boring evening
- A stressful meeting

Warning signs are often internal:

- I'm tired
- I'm irritable
- I'm isolating
- I'm lying to myself
- I'm bargaining
- I'm not eating
- I'm not sleeping.

Both matter.

Today, we're building awareness without shame—so you can build an off-ramp before you're in survival mode.

REMEMBER: You don't have to identify every trigger today. Start with the top three.

Quick Check (choose what fits):

- I tend to get pulled when I'm stressed or overwhelmed
- I tend to get pulled when I'm lonely or unseen
- I tend to get pulled when I'm bored or numb
- I tend to get pulled after conflict or shame
- I'm not sure yet—I just know I lose traction fast

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What tends to happen right before you lose traction?

- What are your top three triggers? (Choose the most common ones.)

- What are your early warning signs—what changes in your body, mood, or thinking?

- What are the first lies or bargains you tend to believe?

My top 3 triggers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My early warning signs (body / mood / thoughts):

CONNECT

Triggers get more powerful in secrecy.

Connection doesn't remove triggers, but it changes what triggers do to you.

With God:

Pray: "God, give me clarity about my patterns, and give me courage to respond early."

With a person:

Share one trigger with someone safe: "I've noticed I get pulled when ____."

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: "I'm learning my early warning signs. If you notice me isolating or getting edgy, can you check in with me?"

ACT

Today's action is simple: write one if/then plan for each trigger.

If/then plans remove decision fatigue.

They help you act while your nervous system is still calm enough to choose.

IF/THEN PLANS: Keep them small. Keep them doable. You're building off-ramps.

Trigger #1: If _____ happens, then I will

Trigger #2: If _____ happens, then I will

Trigger #3: If _____ happens, then I will

Common off-ramps (choose any that fit):

- Stabilize first: water + food + breathe
- Change location (different room / outside)
- Text or call someone safe
- Move your body for 5–10 minutes
- Pray one honest sentence
- Remove access (apps, money channel, contact)

BODY CARE

Triggers hit harder when the body is depleted.

Tonight, let your body get one signal of safety.

This is not about perfection. It's about protection.

Sleep-support step:

- Set a simple bedtime target (even 30 minutes earlier)
- Hydrate + a steady snack
- Shower / wash face / brush teeth (reset cue)
- Phone down 20 minutes before sleep
- Write one worry down and set it aside

What I'm doing tonight to support my body:

RE-ANCHOR

If you lose traction today, do not punish yourself.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then come back to your map.

A pattern showing itself is not a verdict.

It's a doorway to wiser choices next time.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: A pattern showing itself means I can build an off-ramp.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you feel overwhelmed by patterns, narrow it down.

Pick one trigger to focus on this week.

Progress here is not perfect awareness. It's earlier noticing.

Earlier noticing is where freedom begins.

DAY 10 — Environment: People, Places, Access

Reduce friction. Remove access. Protection isn't punishment.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Change one environmental factor that quietly pulls you back into the pattern.

WHY ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Most people don't fail because they don't care.

They lose traction because the environment makes the old pattern easy—and makes the new life hard.

- Access matters.
- Friction matters.

What you see, who you're with, where you go, and what's one click away matters.

KEY TRUTH: Willpower is not your only tool. Design is a tool. We build protection into the environment.

PEOPLE • PLACES • ACCESS

Today we're going to look at three categories:

- People — relationships that pull you toward the pattern (or support your healing)
- Places — locations, routines, routes, and “time-of-day” zones that trigger automatic behavior
- Access — what is available quickly: substances, apps, contacts, money channels, devices, secrecy spaces

This isn't about control.

It's about creating a fair fight while your brain is healing.

REMEMBER: You are not punishing yourself. You are protecting your future.

Quick Check (where is the pull strongest for you?):

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | People (certain relationships or social settings) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Places (routes, rooms, neighborhoods, events) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Access (apps, stash, contacts, money, devices) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Time-of-day (late night, weekends, payday, after work) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm not sure yet—I want clarity |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What environments pull you away from the life you don't want to miss?
- Where does your pattern feel automatic?
- What access points make it easy to return?
- What is one change that would make the next right choice easier?

CONNECT

Environment change is easier with support.

With God:

Pray: “God, give me courage to remove what harms me and build what strengthens me.”

With a person:

Ask one safe person to help you change one access point today.

You can keep it simple: “Can you help me remove ____? I’m trying to make wise choices easier.”

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “I’m changing my environment as protection. Would you help me with one practical step today?”

If you want to message someone, draft it here:

ACT

Today’s action is to remove one access point.

One. Not everything. Just one change that reduces risk and increases steadiness.

ONE ACCESS CHANGE: Choose one action you can complete today (10–30 minutes).

Choose one access point to remove or reduce:

- Delete / block one app or website
- Remove a stash / clean a risky space
- Change a route that passes a trigger location
- Adjust money access (cash limits, accountability, remove saved cards)
- Block / delete one contact that increases risk
- Move devices out of bedroom / late-night space
- Other: _____

The one change I will complete today:

When I will do it (time):

BODY CARE

External order can support internal steadiness.

Today, do one small “reset” in your physical space.

It can be as simple as clearing a counter, changing sheets, taking out trash, or organizing one drawer.

Not for perfection.

For calm.

Small space reset:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clean/organize one surface (5–10 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prepare a simple snack station (water + protein) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Make the bed / change sheets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Take a short walk outside to reset your nervous system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you lose traction today, don't punish yourself.

Look at the environment first.

Ask: “What made the old pattern easy right now?”

Then respond with care: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Protection isn't punishment.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If environment changes feel overwhelming, choose the smallest possible version.

A single app deleted.

A single route changed.

A single person asked for support.

Small design changes compound.

DAY 11 — Acceptance: What's Wise for Me

Accept what's true about you so you can choose what protects your life.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Acceptance isn't giving up. It's clarity that helps you choose what is wise—without shame.

ACCEPTANCE IS NOT DEFEAT

Some days, the hardest part of recovery isn't the craving.

It's the bargaining.

The part of you that wants to believe,

- “Maybe this time will be different.”
- “Maybe I can handle it now.”
- “Maybe I'm not like other people.”

That bargaining is understandable.

It's often grief in disguise.

Because accepting what is true can feel like loss.

KEY TRUTH: Acceptance does not reduce your worth. It reduces confusion.

WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNED

You don't need perfect insight.

You only need honest evidence.

- What has your life already taught you about what happens when you return to the pattern?
- What has it taught you about “just one,” “just tonight,” or “just this time”?

Today, we're going to let reality be real—

so you can stop spending energy fighting what has already proven true.

And you can put that energy into protection, connection, and a life you don't want to miss.

REMEMBER: Clarity is freedom. It's how you stop arguing with your own history.

Quick Check (choose what fits today):

- I still bargain with myself sometimes
- I feel grief about what I may need to let go of
- I feel relief when things are clear
- I'm tired of confusion and want a wise plan
- I'm not sure yet—but I want honesty

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What have you proven to be true about you and this pattern?
- Where does bargaining show up most often (stress, loneliness, celebration, numbness, conflict, payday)?
- What does “wise” look like for you right now—not forever.
- Finish this sentence: “For me, wisdom looks like _____.”

CONNECT

Acceptance gets steadier when you're not alone with it.

With God:

Pray: “God, help me accept what is true so I can choose what is wise.”

If grief rises, you don't have to push it away. Tell God the truth about it.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence:

“I'm choosing what's wise for me right now.”

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “For me, casual use leads to losing traction. I'm choosing what protects my life.”

ACT

Today's action is to write your Wise Statement.

Not as a punishment.

As protection.

It's the sentence you return to when bargaining starts.

MY WISE STATEMENT: Write it in plain language you will actually remember.

My wise statement (one sentence):

Choose a supporting step (small + specific):

- Remove one access point today
- Avoid one high-risk place/event for now
- Ask one person for accountability/check-in
- Create a "craving delay" plan and keep it visible
- Schedule one support space (meeting, group, session)

My supporting step (what + when):

BODY CARE

Acceptance is harder when your body is depleted.

Today, treat nourishment and rest as part of wisdom—not as a reward for doing well.

Body stabilizer:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Protein / steady meal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydration (slow sips) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10-minute movement (walk, stretch) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Short rest / eyes closed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early bedtime plan |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you lose traction today, don't punish yourself.

Bargaining is a signal. So is relapse.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then return to your Wise Statement.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Clarity is freedom. I can return to what is wise.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If acceptance feels like grief, let it be honest.

Grief is not proof you're failing.

It's often proof you're telling the truth—and letting go of what harms you.

Over time, acceptance becomes relief—because you stop fighting reality and start building your best life.

DAY 12 — The Numb Season

Flatness is often recalibration. Don't build scary stories.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Normalize numbness/anhedonia and respond with gentle structure—not panic or shame.

WHEN LIFE FEELS FLAT

Some people expect recovery to feel instantly better.

And sometimes it does.

But for many people, early healing includes a season that feels... quiet.

- Not peaceful-quiet.
- Empty-quiet.
- Flat. Numb. Restless. Irritated. Bored.

If that's happening for you, it doesn't mean you're failing.

It often means your brain is recalibrating.

When your nervous system has been used to intense relief or intense highs, ordinary life can feel muted for a while.

KEY TRUTH: Feeling nothing is not proof you're broken. It can be a normal part of healing.

THE REAL DANGER

The danger isn't the numbness.

The danger is the story you tell yourself about the numbness.

Numbness can trigger scary thoughts like:

- "This is who I am now."
- "I'll never feel joy again."
- "I might as well go back."

Those are fear-stories.

And fear-stories make cravings louder.

So today we practice something simple:

We name the season—without predicting the future.

Quick Check (what does numbness look like for you?):

- Flat mood / no excitement
- Restless and irritable
- Bored and unmotivated
- Emotionally shut down
- Anxious under the numbness
- I'm not numb—I'm just exhausted

LET'S GO DEEPER

- When you feel numb or flat, what story do you tend to tell yourself?

- What do you fear it means about you?

- What helps even a little—movement, sunlight, music, prayer, a shower, a safe person?

- Finish this sentence: “If numbness is a season, then what’s true today is _____.”

CONNECT

Numbness often tries to isolate you.

Connection is medicine even when you don't feel it.

With God:

Pray: "God, I feel flat. Help me not build stories of shame around a normal season."

Then sit for one minute. No pressure to feel anything.

With a person:

If you have someone safe, send one sentence:

"I'm in a recalibration season. I'm not giving up—I'm healing."

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: "I'm not okay-feeling right now, but I'm staying honest. Can you check in with me once today?"

ACT

Today's action is one small good thing—done on purpose.

Not because you feel like it.

Because you're training your brain to receive real reward again.

Keep it short: 10 minutes.

"Small good" (10 minutes):

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Step outside (sunlight / fresh air) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Walk or stretch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Music (one song, fully present) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A simple task (wash dishes, tidy one surface) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Text/call one safe person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Read one page of something life-giving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

What I chose (and when):

BODY CARE

When mood is flat, the body is often the fastest doorway back to steadiness. Today, choose two gentle stabilizers. Keep them simple.

Body stabilizers (pick two):

- Water (slow sips)
- Protein / steady snack
- 5–10 minutes of movement
- Sunlight for 2–5 minutes
- Shower / wash face / change clothes
- Short rest with eyes closed

My two stabilizers today:

RE-ANCHOR

If numbness triggers cravings, don't panic.

Treat the craving as information: "My system wants relief."

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then do one small good thing anyway.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: This is a season. Not my identity.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If numbness lasts a long time, or you feel hopeless, reach for more support.

A counselor, a doctor, a trusted pastor, a recovery group—more support is not failure.

But for many people, numbness comes in waves and eases as rhythms rebuild. Stay steady. Stay connected. Keep doing the next small good thing.

DAY 13 — Contentment Training

Rebuild your reward system with small, real good things—without pretending life is easy.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Practice receiving small good things. Contentment is a skill your brain can relearn.

WHY THIS DAY MATTERS

Addictive patterns train the brain to chase fast reward.

- Quick relief
- Quick escape
- Quick numbness
- Quick intensity

And when your system gets used to “fast,” ordinary life can feel... dull.

That's not a moral failure.

That's conditioning.

Today is not about forcing gratitude.

- It's not about pretending you're fine.
- It's about rebuilding your ability to receive real goodness again—slowly, honestly, in small doses.

KEY TRUTH: Contentment isn't denial. It's the capacity to receive what is good without needing an escape.

TOXIC POSITIVITY VS. TRUE RECEIVING

Toxic positivity says: “Don't feel that.”

True receiving says: “I can feel what's hard... and still receive something good.”

Both can be true at the same time.

- You can be grieving and still enjoy sunlight.
- You can be stressed and still enjoy a warm shower.
- You can be healing and still laugh at something small.

REMEMBER: Small good things don't erase pain. They strengthen you so you can face pain without numbing.

Quick Check (what's hardest for you?):

- I feel guilty receiving anything good
- I don't notice good things—I'm numb or rushed
- I minimize good things ("that doesn't count")
- I can receive good things, but I don't sustain them
- I'm willing to practice today, even if it feels awkward

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What are three small good things you can receive today?
- What small good thing have you been overlooking lately?
- What do you do when something good happens—do you rush past it, dismiss it, or let it land?

CONNECT

With God:

Thank God for one specific good thing—not as a speech, just as honesty.

“God, thank You for ____.”

Then sit for a moment and let your body notice it.

With a person:

Share one small good thing with someone safe.

Not as a highlight reel—just as practice.

“One good thing today is ____.”

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m practicing noticing small good things in recovery. One good thing today is _____.”

ACT

Today’s action is to schedule one small good thing on purpose.

Not someday.

Today.

Contentment grows through repetition.

SCHEDULE A SMALL GOOD THING: 10–20-minute actions

Actions to choose from:

- Walk outside (sunlight + movement)
- Music (one song, fully present)
- Warm drink / meal with attention (no scrolling)
- Creative moment (write, draw, make something)
- A simple tidy/reset that brings calm
- Time with a safe person (call, coffee, sit together)
- Other: _____

What I chose (and when):

How I will make it easier to follow through (one small support):

BODY CARE

Your brain learns safety through the body.

Today, give your nervous system a warm signal of care.

Body comfort practice:

- Warm shower / bath
- Stretch + slow breathing
- Hand on chest: “I’m here.”
- Go outside for fresh air
- Drink water slowly and on purpose
- Early bedtime routine (small, simple)

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you feel a craving today, don’t argue with yourself.

Name the need.

Meet the need in a wise way.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: I’m rebuilding what my brain learns to love.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If your brain says, “This doesn’t count,” keep going anyway.

Counting small good things is part of retraining.

You’re not trying to create a perfect life.

You’re strengthening your ability to receive real life—without escaping from it.

DAY 14 — Repair Begins with Truth

Repair is built through honesty and consistency—not big speeches.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Begin relational repair with one truthful, humble step. No overpromises.

WHY REPAIR MATTERS

Addiction doesn't only impact the person using.

- It impacts trust.
- It impacts safety.
- It impacts the people who love you—sometimes in ways they don't even have words for.

And when repair feels overwhelming, many people avoid it.

They wait until they feel “fully better.”

Or they try to fix everything with one big conversation.

But repair rarely happens through one moment.

Repair happens through a rhythm.

Truth, spoken with humility.

Then consistency, repeated over time.

KEY TRUTH: Repair is not a performance. It's a practice.

WHAT REPAIR IS (AND ISN'T)

- Repair is not begging for trust.
- Repair is not explaining yourself into forgiveness.
- Repair is not promising you'll never struggle again.
- And repair is not forcing someone to be okay before they are ready.
- Repair is telling the truth without manipulation.
- Repair is owning impact without defending your intentions.
- Repair is saying what you're doing differently—and then doing it.

Small. Steady. Over time.

REMEMBER: People don't need perfect words. They need a safe pattern over time.

Quick Check (what feels true today?):

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel guilt or shame about people I've impacted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel afraid to reach out because I don't want to make it worse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I want repair, but I don't know where to start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I've tried big apologies before and it didn't change much |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm willing to take one small truthful step |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- Who has your pattern impacted most?

- What do you think they have experienced (fear, exhaustion, mistrust, grief, anger, confusion)?

- What is one piece of truth you can say without overexplaining?

- What is one small consistency step you can actually keep?

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: “God, give me humility to tell the truth and strength to live it.”

If shame rises, name it and return. Shame makes you hide. Truth helps you repair.

With a person:

Choose one safe person to begin repair with.

Not necessarily the most complicated relationship.

Start where repair is possible and wise.

Choosing a repair person:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone safe who wants the best for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Someone I've impacted but can approach gently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A sponsor/mentor/pastor/coach who can guide repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm not ready to reach out yet—today I will draft and pray |

ACT

Today's action is to write one simple repair message.

- Not a long explanation.
- Not a promise you can't keep.
- Just truth, ownership, and one steady next step.

SIMPLE REPAIR SCRIPT: You can borrow this and adjust it to fit.

“I want to tell the truth. My pattern has impacted you, and I'm sorry for the ways it has hurt trust and peace.

I'm taking steps to heal. I'm not asking you to trust me quickly. I just want you to know I'm committed to showing up with honesty and consistency.”

Draft your message here:

A wise next step (choose one):

- Send the message (if safe and appropriate)
- Ask a mentor/sponsor to review it first
- Hold it for now and choose a smaller step (check-in, apology, acknowledgment)
- Start with consistency (show up on time, follow through once, tell one truth)

BODY CARE

- Repair work can stir anxiety in the body.
- Before and after any repair step, stabilize your nervous system.

Grounding practice:

- Ten slow breaths with feet on the floor
- Hand on chest: “I’m here.”
- Short walk outside
- Warm shower / wash face
- Text a safe person for support

What I will do to ground myself today:

RE-ANCHOR

If repair stirs shame, do not collapse into self-hatred.

Shame will try to convince you to hide.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then take the next small honest step again.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Repair is a rhythm, not a moment.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you’ve harmed someone, they may need time.

Time is not rejection. It’s healing.

Keep showing up with truth and consistency.

That is how trust is rebuilt—one lived day at a time.

DAY 15 — Off-Ramps (When It's Bigger Than a Book)

Getting more support is strength. Safety is wisdom.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Create a clear Off-Ramp Plan for the days you need more than willpower and worksheets.

THIS DAY IS LOVE FOR YOUR FUTURE SELF

Some days, a book is enough to steady you.

Other days, it isn't.

Not because you're weak.

Because addiction can be dangerous—and some bodies need medical support, clinical care, or higher structure for a season.

- Today is not about fear. It's about clarity.
- When your brain is loud and capacity is low, you don't want to decide from scratch.
- You want an off-ramp you can follow like a map.

KEY TRUTH: An off-ramp is not “giving up.” It's choosing safety and support before the cost grows.

WHEN IT'S WISE TO GET MORE HELP

Here are reality-based signs you may need more support right now:

Check any that are true:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm using daily or almost daily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I can't stop once I start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm hiding use, money, or contacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm taking risks (driving impaired, using alone, mixing substances) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm experiencing withdrawal symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | My mental health feels unstable (panic, severe depression, paranoia, suicidal thoughts) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I've tried to stop and keep relapsing quickly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | My environment makes staying sober very hard (unsafe home, constant access) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm afraid of what might happen if I keep going |

SAFETY NOTE (READ THIS): If you are in immediate danger, call emergency services. If you are thinking about harming yourself, call or text 988. If alcohol or benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, Klonopin, Ativan) are part of daily use, do not stop abruptly without medical guidance—withdrawal can be dangerous for some people. If opioids or fentanyl may be involved, overdose risk is real—do not use alone; consider naloxone access and rapid support.

WHEN SUBSTANCES WERE DOING MORE THAN NUMBING

For some people, substance use didn't start only as escape or habit. It started as **self-treatment**.

You may have been unknowingly using alcohol or drugs to manage:

- Anxiety or panic
- Depression or mood swings
- Trauma symptoms
- Attention or impulse challenges
- Sleep or emotional regulation difficulties

In other words, your drug of choice may have been helping your brain cope with something that had never been diagnosed or properly treated.

This matters.

Because stopping a substance does **not automatically resolve** underlying brain or mental health conditions.

And when those symptoms return—louder and unbuffered—it can feel overwhelming or frightening.

This is not a failure of willpower.

It is a signal for **additional care**.

Working with a licensed therapist and, when appropriate, a psychiatrist can help you:

- Identify any underlying mental health conditions
- Treat symptoms safely and appropriately
- Reduce relapse risk caused by untreated distress
- Build a recovery plan that supports your whole brain, not just behavior

Getting this kind of support does not mean you're "sicker" than others.

It means you're being honest about what your brain actually needs.

If this resonates, consider adding mental health evaluation or medication support to your Off-Ramp Plan below.

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What tells you you're at higher risk right now?
- What have you been trying to white-knuckle that may need more support?
- What kind of help would actually protect your life in this season—medical, counseling, detox, outpatient, group support, accountability?

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, give me courage to choose the support I need. Help me not confuse help with failure."

With a person:

Tell one safe person what's true. Not the cleaned-up version. The real version.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: "I think I need more support than I've been getting. Can you help me make a plan today?"

Who is my safe person today? (name + number)

ACT

Today's action is to build your Off-Ramp Plan.

Think of it as: who / where / what / when.

This plan should be simple enough to follow on low battery.

MY OFF-RAMP PLAN Fill this out even if you hope you never need it. This is protection, not pessimism.

1) If I'm in immediate danger, I will:

2) If I'm close to using (or already used), I will contact:

3) My safest place to go (today/tonight) is:

4) Professional support I can access next:

5) Medical safety step (if relevant) I will take:

6) One access door I will close today:

Add three contacts you can reach fast:

Name	Phone / How to reach
------	----------------------

One support action I will schedule in the next 48 hours:

- Medical appointment / assessment
- Therapy or counseling session
- Detox / inpatient / residential inquiry
- Outpatient program (IOP/PHP) inquiry
- Recovery meeting (AA/NA/CR/SMART)
- Sponsor/mentor/pastor check-in
- Other: _____

What I will schedule (date/time):

BODY CARE

When you're at higher risk, body care becomes safety care.

Today, choose the basics like medicine: food, water, rest, and a calm environment.

Stabilize first (choose two):

- Eat something steady (protein if possible)
- Hydration (slow sips)
- Shower / change clothes / wash face
- Move 5–10 minutes
- Protected sleep window tonight
- Get to a safe place with safe people

My two stabilizers today:

RE-ANCHOR

If shame says, “I shouldn’t need this,” answer with truth:
“Needing support is human. Choosing support is wisdom.”
Run your off-ramp plan without debating it.
Then reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Getting help is strength. Safety is wisdom.

FINAL THOUGHT...

You don’t have to decide your whole future today.
You only have to choose the next right step that reduces risk.
A stronger plan is not a failure—it’s a doorway.
And you are worth protecting.

DAY 16 — Shame vs. Conviction

Shame attacks identity. Conviction invites you home.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Learn the difference between shame and conviction so you can return without collapsing.

WHY THIS DISTINCTION CHANGES EVERYTHING

Many people don't struggle because they don't care.

They struggle because shame hijacks the moment after a hard choice.

- Shame doesn't just say, "That was harmful."
- Shame says, "You are harmful."

And when a person believes they are the problem, they stop believing change is possible.

- Conviction is different. Conviction is not humiliation.
- Conviction is loving clarity—a course-correction that pulls you back toward life, truth, and belonging.

KEY TRUTH: Shame makes you hide. Truth helps you return.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE

Here are a few simple markers:

SHAME SOUNDS LIKE: "I'm disgusting." "I always ruin everything." "God is done with me." "I might as well keep going."

CONVICTION SOUNDS LIKE: "That wasn't aligned with my life." "Tell the truth." "Come back." "Make one wise repair."

- Shame is vague and global.
- Conviction is specific and directional.
- Shame pushes you away from God and people.
- Conviction draws you toward God and people.
- Shame says, "Hide."
- Conviction says, "Return."

Quick Check (what are you feeling more of today?):

- Shame (identity attack)
- Conviction (loving clarity)
- Both
- Numbness (I don't know what I feel)
- I want to learn to tell the difference

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What does shame say to you when you struggle? Write one sentence exactly as it shows up.

- What does that sentence make you want to do—hide, numb, perform, punish, give up?

- Now ask: if shame is not the voice of God, what might God be inviting you into instead?

- Write one conviction sentence that is specific and directional.
Example: “Tell the truth to one person.” “Remove access.” “Go to bed.” “Re-anchor and reconnect.”

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: “God, show me the difference between shame and conviction. Help me hear Your voice of truth.”

Then breathe. Notice what happens in your body when you imagine shame vs. truth.

With a person:

Share one shame sentence with someone safe—and let them help you name truth. You don’t need a long conversation. One sentence is enough.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m noticing shame is loud. Can I tell you one sentence it’s saying, and can you help me rewrite it into truth?”

If you want to message someone, draft it here:

ACT

Today’s action is to rewrite one shame script into a truth script.

Keep it short. Make it usable.

Shame is dramatic. Truth is steady.

Truth doesn’t have to shout. It just has to be real.

SCRIPT SWAP: Write one shame line, then a truth line you will practice today.

Shame line:

Truth line:

Practice the truth line today:

- Say it out loud once when shame shows up
- Write it on a note / phone lock screen
- Text it to someone safe
- Pray it slowly (one breath per phrase)
- Act on it (one small next step)

My truth practice choice:

BODY CARE

Shame lives in the body. So we settle the body while we speak truth.

Body settling:

- Hand on chest + 10 slow breaths
- Feet on the floor + name 5 things you see
- Shoulders down + unclench jaw
- Short walk outside
- Warm shower / wash face

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you lose traction today, shame will try to turn it into identity.

Do not let it. A hard moment is information—not a verdict.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then practice your truth line again.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Shame makes me hide. Truth helps me return.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you grew up in shame-based environments, shame may feel like “motivation.”

But shame doesn’t heal you. It only makes you smaller.

Truth, spoken with dignity, is what makes change possible.

You are allowed to be honest without being cruel to yourself.

DAY 17 — Regulation: Stress and the Nervous System

Stabilize first. Then decide. Calm is a recovery skill.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Learn simple regulation tools so stress doesn't turn into urgency—and urgency doesn't turn into relapse.

WHY STRESS FEELS LIKE A CRAVING

A lot of relapse isn't about wanting the substance or behavior.

It's about wanting relief from what your body is carrying.

Stress isn't only a thought.

Stress is a body state.

- Tight chest
- Fast mind
- Shallow breath
- Irritable edges
- Restless hands

When your nervous system is activated, your brain starts looking for the fastest off-switch.

That's why regulation matters.

Not as a “nice idea.”

As a practical skill.

When your body settles, your choices widen.

KEY TRUTH: You don't have to be calm to do the next right thing. You just need to stabilize enough to choose.

TWO MODES: SURVIVAL VS. STEADY

When you're in survival mode, everything feels urgent.

You may overreact, shut down, numb out, or reach for the pattern.

When you're in steady mode, you can think, connect, and choose.

Today is about creating a small bridge from survival to steady.

REMEMBER: Stabilize first. Then decide.

Quick Check (what does stress look like in you?):

- Racing thoughts / worry loops
- Irritability / snapping
- Shut down / numb / checked out
- Restless body / can't sit still
- Tight chest / shallow breathing
- Headache / stomach / body pain

LET'S GO DEEPER

- How does stress live in your body? Where do you feel it first?

- What usually happens right after stress rises—do you isolate, overwork, argue, scroll, crave, or shut down?

- What helps even a little—movement, breath, prayer, water, a safe person, getting outside?

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: “God, settle my body and steady my mind. Help me choose what is wise.”

With a person:

If you have someone safe, ask for co-regulation—
a walk, a call, a quiet presence.

You don't have to carry stress alone.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “My stress is high. Can you be with me for 10 minutes (call/walk/text) so I don’t isolate?”

ACT

Today’s action is to choose one regulation tool and use it twice.

Not because twice is magic—

but because repetition teaches your nervous system a new pathway.

PICK ONE TOOL: Choose what you will actually do. Keep it simple.

Regulation tools:

- 10 slow breaths (inhale 4, exhale 6)
- Grounding: name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear
- Movement: 5–10 minute walk or stretch
- Cold water on face / hold a cool drink (reset cue)
- Prayer + breath: one sentence prayer, one slow breath (repeat 10x)
- Progressive release: tense shoulders 3 seconds, release 6 seconds (repeat)

My regulation tool today:

Time #1 (when I will do it):

Time #2 (when I will do it):

After I regulate, my next wise step will be:

BODY CARE

Regulation is easier when the basics are steady.

Today, choose one body stabilizer that reduces stress load.

Body stabilizer:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Protein / steady meal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydration (slow sips) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5–10 minutes of movement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Short rest (eyes closed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Shower / wash face / change clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early bedtime plan |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

When stress spikes, you don't have to think your way out first.

Stabilize your body.

Then choose.

If you lose traction, don't punish yourself—re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Stabilize first. Then decide.

FINAL THOUGHT...

Some days regulation feels impossible because you're depleted.

On those days, the most spiritual thing you can do might be: eat, drink water, rest, and reach out.

Calm is not personality.

Calm is practice.

And practice changes the nervous system over time.

DAY 18 — A Return Without Punishment

A hard moment is information. Returning quickly is strength.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Build a compassionate response plan for hard moments so shame doesn't turn one slip into a spiral.

WHY PUNISHMENT DOESN'T WORK

Most people don't spiral because they don't care.

They spiral because shame turns a hard moment into a verdict.

Shame says: "See? This is who you are."

And then the nervous system goes into collapse—
which often leads right back to the pattern for relief.

Today is about a different way.

- A return without punishment.
- Not denial.
- Not minimizing.

Just a steady response that keeps you connected to life, truth, and support.

KEY TRUTH: How quickly and gently you return matters more than how perfectly you perform.

THE HARD-MOMENT SEQUENCE (LOCKED)

When you lose traction, we follow one simple sequence:

SEQUENCE: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect

You don't have to feel ready.

You just have to follow the steps.

This is how you interrupt the spiral.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “I had a hard moment. I’m not hiding. I’m re-anchoring and reconnecting. Can you check in with me today?”

ACT

Today’s action is to write your Return Plan.
This is what you do when things go sideways.
Not later. Not when you feel strong.
In the moment.

MY RETURN PLAN (4 STEPS) Write it so you can follow it on low battery.

RE-ANCHOR	One sentence I will tell myself (truth, not shame):
STABILIZE	Two body steps I will do first (food/water/breath/shower/walk):
REBUILD THE RHYTHM	One small structure I will do in the next 24 hours (sleep, meeting, routine):
RECONNECT	Who I will contact (and what I will say):

Write your answers here:

One “do-not-do” after a hard moment:

- I will not isolate
- I will not hide
- I will not punish myself
- I will not make big promises
- I will not decide my whole future today

My “do-not-do” is:

BODY CARE

After a hard moment, your body needs stabilization—not moralizing. Today, do the basics like medicine.

Choose two:

- Protein / steady food
- Hydration
- Shower / change clothes
- Short walk or stretch
- Protected sleep window
- Sit with someone safe / don't be alone

My two body steps today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you return to an old pattern, do not punish yourself. Re-anchor. Stabilize. Rebuild the rhythm. Reconnect.

Then ask one question:

“What is the next wise step that moves me toward my best life?”

RE-ANCHOR LINE: A hard moment is information. I can return.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If your mind says, “I ruined everything,” answer with truth:

You had a hard moment. You did not lose your identity.

The goal is not perfect recovery.

The goal is a faster, gentler return.

That is how people heal over time.

DAY 19 — Boundaries Without Shame

Boundaries protect what matters. They are love in structure.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Choose one boundary that protects your recovery and your relationships—without guilt or hostility.

WHY BOUNDARIES ARE PART OF HEALING

Many people hear the word boundaries and think of rejection.

Or control.

Or conflict.

But boundaries are not about making people small.

Boundaries are about protecting what matters.

When addiction has been in the room, boundaries become essential—

not because you're "too much,"

but because your life is worth protecting while your brain and body heal.

KEY TRUTH: A boundary is not a punishment. It's a protection.

WHAT A BOUNDARY IS (AND ISN'T)

A boundary is:

- a clear line that protects your best life
- a decision you make about what you will do (not what others must do)
- a way to reduce chaos and increase steadiness

A boundary is not:

- a threat
- a lecture
- a way to force someone to change
- an excuse to be cruel

REMEMBER: You can set a firm boundary with a soft tone.

Quick Check (where do you need boundaries most?):

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | People (who pull me toward the pattern) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Places/events (high-risk environments) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Time (late-night / weekends / payday patterns) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Devices/content (apps, websites, contacts) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Money/access (cash, cards, gambling/spending channels) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Emotional boundaries (not rescuing, not spiraling with others) |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- Where are you most likely to lose traction?

- What boundary would protect your stability this week?

- What is the fear underneath boundary-setting (conflict, rejection, disappointing someone, feeling “mean”)?
Finish this sentence: “This boundary protects ____.”

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: “God, give me courage to protect what matters without shame. Help me be clear and calm.”

With a person:

If you have someone safe, tell them your boundary so it can be supported.

Clarity grows when it's spoken.

OPTIONAL SCRIPT: “I’m setting one boundary this week to protect my recovery. Would you support me in it?”

Who will I tell? (name + number)

ACT

Today’s action is to write your boundary in one sentence—
and then define what you will do if the boundary is challenged.
Boundaries are clearer when they include a plan.

MY BOUNDARY (ONE SENTENCE): Keep it short. Keep it doable. Make it about what you will do.

Choose a boundary category to implement for 7 days (trial, not forever):

- No high-risk places/events for 7 days
- No contact / muted contact with one risky person for 7 days
- No late-night scrolling or risky device use for 7 days
- Money boundary (cash limits / remove saved cards / accountability) for 7 days
- Recovery support boundary (meeting/call/check-in scheduled) for 7 days
- Other: _____

If this boundary is challenged, I will:

CALM BOUNDARY LANGUAGE: “I’m not available for that.” “I’m choosing what protects my life right now.” “I can talk tomorrow.”

Write a boundary sentence you can say out loud:

BODY CARE

Boundary-setting can activate your nervous system.

Today, do one calming routine that tells your body you are safe.

Calming practice:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ten slow breaths (inhale 4, exhale 6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Short walk outside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Warm shower / wash face |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stretch shoulders + unclench jaw |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydration + steady snack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early bedtime cue (phone down, lights low) |

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you feel guilty for setting a boundary, don't mistake guilt for wrongdoing. Guilt often shows up when you stop doing what used to keep other people comfortable.

Return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect. Then return to your boundary—calmly, again.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Boundaries protect what matters.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you're new to boundaries, start smaller than you think.

Small boundaries kept consistently build trust—in you and in others.

You're not trying to control the world.

You're protecting your best life while you heal.

DAY 20 — The Body Is a Gift

Your body carries your life. Care is not vanity—it's stewardship.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Choose one simple non-negotiable that helps your body stabilize and heal.

WHY THE BODY MATTERS IN RECOVERY

- Recovery isn't only willpower.
- Recovery is physiology.

When the body is depleted, the brain gets louder.

Cravings get stronger.

Emotions spike faster.

And wise choices become harder to access.

This is why body care is not optional.

- It is not a reward for “doing well.”
- It is part of the foundation that makes change possible.

KEY TRUTH: You are not trying to be impressive. You are trying to be steady.

CARE IS A RETURN TO RESPECT

Some people have treated their bodies like a problem to manage.

Or a machine to push.

Or a source of shame.

But your body is the place your life lives.

It carries your mind, your relationships, your calling, and your capacity to return.

Today is a dignity day.

- A return to respect.
- Not perfection.
- Not punishment.

Just one choice that says:

“This body carries my life.”

REMEMBER: Small body choices compound. A steady body makes a steadier mind.

Quick Check (what body area needs the most support right now?):

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sleep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Food / nourishment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hydration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Movement / energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Stress regulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Medical care / recovery support |

LET'S GO DEEPER

- How have you been treating your body lately?
- What does your body need most right now?
- If your body could speak with kindness, what would it ask for?

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, help me honor my body as a gift. Give me strength to care for myself with dignity."

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence:

"I'm choosing one body-care non-negotiable this week to support recovery."

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: "I'm working on recovery stability. My non-negotiable this week is _____. Can you encourage me in it?"

ACT

Today's action is to choose one body-care non-negotiable for the next 7 days.
Not forever.

Just this week.

It should be simple enough to actually keep.

MY NON-NEGOTIABLE (7 DAYS):

Non-negotiables:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Water (a consistent daily amount / cue) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Protein with one meal per day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10-minute walk or movement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sleep window (bedtime / wake time support) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Morning reset (shower, stretch, prayer, breakfast) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Evening reset (screens down, lights low, calm routine) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Medical support step (appointment, meds consistency, follow-up) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

My non-negotiable is:

When I will do it each day (time/cue):

What might get in the way (and how I'll protect it):

BODY CARE

Now do the first rep.

Even if it's small.

Your brain learns through action.

Do one body-care step right now:

- Drink water (slow sips)
- Eat a steady snack
- Stand and stretch shoulders / unclench jaw
- Walk for 5 minutes
- Set a bedtime reminder
- Take a shower / wash face / change clothes

What I did today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you lose traction today, don't punish yourself.

Go back to the basics.

A dysregulated body makes everything feel harder.

Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then return to your non-negotiable.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: This body carries my life.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you have a history of body shame, keep today very gentle.

This is not about appearance.

It's about capacity.

The goal is a body that can hold your life with more steadiness—
so you can build the life you don't want to miss.

DAY 21 — Service and Meaning

Purpose strengthens recovery. Serving shifts identity.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Choose one small act of service to remind your brain: you are more than the pattern.

WHY SERVICE HELPS HEALING

Addiction narrows life.

It pulls the world inward.

It trains your brain to revolve around relief—
what you want, what you fear, what you need right now.

Service does something powerful.

- It widens you.
- It reminds you that you can contribute.
- It moves you from shame to meaning.
- And meaning strengthens recovery.

KEY TRUTH: Service is not earning love. Service is remembering you have something good to give.

KEEP IT SMALL (AND REAL)

Today is not about saving the world.

It's about one small act that points you back toward purpose.

- A text.
- A meal.
- A prayer.
- A task for someone who is overwhelmed.
- A kind word that costs you attention.

Small service is still service.

And in recovery, small is often the most sustainable form of brave.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m doing one small act of service today as part of recovery. I’m going to ____ for _____. I’ll tell you when I’ve done it.”

Draft your message here (if you want):

ACT

Do one small act of service today.
Then pause for ten seconds and let it land.
Your brain needs to notice the reward of meaning.

Service action (keep it small):

- Send an encouragement text
- Pray for someone and tell them you did
- Do one practical task for someone (trash, dishes, errand)
- Offer to listen for 10 minutes (no fixing)
- Write a thank-you note/message
- Pick up something for someone while you’re out
- Serve in a simple way at church/community (small task)
- Other: _____

What I did today:

How it affected me (one sentence):

BODY CARE

Service should not drain you into collapse.

Today, pair service with one small good thing that restores you.

“Restore” action:

- Hydration + steady snack
- Short walk outside
- Warm shower
- Quiet 10 minutes (no scrolling)
- Music or reading
- Early bedtime cue

My restore action today:

RE-ANCHOR

If cravings show up today, remember:

You are building a life that has meaning.

Meaning strengthens your ability to return.

Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Purpose strengthens recovery.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If serving feels hard because you feel unworthy, start with the smallest version.

Even praying for someone quietly counts.

You are not disqualified from meaning because you have struggled.

Your life still has something good to offer.

DAY 22 — Your Strong Why

Your why leads you home. Protect what matters—not from fear, but from love.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Clarify a strong, repeatable WHY statement that you can return to when cravings, shame, or fatigue show up.

WHY A STRONG WHY MATTERS

Recovery isn't only about what you're quitting.

- It's about what you're building.
- A strong why is the difference between white-knuckling and returning with purpose.
- It doesn't have to be dramatic.
- It just has to be true.

True enough to repeat when your brain is loud.

KEY TRUTH: Your why doesn't have to scare you into change. It can love you into it.

FEAR-WHY VS. LOVE-WHY

Sometimes people try to recover through fear:

“I can't do this or I'll lose everything.”

Fear can create motion, but it doesn't create stability.

It burns you out.

It keeps your nervous system activated.

And when you're activated, you reach for relief.

A love-why is different.

A love-why says:

- “I'm choosing my best life.”
- “I'm protecting what matters.”
- “I'm becoming steady for the people I love.”
- “I want to be present.”

REMEMBER: Your why should make you want to return—not punish you if you struggle.

Quick Check (what kind of why do you tend to use?):

- Fear-why (threats, pressure, panic)
- Shame-why (self-hate motivation)
- Love-why (protection, purpose, presence)
- I'm not sure yet, but I want a love-why

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What do you want to protect? (health, marriage, kids, work, calling, faith, peace)

- What do you want to build? (stability, honesty, joy, belonging, purpose)

- What has addiction been costing you that you're no longer willing to pay?
Finish this sentence: "I want my life back because ____."

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, help me remember what matters when I'm tired. Give me a why that leads me home."

With a person:

If you have someone safe, share one sentence of your why.

Speaking it out loud strengthens it.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m clarifying my why for recovery. One sentence is:”

Draft your message here (if you want):

ACT

Today’s action is to write your WHY STATEMENT.

- Keep it short enough to remember.
- Strong enough to repeat.
- Gentle enough to return to—even after a hard day.

MY WHY STATEMENT: Write 1–3 sentences. You can revise it later.

Keep your why visible this week:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Write it on a note and place it where you’ll see it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Make it your phone lock screen (typed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Put it in your wallet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Text it to someone safe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Read it out loud once a day for 7 days |

My choice:

BODY CARE

Take your why into your body.

Walk for 5–10 minutes (or sit quietly if walking isn't possible).

As you move, repeat your why out loud or under your breath.

Let it become familiar.

Body practice today:

- Walk while repeating my why
- Sit + breathe while repeating my why
- Hand on chest: "This matters."
- Stretch + repeat one line of my why

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

When cravings hit, your brain will say, "Forget why this matters."

Don't debate that voice.

Return to your why like a compass.

Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: My why leads me home.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you can't find a why today, start smaller.

"I want one honest day."

"I want my mind to be quieter."

"I want to be present for dinner."

Small whys grow into strong whys over time.

Keep returning.

DAY 23 — Identity Through Belonging

Connection shapes identity. Belonging fuels recovery—and it's also maintenance.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Build a simple belonging plan so you're not relying on willpower when life gets loud.

WHY IDENTITY NEEDS COMMUNITY

You can do a lot of healing alone in your head—but identity is rarely healed in isolation.

- Addiction trains you to hide.
- Belonging trains you to return.

And over time, the places where you are known become the places where you become steady.

This is not about having “a lot of friends.”

It's about having a few bridges—

places you can be honest when you're tired, tempted, numb, or ashamed.

KEY TRUTH: Connection is not a bonus. Connection is part of how recovery stays stable.

BELONGING IS A PRACTICE, NOT A PERSONALITY

Some people are naturally social.

Some people are not.

Either way, belonging is built through small repeated moments.

- A check-in.
- A meeting.
- A walk.
- A text.
- A safe place to tell the truth without performing.

Today, we're not trying to fix loneliness in one day.

We're building a belonging plan you can maintain.

Quick Check (what blocks connection for you?):

- I don't want to burden anyone
- I'm afraid of being judged
- I don't know who is safe
- I isolate when I'm stressed
- I've been disappointed by people before
- I'm willing to try one small belonging step

LET'S GO DEEPER

- Where do you feel the most connected (even a little)?

- Where do you feel the most alone?

- When you lose traction, do you tend to isolate or reach out?
Finish this sentence: "I belong best when ____."

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, help me receive belonging. Show me where to be honest, and give me courage to show up."

With a person:

Choose one belonging bridge today.

Not the perfect one. Just one.

Then take one step toward it.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m working on recovery and building steady connection. Could we do a quick check-in this week?”

If you want to message someone, draft it here:

ACT

Today’s action is to schedule two connection points for the next 7 days.

Two is enough.

This is how belonging becomes structure.

MY BELONGING PLAN (NEXT 7 DAYS): Write two connection points with a time/date.

1) Connection point (who/where):

Date/time:

2) Connection point (who/where):

Date/time:

“When I’m struggling” connection rule:

- I will reach out before I isolate
- I will tell one truth within 24 hours of a hard moment
- I will attend a meeting/group when cravings spike
- I will ask for a check-in instead of pretending
- Other: _____

My connection rule:

BODY CARE

Connection can be emotionally activating—especially if you're not used to it. So we pair connection with regulation.

Before connection, I will:

- Take 10 slow breaths
- Put feet on the floor + unclench jaw
- Pray one sentence: "God, help me be present."
- Take a short walk
- Drink water and eat something small

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

When you feel tempted to isolate, treat it as a signal.
Isolation often means: stress, shame, fear, or depletion.
Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.
Then do one belonging step—small, immediate, real.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Connection is medicine.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you don't have safe people yet, you're not behind.
Safety is built.
Start with a structured space: a recovery group, a counselor, a pastor, a coach.
Borrow the belonging until it becomes yours.
And keep returning.

DAY 24 — Work Life and Calling

Small competence steps rebuild trust. Stewardship becomes stability.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Take one small competence step that supports your work life (paid work, home responsibilities, school, or calling).

WHY WORK LIFE MATTERS IN RECOVERY

Work can be a source of purpose—or a source of pressure. For many people, addiction disrupts competence.

- You miss deadlines.
- You lose focus.
- You avoid.
- You feel behind.

And then shame gets loud.

Today isn't about fixing your entire work life. It's about rebuilding trust through small steps. Competence is built the way recovery is built: one honest action at a time.

KEY TRUTH: Small steps rebuild trust—in you and in others.

CALLING ISN'T ONLY A JOB

- For some readers, “work life” means a job.
- For others, it means caring for family, rebuilding a home, managing health, going to school, or re-entering the workforce.

Whatever your situation, your work life is part of your stability. And stability protects recovery.

Quick Check (what is your work life right now?):

- Full-time job
- Part-time job
- School / training
- Home responsibilities (family/caregiving)
- Job search / transition
- Medical recovery / disability season
- Other: _____

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What do you want your work life to feel like? (steady, focused, meaningful, calm, consistent)

- What is one stress point right now? (avoidance, overwhelm, conflict, lack of structure, fear)

- What is one competence step you could do in 15–30 minutes?

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: “God, give me wisdom and steadiness. Help me take the next right step in my work life.”

With a person:

If you have someone safe, ask for one practical support step:

accountability, a check-in, help organizing, help applying, help planning.

OPTIONAL TEXT SCRIPT: “I’m rebuilding my work stability. Can you help me with one practical step this week (check-in / planning / accountability)?”

Who will I ask (name + number)?

ACT

Today’s action is one competence step.

Set a timer. Keep it small.

When the timer ends, stop.

You’re building consistency—not burning yourself out.

Competence step:

- Make a short to-do list (top 3 only)
- Reply to one email/text you’ve been avoiding
- Clean up one small workspace area
- Update resume / application (one section)
- Schedule one appointment (doctor, counselor, interview)
- Pay one bill / organize one money channel
- Do one household task that reduces chaos
- Study for 20 minutes / complete one assignment step
- Have one repair conversation at work (short, honest)
- Other: _____

What I will do today (specific):

When I will do it (time/cue):

After I do it, I will acknowledge the win by:

TINY RULE: Do not wait to feel motivated. Do the next right step and let motivation follow.

BODY CARE

Work stress often shows up in the body: tight shoulders, clenched jaw, shallow breath.

Today, reset your body so you can work from steadiness—not panic.

Body reset:

- Hydrate + posture reset (sit tall, shoulders down)
- Two minutes of stretching (neck/shoulders)
- 10 slow breaths
- Short walk
- Eat a steady snack before working

My body reset today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you feel overwhelmed, don't collapse into all-or-nothing thinking. Return to small.

Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then take the next competence step again—smaller if needed.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Small steps rebuild trust.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If work feels triggering, build structure around it:

short timers, breaks, hydration, steady meals, and a check-in person.

You're not trying to become a machine.

You're rebuilding stewardship.

And stewardship creates stability for your best life.

DAY 25 — Family Life and Repair Rhythm

Repair is consistency over speeches. Presence rebuilds trust.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Choose one small repair rhythm that communicates steadiness to someone you love—without overpromising.

WHY REPAIR IS A RHYTHM

When addiction has been in the room, trust often becomes fragile.

- Some people want a big apology speech.
- Some people want guarantees.
- Some people want to believe you—but they're scared to.

And sometimes, you are scared too.

Repair rarely happens in one conversation.

Repair happens through repeated presence.

- Through consistency.
- Through truth without drama.
- Through showing up again and again.

KEY TRUTH: Repair is built with steady actions, not perfect words.

WHAT REPAIR IS (AND ISN'T)

Repair is:

- telling the truth without defending
- making realistic commitments you can keep
- staying connected when it's uncomfortable
- letting time and consistency rebuild trust

Repair is not:

- overpromising to reduce guilt
- demanding quick forgiveness
- using tears as proof
- making yourself the victim to avoid accountability

REMEMBER: You can be humble without collapsing into shame.

Quick Check (what do your people need most right now?):

- Honesty (no hiding)
- Consistency (showing up)
- Communication (simple check-ins)
- Boundaries (clarity and protection)
- Time (space to rebuild trust)
- I'm not sure—but I want to start

LET'S GO DEEPER

- Who has your pattern impacted the most?

- What do you think they feel when they think about your recovery? (fear, hope, anger, exhaustion, guardedness)

- What do you want them to know—without making promises you can't keep? Finish this sentence: "I want to repair by ____."

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, give me humility and steadiness. Help me repair with truth and presence."

With a person:

If the relationship is safe, choose one small connection action today.

If the relationship is not safe right now, choose a repair step that protects both of you (distance, support, counsel).

OPTIONAL REPAIR SCRIPT (SHORT): “I’m working on recovery. I’m not asking you to trust me quickly. I just want you to know I’m choosing steadiness, and I will keep showing up with truth.”

ACT

Today’s action is one reassurance message or one repair step.

Keep it short.

No big vows.

No pressure.

Just presence.

Repair action:

- Send a short reassurance message (no promises)
- Ask if there is one small way you can help today
- Do one practical act that reduces stress in the home
- Schedule one short check-in (10–15 minutes)
- Write a letter you don’t send yet (clarify your heart)
- Ask a counselor/pastor/sponsor for guidance before reaching out
- Other: _____

What I will do today:

When I will do it (time/cue):

REASSURANCE LANGUAGE: “I’m here.” “I’m not hiding.” “I’m taking this seriously.” “You don’t have to carry this alone.”

One reassurance sentence I will use:

BODY CARE

Repair work can stir grief, guilt, and fear.
So we ground your body before and after.

Before/after repair, I will:

- Take 10 slow breaths
- Put feet on the floor + hand on chest
- Drink water and eat something steady
- Take a short walk
- Pray one sentence: “God, keep me steady.”

What I chose today:

RE-ANCHOR

If you feel tempted to overpromise, return to this:
Trust is rebuilt by what you do consistently.
Not by what you say once.
Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.
Then do the next small repair step.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: I repair with presence.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If your people are angry or guarded, that doesn't mean your repair is failing.
It means there has been cost.
You can honor the cost without collapsing into shame.
Stay consistent. Stay honest. Stay gentle.
Time + steadiness are part of healing.

DAY 26 — Private Life and Joy

Joy is part of healing. Play and rest rebuild what addiction narrowed.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Reclaim one life-giving joy without shame—so your brain learns to want your best life again.

WHY JOY MATTERS IN RECOVERY

Addiction trains the brain to chase intense relief.

Over time, ordinary joy can feel muted.

- Not because you're broken—
- because your reward system has been trained to expect a bigger hit.
- That's why early recovery can feel flat.
- And that's why joy is not a luxury.

Joy is part of retraining what your brain learns to love.

KEY TRUTH: You are not recovering into emptiness. You are recovering into a life you don't want to miss.

PRIVATE LIFE IS WHERE YOU BREATHE

Some people can look “fine” on the outside while privately collapsing.

So today we strengthen the private life—

the small moments where you live when no one is watching.

- This is not selfish.
- This is stability.

Because when your private life is empty, the pattern starts offering itself as entertainment, comfort, and escape.

Today we build a different option.

Not dramatic.

Just real.

Quick Check (what does your private life need most?):

- Rest (I'm exhausted)
- Play (I've forgotten how)
- Beauty (music, nature, art, good food)
- Connection (simple, safe companionship)
- Quiet (less noise, less scrolling)
- Structure (a simple routine that feels kind)

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What do you enjoy that God gave you?

- What did you like before the pattern got loud?

- What makes you feel more like yourself—even a little?
Finish this sentence: “A life-giving joy for me is ____.”

WRITE SPACE: List 5 small joys (simple, realistic).

The one I will choose today is:

CONNECT

With God:

Thank God for one small joy you can receive today.

If joy feels hard, pray honestly: “God, help me learn joy again.”

With a person (optional):

If it supports you, invite someone into a simple activity—
a walk, coffee, sitting outside, a short errand together.

Small companionship can make joy safer.

OPTIONAL INVITE TEXT: “I’m rebuilding healthy joy in recovery. Want to do something simple this week—walk/coffee/outside for 30 minutes?”

Draft your message here (if you want):

ACT

Today’s action is 30 minutes of a life-giving activity.

If 30 is too much, do 10.

- The point is not the length.
- The point is the signal: “I am choosing life again.”

Life-giving activity:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Walk outside / nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Music (listen or play) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Art / creativity (draw, paint, write, craft) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading (not doom scrolling) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cooking something simple and nourishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cleaning one small space (fresh start feeling) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A hobby you used to enjoy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Laughter (a show, a friend, a memory) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____ |

My joy activity today:

When I will do it (time/cue):

MAKE IT WORK: Remove one friction point (prep it now): set shoes out, open the book, put supplies on the table, text the friend.

One friction point I will remove now:

BODY CARE

Joy and rest are connected.

Tonight, choose one sleep-support practice so your body has a chance to recover.

Sleep-support practice:

- Screens down 30 minutes earlier
- Warm shower / wash face + low lights
- Steady snack + hydration (if needed)
- Set an alarm for bedtime (gentle cue)
- Write tomorrow's top 3 tasks (reduce racing mind)
- Short prayer + 10 slow breaths in bed

What I chose tonight:

RE-ANCHOR

If you feel tempted today, ask one question before you act:

“Am I craving relief... or am I craving life?”

Then return to the sequence: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

And do one small joy step instead.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Joy is part of healing.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If joy feels unavailable, don't force it.

Start with neutral.

Sunlight. A shower. Clean sheets. A short walk. A steady meal.

Often joy returns quietly after safety returns.

Keep practicing the small good things—your brain will relearn.

DAY 27 — A Plan for Hard Moments

You don't have to think your way out. You can follow your plan.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Create a simple Hard Moment Plan you can use when cravings spike, emotions flood, or you feel close to losing traction.

WHY A PLAN MATTERS

In a hard moment, your brain doesn't want a lecture.

It wants relief.

And if you don't have a plan, your nervous system will reach for the fastest relief it remembers.

That's not weakness.

That's wiring.

- A plan reduces decision fatigue.
- A plan reduces panic.
- A plan gives you a path to follow when you're on low battery.

KEY TRUTH: The best plan is the one you can actually follow when you're tired.

YOUR WARNING SIGNS

Hard moments usually have early signals.

Today we name them so you can catch the wave earlier.

Not perfectly—earlier.

Quick Check (your most common warning signs):

- Isolation (I disappear / avoid people)
- Irritability (everything feels annoying)
- Overwhelm (can't start, can't focus)
- Numbness (I don't feel anything)
- Restlessness (I can't sit still)
- Shame spiral (self-hate voice gets loud)
- Boredom / emptiness
- Sleep disruption
- Other: _____

LET'S GO DEEPER

No shame. Just clarity.

What are your top 3 warning signs that you're losing traction?

What are your top 3 triggers? (stress, loneliness, conflict, boredom, celebration, fatigue)

What does your body need first when you're activated?

WRITE SPACE: List your signs and triggers.

My top 3 warning signs:

My top 3 triggers:

CONNECT

With God:

Pray: "God, help me remember my plan when I'm flooded. Help me return quickly and gently."

With a person:

A hard moment plan works better when someone else knows it.

Choose one person to share your plan with—even if it's short.

OPTIONAL SHARE SCRIPT: "I made a Hard Moment Plan. If I reach out and say 'I'm losing traction,' here's what helps me: _____."

Who will I share my plan with? (name + number)

ACT

Today's action is to write your Hard Moment Plan card.

Keep it simple enough to use in real time.

You can refine it later.

MY HARD MOMENT PLAN Write it like you will read it when you're panicking.

1) RE-ANCHOR	What is my one truth sentence?
2) STABILIZE	What 3 body steps come first? (food/water/breath/shower/walk/sleep)
3) REMOVE ACCESS	What do I need to remove or change right now? (leave, put phone away, delete app, move money, etc.)
4) RECONNECT	Who do I contact? What will I say?
5) NEXT WISE STEP	What is one small step that moves me toward my best life in the next hour?

Write your answers here:

When I'm in a hard moment, my first rule is:

- Stabilize first. Then decide.
- Reconnect before I isolate.
- Delay the craving for 10 minutes.
- No punishment. Only return.
- Other: _____

My first rule:

BODY CARE

Practice your plan once while calm.
This is how your brain learns it.

Practice step:

- Do my stabilizing breath (10 slow breaths)
- Text my person: “Hard moment plan created.”
- Remove one access point (app, contact, route, money channel)
- Pack a ‘go bag’ item (water, snack, note, list)
- Write my plan on a small card or phone note

What I practiced today:

RE-ANCHOR

When you’re in a hard moment, don’t argue with your nervous system.
Follow the plan.
Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.
Then take the next wise step.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: I don’t have to think my way out. I can follow my plan.

FINAL THOUGHT...

Your plan is allowed to be simple.
Simple is usable.
If your plan is too complicated, you won’t use it when you’re flooded.
Start small. Refine later.
The goal is a faster return—again and again.

DAY 28 — Blessing, Commitment, and Return

This isn't the finish line. It's a beginning you can revisit to reclaim your best life.

TODAY'S FOCUS: Close with hope + realism. Name what changed, choose what continues, and bless the next season.

YOU MADE IT HERE

If you finished Day 28, something in you has been choosing life.

- Maybe not perfectly.
- Maybe with hard moments.
- Maybe with a lot of emotion.

But you showed up.

And that matters.

This program was never a performance test.

It was a daily return—

a daily re-anchoring toward dignity, connection, and wisdom.

A daily rhythm to help you reclaim your best life.

KEY TRUTH: The goal is not a flawless story. The goal is a steadier return.

WHAT CHANGED (EVEN IF SMALL)

- Some people finish 28 days and feel radically different.
- Some people finish and feel mostly tired—but clearer.
- Some people finish and realize they need more support.

All of those are valid outcomes.

The question today is not: “Did I do it perfectly?”

The question is: “What is different in me now?”

Quick Check (what shifted for you?):

- More dignity / less shame
- More clarity about my pattern
- More connection (God/people)
- More steadiness in my body
- More boundaries / wisdom
- More hope
- I'm not sure yet, but I'm not where I was

LET'S GO DEEPER

- What do you notice in yourself that you didn't notice on Day 1?
- What tools helped you the most?
- What was hardest?
- What do you want to carry forward into the next 30 days?

CONNECT

With God: Offer a prayer of gratitude—simple, honest, specific.

“God, thank You for ____.”

“God, help me keep returning.”

With a person: Share one takeaway with someone safe. Not a report. A sentence.

OPTIONAL SHARE SCRIPT: “One thing that shifted for me in these 28 days is _____. I'm choosing to keep _____ as my next step.”

ACT

Today's action is to choose your next 30 days.

Pick two rhythms you will keep.

Not everything.

Two.

And make them small enough to actually sustain.

MY NEXT 30 DAYS (TWO RHYTHMS): Write two rhythms you will practice consistently.

Rhythm 1:

When/How:

Rhythm 2:

When/How:

Accountability step:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tell one person my two rhythms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Schedule the rhythms in my calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Join/continue a support group this month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Meet with counselor/coach/pastor/sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Create a weekly check-in (Sunday night or Monday morning) |

My accountability step:

BODY CARE

Celebrate in a healthy way.

Not because you “earned” love—but because you practiced returning to life.

Healthy celebration:

- A good meal (nourishing)
- A walk somewhere beautiful
- Time with someone safe
- A small purchase that supports your life (book, journal, supplies)
- An early night of rest
- Music / worship / gratitude moment

My celebration today:

RE-ANCHOR

If a hard moment comes tomorrow, it doesn't erase these 28 days.

It means you're human.

Return to what you learned: re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

Then open the book again.

This is not the finish line.

This is a beginning you can revisit to reclaim your best life.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: I can return again and again.

FINAL THOUGHT...

If you need more support, that is not failure.

It is wisdom.

Use your Off-Ramps. Find your people. Ask for help.

You are not meant to do this alone.

And you are not defined by how hard it has been.

You still belong.

APPENDIX

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK AGAIN AND AGAIN

Life Design Recovery is not a one-time finish line.

It's a repeatable rhythm to help you reclaim your best life.

You can return to:

- one specific day when you need it
- one week theme when you're losing traction
- the Re-anchor Protocol when you've had a hard moment
- the Toolbox when you need a targeted tool (cravings, numbness, shame, repair, sleep/stress)

REPEAT RULE: Start small. Return gently. Consistency matters more than intensity.

QUICK 28-DAY MAP

If you need a fast re-anchor, use this quick map:

- Week 1: Begin with Dignity (identity, belonging, desire, clarity)
- Week 2: Clarity + Off-Ramps (cravings, triggers, environment, acceptance, numb season, contentment, repair)
- Week 3: Stabilization + Shame Release (support steps, regulation, return without punishment, boundaries, body gift, service)
- Week 4: Sustaining Rhythms (why, belonging plan, work/calling, family repair rhythm, joy, hard moment plan, blessing/return)

OPTION: If you're overwhelmed, start with Day 1, Day 5, Day 18, and Day 27. Those four days form a strong "reset."

RE-ANCHOR PROTOCOL

When you're losing traction, follow this sequence. Don't negotiate with shame.

1) Re-anchor

- Name one true sentence: "This is a hard moment, not my identity."

2) Stabilize

- Water. Food. Breath. Shower. Movement. Sleep.

3) Rebuild the rhythm

- Return to your non-negotiables (simple structure for the next 24 hours).

4) Reconnect

- God + one safe person. Don't isolate.

RE-ANCHOR LINE: Re-anchor → stabilize → rebuild the rhythm → reconnect.

TOOLBOX LIBRARY

Use the tool that matches your need:

- Cravings: 10-minute delay plan + stabilize first + reconnect
- Numbness / flatness: "This is a season" + small good thing + sunlight/movement
- Shame spirals: separate identity from behavior + rewrite the script + tell one safe truth
- Conflict: pause + regulate + short repair language (no speeches)
- Sleep/stress: stabilize body + reduce stimulation + simple nighttime cue
- Purpose/service: one small act of service + notice meaning

NOTE: Tools work best when they're simple enough to use while you're tired.

SUPPORT AND CONNECTION GUIDE

If you need more support, that is wisdom—not failure.

Consider structured support options such as:

- Recovery groups (AA, NA, Celebrate Recovery, SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, etc.)
- Counseling/therapy (especially trauma-informed care when needed)
- Medical support (detox, medication-assisted treatment when appropriate, psychiatric care)
- Pastoral care / spiritual direction
- Coaching or accountability support

ASKING FOR HELP (SCRIPT): “I’m working on recovery and I don’t want to do this alone. Can we talk / can you help me find support / can you check in with me this week?”

OFF-RAMPS

If your situation is beyond what a book can hold, take an off-ramp.

Off-ramps are not dramatic. They are stabilizing steps.

Use an off-ramp if you are:

- experiencing withdrawal symptoms that may be medically risky
- feeling unsafe, out of control, or unable to stop
- having thoughts of harming yourself or someone else
- unable to function (sleep, eat, work, care for children) due to substance/behavior use

Off-ramp options: call a trusted professional, go to urgent care/ER if needed, contact a local crisis line, reach out to a sponsor/pastor/counselor, or ask someone to stay with you.

IMPORTANT: If you are in immediate danger, call your local emergency number right now.

A NOTE ON ADDICTIVE PATTERNS

This book uses the term “addictive patterns” because addiction shows up in many forms:

substances, gambling, spending, screens, food, relational/sexual patterns, and more.

You are not a label.

You are a person learning how to live again.

If you recognize yourself in any pattern, you are welcome here.

REMEMBER: You can take responsibility without surrendering your identity.

FOR CLINICIANS, PASTORS, AND SUPPORTERS

If you are supporting someone using this workbook:

- prioritize safety and stabilization (sleep, food, hydration, regulation)
- reinforce dignity language (identity ≠ behavior)
- help them build small, repeatable rhythms
- use the Re-anchor Protocol after hard moments without punishment
- encourage connection and structured support when needed

SUPPORTER REMINDER: Consistency helps more than intensity.

If you’re reading this as a supporter, you are not forgotten. Support matters—and so does your stability.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cindy H. Carr, D.Min., MACL, is an author, pastoral counselor, speaker, and scholar who has spent more than four decades walking alongside individuals and families navigating addiction, mental illness, and the slow, often unseen work of formation and change. Her vocational life has been intentionally bi-vocational, shaped by years of pastoring, business leadership, and pastoral counseling, all anchored in one steady aim: helping people live with greater clarity, dignity, and wholeness, especially when life feels heavy and support feels far away.

Cindy earned a Master of Arts in Church Leadership from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and later returned to Liberty University to complete her doctoral studies, focusing specifically on mental illness and addiction. That decision grew out of decades of listening and a growing recognition, accelerated during the COVID pandemic, that adult mental health and addiction needs were increasingly exceeding the capacity of clinical systems alone.

Through her doctoral work, Cindy explored how psychiatry, psychology, faith communities, and family systems could be integrated ethically to create a broader foundation of support for those struggling with anxiety, depression, trauma, panic disorder, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and addiction. Her work does not attempt to replace professional care. Instead, it strengthens what happens between appointments, programs, and crises by building skills and structures that help people function in the long stretches of real life where recovery is sustained or lost.

This workbook is offered in the same spirit that has shaped Cindy's life and calling: with honesty, humility, and hope. She considers it an honor to have walked with many people on their recovery journeys, bearing witness to their courage, dignity, and humanity, including those who did not see recovery on this side of heaven.

Learn more and find additional resources at CindyHCarr.com