So It Will Stand Still

Morning Reflections

VOLUME TWO

July 1 to November 1, 2026

Scott W Binder

Why I Write

Every morning since the first day of 2026, I've sat down, written something, and posted it to my Facebook timeline. It began as a suggestion from someone with more experience than me. Write it down, I was told, *so it will stand still long enough for you to look at it.*

Then share it. Something changes when I admit to another human being what I've found in myself. As long as it stays in my head, I can argue with it, bend it, or bury it. Once it's said out loud to someone else, it comes into the light. It stops being negotiable, and I can finally let it go.

That's what these are. They aren't lessons, and I'm not an expert on anything but my own mistakes. They're what was on my mind each morning, put on paper and then passed along.

Some days it's a resentment I needed to set down. Some days it's a walk on the trail, a conversation at the store, or an old computer taking its time with an update. Most days, it's some small piece of learning to trust something greater than myself.

I share them for one more reason. Someone might recognize themselves in one. If that's you, you're not alone.

Read them in order, or open to any page. Each morning stands on its own.

Scott W Binder
McKinleyville, California

Contents

July 2026

My Own Declaration of Independence....9
Trusting the Hammer....11
Giving My Bad Motives Nice Names....12
The Demand Underneath the Disturbance....14
Busy on Purpose, or Busy to Avoid....16
Acceptance First, Accountability Second....18
Gratitude Underneath the Checkout Line....20
Giving the Day Its Shape....22
Nice Is Fear Wearing a Smile....24
People Find What They Seek....26
Someone Else's Puzzle Piece....28
Trust Built From Evidence You Collected....30
Approval, Our First Addiction....32
Some Defects Are an Assignment....34
Readiness Comes After You Start....36
Disagreement Without Contempt....38
Guilt Loops, Accountability Moves....40
The Daily Gifts We Overlook....42
Buried Under His Own Reputation....43
Out of Our Own Resources....45
The Cost of Borrowed Opinions....46
Godshots and Glimmers....48
From Getting to Giving....50
One Cloud at a Time....52
One Honest Sentence....54
Resentment Feels Like Justice....56
Part of Me Stayed Nineteen....57
Willingness Before Readiness....59
The People We'd Rather Avoid....61
Fear Talks, Pride Waits....63

Good Enough for Now....65

August 2026

Somewhere Else to Look....67
Never Meant to Do This Alone....69
The Ones Who Stopped Needing Control....71
Today's Portion....73
When the Floor Gives Way....75
Exactly on Track....77
How the Reflex Was Built....79
The Half-Second After....81
The Spiritual Malady....83
Only a Channel....85
What My Dad Knew....87
Walking Toward, Not Away....89
The Order I'm Living Inside Of....91
Looking for an Exit....93
That Still Small Voice....95
New Neighbors....97
Brakes and Maintenance....99
Getting on the Bus....101
Disappearing from the Room....103
One Knee Scooter....105
Looking Inward....107
I Was That Person....109
The Way I Wanted to Feel....111
Walking Toward the Gate....113
Conditioned by the Heat....115
Naming It....117
The Ground I Needed....119
When Asking Feels Wrong....122
Common Sense and Trust....124
Go Pick Up Trash....126

Steadier Ground....128

September 2026

Local, Small, and Mine....131
Loosening My Hands....133
He Picked Up the Phone....135
It Was Always Within You....137
Not Taking the Credit....139
The Elegance of Simple....141
What Is Healing?....143
Nothing Left to Forgive....145
Different Rooms, Same Habit....147
Landing in the Middle....149
A Steady Hand....151
A Story I Carried for Forty Years....153
The Body Catches Up....156
Righteous or Selfish....158
Who Built the House....160
Where Learning Takes Place....162
Feeding Someone Else....164
To Teach, To Learn....166
A Danger That Doesn't Announce Itself....168
Only the Next Step....170
Steering Around People....172
One Stretch at a Time....174
When Nobody's Checking....176
The Whisper Never Says I....178
Setting It Down....180
Peace Received, Peace Shared....182
We Become What We Think About....184
Grateful I Didn't Get My Way....186
One Hundred Percent of My Days....188
The Door Opens Wider....190

More to Life....192
Her Name Was Liberty....194

October 2026

The Longer Answer....197
Instrument, Vessel, Channel....199
Exercise for the Soul....201
Still Accepting Updates....204
Fear and Conscience....206
Quiet and Stoic....208
An Open Hand....210
Listening Before Deciding....212
The Bigger Picture....214
Connected or Not....216
Checking the Roof....218
Not the Center of the Clock....220
Looking for Beauty....222
Turning Over What I Can't Control....224
My First Memory....227
One Less Angry Voice....229
Once a Year....231
Propagation....233
Before I Hit Send....235
The Ghost at the Old Address....237
The Ladder....240
Small Letters....242
Quiet Joy....244
Letting God Pick the Ending....246
The Push Start....248
Sick Too....250
Nothing Lives Alone....252
The Contract Nobody Signed....254
Patching What We Find....256

Where the Trail Crosses Mill Creek.....258
Little Miracles.....262

November 2026

A Fresh Start Begins with an Honest Look.....265

July

My Own Declaration of Independence

Written July 1, 2026

Yesterday was about independence. Flags, fireworks, freedom from something bigger than any one of us.

But I've had my own declaration of independence to make, and it didn't happen on a single day. It happened slowly, one morning at a time, sometimes one minute at a time.

For a long time I was run by old patterns. Fear. Resentment. The need to control things that were never mine to control. I didn't choose those patterns on purpose. They just took over, the way the rosemary bush out back took over the herb garden.

Real independence isn't about being free from other people. It's about being free from the parts of yourself that keep you small and afraid. That kind of freedom doesn't come from a fireworks show. It comes from waking up and choosing something different, then doing it again the next day.

I still catch the old patterns trying to sneak back in. Old fear. Old resentment. The urge to hang on to the old

familiar things that didn’t work. When that happens, I don't fight it alone. I bring in something bigger than my own willpower and ask for help.

Independence, for me, turned out to mean depending on the right thing instead of the wrong things. That's not a contradiction. That's the whole secret.

Freedom isn't declared once. It's practiced daily.

Trusting the Hammer

Written July 2, 2026

I had a vision once of who I could become. Then came the valley. Nobody tells you that's part of it. You get the glimpse of what's possible,

and you think you're ready to walk straight into it. Instead you get years of being shaped, and shaping hurts.

Tennyson’s poem says it better than I can. That's the valley. Not punishment. Not abandonment. Iron doesn't become useful sitting in the ground. It becomes useful under the hammer.

I wanted the vision without the preparation. I tried to force myself into the person I saw, and I failed every time, because I wasn't ready yet.

God isn't in a hurry. I always was. That mismatch caused most of my pain.

Some mornings I still want to climb out of the valley early. I want to arrive before I've been formed. But I'm starting to trust the hammer instead of dodging it.

The vision was never a fantasy. It was a promise. My job this morning is just to stay under it and let it do its work. Onward into Monday.

Giving My Bad Motives Nice Names

Written July 3, 2026

For a long time, I could not see my own real motives because I always had a good reason ready.

I would do something and then explain why. The explanation always sounded good.

I was just being honest. I was just standing up for myself. I was just looking out for myself, the way an ego-driven person does.

It took me years to see what was really going on.

I got good at putting a good face on a bad motive. Anger became "just telling the truth." Control became "just trying to help." Resentment became "just being realistic."

I never had to face the real motive. I had already given it a nicer name.

Here is what that looks like in real life. I snap at someone and call it honesty. I take over a task and call it help. I hold a grudge and call it good judgment.

Getting honest means more than admitting what I did wrong. It means looking at the good reasons I gave

myself for doing it. That is where the real problem hides.

Now when I catch myself explaining or defending myself, I try to stop and ask one question.

What do I actually want here?

Do I want peace, or do I want to win? Do I want to help, or do I want credit for helping? Do I want to do the right thing, or do I want to look like I am doing the right thing?

I do not always like the answer. But asking the question is where the truth rises to the surface.

The Demand Underneath the Disturbance

Written July 4, 2026

Resentment is one of the most destructive things I carry. It doesn't just sit there, it takes root and spreads, slowly closing off the peace I need to move forward.

Today I want to look at what feeds it, particularly when it comes to other people. Because resentment rarely just happens. It's usually rooted in that demand underneath most of my disturbances, the conviction that things should have gone my way.

Almost every time, if I trace a disturbance back far enough, I find a demand underneath. I wanted something. I expected something. It didn't come, and I got disturbed.

The demand disguises itself as a need. But a true need doesn't hinge on someone else acting a certain way.

So today I'm loosening my grip. Not on the people or outcomes themselves, but on my insistence that I get to control them.

This practice didn't start with me deciding to be less

demanding. A Power greater than my own will had to open the door first. My part was showing up, willing to listen and act upon the guidance given.

And it works the same way today. I didn't build this once and now run on my own steam. It's renewed daily, which is exactly why I keep asking for help letting go of what was never mine to hold.

Busy on Purpose, or Busy to Avoid

Written July 5, 2026

I kept busy as a kid. If I sat still too long, my parents would put me to work. So I kept moving, and moving kept me in charge.

I'm still busy as an adult. I'm never bored. For a long time I didn't ask why.

There's a difference between staying busy on purpose and staying busy to avoid something. From the outside they can look identical.

Somewhere along the way, that old instinct found a new outlet. I love to help people, and people are always handing me opportunities to do it.

That's a gift. I've built a good part of my life around being useful to others, and I don't regret it. It's a core part of my identity.

What matters isn't whether I help. It's why. Am I giving on purpose, or saying yes to avoid that old uncomfortable feeling of idleness?

Yesterday I got to notice something good. I do say no, especially when someone's fully capable of doing it

themselves. That's not indispensability. That's respect for their growth.

Old patterns don't disappear. They just get a chance, one day at a time, to be looked at honestly and outgrown a little.

Progress, not perfection.

Acceptance First, Accountability Second

Written July 6, 2026

Acceptance and accountability. Two virtues I lean on every day, threaded well together by the speaker at today's noon meeting.

Acceptance comes first. It means seeing things exactly as they are, not as we wish them to be. Without that, accountability has nothing solid to stand on. We end up either denying the problem or drowning in blame.

Accountability is what we do once we've accepted reality. It's the willingness to look at our actions honestly, and make it right.

The two work like this:

Acceptance settles the question of what's true. It's not resignation or approval. It's just agreeing not to fight reality.

Accountability then asks what's mine to do about it. Once we stop arguing with what is, we have the clarity and the energy to actually take responsibility, make amends where needed, and change what's within our

power to change.

Trying accountability without acceptance first usually turns into self-punishment or defensiveness, because we're still resisting the facts underneath. And acceptance without accountability can become passive. Just a way of saying "it is what it is" and stopping there.

Together, they move in sequence: see it clearly, then own what you did.

Gratitude Underneath the Checkout Line

Written July 7, 2026

The checkout line at Grocery Outlet isn't moving, and somewhere around the third minute, irritation starts to surface. The person ahead of me is counting change. The cashier is training someone new. My arms are tired from the basket, and I've already decided this is the worst possible way to spend the next several minutes.

That story felt true in the moment, but it's really just the surface. Underneath my impatience is a basketful of food, which means that I had enough money to fill it. Underneath the wait is the fact that I had somewhere to be after this, a life outside the store worth getting back to. Underneath the slow cashier was someone doing a hard, repetitive job for less than they deserve, and doing it patiently while a line of irritated people watches, me included.

None of these facts made the line move faster. That's not really the point. The point is that irritation and gratitude can sit on top of the exact same set of facts, and I get to choose which one I reach for. The wait

doesn't change. My angle does.

This morning, the aim isn't to enjoy waiting. It's to notice, in one ordinary moment of friction, that irritation was optional and the gratitude was there the whole time, just underneath.

The more I think on this, it seems as though underneath every irritation I've ever had was something I'd forgotten to be grateful for first.

Giving the Day Its Shape

Written July 8, 2026

Meditation, journaling, and sharing are very important to me.

It starts in the quiet. A few minutes of meditation each morning, just sitting still and listening for whatever wants to come through. These posts are the meat of what falls out of that quiet once I pick up my journal and a pen.

Left to myself, I drift. A day slides by and I can't tell you what shape it had. But that morning stillness gives the day a shape before the day gets to decide for me, and writing is how I hold onto it.

It's said that how you spend the first minutes of your day tends to shape your entire day, and I've found this to be spot-on.

There's also something about saying it out loud, even to a page. Half-formed thoughts stay comfortable and vague until you try to write them in a sentence. Then you find out what you actually believe, and what that quiet time was trying to tell you.

I don't do it because I have it figured out. I do it because

I don't, and this is how I keep at it anyway. Progress, not perfection. Showing up today matters more than getting it right.

A man I trust encouraged me to make my journal more public. His thinking was simple: what helps me might help someone else too. I didn't start writing for an audience, but I kept it up partly on his word, because he's been right about things like this before. That's why you're reading it here.

And honestly, some of it's just gratitude. Waking up clear-headed, sitting still for a few minutes, and being able to write a few honest lines after is not something I take for granted anymore.

If it helps someone else feel less alone in their own mornings, that's a bonus. But mainly I write it for me, so tomorrow-me has a record of what today-me heard in that quiet.

Nice Is Fear Wearing a Smile

Written July 9, 2026

Have you even wondered if there was a difference between being nice, and being kind? There is, and it's worth looking at.

Nice expects something back, even when we don't say so. We're nice so people will like us. We're nice so we won't feel left out. We're nice hoping we get something in return, even if it's just a good opinion of us.

Kind doesn't expect anything back. It gives without checking for a reward or a return.

Fear is usually behind the nice in us. Fear of disagreement. Fear of being disliked. Fear of being alone. Nice is often just fear wearing a smile.

Thinking only of ourselves has always been at the root of our trouble. We act like the world is about how we look, how we're treated, how comfortable we feel. Nice grows right out of that.

Kind asks us to let go of that form of self-centeredness. To stop asking "how does this make me look" and start asking "what does this person need."

That's not easy. It has to be practiced each day, one moment at a time.

My realization is that helping others is what actually frees us from ourselves. When we stop worrying about how we look and start paying attention to someone else's needs, the fear behind our niceness starts to loosen.

So the question to ask yourself at the end of the day isn't just "was I nice today." It's "did I really help anyone, or was I just protecting myself."

Have a good Sunday!

People Find What They Seek

Written July 10, 2026

I love my morning walks for two very good reasons. One is therapy for my formerly broken ankle; to loosen it up and stave off arthritis. The second reason is the search for beauty. I actively seek it, and I always find it.

You've likely seen my photo posts of what I'd found.

People tend to find what they seek. It's one of the quieter laws of the mind, and it holds up under almost any scrutiny.

Look for evidence that the world is against you, and it will oblige. Every slight, every disappointment, every unreturned call becomes proof. The pile grows because you're the one guiding that.

Look for evidence of goodness, and that pile grows too. Small kindnesses that used to pass unnoticed start to register. People who were there all along suddenly become visible. The tiny nasturtiums along the fenceline of a nearby trail suddenly become a highlight.

This isn't a claim that the search creates the reality. Both kinds of evidence exist, all the time, in nearly

everyone's life. The question is only which kind you've trained your mind to acknowledge.

There's an old insight that most of our real trouble starts as a thought, well before it becomes a circumstance. A person convinced the world is stacked against them will find daily confirmation. A person expecting some decency will find that too, sometimes from the very same people, on the very same day.

None of this means forcing a rosy view onto hard facts. Denial isn't the goal, and pretending is its own kind of dishonesty.

It means recognizing that attention is a choice, made new each morning, and that the choice shapes what gets found. A willingness to look for good doesn't erase what's difficult. It just makes sure the difficult isn't the only thing you see.

Practiced daily, this becomes less an opinion and more a discipline. You start each day deciding what you're willing to notice, and by evening you tend to have collected exactly that.

Someone Else's Puzzle Piece

Written July 11, 2026

A couple of Fridays ago, a woman called our Senior Center, offering a mobility scooter she wanted gone. Nothing dramatic. Just a bit of clutter she wanted her space back from.

She mentioned the battery was new. That was the detail that mattered. Most donated scooters come with worn-out batteries, the kind nobody wants to recommend. A new battery meant this one was a piece worth keeping, but we don't have the space at our Center.

So her name and number went onto a slip of paper at our hostess desk, in case anyone called needing one. Just a piece, set down without knowing where it belonged yet.

It sat there for over a week. Waiting, though it didn't look like waiting.

Then someone I know personally reached out, fresh out of surgery, needing a power chair. Another piece, arriving on its own schedule.

I passed along the name. This past Sunday, the scooter

was picked up, and she had her mobility back.

Neither woman knew she was holding a piece of someone else's puzzle. I didn't either, not until they fit together.

This is how God, or the universe, or whatever you're comfortable calling it, tends to work. The pieces get handed out quietly, one at a time, without a picture on the box to show where they lead. A phone call here. A name on

a slip of paper there. A message, days later, from someone who needed exactly that name.

Nobody is shown the whole design in advance. We're each just given a piece, and asked to hold onto it a little more carefully than clutter usually deserves.

Then, when the moment is right, the pieces get moved into place, quietly, for the good of everyone involved. Not because anyone planned it that way. Because something larger was already assembling it, using ordinary people who simply did the next right thing with what was put in their hands.

Somewhere today, you're holding a piece. You may not know yet what it's for.

Hold onto it anyway. Let the rest be arranged.

Trust Built From Evidence You Collected

Written July 12, 2026

Good morning, and I'm still thinking about how sometimes things just seem to fall into place at the precise time that they need to.

Yesterday's example of a scooter and a phone call turning into someone's mobility back doesn't just solve one problem. It teaches something.

Faith isn't usually built by being told to believe. It's built by watching, over and over, small things line up in ways you didn't orchestrate.

The first time it happens, it looks like coincidence. A name on a slip of paper, a text at the right moment. Easy to shrug off.

The second time, you start paying closer attention.

By the third or fourth time, something changes. You stop needing to understand the mechanism. You just start trusting the pattern.

That trust doesn't arrive all at once. It accumulates, the same way the pieces do, quietly, one placed moment at

a time.

Eventually you notice you're doing something different. You hold onto details you might have once dismissed. You write down a name you don't yet have a use for. You stay open, because you've seen what opening leads to.

That's what trust actually looks like in practice. Not a feeling. A habit, built from evidence you collected yourself.

So the next unexplained detail, the next stray piece that shows up without a clear reason, gets a little less resistance from you. You've learned it usually belongs to something.

Keep watching. The pattern holds up better than doubt does.

Approval, Our First Addiction

Written July 13, 2026

I wanted approval before I could even talk.

A smile. A voice saying my name. A hand to hold. That want was not a flaw. It was built into me from the start. But I aimed it at the wrong thing. I started chasing approval through performance instead of connection.

Somewhere along the way, that want became something I could not control. I built my worth on people and opinions, and that ground was never solid.

I have come to believe the need for validation is our first addiction. It shows up before we can even speak, and if we never learn another way to meet it, we spend a lifetime chasing it. I made other people's approval into a power greater than myself, and it let me down every time. It could not hold the weight I put on it.

I am learning to turn that need over to something steadier than applause. Not by forcing it. By admitting I cannot supply my own peace through performance. Willingness comes first. The relief comes after.

This morning I want to stop hunting for approval and start offering something instead. Kindness. Attention. A little honesty. When I turn my energy toward being useful instead of being validated, the hunger quiets down.

I want to receive love today instead of chasing it. I do not always believe it yet. But I want to.

Some Defects Are an Assignment

Written July 14, 2026

Yesterday a friend told me he still carries many character defects and shortcomings, even though he's become willing and is working to have them removed.

I told him something I believe deeply: spiritual growth can only happen because those defects are still in place.

My reality is this: a Power greater than ourselves removes the defects of character that are of no use to it. Others it leaves behind, on purpose, to drive spiritual growth.

That reframes everything. What remains isn't leftover failure. It's assignment.

If we woke up one day with every flaw erased, what would be left to work on? What would humble us? What would remind us we still need something beyond ourselves?

Consider the defects that do get removed. They tend to fall away quietly, almost without effort, once we've truly let go of them. That ease is often the sign they'd served their purpose and were never meant to stay.

Now consider the ones that linger no matter how hard we work at them. Those aren't failures of willpower. They're often the very ones assigned to keep us humble, keep us teachable, keep us returning to something greater than ourselves for help we cannot give ourselves.

The defects staying present isn't a sign we haven't surrendered enough. Some things are removed in a timing not our own, and some are never meant to be removed at all, only managed, one day at a time. What is left behind is left with a purpose, to keep us reaching, keep us leaning on faith, keep us in motion.

This is why comparison steals so much peace. We look at someone who seems to have it together and assume they've been cleared of what we're still carrying. More likely, they've simply been assigned different work.

The moment we believe we've outgrown our shortcomings is the moment we stop growing. We get comfortable. We stop asking for help. And when we stop growing, we start dying.

Action is what keeps us alive.

Have a great day!

Readiness Comes After You Start

Written July 15, 2026

We wait for readiness like it's a feeling that arrives on its own. It doesn't. The feeling of being ready comes after you've already started, not before.

So skip the waiting. Pick one thing you've been carrying, whether it be a resentment, a fear, or a habit you keep excusing. Write it down plainly. No editing it to look better than it is.

Writing does something a thought alone can't. It forces a vague, ever-changing worry into one plain sentence. It puts a little distance between you and the thing, so you're looking at it instead of becoming overwhelmed by it. And once it's on the page, you can't quietly talk yourself out of what it says.

Why this matters is that most of what drains us isn't the problem itself. It's the energy spent avoiding a clear look at it. The moment you name something honestly, it loses some of its power. Seeing it written down on paper increases the effect.

This isn't about solving anything today. It's small on purpose. Anyone can manage

one honest sentence. And underneath it is the real change: you don't need everything figured out before you do it. You just need to stop lying to yourself about what's in front of you.

One thing, honestly named, is enough for one morning.

Disagreement Without Contempt

Written July 16, 2026

Some people can disagree on just about everything and still greet each other kindly the next day. That's not natural. It's learned.

It starts with separating the person from the position. Left alone, disagreement tends to harden. People rehearse their side, collect evidence against the other, and start seeing the whole person through the lens of that one dispute. You can hold your ground firmly on what you believe and still respect the ground someone else is standing on. The disagreement stays about the issue, not about them.

Disagreeing with someone's views doesn't require despising them.

Resentment is what usually kills it. Carry yesterday's argument into today, and it hardens into judgment of the person instead of just a difference of opinion. Once that happens, it's not disagreement anymore. It's contempt.

A little humility helps too. Admitting you might not have the whole picture, that the other person may see something you don't, keeps the conversation from

turning into a contest.

And underneath it all is a kind of acceptance, letting people be exactly who they are today, without needing them to change first. That's what makes it possible to sit down again tomorrow, still friends, still willing to listen.

Guilt Loops, Accountability Moves

Written July 17, 2026

Guilt says, "I am bad." Accountability says, "I did something that hurt someone, and I can make it right." One is who you think you are. The other is what you do next.

What's the difference between beating yourself up and actually fixing it? Beating yourself up feels like enough. It feels like remorse. It carries real weight. But it stops right there. It just keeps us stuck in the same spot.

Fixing it starts the same way, with an honest look. But then it moves. It asks what's owed, and to whom, and takes the step to pay it.

Guilt loops over and over, much like resentment does. It replays the mistake and piles shame on top. Accountability looks once, tells the truth, and moves on.

Guilt is a feeling. Accountability is a choice, then a step. Feeling bad has never fixed anything. Only action does.

Sometimes guilt looks like humility, but it's really just more focus on ourselves. We can spend so much energy feeling bad that we never get around to making things

right.

Today, if something is weighing on you, trade the feeling for the action. Make the call. Say the words. Take the step.

That's how the past stops owning us.

The Daily Gifts We Overlook

Written July 18, 2026

The little things in life are the most important. We all have little victories, little moments of joy. If we only consider the big things important, we will never be happy, because they are infrequent.

Today, gratitude means noticing what is right in front of us. A good cup of coffee. A kind word from a friend. A problem solved before breakfast.

Waiting for the big win leaves too many empty days in between. The daily gifts are there for the taking, if we only pause long enough to see them.

Progress, not perfection, is the aim. One day at a time, one small thing noticed, one moment of joy allowed to count.

That is enough for today.

Buried Under His Own Reputation

Written July 19, 2026

There's a spiritual sickness in clinging to an identity built out of straw.

My story, my status, my opinions about how things should go. None of it was ever solid. It was borrowed, and borrowed things can always be repossessed by fear.

The man in that picture is buried under his own reputation. He can't see his feet. He can't see the road. He's so busy protecting who he thinks he is that he's lost touch with where he actually is.

That's the danger of fixing your eyes too far down the road; on the next crisis, the next decision, the next thing that might go wrong. You start scanning the horizon for threats to an identity that was never real to begin with, and you stop looking at what's right here.

I often say: beware of looking too far down the road, for the hole in which you will fall is right in front of you. That's not just practical advice. It's a spiritual law. Tomorrow is not yours to manage. It never was. Today

is.

Peace doesn't come from having the future figured out. It comes from surrender. Lay the bundle down, uncover your eyes, and tend to the one step that's actually in front of you. That's the only ground that was ever solid, as that's what's visible and real today.

Out of Our Own Resources

Written July 20, 2026

We spend a lot of energy trying to measure up. We look at the standard and try to make it work, thinking that's the way through.

It isn't. The tighter we grip, the more clearly we see we can't hold on. That's not failure. That's the doorway.

Honest self-appraisal starts right there. Admitting, without argument, that we're out of our own resources. Not as defeat, but as the first fact we need.

Once we stop fighting that fact, something else becomes possible. A Power greater than our own will can enter in and start changing us from the inside, not just cleaning up our behavior on the surface.

Until we make that admission, we just cycle. We keep striving, failing, despairing, striving again.

Once we make it, the standard stops being a threat. It becomes the direction we're being walked in, one day at a time.

The Cost of Borrowed Opinions

Written July 21, 2026

We spend a lot of energy trying to be heard. Talking more, agreeing louder, making sure people know which side we're on.

Most of the time, that's not really our own voice. It's borrowed. We take on the opinions of the people we want to belong to, because agreeing with them feels like proof we're one of them.

It's a subtle kind of trade. We give up a little of what we actually think, in exchange for standing among the right crowd. It doesn't feel like a loss. It feels like belonging.

But the people who find real peace usually stop making that trade. They stop needing others to confirm they matter. Not because those people were wrong, but because the need to be counted among them was costing something.

They get quiet. And in that quiet, without anyone to please, something honest shows up. Not the version shaped to fit in. Just what's true for them, whether or not the crowd agrees.

We perform for the masses. We fall silent for the Spirit that never needed convincing.

Oh, what does it cost those people who take on the opinion of others?

It costs them their own judgment. Over time, they stop checking what they actually think and start checking what's acceptable to think.

It costs peace. Belonging that depends on agreement is fragile, so there's always a low hum of anxiety underneath it, a fear of being found out or left out.

It costs self-respect. Somewhere inside, a person knows when they've traded truth for cover, and that knowledge doesn't go away just because no one else notices.

And it costs connection to Spirit. That voice speaks from what's true, not from what's popular, so drowning it out with borrowed opinions is really just drowning out yourself.

Godshots and Glimmers

Written July 22, 2026

Some people call them Godshots. Others call them glimmers. Small, quiet moments that don't just happen to you, they point you: Running into an old contact who happens to mention a job opening you'd never have found on your own. Overhearing a stranger's conversation that gives you the courage to finally ask for help. A gut feeling to skip a trip, a drive, a decision, that later turns out to have kept you out of harm's way.

Easy to wave off as coincidence. That's the reflex. Call it luck, keep moving, stay in control of the story.

But coincidence doesn't explain the pattern. It explains it away. These moments tend to arrive exactly when we're paying attention, and vanish from memory the moment we're not. That alone says something about where the miracle is actually located.

Half of it is the event. The other half is a willingness to see it as one. Noticing is where faith starts to build.

But noticing alone leaves it theoretical. The next step is putting the glimmer to use: letting it point you toward

the next right action instead of just filing it away as a nice moment. That's where trust gets built, and it tends to arrive backward: not before the outcome, but after, once you've acted on the nudge and watched what it became. Each time that happens, the next one gets a little easier to trust.

So this morning, try this: notice one thing before noon that you'd normally file under "coincidence." Don't explain it. Don't dismiss it. Act on it, in whatever small way it's asking for. Then watch what comes of it.

That's the whole practice. Notice. Act. Watch.
Little miracles happen daily. It’s up to us to see them for what they really are.

From Getting to Giving

Written July 23, 2026

Good morning.

Yesterday I caught myself paying extra attention to someone I don't normally associate with. Later that day, thinking back on it, I realized why: I was about to ask them for something.

That's an old pattern surfacing. I used to size people up by what they could do for me. If someone had no use, I barely saw them at all.

That's a hard thing to admit. It's a harder thing to live.

Somewhere along the way, the question started to change: from "what can I get" to "what can I give." Not because I became a better person overnight, but because I got honest about what I'd become.

Giving does something that getting never quite manages. It gets me out of my own head.

Self-interest keeps a person circling the same small orbit: what do I need, what am I owed, what am I missing. It's a pretty restrictive place to live.

Giving breaks that circle. For a moment, the focus

shifts off me entirely, and something in that shift feels like relief.

There's a strange math to it too. The more freely I give, whether it's attention, patience, or a hand with something, the less empty I feel, not more. Hoarding never worked that way.

People were never meant to be tools. They were meant to be loved.

Just for today, I'm trying to see people, not use them, and to give something away without checking what it's worth first.

One Cloud at a Time

Written July 24, 2026

This morning I looked east and saw it plainly. A low bank of cloud sitting right along the top of our Community Forest, and above it, clear sky already lit.

The clear sky wasn't something that had to arrive later. It was already there, right where the cloud cover ended. Give it time, and the same sun will burn through the rest, or the wind will move it along. Either way, none of it waits on the cloud's permission.

That's the picture worth carrying into the rest of the day. Most of us go through it assuming something's missing. So we go looking outward: one more achievement, one more relationship, one more distraction that might finally fill the gap.

But what if nothing's actually missing? What if it's like that ridge this morning, still there, just covered over in places, and what we call "searching" is really just clearing the clouds?

That changes the whole approach. Instead of chasing something new, the work becomes noticing what's in the way (old grudges, self-interest, the need to control

everything) and letting a little of it go.

Think about the last time you felt truly at peace. Chances are it wasn't because you'd finally gotten something you wanted. It was because, for a moment, you'd stopped grabbing. The noise settled. The clouds thinned.

That's available more than once in a while. It's available today, in small ways. A resentment set down. A need to be right let go of. A moment where you stop managing everyone and everything around you.

We already have what we need. We don't have to build it or earn it. We just have to stop blocking it.

So the question this morning isn't "what am I missing." It's "what am I willing to let go of today." Start small. One cloud at a time is enough.

One Honest Sentence

Written July 25, 2026

Most of the trouble people cause comes from wanting their own way and calling it something else: good judgment, standing up for themselves, just being honest. Hardly anyone sees it clearly while it's happening.

The fix starts with taking an honest look at yourself, on paper if possible. Not "here's why I was right," but the real list: who you've resented, what you were actually afraid of, who you've hurt, and what you did to cause it. Left in your head, this always comes out sounding pretty reasonable. Written down and looked at plainly, it usually doesn't.

Then say it to someone else. A friend, a therapist, anyone who isn't going to just nod along. Something changes when the truth leaves your own head and lands on another person. It stops being negotiable.

After that comes the part many people ignore: actually being willing to let go of the thing, and asking for help doing it, from a person, a practice, a higher power, whatever that means to you. Trying harder on your own has usually already failed once. That's how you know it's not a willpower problem.

What comes after isn't a gold star. It's just relief: things get lighter, easier to be around, easier to live with. But that only shows up after the letting go, not before.

None of this needs to happen all at once, and it doesn't require you to have this figured out. Start with one honest sentence about yourself, said to one person you trust. That's the whole first move. Everything else follows from there.

Resentment Feels Like Justice

Written July 26, 2026

Good morning,

Resentment feels like justice. It feels like proof I was right and they were wrong. But held long enough, it stops punishing them and starts poisoning me.

In this polarized world, resentment gets to feel like a virtue instead of a grudge, which makes it so much easier to keep. And it runs both directions: whatever side someone's on, the mechanism is identical. Only the content changes.

The strange thing about resentment is how much company it keeps me. I replay the scene, sharpen the argument, win it again in my head, and somehow still feel robbed.

The question that actually helps is this, no matter which side it's aimed at: what is this costing me today, right now, with the people actually in front of me? Not whether I'm entitled to it. Just what it's costing.

Today, try this: hold the belief, drop the grudge. See how much lighter it is to stand for something without carrying it like a wound.

A wound left open long enough will take more than the flesh around it, given time, it takes the whole life.

Part of Me Stayed Nineteen

Written July 27, 2026

I stopped drinking at age 55. Part of me stayed 19.

I was 19 years old when drinking became my answer to anything I didn't want to feel. For the next 36 years, whenever life handed me something uncomfortable, I reached for a drink instead of learning what to do with it.

Quitting drinking and growing up are two separate jobs. The first happens the day you put the bottle down. The second can take years, and it doesn't start until the first one's done.

None of this means something is broken in you. It means the years that were supposed to teach you how to handle disappointment, rejection, boredom, or conflict got spent drinking instead. Sobriety didn't hand me the skills I'd missed. It just stopped the thing that let me avoid needing them.

This is why early sobriety can feel less like relief and more like starting over in front of an audience. You're learning things at 55 that most people picked up decades earlier, while still expected to run a household, hold a job, and repair what drinking broke.

Not drinking and becoming emotionally sober are different things. One is abstinence. The other is the slower work of sitting through disappointment without collapsing, tolerating boredom without escaping it, hearing "no" without needing to be right.

If you're sober and still feel unprepared for your own life, that's not failure. That's the actual work starting.

It moves faster than it did the first time, though. You're not 19 anymore in any way that matters except this one. Every hard moment you get through now builds a kind of strength drinking never let you build. For me it's been slow, but the distance keeps shrinking.

Old reactions still show up. But so much has changed. I can be told no and not take it as rejection. I can be wrong and look at it and see why. I can feel hurt and take it as a lesson rather than an affront.

If you've put the drink down and still feel like you're improvising your way through adult life, you are. That's not a problem to fix. That's what growth, finally, looks like.

Willingness Before Readiness

Written July 28, 2026

A friend posted one of those open questions online, the kind built to get people talking: what have you learned with time? I didn't have to think about my answer. It came out before I'd even finished reading the question: willingness matters more than readiness. I've rarely felt ready for the things that turned out to matter.

For decades, I was ready to stop drinking, but I wasn't willing to ask for help. Readiness alone never moved me an inch. I knew what needed to happen and thought about it plenty, ready in every sense except the one that counted.

Readiness is a feeling. It shows up late, if it shows up at all. Most people wait for it before trying anything that scares them, then wonder why they never moved.

Willingness works differently. It's not a feeling, it's a decision you make while still scared, still unsure, still not knowing how it turns out. You do the thing first, and the confidence comes after, never before.

Look back at anything that actually mattered: a conversation you had, a change you made, a person you let in. Chances are you weren't ready. You were just willing

enough to go first and figure out the rest along the way.

Waiting for ready sounds responsible. It feels like wisdom. Most of the time it's just fear that found a palatable word for itself, and it keeps things exactly where they are.

None of this requires courage you don't already have. It just asks for one small step before you feel prepared for it. Ready will catch up later, if it ever shows up at all.

The People We'd Rather Avoid

Written July 29, 2026

No one enters your life by accident, but the ones worth paying attention to are usually the ones you'd rather avoid. The people who get under your skin for no clear reason, the ones who keep showing up in your resentments, are often holding up something about yourself you haven't wanted to look at. Most people miss this while it's happening and only see it looking back.

That's where an honest look at yourself comes in. Not who wronged you, but what you were actually afraid of, what you did to provoke it, and what pattern keeps repeating with different people playing the same part. In your head this always sounds like someone else's fault. Looked at plainly, it starts to look like something you keep doing, not something that keeps happening to you.

Then say it out loud to someone else. Not the story of what they did to you, but your part in it. A friend, a therapist, anyone who won't just agree with you. Something changes when it leaves your head and lands on another person; it becomes real in a way it wasn't before.

Then comes the part most people avoid: being willing to

actually let go of the old grievance or the old version of yourself that needed it, and asking for help doing that, from a person, a practice, whatever that means to you. This isn't about trying harder. You've likely already tried that alone, and it hasn't worked.

What follows isn't a lesson learned or a lightning bolt. It's just relief, the encounter stops weighing anything. But that only comes after the letting go, never before it.

It’s not all going to be sorted out today. Start with one honest sentence about your part in one relationship, said to one person you trust. That's all it takes to begin.

Fear Talks, Pride Waits

Written July 30, 2026

Most people face a hard task, and fear shows up first, with a lot to say. It hands you reasons: not enough skill, not enough time, not ready yet. It sounds smart. Really it's just fear, doing its job, keeping you from moving. Right behind it comes pride, and pride is quiet. It doesn't argue. It just says that if you can't do this alone, it shouldn't count if someone else helps. It calls itself independence. It blocks the door just as well as fear does, and it's harder to see, because it looks like strength. For me, that task was to stop drinking. Fear told me I couldn't do it. Pride told me I shouldn't need help doing it. Between the two of them, they can stop almost anyone in their tracks. But the thing almost nobody does is turn around, see them both standing there, and walk past anyway to ask, plainly, for help. Not hoping someone notices you're struggling. An actual ask. If you've tried to push through alone and it hasn't worked, that doesn't mean you're broken. It means you tried the wrong way. What comes next isn't a feeling of having proven yourself. It's simpler: things get lighter. The task stops feeling so heavy. But that only happens after you ask, never before. None of this takes a big plan. Just name

the task, and name the person. For me, it was standing in front of someone and saying I am an alcoholic. That was where everything else started.

Good Enough for Now

Written July 31, 2026

Growth takes time. It's not about pushing through one hard moment, it's about letting the process finish, so nothing in you stays half-done.

Most of us have our life mostly together, but we still slack off in certain spots. Maybe it's how we eat, how we talk to people when we're tired, how we handle the small tasks nobody's checking on. It's not a flaw in you, it's an old habit still running on autopilot. But it still gets in the way of becoming who you're trying to be.

Meaning well isn't the same as living well. The two have to match. Little by little, life keeps circling back to the same weak spot, whether it's snapping at your wife, putting off a hard conversation, or letting your mind spiral before bed. It won't let that spot go until you actually deal with it. Not because it's cruel, just because it's thorough.

Feeling generally okay isn't the same as being finished growing. Pay attention to the moment you catch yourself thinking "good enough for now." That's usually the exact spot still asking for your attention.

August

Somewhere Else to Look

Written August 1, 2026

Distraction is the easiest habit in the world. It doesn't take effort, it doesn't take courage, it's just always right there. A phone in your pocket, a show to watch, a feed to scroll. Anytime something feels uncomfortable, distraction offers you somewhere else to look instead.

We don't usually choose distraction on purpose. It just fills the gap the second things get quiet. Silence tends to let the uncomfortable stuff back in. So we shut it out fast. Another doomscroll, another TikTok, another notification.

The problem is, distraction doesn't get rid of anything. It just delays it. The worry, the conversation you're avoiding, the thing you already know is true, it's all still there, waiting for you the second the noise stops.

This is easier than it's ever been. You used to have to work a little to avoid your own thoughts. Now it takes zero effort. There's always something else one click away, built to be more interesting than whatever you're actually feeling.

A little bit here, a little bit there, never enough to notice. But add it up over weeks, and you realize you haven't actually sat still with your own life in a long time.

Nobody's asking you to give up your phone or sit in silence for an hour. Just catch yourself once today, right as you reach for it, and ask what you're avoiding. You don't have to fix it. Noticing that is the whole point.

Never Meant to Do This Alone

Written August 2, 2026

Most people expect that getting their life together means the hard stuff stops. It doesn't. What changes is that you stop facing it alone.

Struggle isn't indicative of doing something wrong. It's just what real life includes. Expecting otherwise is what breaks people. They think growth was supposed to mean smooth sailing, and when it isn't, they assume they failed.

Growth doesn't remove the weight. It builds your capacity to carry it. You don't get handed strength in advance. You get exactly enough for what's in front of you today, and that's usually all you actually need.

So don't wait for the fear to pass before you act. Take the next right action now, as small as it might be. Capacity shows up after you move, not before.

And there's a strange kind of ease in it, once you see it clearly. The odds look impossible from where you're standing, and that's fine. This is where faith and trust come into the picture.

Something larger is already in this with you. Call it what

you want. A higher power, a deeper order, a strength beyond your own. You don't have to define it to lean on it.

That's the whole point of reaching out for it instead of holding on by yourself. Not because you're weak, but because you were never meant to do this by yourself.

The Ones Who Stopped Needing Control

Written August 3, 2026

Losing a job you loved, waiting on a diagnosis, watching a relationship end even though you did everything right. Life keeps handing us moments we can't control no matter how hard we try. This is where surrender comes in.

What that looks like is that I stop trying to control everything, and I let a Power bigger than me guide what happens next.

It doesn't mean giving up or doing nothing. It means I stop fighting to make things go my way, and I start asking what's actually being asked of me.

Say you lose a job you loved. Your first instinct is to scramble, to force a fix, to control the outcome by sheer effort. Surrender looks different. It means you do the next thing that’s in front of you to do, send the applications, show up to the interviews, and then let go of needing to know how or when it works out.

Most of us start out thinking we're in charge of our own path. We make plans. We decide what our purpose should be. Then life shows us, again and again, that we aren’t as in

control as we thought.

That's not failure. That's the point where real change can start. We let go of needing to know exactly how things will turn out.

We won't always understand where we're being led. That's okay. We don't need the whole plan. We just need to be willing to take the next right step today.

The people who find real peace aren't the ones who finally got everything under control. They're the ones who stopped needing to, one day at a time.

Today's Portion

Written August 4, 2026

Mental chaos often mirrors something deeper: an emotional unmanageability that takes hold when the mind stays trapped in old hurts and future fears. Left unexamined, this restlessness can quietly run the show, coloring decisions and relationships without our even noticing.

Actual healing starts with honest self-appraisal. It takes the same rigorous, unflinching look inward that any real change to destructive patterns requires, a willingness to see ourselves as we actually are, not as we wish to be.

Letting go of old resentments matters here. Naming them, looking at what we did, and releasing them lifts a weight that memory alone can't put down. Carried resentment tends to poison the present far more than the original event ever did.

Prayer and quiet reflection help too. They settle the mind's habit of imagining disasters that haven't happened, and bring us back to the present, the only place where anything can actually be done.

Peace comes from surrendering the illusion of control, over the past, and over what's still ahead. In its place, a steadier

reliance on something larger than ourselves, a source of strength we don't have to manufacture on our own.

That shift is what turns turmoil into lasting serenity, letting us meet life patiently and effectively, trusting that today's portion is enough to carry, one day at a time.

When the Floor Gives Way

Written August 5, 2026

There are moments when everything falls apart, and it feels like failure. The plans collapse, the people around us are confused or hurt, and by any ordinary measure it looks like ruin.

Think of someone who loses a job they'd built their whole identity around. At the time, it feels like the floor giving way. Only years later do they see that job had been holding them back from their true calling, and the loss was what finally opened the door to their destiny.

But we're not the only ones with a plan. There's a larger order at work, something we might call life's design or a wisdom beyond our own, and what looks like the end from where we stand may be exactly where that larger plan needed to go.

We don't get to understand it before we agree to follow it. Understanding isn't the deal. Trust is.

Some of us sense that pull toward something larger than ourselves. It isn't something we can argue anyone into feeling. It depends on what's already alive inside us.

We came to believe that this greater wisdom, not our own will, could set things right. That belief only works once we stop demanding to see the whole road first.

Our own plans got us into trouble. Letting go of them is what gets us out. When we stop trying to control everything ourselves, life gets simpler. Less rushing. Less strain.

That larger order is shaping how this turns out. Our job is just to trust it.

Exactly on Track

Written August 6, 2026

There are moments when what looks like collapse from the outside is not collapse at all. From a wider view, it can be exactly on track. We don't see that at the time. We only see it looking back.

This kind of trust is not something we reason our way into. It is something we feel, in quiet moments, when we finally stop fighting. No argument gets us there. Only surrender does.

We don't get to understand the whole plan before we agree to follow it. Understanding, if it comes, comes after. Trust has to come first.

We often ask for things not because a larger wisdom needs to be told what we need. It already knows. We ask so we can stay close to it, so the connection stays alive.

If we treat that connection like a machine for getting answers, we set ourselves up for frustration. It rarely responds the way we expect, on the timeline we want.

When things don't go our way, we look for someone to blame. That's a trap. The real lesson is usually meant for

us alone, not for anyone else.

Most of our trouble comes from insisting on running the show ourselves. Letting go of that grip is what brings relief. Life gets simpler and less rushed once we stop straining against it.

We don't have to prove that trust like this works. We just have to live it, so fully that our life becomes the proof, quiet and steady, until it's hard to tell where our will ends and that larger guidance begins.

How the Reflex Was Built

Written August 7, 2026

When I was an infant, I cried out because I instinctually knew my survival needs would be met. But soon, I learned a second lesson: crying could also demand a want. When that want was denied, fear crept in, a fear of not getting what I wanted, of lacking control. That fear immediately curdled into a quiet, early anger. It was a tiny seed of resentment, planted long before I had the words to name it.

Over the years, these hidden fears and unresolved resentments compounded. As an adult, that accumulated anger became a heavy, vibrating pressure that desperately needed somewhere to go. My brain, constantly seeking relief from this internal threat, discovered that alcohol could artificially quiet the storm. It was a survival adaptation; my mind took careful notes on how to escape the pain of fear and the heat of resentment without me ever making a conscious choice.

After enough repetitions, the choice vanished entirely.

For years, when a fresh resentment flashed or an old fear was triggered, my brain bypassed my conscious will. It immediately reached for the liquid shield it was trained to

use. I wasn't choosing to drink in those moments; I was watching an automated reflex run its course. A tool that once offered temporary safety had come to hold me hostage.

That is how my deepest character defects were forged. A coping mechanism, originally designed to protect a frightened child from a world he couldn't control, had been repurposed into an adult reflex. The ancient fear of being rejected or overlooked still shows up today in various forms. Some part of my brain still remembers the old relief alcohol offered, even though my soul no longer wants it.

But I am sober today, and I am no longer a defenseless child. Alcohol is no longer my only defense. When the old wave of fear and resentment rises now, I have a new choice. I can pause, recognize the automated reflex for what it is, and hand that burden over to a Power greater than myself. This spiritual tool does not demand a price later, and it cannot be depleted.

This morning, when the tension tightens in my chest, I ask myself: Am I reacting to a real, present danger, or am I being driven by an old fear or an unresolved resentment? When the old reflex tells me to pour a drink to kill the anger, I pause, and I reach for a greater strength instead. That is what sober looks like today.

The Half-Second After

Written August 8, 2026

Yesterday I wrote about how the reflex was built. A denied want curdled into fear, fear hardened into resentment, and resentment turned into anger before I had any say in it. From there, I usually reacted in a way that made things worse, not better.

Today I want to slow down further, into the pause I mentioned, the small gap that lives just before the reflex takes over.

Something happens. A comment lands wrong, a plan shifts, control slips a little. That's just an event. What happens next used to be automatic: the old fear loads, the old resentment ignites, and a reaction fires before I've had a single honest thought about it.

But there is a pause available between the event and what I do about it. It's small. It's easy to miss. For most of my life I didn't know it existed, so the reaction always won by default.

The pause is where the actual choice lives. Not before it, not after it, but inside it. On one side is reaction: the trained reflex, the shield, the old way of making the

discomfort go away fast. On the other side is intentional action, chosen only after asking what's true and whether anything even needs to be done. Often the honest answer is no. The event didn't require me at all. Only the old fear insisted that it did.

Last night, during a discussion on a local Facebook community group, someone was short with me. The old reflex wanted to match it, word for word. I stayed in the pause instead, and asked the question: did this actually require anything from me? As it turned out, the intentional action turned out to be no action at all.

The old irritation still showed up right on schedule. What's different is what I did with the half-second after. This time, the best move wasn't a response at all. It was letting it go.

The Spiritual Malady

Written August 9, 2026

For years, alcohol was my answer to emotional pain. It covered things I never wanted to look at, and for a long time it worked well enough to fool me.

Recovery teaches that this goes deeper than a physical or mental problem. At the root is a spiritual malady. Underneath the drinking is an emptiness, a God-shaped hole, that no drink was ever going to fill.

Alcohol fit into that hole for a while. It quieted the ache and made the emptiness bearable. But it was never the right thing for that hole, so it never actually healed it. It just covered up the fact that something deeper was sick.

When I got sober, the alcohol was gone, but the spiritual malady was still there. Yes, I was sober, but I was not happy. The same character defects were still running the show, albeit without being drunk while they surfaced. I couldn't pretend anymore. I had to face the fact that I'd been trying to treat a spiritual illness with something that could never touch it.

That's what the God-shaped hole points to. It isn't a character flaw to white-knuckle through. It's a sickness of

the spirit, and it needed a spiritual solution, not more willpower.

So I stopped trying to fix the hole with self-will. I started treating it the way it actually has to be treated, through turning my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood Him.

Prayer, meditation, honesty, and fellowship with others in recovery became the daily medicine for that spiritual malady. Slowly, the hole stopped feeling like a wound I had to manage and started feeling like the place where I meet God every day.

The spiritual malady was never something I could out-think or outwork. It needed God to fill it. And in its place, the problem itself has been removed. It no longer exists for me, so long as I keep in fit spiritual condition. That's what recovery has actually given me.

Only a Channel

Written August 10, 2026

Today I wake up and remember I am not the source of anything good in me. I am only a channel. What moves through me is not mine. It is a spiritual power, a Power greater than any human strength, and my only task is to stay open and let it pass through. It is much like water flowing down a river.

Before the day begins, I ask quietly: keep me clear today. Let what comes to me go on to someone else. Don't let me hold it back, and don't let me mistake the water for my own. I never made a drop of it.

Through the day this looks small. A kind word to someone who needs reassurance. Patience with someone who may be struggling. Listening instead of rushing to fix. None of it belongs to me to keep, and none of it is mine to claim credit for. It comes from Something higher than me, and it is meant to keep moving through me to the next person.

I have lived the other way too. I know what it looks like to let the channel close; to become so absorbed in my own concerns that nothing flows through, in or out. It rarely happens all at once. It begins with small neglects.

Skipping the quiet moments. Skipping honesty. Skipping the reaching out to others. All of those little things have a cumulative effect.

Then one day I notice the water has gone still. And stagnant water breeds disease. What was meant to give life starts to poison it instead. I feel cut off, uneasy, shut in on myself. Back to relying only on my own strength, which was never enough on its own.

So tonight I'll check the channel again. Did I let Something greater move through me today, or did I try to hold some of it back for myself? Where did I let the passage narrow?

This upkeep is not dramatic. It is daily. But a channel does not wait until it feels like flowing. It simply flows, or it stops being a channel at all.

What My Dad Knew

Written August 11, 2026

The anniversary of my dad's death is coming up again, and I've been thinking about him more than usual this week. Mostly I've been thinking about what he actually taught me, past the surface-level things.

My dad knew something that might not be obvious to people. He fell trees for a living, out on logging shows in the woods. When the wind came up too high to safely fall timber, the whole crew stood down for the day. No trees hit the ground. No wood moved. From where he stood, it looked like a wasted day.

But he had been at it long enough to know better. What looks like a day lost from the ground can be exactly the day that was needed, seen from somewhere higher up.

He never got the full plan ahead of time. Nobody radios down and tells you why the wind picked up when it did, or what it's protecting you from. Trust comes first. Understanding, if it comes, comes later.

The pull to use that day well instead of just cursing it was not something he argued himself into. It showed up in his hands, in the habit of picking up a file instead of taking the day off.

So on the high wind days, he sharpened chains, dressed his wedges, sanded down axe handles, and spliced wire rope that had started to fray. None of it looked like the job. All of it was the job.

If everything was already squared away, he'd head down to the beach and split up driftwood logs. Even with nothing left on the list, he still found a way to keep his hands busy.

The real trouble was never the wind. It was the itch to force the day to go the way he had planned it, instead of the way it was actually going to go. Letting go of that itch is what let him work instead of sitting idle.

That is the part I want to carry forward, past the woods and into the rest of my life. The wind is still going to come up high some days. Plans will still stall. Something I was counting on will still get called off.

My job on those days is not to fight the wind or explain it. It is to sharpen what I've got, tend to what's fraying, and stay ready.

He never controlled the wind on that ridge, and I don't control mine. I can only keep my tools ready for the day it eases up, and trust that something bigger than my own schedule is deciding when I fall the next tree.

Walking Toward, Not Away

Written August 12, 2026

Some people think leaving formal, doctrinal religion means turning their back on God, as they understand God. From the outside, it can look like walking away. From the inside, it felt like walking toward something instead. What looked like loss turned out to be an opening. Room enough to step closer to a Power greater than Self, without anyone else setting the terms. We don't need a full explanation before we're allowed to feel connected to our Higher Power. Understanding can come later, if it comes at all. Trust comes first.

That Higher Power isn't something anyone talks us into. It shows up on its own, quietly, in a moment outdoors, in a small creature going about its work, in water closing over our shoulders. We don't reason our way there. We just notice it. It's always been within us.

Look at how things in nature depend on each other without being asked to. One creature feeds another, a root feeds the soil, a season feeds the next. Nothing out there is trying to survive alone, and nothing has to. That kind of quiet cooperation is our Higher Power at work too.

For a long time, the hardest part was believing a Power greater than Self could hold things together without our constant sorting and judging. Deciding who counted and who didn't. Deciding who was in and who was out. That kind of control cost us peace, not gave it.

Relinquishing the job of judging other people turned out to be the relief. We stopped needing anyone to agree with us before we could see something worthwhile in them. Once we let go of that, life got simpler and a lot less exhausting.

The walls we build between ourselves and our Higher Power are our own doing, not the world's. When those walls come down, we become enveloped in that Power, and the reality of it becomes even more clear.

So the practice, if there is one, is trust. Trust that our Higher Power is already at work, in the ordinary and the small, without needing our permission or our approval. Our part is just to see it clearly.

The Order I'm Living Inside Of

Written August 13, 2026

I listen to classical music every chance I get. From sunup to sundown, if I can have it playing, I do. There's a reason it settles me the way it does.

Baroque music is built on math. Every note has its place. Every voice knows its job. Nothing is left to chance, and yet it never sounds stiff. It sounds alive.

The more I intentionally listen, the more I see the same math written into the earth itself.

A skilled composer doesn't throw notes together and hope they land. Every voice is placed on purpose, so it can move freely and still meet the others exactly where it needs to. I believe the earth was put together the same way, by a Higher Power, a Spirit that oversees every physical system on this planet and holds them in relationship with each other, working on a scale I can't fully take in.

A bee visits a flower and the flower feeds it, and in trade, the plant gets to live on through its seed. A tree pulls water up from the ground and breathes it back out as rain somewhere else. The very air I'm breathing right now was made by something green, and what I breathe out feeds it

in return.

None of that is an accident. It's a kind of counterpoint, much like the intentional design of baroque classical. Every part was placed by a hand skilled enough to let it move on its own, and still lock into everything else, in time, into something that sustains everything at once.

I didn't design any of it. I can't even see all of it. I just get to live inside it, one small voice in a much larger piece.

That's what settles me most, I think. Not that I understand the whole score. Just that I'm part of it, playing my note, trusting the order that holds it all together. Maybe that's why I keep the music on from sunup to sundown. It's the same order I'm living inside of, just easier for me to hear.

Looking for an Exit

Written August 14, 2026

Self-centeredness may be the most underrated danger there is. It's not loud or dramatic. Just a steady pull toward "me first" that silently runs most of our decisions.

Left alone, it doesn't stay put. It looks for somewhere to go, some way to manage the discomfort of being that focused on ourselves. That's where the coping starts.

Addiction is one of those copes. Drinking, drugs, gambling, food, sex. All different objects, all doing the same job: relieving the pressure of a mind turned entirely inward.

But it isn't the only one. Control is another. Needing to be right is another. Resentment, self-pity, chronic worry, even relentless achievement, can all be self-centeredness, just in different forms.

That's why fixing one symptom rarely finishes the job. Someone puts down the bottle and picks up control, or anger, or overwork. The object changed. The pattern underneath stays in charge.

Real change doesn't come from managing each behavior one by one. It comes from loosening the self-focus feeding

all of them.

Turning attention outward, toward someone else's need, is one of the few things that reliably does that. Not as a trick to quiet one habit, but as a way of living that starves the whole pattern.

Self-centeredness will always look for an exit. The task isn't closing every exit one at a time. It's shrinking the pressure that's looking for one in the first place.

That Still Small Voice

Written August 15, 2026

It's easy for me to stop listening to that still small voice inside of me. That voice is Spirit, spoken to me through conscience. It never lies. I stop listening by ignoring what it's trying to teach me, and by giving up when it shows me something I don't want to see. When I haven't grown much yet, I mistake real truth for something bad. I say, "That's just fear," when it's really trying to help me.

I can't afford to stop listening to it. I can't turn away when it says, "Stop pretending you don't see this. You're not as far along as you thought, but now you get the chance to grow." When that happens, the best thing I can do is let it work on me. Let it put me back on the right path.

I can't give up when it shows me something hard. I get upset with life and say, "I tried, I did the work, and it still didn't go my way. I'm done trying." Think about what would happen if I gave up that easily on everything else in life. I'd never grow at all.

Am I willing to let a Power greater than self move through me and change me? Growth isn't about getting the result I want. It's about what Spirit actually wants for me. It has

to bring me to a place where I can let go fully, no matter what that costs. And if it costs me my ego, then that's okay.

New Neighbors

Written August 16, 2026

There's a certain unease that comes with hearing someone new is moving in next door. You don't know them yet, so your mind fills the gap: will they be respectful, quiet, easy to live alongside? Our old neighbors were good ones, respectful and communicative, and that's a hard standard to expect a stranger to meet. Will it turn out to be neighbors who never quite return the courtesy, careless with noise or boundaries, headaches for years to come? That fear is natural. It's also usually unnecessary.

We have new neighbors, a young couple who lived in Eureka before coming here, moving in right next door.

Yesterday I came home from running errands and found the driveway full of life, a small crew of young friends carrying boxes and items into the garage, getting a head start before the actual move-in day. I walked over, introduced myself, and we shook hands. Two young girls, two cats, and a dog round out the family. We don't know them yet, not really, but everything about that first meeting, the easy conversation, the warm handshake, gave all the appearances of a good neighbor to come. I gave him my card with my number, the kind of thing you do when

you plan on knowing someone a long time.

Not long after, Miss K got home from her Rummikub game uptown and went straight over to introduce herself too. She came back smiling, sure she'd just met a very nice little family.

Moving is no small thing. New house, new street, new faces everywhere you look. A little welcome goes a long way toward turning a stressful day into a hopeful one, and knowing there's a friendly face next door, with a number to call if they ever need one, has to make settling in easier.

It does something for us too. Fear has less room to grow once a stranger becomes a name and a face. Small courtesies now tend to prevent bigger misunderstandings later. And there's a quiet peace in knowing the people around us, rather than just living alongside them.

Nobody chooses their neighbors. But everybody can choose to show up open-handed. Looks like both sides might come out ahead on this one.

Brakes and Maintenance

Written August 17, 2026

120,000 miles on the RAV4, and it was time. Pads worn thin, rotors due. Today it gets fixed.

Here's the thing about brake maintenance. You don't wait for the grinding, the failure, the near miss on the highway. You watch the wear as it happens, and you act before it becomes an emergency. That's not caution. That's respect, for yourself and for everyone else sharing the road with you.

Our inner condition works the same way. Left unchecked, resentment and fear build up quietly, the way a brake pad wears down a little more each day. You don't notice it happening until the day it fails you, usually at the worst possible moment. Regular, honest maintenance isn't a sign that something's wrong with us. It's simply what keeps us dependable.

Oil changes are the same idea, just smaller and more frequent. Nobody sees them. Nobody claps for them. But skip enough of them and the whole engine gives out. A daily habit of quiet reflection works the same way. Small, unremarkable, easy to skip. And exactly what keeps the bigger breakdown from happening.

Wiper blades matter most when the weather turns bad. In the sunshine, worn blades don't seem to matter at all. It's the sudden downpour that shows you what you were driving with. Our own clarity works the same way. Anybody can see straight on a calm day. The real test is whether we can still see clearly when the storm hits, when emotions are high and the road ahead is hard to read.

A car well maintained protects more than the driver. It protects the passengers, the family in the next lane, the kids crossing the street. A life well maintained works the same way. The benefits reach far past ourselves.

So take care of what's under the hood. The oil, the pads, the blades. And take care of what's underneath that, too.

Getting on the Bus

Written August 18, 2026

Yesterday I rode a public bus for the first time in almost thirty years. I didn't want to. I wasn't going to pay for a rideshare, and I didn't want to lean on anyone for a favor, so the bus was what was left.

I went in already sure of what I'd find. Dirty seats. Bad smells. People I'd rather not sit near. None of it was true. The bus was clean, quiet, comfortable, and on time, both ways.

What stayed with me wasn't really the bus. It was how certain I'd been about something I hadn't actually seen in thirty years. I had built the whole picture in my head, and I believed it without checking.

That's usually how fear works. It doesn't argue. It just moves in quietly and starts making the decision. Mine wasn't built on anything real. I simply believed what I wanted to believe.

None of that made sense to me yesterday morning. I just knew I had somewhere to be, and the bus was the way to get there. Whatever sense it made came afterward, not before.

It's a relief, not having to understand before acting. We don't need to see where the road goes before we get on. We just have to be willing to go where the day is asking us to go.

The parts of me that wanted control, that wanted a nicer ride, that didn't want to depend on anything outside my own plan, were the parts that made the whole thing feel heavier than it was. Once I let that go and just sat down, the trip was easy.

What's strange is that I already trust like this in other parts of my life. This particular corner just hadn't been tested. Trust doesn't arrive all at once. It gets built area by area, and some areas sit there waiting their turn.

That corner's been tested now, and it held. It turns out I didn't need to like the bus. I just needed to get on it and let the rest sort itself out.

Disappearing from the Room

Written August 19, 2026

I noticed something yesterday. I was in a conversation, nodding along, and I realized I hadn't heard the last thing said. I was too busy thinking about what I would say next.

That's a form of isolation. You don't have to leave a room to disappear from it.

It happens in small places. A meeting where I'm half tuned out, waiting for my turn to talk. A phone call where I'm half listening and half judging my own last response. Even at the dinner table, nodding at Miss K while quietly keeping score on how I'm doing.

None of it looks like much from the outside. That's what makes it easy to miss. I can go a whole conversation this way and still say all the right things, and still walk away feeling strangely alone.

Here's what I'm trying now. When I catch myself doing this, I ask one real question about whatever the person just said. Not a question to fill space. A question I actually want the answer to.

It works almost every time. The second I'm curious about

them instead of worried about me, the wall comes down. My attention moves from the inside of my head to the person in front of me, and, just like that, I'm back in the room.

I don't need a plan for this, or a technique to master. I just need to notice the moment it happens, and ask one honest question.

Small thing. But it's the difference between being in the room and just standing in it.

One Knee Scooter

Written August 20, 2026

One knee scooter.

A young woman who lives not far from me bought it. She used it for a little while, then found something that worked better for her small apartment.

Most people in her spot would have sold it, or let it sit in a garage. She did neither.

In the early summer of 2024, I badly broke my ankle. She read about it on social media, and reached out to a neighbor she barely knew. She gave me the scooter outright, free and clear. No conditions, no expectation of return.

That is where this whole thing started. Not with me. With her willingness to give something away simply because someone needed it.

When I picked it up, I told her this: when I was done with it, I would not just set it in a closet. I would pass it on, get it back, and pass it on again. What I could not have known then is how much would grow out of that one gift.

Since then, the scooter has gone out again and again.

A hospice nurse recovering from foot surgery. A man hurt in a car accident. A woman in her seventies who sprained her ankle badly. A Eureka woman who found a gopher hole the hard way. A young man whose foot was run over by a rolling car. And a few others that I have forgotten about.

Today it goes to a woman with a broken foot, her first broken bone since birth.

None of those people know her name. But every one of them was helped because a stranger decided, once, to help someone without obligation.

Every time the scooter goes out again, I message her. She is thrilled every single time, hearing about a new stranger the scooter is helping. I do this so she can see what her one small act has become. A single kindness, multiplied by every person willing to keep it moving.

I did not create this chain. She did, the moment she chose to give something away with no strings attached. I was only handed a link, and chose to keep it going.

That is what generosity does when it is real. It does not stay where it lands. It moves through a whole line of people who never met each other, all because one person decided that what she had was not only for keeping, but for giving away.

Looking Inward

Written August 21, 2026

I used to think looking inward was dangerous. I thought if I really looked at myself, I would not like what I found. So I avoided it. I stayed busy. I stayed distracted. I let resentment pile up in the dark corners of my mind where I never had to look at it.

But avoidance is not peace. It just delays the reckoning.

An inventory, in the simplest terms, is just an honest list. A look at where I have been wrong, where fear has run my life, where old resentments still sit unresolved. Nothing more complicated than that. Just an honest accounting, written down instead of left to circle in my head.

There is a different way. It starts with honesty. Not the kind that beats you down, but the kind that sets you free. Taking a fearless look at where I have gone wrong, where fear has driven me, where my own selfishness has hurt someone. Writing it down. Getting it out of my head and onto paper where I can actually see it.

Something strange happens when I do this. The things that felt enormous in my mind shrink down to size on the page. The resentments I carried like boulders turn out to be

pebbles once I examine them honestly.

Inventory is not about self punishment. It is about clearing the wreckage so I can move forward without dragging yesterday behind me.

I do this daily now. A quick check at the end of the day. Where was I selfish? Where was I afraid? Where do I owe someone an apology?

Some days the list is short. Some days it is not. Either way, I sleep better for having looked.

The people who taught me this were not interested in me feeling ashamed. They wanted me free. And freedom, it turns out, starts with telling myself the truth.

I Was That Person

Written August 22, 2026

I used to think that patience was a virtue I either had or didn't. Some days I had it. Most days, especially with people wrapped up in themselves, I didn't.

Then I remembered something I would rather forget. I was that person. I put Miss K through years of my own self-centeredness before I ever had a name for it.

She lived with a man who made most things about himself. Not always loudly. Sometimes just by absence, by distraction, by fear expressed as needing things a certain way. I know what that cost her, because I have heard it in her voice when these years come up in conversation.

So when someone in front of me now is seeing things only from their own perspective, making everything about their world, I get a choice. I can resent them. Or I can remember.

I remember what it felt like to be on the other side of that pattern, and how long it took someone patient to love me through it. That memory softens me. It turns judgment into something closer to compassion.

I am not excusing bad behavior. Miss K never excused mine, and that mattered. But I am refusing to stand outside of someone else's self-centeredness, pointing a finger, as if I have never lived there myself.

Patience, then, is not about gritting my teeth and waiting someone out. It is about seeing a mirror and choosing kindness instead.

Today I will try to meet self-centeredness with a little more understanding. Not because the other person has earned it. Because I remember when I needed it too, and because someone gave it to me anyway.

The Way I Wanted to Feel

Written August 23, 2026

At a meeting on Thursday, the speaker put words to something I'd never been able to name:

“I didn't like the way I wanted to feel.”

And that's the part people miss. I wasn't always chasing relief. In the beginning, it was fun. Just a good time, nothing more.

But it didn't stay that way. Somewhere along the line it turned into something else. A tool. A way to medicate feelings of emotional unease.

There was pain in there I didn't have words for yet. Old pain, deep pain, the kind that stays quiet until it doesn't.

Alcohol helped. Not well, not for long, but it worked when nothing else did. It became the only option I had.

And somewhere in that shift, the fun disappeared. What started as a good time became a job. I didn't like who I became when I used it. I didn't like the numbness, the distance, the person staring back at me some mornings.

But the alternative felt worse. Feeling everything, all at once, and not knowing what to do with any of it. So I made

a trade. I'd rather feel this than feel that.

The solution didn't come from trying harder. It came from admitting I couldn't do this alone.

I had to get honest about what I was really running from. Not just the drinking, but the fear and pain underneath it.

Then I had to become willing to hand it over. To trust something greater than myself with the parts of me I couldn't fix by willpower alone.

That's when things started to change. Not all at once, not perfectly, but steadily. A Power greater than me began to do for me what I could never do for myself.

Today I don't need the medication. I have something better. I have a discipline of turning my will and my pain over, and the trust that comes from watching it work, one day at a time.

Walking Toward the Gate

Written August 24, 2026

I'm flying out this morning, headed to Palm Desert for a conference. Curiously enough, I'm not anxious about the plane itself. I'm anxious about the fog, even though it's not a threat today.

This year the odds are better than usual. The Super El Nino weather out over the Pacific has kept the fog thinner and less frequent than most years. Logically, I know that.

But the anxiety doesn't care about odds. It's not reacting to this morning. It's reacting to every other morning that came before it.

And it doesn't stop at the fog. Even if this first flight lands on time, there's a second fear waiting right behind it, the connection.

All the times I sat with that same knot in my stomach, waiting, my mind already three steps ahead, running the numbers on the layover. What if the gate changes to a distant one? What if the plane is late? What if I land just in time to watch my next flight pull away from the jet bridge? I've built the whole missed connection in my head before I've even landed.

That's the part I'm learning to see clearly. The fear I carry isn't really about today's forecast, or today's layover. It's leftover weight from old mornings, still riding along uninvited.

I can't argue it away with statistics. What actually helps is smaller than that. I pack what I need. I get to the airport with enough time. And then I let go of the parts that were never mine to carry.

There's a difference between preparing for a day and rehearsing its worst version. Preparing is useful. Rehearsing disaster a hundred times before breakfast is just suffering paid in advance, for a bill that may never come due.

So this morning I'm taking the next indicated action instead. Not solving tomorrow's problem before it exists. Just showing up, one step at a time, and trusting that whatever the day brings, I'll have what I need to meet it when it actually arrives.

The fog, real or remembered, will do what it does. My job is to keep walking toward that gate.

Conditioned by the Heat

Written August 25, 2026

I'm in Palm Desert this week. 106 degrees outside. Back home, 65 is a warm day.

I'm doing fine here. The air itself feels like it's on fire compared to home, but I'm no worse for wear.

I remember when I started selling milk and ice cream in the Valley. At first, the heat was miserable. Every part of me wanted out of it. But the work didn't stop for comfort, so I kept showing up anyway.

Slowly, without noticing exactly when it happened, the discomfort faded. What used to feel unbearable started to feel normal. Then it barely registered at all.

I think the same is true underneath the skin.

Spiritual conditioning doesn't get built in one big moment. It gets built the way heat tolerance does, by showing up, day after day, with no easy relief. It's uncomfortable at first. Then, little by little, we grow into it, until what once felt unbearable becomes just another Tuesday.

Faith works the same way. Trust in a Power greater than myself isn't something I can talk myself into overnight. It

has to be tested, day after day, in the heat of real circumstances, before it becomes something solid enough to stand on. The trust I have today isn't the trust I started with. It grew because I kept showing up long enough to let it.

Comfort has its place. It's not the enemy. But I've noticed the growth usually starts a few degrees past it, right about where I want to quit, turn back, or find the shade. That edge of discomfort isn't a sign I've gone too far. It's usually the sign I'm right where the work is happening.

Whatever heat I'm standing in today, literal or otherwise, it might just be conditioning me for something. My job is just to show up. The rest isn't mine to decide.

Naming It

Written August 26, 2026

Yesterday morning at my conference, the keynote speaker was Ben Nemtin. He's one of the co-founders of The Buried Life, a project that started as a simple question among friends, what do you want to do before you die?

He and his friends wrote out a list of 100 things they wanted to do before they died. Not a mental list, not a someday list. An actual list, on paper, with a number next to each one. Play basketball with the president. Write a letter to their unborn child. Help a stranger cross something off their own list. Each one specific, each one real enough to fail at or finish.

That's what got me. Before the list existed on paper, those were just daydreams, the kind everybody has and nobody does anything about. The moment they wrote them down, something changed. A daydream doesn't have a shape. A written goal does. You can look at it, plan for it, fail at it, cross it off. You can't do any of that with a thought still floating around in your head.

If you've read these morning posts for a while, you know I come back to this idea often. Yesterday's talk gave it a new shape.

I used to think the hard part was the doing. Turns out the hard part is the naming.

As long as a thing stays vague, it stays safe. A feeling with no name can't be argued with, can't be measured, can't be

acted on. It just sits there, taking up room.

Put it on paper, and a feeling becomes a sentence. A sentence can be looked at. A sentence can be true or not true, finished or not finished, mine to work on or mine to let go of.

It struck me hard to realize that isn't the easy part. It's the exposing part. You put the thing on paper and you can finally see it for what it is, instead of what your fear made it into overnight.

I've done this with resentments. I've done this with fears. I've done this with plans I was too scared to say out loud. Every time, the page did the same thing. It took something shapeless and gave it an edge I could actually work with. And every time, once I could see the thing clearly, I found a way through it that I couldn't find while it was still just weight I was carrying around.

So this morning, if something's been sitting heavy and formless, don't try to fix it yet. Just name it. Write the sentence. The clarity comes first. The action follows.

The Ground I Needed

Written August 27, 2026

I used to think the box was the problem, the walls of a situation you can't change, the limits on your time, money, or how much control you actually have. The lack, the not-enough. I spent years waiting for those walls to move before I'd even try to build a sober life inside them.

But that's backwards. The walls were never the obstacle. They were the shape my life needed to take a new form.

I couldn't drink my way into feeling better, and I couldn't think my way out of drinking either. I couldn't manage it, control it, or wait for the right conditions to quit. What actually worked was surrender. Admitting I didn't have what I thought I needed to stop, and starting anyway, with just what was in front of me.

Here's what I didn't expect when I hit bottom. I thought it was the end of something. Turns out it was the start.

For years I believed hitting bottom meant loss. Loss of control, loss of respect, loss of the version of myself I was trying to protect by drinking. I fought it every step of the way, sure that if I just held on tighter, I could stop the fall myself.

What I discovered changed my entire mindset about hitting bottom. It wasn't a punishment. It was solid ground.

I couldn't feel it as ground while I was still grasping for the next drink on the way down. Only once I stopped grasping did I realize I was standing on something. Something that didn't move, didn't lie to me, didn't ask me to keep performing or pretending I had it handled.

Bottom was where the excuses ran out. Where the will power I thought I needed was finally, completely gone. And in that emptiness, something honest showed up for the first time in a long time.

I didn't white-knuckle my way out. I surrendered my way out. I stopped trying to engineer my own rescue and let myself be led, one small step at a time, by Something wiser than my own plans.

Every real change in my sobriety happened inside a constraint, never outside of one. Not enough certainty it would work. Not enough proof I could actually do this. Not enough of my old confidence left to lean on. I had to trust Something bigger than myself, and take the next right action with empty hands.

I think that's the design, not a flaw in it. A Power greater

than myself doesn't usually hand me more room. It teaches me what I can do with the room I've got, one day at a time.

The square filter still has to fit the round hole somehow. You don't get to redesign the ship mid-sail. You work with the parts you were given, you ask for guidance, and you find out you had more sobriety in you than you thought.

The bottom isn't the opposite of the ground you needed. It is the ground you needed.

When Asking Feels Wrong

Written August 28, 2026

There are times when asking for help feels wrong. We tell ourselves it's weak to need someone. We think we should handle it alone. So we stay quiet. We keep going. We hold on tighter.

Pride feels like something that will catch us. But it won't. It holds us up, right up until the moment we really need help, and then it lets go. When it does, we see how tired and empty we've been for a long time.

We were made to need more than food and hard work. Part of us goes hungry when we never turn to something bigger than ourselves. We don't always feel it. We just feel worn out, without knowing why.

Most of us wait until we have no other choice before we ask for help. We wait until nothing else works. We think asking too soon means we haven't really tried.

It doesn't. Asking for help, once we've run out of our own answers, is often the most honest moment we've had in a long time. It isn't weakness. It's the most natural thing there is.

A child doesn't wait to ask. A child brings every worry to someone else, without shame, without deciding if it's a big enough problem. We lose that freedom as we grow older and try to do everything on our own. Debilitating pride is a learned behavior.

As long as we think we can handle everything by ourselves, we won't ask for help. It looks like strength. But it shuts the door on the help we need.

Here's something surprising about this: Letting go doesn't usually change what's happening around us right away. It changes us first. And once we change, other things start to shift too.

That's the real gift of letting go. It's not that the world rearranges itself for us. It's that trusting something bigger changes how we carry what we're facing. Our job isn't to force the outcome. Our job is to trust.

Common Sense and Trust

Written August 29, 2026

Every time we try to trust something bigger than ourselves, we run into things that seem to prove us wrong. Common sense and trust are not the same. One runs on what we can see. The other runs on what we can't always prove yet.

It's easy to trust when things are going well. On the good days, we say, "I believe this will work out." Then life brings us back down. The facts seem to laugh at what we believe.

Every time our trust feels sure, something tests it. We might say, "I'll be taken care of." Then the money runs low. We don't know how it will get better. That's the moment we choose. Do we keep trusting, or do we go back to handling it all ourselves?

Trust has to be tested before it becomes real. It only becomes ours through some kind of struggle. Whatever we're facing right now will either prove our trust is solid or show us it wasn't there yet.

The struggle isn't a sign we're doing something wrong. It's just part of the process. Real trust gets stronger each time it's tested. It doesn't get weaker.

This testing never really stops. It shows up again and again, in small ways and big ones, for as long as we live.

Letting go of the need to control everything is what makes trust possible. We don't get to see the whole plan before we agree to follow it. We trust first. We may not understand until much later, if ever.

May we stay ready for this. Trust means believing something bigger will stand by us, even when we can't see how yet.

Go Pick Up Trash

Written August 30, 2026

Peter McWilliams once wrote, "If you want peace, stop fighting. If you want peace of mind, stop fighting with your thoughts."

Early in sobriety, a mentor of mine had a simple answer for when I felt like drinking. Go pick up trash.

I didn't understand it then. I thought the problem was the craving. What he was really pointing at was the fight. I'd get a thought, wrestle with it, lose, and go looking for a drink to numb the loss. Picking up trash didn't answer the thought. It just got me out of my head and back into the world, doing something for someone other than myself.

Most of what I fight isn't even mine to fight. Other people's choices. Things that already happened. What might happen tomorrow. None of it changes because I clenched up over it. All the fighting does is keep me exhausted and convinced I'm in control of something I never was.

That's still how it works. I used to think peace meant winning the argument in my head. But the fighting was the problem. Every time I picked up a thought and squared off with it, I lost something. Time. Energy. The present

moment.

Peace of mind never came from beating my thoughts into submission. It came from getting honest about what was actually mine to carry.

It came from noticing a thought, letting it pass instead of grabbing hold of it, and putting my hands to something useful instead. Some days that's a task. Some days it's just a breath and a decision to let the thought keep moving. Either way, the peace comes after I quit trying to control the thought, not after I win the argument with it.

If you want peace, stop fighting.

Steadier Ground

Written August 31, 2026

Yesterday I drove down to the rental property that Miss K and I help take care of. I needed to check the hot tubs for cleanliness, scrub down the Weber grills, routine things. Today's addition was dusting the ceiling fans.

There was a small stepstool available down there. It would have enabled me to reach the blades just fine.

Instead I loaded up a six-foot stepladder. It took a few more steps and a little more effort, but it gave me margin I wasn't willing to go without.

I broke my ankle a few years back, choosing to take a risk that I could have avoided. That changed me. I used to trust my balance without thinking about it. Now I'm careful not to put it to the test.

There was a time I would have grabbed the stepstool, stretched a little further than I should, called it good enough. That was pride talking. It told me I didn't need the extra safety, that asking for more support was for people weaker than me.

Pride is expensive. It collects on the fall, not before it.

I know that bill personally. Pride never asks for payment up front. It lets you walk around feeling capable, feeling like you've got it handled, right up until the moment you don't. Then it presents the invoice all at once. A broken ankle. A relationship worn thin because I couldn't admit I needed help. Years spent trying to prove something nobody was asking me to prove.

The cruelest part is that pride convinces you the debt is worth it. It tells you that needing a taller ladder is an admission of being less-than, when really it's just arithmetic. Small risk, small cost. Ignored risk, bigger cost, paid later, usually with interest.

The ladder wasn't really about the fan blades. It was about admitting what my body actually is right now, not what I wish it still was. That kind of honesty used to feel like defeat. Today it just feels like wisdom.

I've learned that respecting my limits isn't the same as giving up on myself. It's the opposite. It's how I stay in the game long enough to keep protecting my mobility, keep showing up, keep being useful to others.

Some days the growth isn't in reaching higher. It's in choosing the steadier ground to stand on while you reach.

September

Local, Small, and Mine

Written September 1, 2026

I used to run on resentment. Politics, greed, people who never seem to answer for what they take, it was fuel and I burned it like fuel.

For years I told myself the anger was righteous. It felt like standing for something. It wasn't. It was just me, trying to control what was never mine to control.

I've learned that for people like me, this kind of anger isn't just uncomfortable. Left unchecked, it's dangerous. It can quietly undo everything I've built to stay well. After all, alcohol quelled the discomfort.

The graft is real. The self-centeredness is real. I'm not pretending otherwise.

Although I feel resentful, I don't act on it. I pause, and I realize I'm powerless over politics, over greed, over other people.

Then I take that same energy and point it somewhere I can actually touch.

There used to be a bumper sticker that said it simply. “Think global, act local.” I loved that one.

I can't fix the whole structure. But on a small local scale, I can act. That's not resentment talking. That's a responsibility to the people around me.

My work. My street. One honest thing I can do before noon, and then letting the rest go.

That's where I'm putting it this morning. Local, and small, and mine to carry. The afternoon can figure itself out when it gets here. Time to go to work.

Loosening My Hands

Written September 2, 2026

There's a way of thinking about giving that runs backward from what we might expect. We assume that whatever good comes to us is ours to keep. But the deeper pattern seems to be the opposite. Whatever we receive that's worth having, we're meant to let it move through us, not settle into us.

This isn't about building ourselves up, or to become more complete. It's about becoming willing to be used for something bigger. That's a strange goal by ordinary standards. Most of what we're taught points the other way, toward holding on, toward growing and rounding out our own lives.

We can't measure life like this by the usual markers of success. There's no scoreboard for how much has moved through us. We can only sense that something is flowing, and let it flow, without needing to tally the results.

I notice this most in the quiet part of the morning, before the day gets going. Meditating and then writing about it, asking to be shown something rather than to accomplish something. Most mornings nothing dramatic happens. But

something does sink in.

That sinking in is the whole point. Not a plan for the day, not a burst of insight, just a loosening of the grip. The tighter I hold onto how things should go, the more strained everything feels by nine o'clock. The mornings I actually let go, the day moves slower and easier, even when it's a hard one.

We think of the times we've been running late for something important, and passed a stranger stopped on the road with a flat tire. The clock said keep driving. Something else said stop. We weren't calculating what we'd get back. We were just answering a calling that had nothing to do with our own schedule.

That kind of stopping runs against the instinct to protect our own time. It's not the careful choice, it's the interrupted one. I find I can only answer that kind of interruption on the mornings I've already practiced letting go, sitting quietly before anything else starts.

So the real question isn't how to hold onto what I've been given. It's whether I can keep starting each day by loosening my hands a little, and trust that a Power greater than self is shaping what comes through them.

He Picked Up the Phone

Written September 3, 2026

I talked to a man on the phone last night who was struggling. Upon awakening, he was still on my mind, so that's what I'm writing about this morning.

I used to think staying sober was the finish line. Just don't drink, get through the day.

As it turns out, it's a whole lot more than that. It took me a long time to understand it wasn't just about the drinking. It never was. The drinking was just where it showed up. The real problem was how I dealt with pain.

I remember the hopelessness. I remember what I was willing to do just to get a drink, and what it cost me every time. I don't romanticize it, but I don't forget it either. That memory makes me more useful to other alcoholics, and serves as a cautionary warning to myself.

I also remember the moment I finally admitted I couldn't do this on my own. That admission didn't weaken me. It's what opened the door. Somehow ego backed down enough for me to get a mere glimmer of hope, and that was what it took.

Staying sober is not enough on its own. It's a gift, but it's one I only get to keep by giving it away.

I have to show up for more than just myself. Being present. Being someone people can actually count on.

For me that means staying open to that man, and to anyone else looking for their own way out of the bottle. It's the best measure I can take to remain sober myself.

It's not really about fixing him. It's about carrying something forward that was given to me, and letting it move through me instead of stopping with me.

That flow has to keep moving. A stream that stops moving starts to stagnate, and I think it works the same way in me.

He's still out there this morning, and he doesn't know it yet, but he's already taken the hardest step. He picked up the phone.

Some days that's the only prayer I've got. Show up, stay open, see what happens.

It Was Always Within You

Written September 4, 2026

We already have what we need to live a blessed life. It is inside us right now, waiting.

What blocks it has nothing to do with what we own or don't own. It is something underneath that.

Certain instincts once served an important purpose. The drive for security, for connection, for a place in the world. They kept us safe and moving forward. Somewhere along the way we let those instincts run past where they were meant to stop. The drive for security became greed. The drive for connection became control. What was meant to serve us, we bent toward serving only ourselves.

Self-centeredness is what stands between us and the Spirit that is already inside. Not a lack of anything. A distortion of something good, aimed at the wrong targets.

Knocking down that wall starts with honesty. Looking straight at where those instincts run our life instead of serving it. Not with shame, just with clear eyes.

Then comes willingness. A readiness to let go of the control we have been gripping so tightly, even when we do not

know what will replace it.

Then comes action. Small and steady. Turning toward someone else instead of toward ourselves. Making something right instead of defending why it happened. Sitting still long enough to listen for something other than our own noise.

And through all of it, trusting the process. Trusting that the walls do not have to come down all at once. Trusting that showing up today matters even when nothing feels different yet.

None of this is dramatic. It is daily, repeated, unglamorous work. But each act chips at the wall from a different angle, until enough light gets through for the Spirit already inside to move.

Some mornings the simplest way to start is one question. Who can I help today? Not who can fix me, not who can finally make me feel whole. Just who can I help.

Ask that question honestly enough and the wall gets a little thinner without you even trying.

It was always within you.

Not Taking the Credit

Written September 5, 2026

I used to call it mine. My work, my progress, my turnaround. I put in real hours to get here, and that part is true. I like to think I built it on my own. It's a better story. It puts me at the center.

But if I trace it back far enough, none of it started with me.

Somebody showed up first. Somebody believed in me before I believed in myself. Somebody handed me a chance I hadn't earned yet and didn't ask me to prove anything before they gave it.

I didn't call it grace back then. I just called it luck, or timing, or somebody being nice to me at the right moment. Looking back, it was bigger than that. It was unearned. It showed up before I deserved it and stayed even when I didn't.

Grace doesn't wait for me to get it right. It shows up in the middle of the mess and hands me something anyway.

The real story is less flattering and more true. This whole thing was orchestrated by a Power greater than self. I don't get to choose my calling. I only get to step out in faith and

let it find me.

I was on the receiving end of something I didn't earn, long before I did anything to deserve it. Something bigger than me went first. I just kept going after that.

So now it's my turn. Somebody listened once so I could be found. Now I listen, and I stay available, so somebody else can be found too.

This was reinforced to me this morning. Not taking the credit. Just staying available, letting the calling find me, and keeping that flow of power moving.

The Elegance of Simple

Written September 6, 2026

I used to think that elegance meant impressive. Complicated. Something that took extra effort to build.

I was wrong.

This morning I got to thinking about math and music, and how the best of both share one thing in common. They're simple. Take Euler's Identity, one line of math that ties together five of the most fundamental numbers we know.

Or Bach's Prelude in C Major, built on one simple repeated pattern with no melody laid on top at all. A woman named Mary plays it for me often at a meeting that I attend during the week, and it never once feels like it's missing something.

Neither one needed more than what was necessary. Not because their makers were smarter than everyone else, but because they stopped overworking it. Cut the clutter and what's left just works.

That's not how I lived for a long time. I added noise. I added excuses, extra steps, ways to avoid the plain truth in front of me. I complicated things that were actually simple,

because simple meant I'd have to face them. My life was not elegant. It was defended, built up in layers so nothing true could get through.

What changed wasn't that I got smarter. It's that I got quieter. I stopped trying to be the architect of everything and started paying attention to what was already there, waiting on me to notice it.

Some mornings the practice feels like that. Sit still. Clear the wreckage. Listen for the note that's already playing.

I'm not a finished product, and some days I add clutter faster than I remove it. But the way forward was never about adding more. It was about decluttering, a little more each day.

What Is Healing?

Written September 7, 2026

What is healing? Merely fixing what hurt?

I used to think so. Get rid of the pain, get back to normal, move on.

I've come to believe that it's not that simple.

Before anything gets better, I have to ask myself something. Am I actually willing to give up the thing that's making me sick, or making me hurt? Not the symptom. The thing underneath it. Whatever I'm actually afraid of.

That question isn't an easy one to answer. It means looking at the patterns I've called normal for years. Some of them run back to childhood, like believing I had to be perfect to be worthy. They feel safe because they're familiar, not because they're good for me.

So I stopped waiting for a lightning bolt. There isn't one coming.

What actually works is smaller and less exciting. Time alone with the truth. A few minutes where I stop pretending. Choosing the thing I need over the thing I want, again, on a day I don't feel like it.

That's not punishment. It's the most loving thing I can do for myself.

It started the morning I put down something I'd been carrying, and picked up a practice instead.

For me that practice is simple. Sit still. Write down what's actually true, not what sounds good. Ask for help staying honest, because I can't always see myself clearly on my own. Some days it's five minutes. Most days it's longer. The length doesn't matter as much as just doing it.

There's something about putting it on paper that just thinking about it never quite does. I can shape a thought, soften it, tell myself a version I like better. On paper it becomes real, not just a thought, something I can actually look at and work with. And it brings the past into the present, where I can actually do something about it. I can't change what happened. But I can change what I carry from it, right now, today.

That's all it takes. Put it down, so I can pick something better up.

Nothing Left to Forgive

Written September 8, 2026

Some friends were discussing forgiveness yesterday, and self-forgiveness seemed to be very popular with many of them.

But self-forgiveness isn't a goal to chase on its own. The very act of reaching for it keeps us bound to self, still circling around "me" and "how I feel about myself." That's exactly the thing we're trying to be freed from. Trying to talk yourself into feeling better rarely changes anything, and that kind of relief doesn't tend to last.

The way forward runs through honest action instead. We take a fearless look at what we've actually done, the resentments we've carried and the harms behind each one. We write it down first, pencil on paper, plainly, before we say a word of it out loud.

Then we say it to someone else. We make it right wherever we can, except when doing so would hurt the very people we're trying to make amends to.

There's a catch here, though. The same measure we ask for ourselves is the measure we owe to others. We can't hold a grudge with one hand and expect to be released with the

other. Forgiving what was done to us and being forgiven for what we ourselves have done turn out to be the same motion, not two separate ones.

Once we take that action, the peace we were chasing arrives on its own. There's no unpaid debt left to settle, so there's nothing left to forgive ourselves for. And no one we're still refusing to release, either.

Personal effort isn't the whole story here. Leaning on a Power greater than ourselves to help carry what we can't manage alone is central. Peace isn't ours to command into existence. It's something we receive once the work is done and we stop trying to control how it turns out.

So self-forgiveness isn't a separate step to master. Chasing it directly just keeps us tied to self. Letting it go is what actually loosens the knot. What follows in its place is the fruit of one whole process, the inventory, the admission, the amends, the release of others, and trust in something larger than ourselves.

In the end, there's nothing left to forgive ourselves for, only something larger to trust.

Different Rooms, Same Habit

Written September 9, 2026

Micromanaging showed up everywhere. At home, at work, in the group I meet with each week. Different rooms, same habit.

I thought if I didn't manage every piece, things would fall apart. So I hovered. I double checked. I pushed my own picture onto something that was built to belong to more than just me.

At home, that looked like redoing a chore that was already done, just not the way I would have done it. At work, it meant trying to shape a program around my own personal vision, instead of letting it be led by the people who actually made it up.

I didn't need to reinvent the wheel just because it didn't look like my wheel, especially when it was already working. In the group, it meant steering the conversation back toward my own experience, at the expense of room for what everyone else brought that day.

None of that was trust. It was the opposite. It was a way of admitting I didn't believe things would turn out right unless my hand was on it.

The truth was, when I backed off, it all worked out anyway. Not because I finally got it right, but because it was never fully mine to steer in the first place.

I saw small proof of that. Stepping back at home. Letting a program find its own direction through the people in it, instead of my own plan for it. Staying quiet in the group and making room for other people's experience instead of centering my own. Each time, things moved forward for the better.

That was the shift that mattered. Not that hovering was wrong, but that most of what I was attempting was never really mine to decide.

Looking back, the lesson wasn't really about letting go. It was about seeing what was never mine to begin with. A program, a group, a home, all of it belonged to more people than just me.

My job was smaller than I thought. Show up, do my part, and step back. Allow it to evolve the way that it should.

That's what I'm carrying forward. Not as something I figured out once, but as something I'd have to keep relearning. Now…what am I going to relearn today?

Landing in the Middle

Written September 10, 2026

Humility took me a while to grasp. I'd swing one way, then the other, and never land in the middle.

On one side, I'd shrink myself down. Downplay what I could do, hoping nobody would think I was full of myself. I'd take a compliment and quietly hand it away to someone else.

On the other side, I'd tell myself my gifts didn't really matter. That what I had to offer wasn't worth much anyway, so why bother putting it out there.

Both of those missed the mark completely. One kept me hiding. The other kept me small on purpose. Neither one was honest.

A wise man, someone who'd spent years living this, once told me that real humility isn't thinking less of myself. It's thinking of myself less. That's a small shift in wording, but it changed everything for me once it sunk in.

It means knowing what I have to offer, plainly, the way I'd know my own name, without needing to hide it or shrink it.

The gifts I carry weren't something I built on my own. I

didn't earn them by myself, and I didn't invent them out of nothing. They were given to me by a Power greater than self.

But a gift left alone doesn't grow. I had to recognize what I'd been given, and then put in the work. Study. Practice. Showing up on the days I didn't feel like it.

Being humbled isn't about feeling small. It's about remembering where everything I have actually came from, and who it's for. I learned that slowly, and not without stumbling.

Every gift I've been handed comes with a job attached. Not for my sake. For the people around me.

I spent years thinking humility meant staying quiet about what I could do. Now I think it means putting it to work, then moving on without fanfare.

So today, I'm trying to hold both at once. Grateful for what I've been given, and willing to put it to work for someone other than myself.

What I was given was never mine to keep. It was mine to give away.

A Steady Hand

Written September 10, 2026

Some people carry us when we can't carry ourselves. They show up in the worst of it and just stay. Not to fix us. Not to lecture us. Just to walk beside us until we can stand on our own.

The man who guided me through recovery was a retired biology professor. Old school, through and through. He'd been sober since 1967, decades before I ever walked through the door.

He never coddled me. He never told me what I wanted to hear. He held the line and waited for me to catch up to it. Every single day, he expected the same honesty from me that he gave. No shortcuts, no excuses. He's gone now, but that line still holds.

He showed me that gratitude isn't a feeling you hold onto. It's something you do. It moves. It has to leave your hands and land in someone else's life.

So when I think about the people who walked me through the dark, the real way I honor them isn't a thank you. It's becoming that person for somebody else. Holding a line for someone, even when it's easier not to.

That's how it's supposed to work. Somebody carries you, then you carry the next person.

People need this more than ever right now. So many doors are closed, and fear is what's closing them. Fear of being seen, fear of being judged, fear of what happens if they let someone in. A steady presence is what starts to open that door back up.

My mentor never saved me himself; he doesn't have the power to do that. He simply pointed the way. He showed me how to find something bigger than myself, a Power that could do what I could never do alone. That was the real rescue.

So don't wait. Tell the people who pointed you toward that Power. Show them. Or better yet, go be that same steady hand for someone who needs it today.

A Story I Carried for Forty Years

Written September 11, 2026

I carried a story about myself for over forty years. Kindergarten started in 1968. I graduated high school in 1981. What happened in those years stayed with me long after they ended.

I believed I was disliked. Not disliked by one or two people, but by nearly everyone who knew me in school. There were unkind words along the way, there always are, nobody gets through childhood without some. But I took the sting of a few moments and let it stand for the whole of who I was to everyone.

I never questioned it. I didn't think about it much at all. It wasn't sitting on the surface where I could examine it. It had sunk down into my subconscious, and stayed there, quiet and unnoticed, doing its work anyway.

A resentment doesn't need your attention to keep causing damage. It can sit below the surface for decades, rarely thought of, and still shape how you move through a room, still make you brace for rejection before anyone's said a word.

I didn't figure out that a drink could dull that feeling. Some

part of my mind did, quietly, long before I had words for any of it. I had no idea it was feeding an obsession to drink that I couldn't seem to control, no matter how much I wanted to.

Alcohol didn't answer the question of whether I was liked or not. It just made the question stop mattering for a few hours. The relief never lasted. It just covered the ache long enough to need covering again, and again, until the covering became its own problem.

Years later, I was doing the kind of honest self-examination recovery asks of you. A mentor told me to dig out old school yearbooks and family photos, not to relive the past for its own sake, but to help me recollect old resentments that still needed to be dealt with.

So I opened boxes I hadn't touched in decades, full of photos and yearbooks. I read the inscriptions, page after page of them, written in the handwriting of actual classmates. Kind words. Specific ones. The kind you don't write for someone you dislike.

Here's the strange part. I had known those inscriptions were there. I'd seen them before, more than once. But they never registered. They didn't fit the story I was carrying, so they slid underneath it, unnoticed, while the few harsh

words from the same years stayed sharp and present. I wasn't lied to by anyone else. I edited the evidence myself, without ever deciding to.

Looking at those pages again, with different eyes, I finally let them mean something. What I found wasn't universal affection, nobody gets that. But it was proof, plain and sitting right there the whole time, that the story I'd built was never the whole picture. I had taken a handful of confused moments from kids still figuring out who they were, and built an entire identity on top of them, while the contradicting evidence sat in the same box, ignored.

I hadn't uncovered a hidden truth about myself. I'd uncovered a mistaken one, and the proof against it had been in my hands. I just hadn't readied myself to see it. A belief doesn't have to be true to do damage. It just has to go unexamined, or unseen even when it's right in front of you. Mine did, for more than forty years. But whatever's buried can be dug up, looked at honestly, and set down. That's the solution, and it's available to anyone willing to dig.

The Body Catches Up

Written September 12, 2026

Woke up this morning with my heart pounding for no reason. Room quiet. Life fine. Nothing wrong. And still, the feeling arrived anyway.

It used to feel like evidence. Proof I was broken.

I don't think that anymore.

What I've learned is that the body carries things the mind has already let go of. Old fear, old adrenaline, still moving through, looking for an escape. It doesn't need a reason. It just needs to pass.

The mistake I used to make was giving it one. My mind would scan the morning for something to blame, and it always found something. A conversation from yesterday. A worry about tomorrow. A story about who I am. None of it was true. It was just my head trying to match a feeling to a fact.

So here's what I do now, before I do anything else.

I put my hand on my chest. I feel it rise and fall. This is just energy passing through.

I wiggle my toes. I let my attention drop out of my head

and into my feet, into the sheets, into the floor.

I breathe in slow. I breathe out slower. Like I'm wiping a little fog off the glass.

And if it doesn't pass right away, that's okay. Some mornings are just slower than others. I don't have to fix it on a schedule. I just have to stop fighting it.

Three things I remind myself, some mornings out loud:

I'm just clearing something out. That's all this is.

This is a feeling, not a forecast.

I don't have to solve everything before I get out of bed.

Anxiety is a loud visitor.

This isn't every morning. It isn't the same thing as living with anxiety as a daily condition. If it were, I'd be seeking professional help. This was just a wave.

It passed. The fog cleared. I got up. The sun will rise soon, same as it always does. Now, a few hours later, I'm fine. I was fine the whole time. I just hadn't caught up to it yet.

Righteous or Selfish

Written September 13, 2026

I've been angry for good reasons and angry for bad ones. Both nearly killed me the same way.

For a long time, I told myself there were two kinds of anger. The righteous kind, when I'd been genuinely wronged and had every right to feel it. And the selfish kind, when I just wanted things my way and didn't get them.

I used to think only one of those was dangerous.

I was wrong. Both kinds can kill people like me.

For someone with my history, anger isn't just an uncomfortable feeling. It's the first domino. Left alone, it doesn't fade, it grows.

When I let it sit, it turns into obsession, replaying the same scene over and over until I can't think about anything else. And obsession like that is exhausting in a way that makes relief sound reasonable, even necessary.

That's how it happens. Not because I decided to drink, but because I let the anger run long enough that drinking started to feel like the only way to make it stop.

Harbored anger leads to the same place no matter how right

I was to feel it.

I've watched people with every reason in the world to be angry lose everything to a drink they swore they'd never take again. The anger was justified. It killed them anyway.

I've watched the same thing happen over something small, a comment, a slight, nothing anyone else would even remember. Same ending.

Righteous or selfish, real or petty, the anger doesn't care. It just wants to be fed, and if I feed it long enough, it will hand me a drink.

Nobody I was angry at ever paid for that. I would have been the one who did.

Everything changed when I stopped asking whether my anger was justified and started asking whether I could survive holding onto it. I couldn't. No version of me could.

I let go instead, and it stopped having power over me.

Now, when anger shows up, righteous or selfish, I remember exactly where it leads if I let it stay. Today, I'm not giving it the chance.

Who Built the House

Written September 14, 2026

Comfort had a way of making me forget who built the house. I never stopped praying, I just didn't stay as long, and I didn't listen as hard. I never stopped reaching out, I just did it less. I started crediting myself for a life I hadn't built alone.

I noticed it, but only after it was already a problem. A quiet drift, not a dramatic fall. Fewer minutes in the morning. Less honesty in the middle of the day. More confidence in my own judgment than the evidence ever supported.

None of it happened on purpose. It happened because things were going well.

When life was falling apart several years back, I'd had no choice but to stay humble. I needed help and I knew it. Every day forced me deeper into prayer, back to other people, back to something bigger than my own thinking.

Once things got steady, that daily forcing disappeared. I had to choose it instead, and I didn't choose it enough. Nothing was pushing me anymore except memory, and memory is a poor substitute for necessity.

I told myself I'd get back to it tomorrow. Tomorrow kept moving.

The house never fell apart. I noticed the drift before it went further, and I caught myself in time.

I caught it before it cost me more, not because I was strong, but because I stopped ignoring the small things that were slipping.

That's the lesson underneath the lesson. It's never the big decision that costs you. It's the thousand small ones nobody's watching. I ignored the fact that these little things are cumulative.

I know that now. I feel it every morning when I sit down before the day gets loud, when I stay a little longer than I want to, when I listen a little harder than feels necessary.

I'm not maintaining the house out of fear anymore. I'm maintaining it because I finally understand what it costs to let it slide, and I'm not willing to pay that price twice.

Where Learning Takes Place

Written September 15, 2026

I've noticed something about social media, Facebook especially. Most of what gets posted is success. The strength, the win, the highlight reel.

Lately I've been writing something different. I've been putting my failures and weaknesses out there instead.

Not for sympathy, and not to wallow. Because that's where learning actually takes place.

Perfection teaches nothing. Nobody grows by getting it right the first time. And in many areas, I'm still trying to get things right.

That's not a confession I'm ashamed of anymore. It's just the honest state of things. There are places in my life where the lesson hasn't hit yet, where I'm still circling the same failure, still working it out.

Success, taken alone, offers even less. It just confirms what already worked and tempts a person to stop looking any closer. Most of what gets celebrated as success is measured in things anyway. Things that were never going to deliver what people actually wanted from them.

Failure shows exactly where the gap is, what got missed, what needs to change. That kind of clarity rarely shows up any other way.

So the failure isn't the problem. Stopping there is the problem.

The pattern that actually builds a person is simple. Try. Fail. Get honest about why. Carry that lesson forward into tomorrow, and the day after that.

That's the quality of life I've come to value, building the kind of happiness no amount of material goods could ever provide. It's why I write about what's broken in me instead of what's solid. That's exactly where I'm supposed to be. Still trying. Still failing sometimes. Still carrying the lesson forward, one day at a time.

Feeding Someone Else

Written September 16, 2026

This morning I got up thinking about volunteering. About the unforeseen list of things it gives back to a person who shows up to do it. Not the résumé kind of benefits. The other kind.

Then I remembered tomorrow. I'm training a new volunteer at the senior center. Someone who wants to give a few hours in the afternoon, a piece of themselves to people who could use it.

There's a strange math to service. You go in thinking you're giving something away, and you come out with more than you brought. Every time. I still don't fully understand it, but I've stopped arguing with it.

Self only grows heavier the more you feed it. Attention on others is the one diet that actually works.

I used to think that help was something you gave when you had extra. Extra time, extra money, extra patience. That changed in me. Now I think it's closer to medicine. You don't wait until you feel good to take it. You take it because you don't feel good, and it's the thing that works.

As the director here, I get to watch this happen again and again. People whose working careers ended years ago, still showing up, still choosing to give something to others. It never stops moving me.

Training someone new isn't really about teaching them our programs and resources, our medical equipment inventory, our daily procedures. It's about handing them the same thing that got handed to me. A way out of my own head.

If you're restless this morning, if something in you is asking to be fed, try feeding someone else instead. See what happens.

To Teach, To Learn

Written September 17, 2026

Discipline gets a bad name. Most of us learned to see it as punishment, as something pushed on us from outside. No wonder we fought against it.

But the word itself never meant punishment. It comes from an old Latin root word that simply means to teach, or to learn. Somewhere along the way we forgot that, and started treating it like a cage instead of a classroom.

Real discipline doesn't box us in. It sets us free. Someone who has spun pizza dough for years doesn't have to think about it anymore, the hands just know what to do. What once took real focus, and a few dropped rounds along the way, is now easy and natural.

The discipline that lasts doesn't come from outside pressure. It grows from something we love, the way a skilled pizza maker doesn't dread another round of dough, because it isn't a chore to them. It now comes as second nature. When we do what we truly care about, the work stops feeling like work.

This is where trust comes in. We don't build discipline by clenching our teeth and forcing our own will harder. We

build it by lining up with something we already love, something bigger than the small daily pull to quit.

Forcing things on our own is tiring. It's the white-knuckle kind of trying, and it wears out fast. Surrendering that hold, and following what really draws us, is what makes the effort easy to keep up.

We don't have to see the whole road to take the first step. We move toward what we love, and the structure comes on its own. Trusting this works comes from doing it, not from figuring it out ahead of time.

A simpler life isn't a stricter one. It's one where what we do and what we love point the same way, so there's less strain between the two. That's what makes it easy.

In the end, we're not the ones holding it all together by force. Something steadier is shaping how things turn out when we stop fighting it. Our job is just to keep trusting that, and let it lead.

A Danger That Doesn't Announce Itself

Written September 18, 2026

There's a kind of danger that doesn't announce itself. It shows up looking like something seemingly harmless, even something that helps. A slow retreat into myself that feels, at the time, like peace.

A quiet evening in my chair, Miss K right across the room. A text left unanswered. A choice to keep to myself, just for tonight. I've since learned that this is a form of emotional isolation.

But it has an ulterior motive, and it lies to me. It tells me I'm fine on my own. It tells me other people are tiring, that connection is optional, that I've earned some distance.

The truth is simpler and less comfortable. I get sick in isolation and I get well in community. Left alone with my own thinking for too long, I start believing things about myself that aren't true, and there's no one there to tell me otherwise.

Emotional isolation doesn't require a locked door. I can do it in a crowded room. I can do it while smiling at people, answering their questions, and never once letting them see

what's actually going on underneath. That's the more dangerous kind, because it looks like connection while doing the work of isolation.

The way out isn't complicated, even when it's hard. It's a phone call I don't want to make. It's telling someone the true thing instead of the easy thing. It's showing up somewhere, even tired, even unsure I'll say anything worth saying.

Connection is a discipline, not a mood. Some mornings I don't feel like reaching out. Those are usually the mornings I need to most.

If you're reading this and something in it resonates, that's probably not by chance. Reach out to somebody today. Let somebody reach out to you.

Only the Next Step

Written September 19, 2026

Yesterday I took a walk in the woods east of town. This is what came to my mind along the way.

We each walk our own trail through the woods of this life, but we share one destination: to learn how to live our lives with meaning and purpose. Our trails may run alongside others or cross them in a clearing. The walk itself is something we share.

No one else can walk our trail for us. Each step is ours to take. But we do not have to take any of them alone, and that difference matters more than we once knew.

The way is rarely a straight line. The trail winds between the trees and doubles back on itself. We lose our footing, back-track, and meet fallen logs across the path, and it takes patience to keep going.

Every stumble serves a purpose. I know that from a literal one in these woods, which left me with a significant injury.

When I fell, I was calm and unafraid. I cannot say why. I knew in my heart that I would be okay. I just did not know when.

That is what trust looks like. It comes before understanding, and it does not ask to see the whole trail first. As we grow in understanding and effectiveness, and rely on a quiet inner strength, our footing becomes more sure.

We were never meant to find our way through the trees alone. In the past, trying to do so only made the woods darker. Now we know better.

Security comes from turning to a higher power and leaning on trusted friends. A trusted friend may know these woods better than we do. When we take hold of the hand that is offered, the ground beneath us feels solid.

Then we can move forward with a steady and peaceful heart. We do not need to see the whole trail. We only need the next step.

Steering Around People

Written September 20, 2026

Yesterday I went to Safeway and ran into someone I've had friction with in the past. They wanted to stop and visit. I didn't want to, and the only reason was our history.

I was still thinking about it this morning, and I realized something about myself. We all like some people and dislike others. That's just part of being human. The trouble comes when we let those feelings make our choices.

In that moment, I wanted to keep my distance. I didn't have to act on that feeling. A power greater than ourselves asks us to treat everyone with kindness.

We did not earn the kindness we were given. It came freely. Our part is not to be good by our own effort. It is to pass along what we received.

Kindness put on for show does not last. Self-will can make us act the part, but it takes a change of heart to make it real. That begins when we quit insisting on our own way. A new kind of strength can flow through us.

That strength is not saved for quiet moments. It shows up in the noise and rush of daily life. It is there when we run

into someone we'd rather avoid.

Many of us are surprised to find that we stay calm in those moments. I was surprised at how easy it was. We did not make ourselves that way. It came as we became willing.

That's what happened yesterday at the store. The two of us had a cordial chat for about 15 minutes, and we each went on our way without conflict.

Life grows simpler. We stop keeping score of who we like and who we don't. We stop steering around people.

Our job is to stay willing and to trust. Something greater is shaping the outcome, and that is enough.

One Stretch at a Time

Written September 21, 2026

It's early Monday morning, and I've a lot going on this workweek. I'm doing my best to coordinate everything the way I see it happening. Here is what I'm reminding myself of today.

Most of us are moving fast and feeling a little behind. Our phones ding, our calendars fill up, and somewhere in the noise we wonder if we are headed the right way. Even so, there is a path laid out for each of us, whether we can see it or not.

We pull up our directions on Google Maps and start the navigation before we even start the car. Life does not work that way. Often we are shown only the next turn, and we are asked to take it anyway.

Each of us has a purpose, even if we don't know it, and it usually has to do with serving others. It has nothing to do with the image we post or the title we hold. When we ignore that quiet pull, we stay restless, no matter how busy we are.

Just because the road gets rough does not mean it is the wrong one. A layoff, a lost relationship, a health scare, or a

long stretch of worry can feel like failure. From a larger view, it may be the very ground we needed to cross, so we could one day help someone else who is crossing it.

We wear ourselves out trying to control the outcome. We plan, we compare, and we demand answers before we act. When we trust the process, we can breathe again.

Doubt is really a lack of faith and trust, and it tells us we have been left on our own. It is loud, and it never seems to stop scrolling. But the support was never gone. Only our doubting made it seem that way.

Life gets simpler when we stop straining. Put the phone down for a few minutes each day, and reach for something greater than ourselves. Ask to have the doubts lifted, and then take the next step we feel guided toward. Asking alone does nothing without action, but once we act, we begin to see clearly and stand up straight.

The road will keep unfolding one stretch at a time. My job is to show up, do the work in front of me, and let the rest come as it may.

When Nobody's Checking

Written September 22, 2026

I used to think I could read people. I was wrong, mostly about myself.

Talk doesn't tell me much. Mine included. I've said the right thing plenty of times and not meant it.

I watch how someone treats a person who can't do anything for them. An elderly customer at a store. A frustrated traveler at an airline counter. Someone who won't remember me. I pay attention to this because I've blown it myself, being selfish and figuring nobody would notice.

I watch what happens when things don't go someone's way. Anybody's easy to get along with when life is going fine. My own stuff shows up in the disappointment, when something goes wrong and I stop trying so hard.

I watch people who post one thing online, then act different in public. Living in a small town, I see that a lot. The same people I see online, I see at the store, the gas station, in meetings. I hear them too. I figure they see me the same way.

It's easy to be one person on a screen. I've done it. A few

sentences, a cause in a post, none of it costs anything. Eventually the gap shows.

I watch whether people follow through on the small stuff nobody's keeping track of. Not the big promise everyone hears. The quiet ones nobody would notice if I broke them. I've broken a few and told myself it didn't matter.

None of this takes anything special. Just paying attention, starting with myself. I'm not one good moment. I'm what I keep doing when nobody's checking.

The Whisper Never Says I

Written September 23, 2026

The voice of Spirit speaks in whispers, and never lies to me. I've also noticed it almost never says "I."

For a long time, a louder voice ran my life. What do I want? How do I get it? Why isn't everyone cooperating? I spent years trying to arrange the whole stage to suit myself, and it never worked. The harder I pushed, the more restless and alone I felt.

The whisper asks something different. "Where is the need?" "What's the next right thing?"

There's real relief in that. When I stop trying to run the show, I don't have to carry the weight of managing everyone. And there's only one direction left to face. Outward.

I've also learned that whatever peace I've been given, I only get to keep by passing it along.

Faith that never gets out of the chair is just an idea. It becomes real in ordinary moments. Sitting with someone who's hurting without trying to fix them. Picking up the trash nobody else seems to see. Doing the job nobody

asked me to do, and not mentioning it later.

Even my worst days turn out to be useful. There are people I can reach precisely because I've been where they are.

The louder voice still shows up sometimes, disguised as helpfulness. It wants approval, or control, or a way out of my own work. So I ask: am I doing this to be useful, or to be seen as useful?

The whisper never needs credit. It doesn't keep score. And it has never once steered me wrong.

Where is that whisper pointing you today?

Setting It Down

Written September 24, 2026

For most of my adult life, I didn't trust anyone.

If I wanted something done right, I had to do it myself. I said it with pride. I called it responsibility. I called it strength.

It was fear.

Fear that others would let me down. Fear that if I loosened my grip, everything would fall apart. Fear that my worth depended on being the one who held it all together.

So I carried everything. At work, at home, even in my marriage. I checked and rechecked. I took back jobs I had given away. I kept score of who failed me, and the list grew long.

What I couldn't see was the cost. I was tired all the time. I was lonely in rooms full of people. And the people around me never got the chance to show up, because I never gave them room.

Then I changed.

Something woke up in me, and my ego took the hit. Not gently. But what fell away was never really holding me up.

It was holding me apart.

When I stopped standing at the center of everything, I found I could breathe. I didn't have to manage every outcome to feel safe. My safety was no longer resting on my own shoulders.

Today I delegate. It's how I've run the Senior Center from my first day as director. I tell the staff and volunteers, "This is your shift, and you're in charge." And I mean it. I let them do their part, even when they do it differently than I would. Sometimes they do it better. Sometimes they make mistakes, the same way I do.

Either way, the work gets done, and I get to be one part of something larger than myself.

I was never meant to carry it all.

And there's much relief in finally setting it down.

Peace Received, Peace Shared

Written September 25, 2026

Every one of us faces something hard today. Some are sitting at a loved one's bedside, waiting for news. Some are worn down by trouble at work. All of us carry some worry about the state of the world and what lies ahead.

Much of this is out of our hands. We can't fix it, stop it, or make it go away. But we don't have to let it take us over. A person can feel boxed in by circumstances and still be free on the inside.

We can't win that freedom by sheer willpower. It comes from staying in touch with something greater than ourselves. Day by day, that contact builds a place inside us where no outside trouble can reach.

We are never outside the reach of that greater love. Not on the worst day. Not in the worst place. Knowing this lets us stop fighting what we cannot change.

Once we accept our limits, we are free to act where we can. We can mend a strained relationship. We can do the work that is ours to do. We can offer something useful to the people around us.

The troubles swirling around us are real, but they are not the whole of who we are. When we are at peace inside, we are rich in the ways that matter most. Today, that peace is available to us.

But peace is not something we can simply hold onto. If we keep it to ourselves, it slowly slips away. It stays with us only as long as we pass it on.

So we look for ways to be useful. We listen to someone who is struggling. We lend a hand without being asked, just because it needs doing. In giving ourselves away, we find that the peace we were given keeps growing.

Peace received is peace we are meant to share, and in the sharing, it becomes our own.

We Become What We Think About

Written September 26, 2026

We become what we think about. Our daily thoughts shape who we are. So it helps to keep a clear picture of the life we think Spirit would have us lead.

When we get off track, we feel it. Something inside feels wrong and lets us know. That quiet inner voice is our conscience. It is how Spirit speaks to us. It is gentle, but it is always right.

Sometimes the warning comes from outside us. Often, people who have been where we are see it first. They made the same mistakes and found their way back. When they tell us, it is usually because they care.

We cannot always see our own faults. A friend who tells us the truth is doing us a favor.

At first, we may want to argue. Pride wants to defend itself. We start making excuses or pointing out what the other person did wrong. We may even stop listening before they finish.

This is old self-will at work. It wants to be right more than it wants to get better. But arguing only keeps us stuck

where we are.

It is better to listen first and think about it later. We can simply say, "Thank you, I will think about that." Then we take some quiet time, look at it honestly, and ask for help to see the truth.

Not every piece of advice will fit. But if it stings, there may be something in it for us.

When we take advice with an open mind, we grow stronger. We must stay teachable if we are to grow spiritually. An open mind keeps us honest and on the right path.

Today, if I need it, please send me honest advice. And help me be willing to hear it.

Grateful I Didn't Get My Way

Written September 26, 2026

I had my Saturday all planned out. Get my work done at the Senior Center, then settle in for the NASCAR Truck Series race at 10.

Kristina headed to the rental around 9 to get it ready for a 4:00 guest. I watched the first stage just fine.

Late in the second stage, the phone rang. K needed help with the beds and mirrors, and she needed it soon. I had just sat down with my lunch. I wanted to see the stage through.

I felt that old tug of frustration. My plans. My race. My lunch.

I told her I'd come after the stage ended. Then, with nine laps to go, a driver spun out and the stage ended early.

Okay. End of stage. Time to go.

I went and helped. When I got home, I expected to find the race deep into the final stage. Instead, it was in a rain delay.

So I went to the bank and made the weekly deposits. Still raining. I did some yard work out back. Swept and

vacuumed the house. Still raining.

Now the race is still on hold, and I'm watching some GT4 racing instead. K's work is done. My work is done. The homestead is in better shape than it was this morning.

I didn't plan any of that. I only planned to sit in my chair.

Looking back, I can see how gently I was steered. A spin-out ended my excuse. A rain cloud gave me the time. Each little nudge moved me away from what I wanted and toward what was useful.

Sometimes I try to call the shots. Most of the time, I get corrected in ways that aren't obvious unless I'm paying attention.

I didn't let go of my agenda today. I was moved off of it, one lap and one raindrop at a time. And once I stopped fighting, the day seemed to arrange itself. I got to be helpful instead of comfortable. Somehow, I ended up more content.

The race will finish when it finishes. I'm grateful I didn't get my way today.

One Hundred Percent of My Days

Written September 27, 2026

Even though I try to walk a road of faith and trust, some days the world feels like too much. When that happens, I stop and look back.

So far, I have made it through 100% of my days on this Earth. That tells me there's a pretty good chance I'll make it through today, too. But I have to remember that I did not do it on my own.

For a long time I thought I could. Most of my life, I tried to steer every road alone. My own plans rarely got me where I needed to go. Still, I was afraid to let go of the wheel. Control felt safer, even when it wasn't working.

During the Covid lockdown, I walked. Ten miles a day, sometimes more. The news was full of the power of disease, and scared people trying to run the whole show for all of us. Out there, I saw a different power. The trees, the ocean, the sky. Nature just kept going, and it was much more comforting than the displays of power elsewhere.

Every day I walk 8,000 steps, rain or shine. After breaking my ankle, I walk to keep arthritis away. I also walk for the same reason I did during Covid, to see nature's power at

work. I can't control what my body does next. I can do my part.

Each morning I sit quiet and write, and I share what I find. Being open keeps me honest. When I keep my thoughts to myself, my head gets loud. It tells me I should be in charge of things I can't control. Writing it down and letting it out quiets it down.

As I write, Miss K is still asleep in the bedroom. The house is calm and peaceful. On my hardest days, I never pictured mornings like this. Yet here it is.

So today I don't have to hold it all together myself. I trust the good that has carried me before. My job is to let go and take the next step.

The Door Opens Wider

Written September 28, 2026

When all I could see was a choice between drowning in emotional pain or shutting down, going numb felt like the only way to survive.

So I fell into a routine. I could service a store on my route and not even know I'd done it. I went through the motions like a machine, just to get through the day.

But a gray, flat routine can only block out so much. In 2001 I took on a mortgage for a new house, and my fear rose to new heights. When the fear and old hurt got too loud, I needed something stronger to keep it all away.

That's when my drinking really picked up. It wasn't a lack of willpower. It was a desperate attempt to shut out the world when my own defenses had run out.

It traded a painful reality for a predictable escape.

What resulted was that the bunker I built to keep the storms out became a cage. It locked me inside, blocked the sunlight, and cut me off from the very thing that could have healed me. A Power greater than myself.

I lived that way for nearly 20 years.

The way out didn't start with strength. It started with admitting I had none left.

I stopped trying to fight my way free alone. I became willing to trust that Power, and to let other people in.

I looked honestly at the fear and hurt I had been hiding from. I found they couldn't destroy me once I faced them in the light.

Today I don't need a bunker. I still feel the storms, but I don't face them alone. And when I reach out a hand to someone else still inside their cage, the door opens a little wider for both of us.

More to Life

Written September 29, 2026

Chances are, you've felt it too. A feeling that there's more to life than just getting through the day. It might show up as a job, a cause, a person who needs us, or just a better way of living. It's hard to explain, and that's okay. Some things are meant to be felt more than understood.

For some people it comes all at once. For me, it came slowly. There was no big moment, just a gradual sense over the years that I was meant for more than I had been living. Looking back, I can see it was there all along, growing a little each day. We live life forward, but we understand it backward. If you're still waiting for your moment, it may already be happening.

Then life gets busy. Phones, bills, work, and my own plans fill every corner of the day. I scroll, I rush, I react. Before long, that still, small voice gets drowned out by everything I think I have to do.

When that happens, I have to stop and ask myself a simple question. What have I been putting first? If I'm honest, the answer is usually me, my plans, or my way of doing things. Even my good intentions get in the way when I insist on

running the show.

What helps me most is doing something for someone else. My work puts me in front of people every day who need a hand, a call back, or just someone to listen. On the days I'm stuck in myself, showing up for them gets me out of my own way.

The good news is I don't need perfect circumstances to get back on track. I don't need a quiet house, a full bank account, or an easy week. Even the rough days, the setbacks, and the detours end up serving a purpose. Nothing I go through is wasted.

So each morning, I slow down and listen. Before the day takes over, I sit quietly, write in my journal, and remind myself to put the bigger purpose first. Then I let the rest fall into place.

I don't have to figure it all out. I don't have to see the whole road. I just have to say yes, do the next right thing, and trust that something greater than myself is working it out.

Her Name Was Liberty

Written September 30, 2026

Her name was Liberty.

I met her yesterday morning at a church up town. I was standing inside with friends, waiting for a noon meeting, looking out the big plate glass windows. I watched her walk up the sidewalk.

She came in, asked a few questions, and went back outside. She looked like she might live outdoors.

My cigar was sitting on the brickwork by the front door. I told myself I was going out for a few puffs. The truth is, I went out to make sure she didn't take it.

She saw me and smiled. "Oh, you smoke those little cigars? Here, I have some for you."

She reached into her bag and handed me a 2-pack of Swisher Sweets. Unopened. She'd found them on the street outside where she lived.

I stood there holding her gift, knowing why I'd really come outside.

I thanked her. I put them in my car and went back inside.

Then it hit me.

I'd gone out there guarding my stuff. She came out there giving hers away.

I had her figured out before she said a word. I was wrong. My fear wrote a story about her, and I believed it.

All that suspicion, over a cigar. That's how small my fear can make me.

That's the old way in me. Protect what's mine. Size people up. Keep my guard up.

Liberty didn't size me up. She saw a man who liked little cigars, and she had some. That's all.

Liberty. I didn't think about her name until later. She was the free one that morning. I was the one standing guard.

I'm grateful she showed me something about myself. When I judge someone by how they look, it usually tells me more about me than about them.

Just for today, I'll meet people the way she met me.

October

The Longer Answer

Written October 1, 2026

A few days ago local radio personality Rollin Trehearne asked a simple question. "What's something you regret not doing sooner in life?"

My reply was, "The short answer is becoming sober. The real answer is much longer and not suitable for this thread."

So here's the longer answer.

I didn't just drink too much. I lived too much for myself. I carried resentments like they were owed to me. I wanted life on my terms, and when it didn't go my way, I drank.

Drinking wasn't the whole problem. It was how I handled everything else. It quieted the anger for a while, and then it made everything worse. The people closest to me paid for it, and so did I.

For a long time I thought the problem was other people. It wasn't. It was me, and the way I saw everything through my own wants and fears.

What changed wasn't willpower. I'd tried that, and it never lasted. What changed was honesty. Somebody told me the

truth, and for once I listened. I started looking at my part instead of everyone else's.

It was humbling. It was also a relief. If I was part of the problem, I could be part of the answer.

Early on, when I wanted a drink, I was told to go pick up trash. Get out of my head. Do something for someone else. It sounded too simple to work. It worked.

I kept doing that. I spend most of my days now looking for ways to be useful. When I'm focused on someone else, I'm not stewing in my own head. That's where the peace comes from.

That's what I regret not finding sooner. Not just sobriety, but a way of living where I'm not the center of it.

I don't regret the years it took to get here, though. They're what let me say this to someone who might need to hear it.

If that's you, you're not alone. Someone once reached out a hand to me. I'm happy to do the same. It's never too late to start.

Instrument, Vessel, Channel

Written October 2, 2026

A man stopped me yesterday to talk about the Prayer of St. Francis. It opens with a simple request: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." He likes it that way. Others say vessel. I've always said channel.

A vessel holds. An instrument is a tool in someone's hand. A channel lets something pass through.

I like all three, but I've come to lean on the last one. The tool and the channel both serve. The channel reminds me that what I've been given has to keep moving.

The peace I receive isn't mine to hold. If I try to store it, it goes stagnant, like a pond with no outlet. It only stays alive when it's flowing.

Then I noticed something else. The prayer is full of verbs. Sow. Pardon. Bring. Console. Understand. Love. Give.

It doesn't ask for hatred or doubt or sadness to disappear. It asks me to carry something into them. Where there's darkness, I bring light. Where there's despair, I bring hope.

That's the difference between a spiritual idea and a spiritual life. I can hold an idea in my head. A verb only

exists when I do it.

So this morning I'm not asking to be filled. I'm asking to be used. Let peace come in, and let it go out, and let me stay out of the way.

Just for today, I'll look for one place to put the prayer into action. I don't supply the water. I just keep it moving.

Exercise for the Soul

Written October 3, 2026

I walk for more than exercise.

Most mornings I'm on the Midtown Trail as soon as it starts to get light. My body gets its workout, ankle and all. But my soul gets one too.

I often run into people I know. Sometimes I make new friends, even at that early hour.

A few weeks ago, a young man came hurrying straight toward me on a long, open stretch of trail. I wished him a good morning.

He slowed down and said, cheerfully, "Good morning! Have a great day!"

"You too!" I said.

"Thank you!" he called back, and off he went.

I've seen him several times since. It's always the same exchange. And there's always sincerity in his voice. He means it.

A few days ago, I stopped him for a moment longer than our usual exchange. I told him my name, and he told me his.

Jacob. He's usually racing to catch the bus, it seems.

But he's never in too much of a hurry to return a greeting with one of his own.

That's the kind of connection I'm looking for. It's not small talk. It's something deeper, something I feel more than I can explain.

When I say good morning to Jacob, something happens in me. For a few seconds, I'm not thinking about my day, my worries, or myself. I'm thinking about him. That small turn outward lifts a weight off my shoulders.

I like to think it helps him, too. A young man rushing to the bus gets reminded that he's seen. That somebody on the trail is glad he's there. He gives that same gift right back to me.

Neither of us loses anything in the trade. We both walk away with more than we brought.

I used to believe I had to earn my place among people. Now I know it can be as simple as a kind word, freely given and freely returned. There's no score to keep and nothing to prove.

That's where Spirit comes in, something bigger than both of us. It isn't in the words themselves. It's in the space

between two people who mean them.

I can't control much about the day ahead. But I can say good morning and mean it. And sometimes, the world says it right back.

Still Accepting Updates

Written October 4, 2026

This morning one of my old computers was running an update that took longer than usual. So I sat there with my coffee and watched the progress bar crawl.

It gave me time to think.

I tinker with old machines. Every few days I run the updates, and the computer quietly takes what it needs. Security fixes. Small repairs. A little more speed than it had yesterday.

Some mornings I wish I had a button like that for myself.

I don't. But I have something close.

When I look honestly at yesterday, I find the bugs. The impatience. The fear dressed up as control. The moment I made it about me. That's checking for updates.

When I own it and make it right, that's the install.

When I ask for help with what I can't fix on my own, I'm pulling from a source much bigger than me. It's never once been down.

My updates don't finish in one session. Some of my old

code is stubborn. I patch the same thing again and again. I'm learning that isn't failure. It's maintenance.

I'm an older machine myself. A few dents. Some parts that don't run like they used to. Updates take me longer than they once did.

But the machine doesn't quit halfway through. Neither do I.

I'm not finished. But I'm still accepting updates.

Fear and Conscience

Written October 5, 2026

Sometimes I wake up with the voices already started.

I couldn't always tell them apart. Fear and conscience both speak from inside me. Both feel urgent. Both sound like they're looking out for me.

But I've learned they don't talk the same way.

Fear is loud. It repeats itself. It spins the same story around and around until I'm dizzy. Conscience says it once, quietly, and waits.

Fear lives in tomorrow. What if I get it wrong? What if it all falls apart? What if I'm not enough? Conscience lives in today. It points at something right in front of me.

Fear is vague. It gives me a sense of doom, but never says why. Conscience is specific. It says, call him. Apologize for that. Give the money back.

Fear wants control. It tells me to hold on tighter, plan more, protect myself. Conscience asks me to let go and do the next right thing, then leave the outcome alone.

Fear makes me smaller and more alone. Conscience moves me toward people.

And here's the surest test I know. When I act on fear, the relief doesn't last. The worry just finds a new place to land. When I act on conscience, even when it's hard, I feel peace afterward. Something settles.

So this morning I'm listening for the quiet voice. The one that doesn't shout. The one that usually asks something simple of me.

That's how Spirit has always spoken to me. That still small voice never lies.

Quiet and Stoic

Written October 6, 2026

Someone at a meeting yesterday called me "quiet and stoic."

I bowed my head and said a silent prayer: "Thank you for giving me back right thinking."

For most of my life, I was neither quiet nor stoic.

I was loud. I was proud. I needed the room to know I was there. Everyone else was wrong, I was right, and I made sure they knew it. If something went wrong, everyone heard about it. If someone crossed me, they paid for it.

That man didn't disappear overnight. He changed slowly, one choice at a time.

Nearly two thousand years ago, a man named Epictetus taught that some things are up to us, and some things aren't. Today it's called the dichotomy of control. I just call it the truth that saved my life.

For years, I lived on the wrong side of that line. I tried to control people. I tried to force outcomes. I tried to control how everyone saw me. None of it worked, and the harder I pushed, the angrier I got.

I was exhausted, and I didn't know why.

Then I learned to tell the difference.

I can't control other people. I can't control outcomes. I can't control what someone thinks of me in a meeting.

I can control my thoughts. My choices. How I treat the person in front of me. Whether I pause before I speak.

That's a much smaller list. But it's mine, and it's enough.

Letting go of everything else felt like losing at first. It turned out to be the greatest gift I've ever received. The weight I'd carried for decades was never mine to carry.

When I stopped needing to be right, I didn't have to shout anymore.

After the meeting, the man who'd said it ribbed me about it a little. I smiled and told him I took it as a compliment.

He didn't know the whole story. He didn't need to.

I'm quieter now. Not because I've got less to say, but because I'm not fighting anymore.

That quiet isn't emptiness. It's peace.

And I didn't get here alone.

An Open Hand

Written October 7, 2026

Yesterday a friend told us about his new job. Good wages, medical and dental, and some nice perks. I was happy for him, and I also felt a twinge of something I didn't expect.

I remembered the years I worked a job that paid only on what I produced. No benefits except for a paid vacation each year. Most years we paid for our own insurance out of pocket, and money was tight. Life is easier these days, but that old feeling showed up anyway.

There's an old fear in us that says life is a pie with only so many slices. When someone else gets ahead, we worry there's less to go around. That fear doesn't look at where we are today. It remembers where we've been, and it hasn't let go.

But my friend's good news wasn't taken from my share. There's enough to go around. I don't have to understand how that works to start living as if it's true.

Being glad for others isn't a feeling we wait for. It's a practice. We cheer for someone first, and the gladness grows from there.

And those hard years gave me something. I learned to work, to stretch a dollar, and to carry a load. I've lived without that safety net, so I know its value. That should make it easier for me to be truly glad for him.

Envy is a heavy burden to bear. When I set it down, life gets simpler, and I can enjoy the people beside me instead of measuring myself against them.

So this morning I'm saying a quiet thank you for what I've been given. I wished my friend well yesterday, and this morning I mean it even more. Something greater than me is looking after all of us, and my part is to meet the day with an open hand.

Listening Before Deciding

Written October 8, 2026

Sometimes a decision comes along that's outside what I know. My first instinct is to form an opinion fast and settle it on my own. That's my own will talking, wanting a quick, tidy answer.

Last evening, an item came before our board at the District that reminded me there's a better way. I had a piece of the picture, but not all of it. So I leaned on people who are more educated and experienced than I am, especially when it comes to technical and legal issues.

They bring years of training and know-how I don't have. When they take a careful look and say what's fair and right, I can listen.

That trust doesn't always come easy. Part of me wants to understand everything myself before I go along. But I don't have to be the expert on everything. I just have to be willing to learn from those who are.

Trusting others doesn't mean handing over my judgment. In the several years I've had a seat at the table, I've studied many issues that have come before our board, and I've learned some things along the way. I bring that experience

with me.

I still have to weigh the whole issue. Then I get quiet and listen to my conscience, that inner voice of Spirit, before I settle on what's right.

We also heard from someone who saw things differently and made a sincere case for their position. I listened to that, too. A good decision means hearing every side, not just the one that's easiest to agree with.

In the end, the decision came down to two things: what's best for our District, and what's fair to everyone who bid on the job. Holding both of those together kept me honest.

Leaning on others isn't weakness. It's admitting I'm one part of something larger, and that the right answer doesn't have to come from me alone. When I combine good counsel, my own experience, and a quiet, honest heart, the path gets clearer.

There's real freedom in that. I don't have to carry every decision by myself. I can listen to those who know more, listen to that still, small voice within, and do my part.

The Bigger Picture

Written October 9, 2026

A lot of the time, we only see what's right in front of us. Bills. Plans. The problem that won't let us get any sleep. It feels like that's all there is, but it's not.

There's a bigger picture than the one we're stuck in. When times are hard, it can look like we're losing. But from a wider view, things may be right on track.

We don't see more by thinking harder. We see more by seeking stillness and opening our minds. Getting quiet isn't easy. Most of us will do almost anything to avoid it. But the answers we need don't usually show up when we keep ourselves distracted.

Things go wrong when we try to run it all ourselves. We push, we worry, and we only see less. When we let go, a Power greater than ourselves can show us what we've missed.

We don't have to understand everything before we trust. Trust comes first. We don't even need to understand in order to draw on that Power.

Small habits help. A few quiet minutes in the morning. A

walk at sunrise. Looking up at the stars. Writing down what we notice. These things slow us down enough to see.

When we finally look up, we find that what we needed was there all along. We were never as alone as we thought.

So whatever we're facing today, we can take some quiet time and wait. Something bigger is at work.

Our job is to be still, and to trust it.

Connected or Not

Written October 10, 2026

Getting right with a Power greater than ourselves isn't a slow climb. At any moment, we're either connected or we're not. It comes down to whether we're open to it. When we are, it's there, and we feel closer to the people around us too.

The same is true of our old problems. We don't get fixed a little at a time. The minute we let go of running the show and do the next right thing, we're free. The minute we grab the wheel again, even for a second, the old trouble starts creeping back.

Most of what we want to understand stays out of reach until we act. We can't think our way there. Being smart or well-read won't do it. But when we take the next step, things start to make sense.

I know this from experience. When I first went looking for a Power greater than myself, I tried to figure it out in my head. I read the books, studied the ideas, and thought about it from every angle. None of it worked.

What finally worked was living by the principles suggested. I had to actually do something, not just think about it.

Once I started acting, I had an experience I could never have gotten from reading.

So we don't need to stress about getting it all figured out. We let it sink in over time, like water soaking into dry ground. The way to know these things is to stop forcing it and let ourselves start fresh.

We just do the next thing in front of us today, whatever it is. Then the next thing shows up. We could scroll through endless articles and videos about the spiritual life. Five minutes of honest effort will teach us more.

"I'll get it someday," we say. But we can get it today. Even the smallest step is enough to open the door.

We don't have to understand how the Power works. All we need for a life of meaning and purpose is willingness, and the action that follows that quiet, unspoken guidance.

Checking the Roof

Written October 11, 2026

Think about a leaky roof. The water stain on the ceiling is what we notice, but painting over it does nothing. Sooner or later, someone has to climb up and find where the water is getting in.

Most of us are pretty good at painting over stains. We scroll until midnight, have another drink, binge one more episode, or fire off an angry comment online. We blame the economy, the news, the boss, the politicians. Tracing the trouble to its source means finally climbing up on the roof.

The irritability, the worry, the lying awake replaying an argument or a post that got under our skin are only symptoms. Underneath, the cause is usually the same: a life run on self. Wanting things our way, fearing we won't get what we want, or fearing we'll lose what we have.

A good place to start is an honest look, on paper, not on a screen. Who are we angry at, and why? What are we afraid of? Whom have we hurt, in person or online?

Then comes the turning point. We set aside what other people did and look only at our own wrongs. Where were we selfish? Where were we dishonest? Where were we

frightened?

This isn't about beating ourselves up. Our wrongs are the one part of the picture we can actually do something about. We can't fix other people, and we can't fix the world by arguing with it. Yet we can clean up our side of the street.

Once our wrongs are on paper, patterns start to show. The same fears and the same wounded pride keep turning up in one form or another. Instead of a hundred separate problems, we find one root.

That root can be handed over to something greater than ourselves, a little at a time. Remove the cause, and the symptoms lose their fuel.

When the symptoms lose their fuel, they burn down on their own, like a campfire nobody feeds. We stop white-knuckling past the scrolling, the extra glass, the angry comments. We just don't need them the way we did. In their place comes something quieter: less fear, more patience, and a calm in situations that used to knock us off balance. It comes a little at a time, and it lasts as long as we keep checking the roof.

Have a good day, and keep it simple.

Not the Center of the Clock

Written October 12, 2026

A lot of the people I spend time with describe themselves as egomaniacs with an inferiority complex. The first time I heard it, I laughed. Then I realized it described me better than anything I'd ever said about myself.

I could swing from one end to the other in a single day. In the morning I was the smartest guy in the room. By night I wasn't fit to be in the room at all.

I used to think that those were two different problems. One needed taking down a notch. The other needed building up.

It turns out they were the same problem.

High or low, the story was always about me. The spotlight never moved. Only the script changed.

The high was there to cover the low. And when I couldn't keep up the performance, the low came rushing back. So I'd climb back up to get away from it. Back and forth, like a pendulum that never ran out of swing.

Carl Jung wrote about this. He believed that anything pushed too far in one direction eventually swings back the

other way. I didn't need to read him to know it was true. I'd lived it.

I used to think the answer was to find the middle. Not too proud, not too down on myself. Just right.

But the middle still has me at the center.

What actually slows the swing is getting my attention off myself. Taking an honest look at what I've done, without making myself the hero or the villain. Asking who I can help today. Doing the next right thing and letting it be enough.

Humility isn't thinking less of myself. It's thinking of myself less.

Some days the pendulum still moves. But it doesn't swing as far, and it settles a lot faster when I remember I'm not the center of the clock.

Looking for Beauty

Written October 13, 2026

I've made a habit of looking for beauty as I go through my day. Some mornings it's the first light coming up over the trail. Some afternoons it's the seals sunning themselves along the shore of Mad River, or fog lifting off the trees. It's always there if I'm willing to look.

Nature runs on its own pattern. It doesn't carry anger or fear. The tide comes in and goes out. The trees grow at their own pace. When I'm out walking, I get to borrow a little of that calm.

But beauty isn't only found in nature. There's beauty in people, in situations, and especially in solutions. It's there when a neighbor lends a hand, when a hard conversation ends in understanding, or when a problem that seemed hopeless finally finds its way through.

In March of 2020, when Covid had all of us shut in, the news was full of fear. So I started a daily photo thread in a countywide Facebook group. The idea was simple. Let's see with our own eyes the local beauty that's still all around us. So many of you joined in, and it reminded me that we're not alone.

That thread is still going today. The pandemic has passed, but the need hasn't. There's always a reason to stop and see what's good around us.

I've learned that I find what I'm looking for. If I go looking for trouble, I'll find plenty of it. If I go looking for beauty, I'll find that too. Most days, there's a silver lining if I'm patient enough to see it.

This isn't about pretending hard things aren't real. It's about not letting fear be the only thing we see. Gratitude has a way of shrinking our worries down to their real size.

So here's my invitation for today. On your way to work, on a walk, or just looking out the kitchen window, find one beautiful thing. Stop for a moment and take it in.

And if you catch it with your phone, share it below. Let's keep filling this thread with what's good!

Turning Over What I Can't Control

Written October 14, 2026

Yesterday I spoke with my mother on her 84th birthday. My brother set up a video call and sat beside her the whole time.

Her memory has been slipping for several years now, and it's getting worse. After my dad passed, she left her home here and moved back East with my brother so she could get better care. She no longer remembers the friends she had here. She doesn't remember my wife, or that I'm married. At one point she asked if I had a girlfriend.

That one landed hard.

My grandmother went through this too, and she grew mean as it progressed. My mother hasn't. She's still kind. She's still loving. She didn't know what she'd said, and she meant no harm by it.

I've learned that I don't have to make sense of this. I didn't cause it. She didn't cause it. It just is what it is.

Acceptance isn't giving up. It's turning over what I can't control. I can't restore her memory. I can't slow the decline by wanting it badly enough. When I try, I end up resentful,

fighting a battle I can't win.

I let go of it. I trust that she's held by something greater than my worry. I trust that I am too.

That trust frees me to act. When I'm no longer fighting what is, I have room to show up for what's in front of me.

Acceptance has a follow-through. It looks like picking up the phone again next week. It looks like answering the same question gently, as many times as she asks it.

I learned this during Covid. I called her often, and mostly I just listened. I let her hear my voice. That's all she wanted. It still is.

It looks like telling her I'm married to a wonderful woman, and letting it be good news to her all over again. It looks like not correcting her. Not needing her to remember me the way I remember her. Loving her as she is today, not as she was.

I know a day will come when she won't remember me at all. I'll cross that bridge when I get there. For now, she still knows my voice, and today is enough.

I don't get to choose how this ends. I only get to choose how I show up along the way.

So this morning I'm grateful for what remains. A mother who still lights up for her boys. A love that made it through when so much else didn't.

I can be sad about the rest and still be okay.

My First Memory

Written October 15, 2026

My first memory is a resentment.

It was March 1967. I was three and a half years old. My little brother, Brian, had just been born, and my grandmother drove me to the old General Hospital in Eureka to see him through the glass of the nursery window.

I didn't want to go in.

I was deep into a book, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang by Ian Fleming. Jeremy and Jemima were about to step into Joe the Monster's cave, carved into the chalk banks of Calais, France. That was where I wanted to be. Not in a hospital hallway, looking at a baby.

I went in eventually. But I remember the feeling more than the baby. I was put out. My plans had been interrupted, and I didn't like it.

For years, that's all I thought the memory was. A little boy who didn't want to put down his book.

It took a lot of honest looking before I saw what was underneath it. Until that spring, I was an only child. My parents' world revolved around me. Then, overnight, it didn't. I wasn't angry about the book. I was angry that someone else had arrived, and I was no longer the center of attention.

I resented my brother for being born.

That's hard to write down. But there it is, standing still

where I can look at it. The very first thing I can remember is me, wanting the world to arrange itself around me, and resenting it when it didn't.

That pattern didn't stay in 1967. It followed me for most of my life. It showed up in how I treated people, how I handled disappointment, and eventually in what I reached for to make the feeling go away.

Today I can see that little boy with some compassion. He was three. He didn't know any better. But I'm not three anymore, and I do.

Writing it down is hard. Saying it to my brother was harder. In 2021, I called him and made my amends. I told him what I'd carried since the day he was born, and I owned it.

On Tuesday, Brian sat beside our mother for her 84th birthday, holding the phone so I could see her face. The baby I resented through the glass has been caring for her since May of 2019.

I'm grateful I got to let go of that one.

One Less Angry Voice

Written October 16, 2026

When I'm carrying a resentment, I can't keep quiet about it. It has to come out somewhere. A sharp comment, a little dig, a story I've told myself enough times to believe it. Nothing big. Just enough to let off some steam.

I never connected the words to the resentment. I called it telling it like it is.

But when I look closely, the resentment is almost always behind what I say. Something didn't go my way. Someone didn't treat me the way I thought they should. Rather than face that feeling, I talk around it. I go looking for someone who'll agree with me. For a minute I feel justified, even righteous.

That feeling never lasts. The resentment doesn't shrink when I feed it with words. It grows. Every time I tell the story, I get a little angrier and a little more certain I'm right.

I can see the same thing everywhere I look right now. The whole country seems to be running on resentment. People who disagree aren't just wrong anymore. They're enemies. We say things about each other, online and across the table, that we'd never have said to someone's face in the

past. Each sharp word gets a sharper one back. Nobody's mind changes. Everybody just gets angrier.

I can't fix that. But I can watch what comes out of my own mouth.

So I'm learning to pause before I speak. I don't always manage it. But more often now, I ask myself a few questions first. Is this true? Is it kind? Does it need to be said, by me, right now? And under all of those, the real one: am I about to say this because I'm resentful?

If I am, I'm better off keeping quiet and taking a look at what's eating at me. Where was I selfish? Where was I afraid? What part of this belongs to me?

That small pause makes all the difference. The urge passes. What's left is quieter, and a lot more honest. I don't have to win. I don't have to have the last word. I don't even have to be right.

The country will find its way or it won't. That's bigger than me. But what I bring into each conversation is mine. I can add one more angry voice, or I can be one less.

Today, when a name comes up, or a headline, and I feel that heat rising, I can wait a moment before I say anything. It's usually the right call.

Once a Year

Written October 17, 2026

It's my birthday today. I'm up before the sun, like always, coffee in hand and the house still quiet.

At 8 o'clock I'll sit down at a local restaurant and order chicken fried steak. It's one of my favorite foods in the world, and I only eat it once a year. Today.

People ask me why. If I love it so much, why not have it whenever I want?

Because I know myself. For a lot of years, anything I enjoyed, I took to excess. If a little felt good, more would obviously be better. But more was never enough. Alcohol proved that to me better than anything.

So I keep this one thing set apart. I wait for it. And when the plate finally arrives, it's every bit as good as I remember.

I've learned to value the waiting. When I can have anything anytime, nothing stands out. Every day starts to look like every other day.

But when I hold something back, that day becomes its own thing. I think about it the week before. I sit down and

actually taste it, instead of eating it on the way to something else.

That's restraint, but it doesn't feel like giving something up. It feels like protecting it.

Once a year is enough to remember a thing is good. Any more than that, and I start to take it for granted.

I think that's how gratitude works for me too. The good things in my life didn't stop being good. I just stopped noticing them.

I think we all need to notice more, especially in this day and age. So much pulls our attention toward what's wrong. The good is still there. It just doesn't make the headlines.

This morning I'm noticing. A wife who loves me, and stayed. Work that matters. Friends who show up. A day I get to live, one more time.

That's plenty. It's more than plenty.

But I'm still having the steak.

Propagation

Written October 18, 2026

Yesterday afternoon I moved a website to a new home. Better service, lower cost. The email part looked complicated, but once I sat down with it, it took only a few minutes.

The website was another story. Once the change is made, it has to travel to servers all over the world. That takes hours. Sometimes longer. There's no button to speed it up.

So I did what I do. I checked. Then I checked again. I refreshed the page, cleared the cache, tried my phone, tried another browser. Still the old site. I could feel it rising in my chest, that familiar heat. Hurry up. Even on my birthday, with every reason to be grateful, I let a loading screen run the show.

The work was done. I'd done my part, and done it right. What was left wasn't mine to do. But I kept reaching for it anyway, as if my refreshing could push it along.

That's the oldest pattern I know. I want the world to run on my clock. I've done the footwork, so now I expect the results, and I expect them now. When they don't show up on schedule, I start to fret, then to stew. Left alone long

enough, impatience turns into resentment, and resentment is the thing that's always cost me the most.

Impatience is really just self-will wearing a watch. It says I know better than the timing of things. It says my plans matter more than God's.

What if I let it be finished? What if doing my part was enough, and the rest was in better hands than mine?

When I finally closed the laptop and headed down to the Hammond Trail for a walk, something eased. The river kept moving toward the ocean. The tide came in on its own time. Nobody was refreshing any of it. And the servers kept doing their work without me. They didn't need my supervision. They never had.

This morning the new site comes up. It came up on its own time, the way most good things do.

My job is to do the next right thing and then let go of the outcome. Not to sit and stare at it. Not to demand it. Faith isn't knowing when it'll arrive. It's trusting that it will, and that I'll be taken care of while I wait.

I'm learning to let the waiting be enough. Some days I'm better at it than others. Yesterday I needed the reminder, birthday and all.

Before I Hit Send

Written October 19, 2026

Some of the worst words I've ever used, I never spoke out loud. I typed them. It was always easier to type something than to say it to someone's face.

An email written at five in the morning, still bothered by something that happened the day before. A reply on Facebook to someone I'd never met. A text I fired off before I'd finished being angry.

I always had someone else to point at. If they hadn't said what they said, I wouldn't have had to answer it. But nobody was making me type. The words came out of me, so the problem was in me.

What I've learned is that a disturbed mind always wants to be heard right now. It feels urgent. It feels righteous. It almost never is.

So I've adopted a simple practice. When I'm agitated, I pause. I don't argue, and I don't send. I can write it down if I need to get it out, but it stays in a drafts folder, not in someone's inbox. It may sound like wasted time, but it works.

Then I ask a few honest questions. Is it true? Is it kind?

Does it need to be said, and does it need to be said by me? Most of the time, the answers settle it for me. Then I delete the draft.

Gossip works the same way. It feels like connection while it's happening. Two people agreeing about a third person who isn't in the room. But I always walk away a little smaller, and I've given away a piece of my peace to talk about someone else's life.

I help run a few local Facebook groups, and people post about each other all the time. When someone puts up something about another person, I wait until at least one more person backs it up before I'll even give it a serious look. A story told once is just a story, and a story told twice begins to look more like a fact.

I sit at a few tables where people disagree regularly. I don't have to win every exchange. I'm not there to be right. I'm there to be useful, and nobody was ever helped by me proving a point.

Holding my tongue isn't weakness, and it isn't hiding what I think. It's waiting until the right part of me is doing the talking.

The words will still be there in an hour. Usually, by then, I won't want them.

The Ghost at the Old Address

Written October 20, 2026

I built a fresh home on the web recently. New host, new pages, clean code. I put a significant amount of time into the design, getting it exactly the way I want it. I'm proud of it.

Then I learned some people can't reach it. Certain security companies still have kapone.net flagged, from software I kept on the site during the IRC days, twenty-five or thirty years ago. Because of those flags, some internet service providers, Optimum among them, are blocking my site from their customers.

Back then I was hacking, though it was more of a game than anything malicious. My targets were frenemies in chat rooms, never the public. But the record doesn't care about my reasons. It only remembers.

My first reaction was indignation. That was decades ago. I never hurt anyone at all! Why is this following me now?

I've learned to notice when I start building a case. When I'm arguing my innocence to an empty room, something in me is still defending the old self.

So I took an honest look. The people I targeted were playing the same game I was. We were all trying to get the upper hand on one another, to show off our "mad skills." Nobody in that room was a victim. But I can see what drove me, and it wasn't malice. It was ego, the need to be seen as the best one there.

That's my part. It doesn't need to be bigger than it was, and it doesn't need to be smaller.

The past doesn't vanish because I no longer hack. It stays on the books until I deal with it. Sometimes it shows up years later, at the worst possible moment, right when I've built something new. That isn't punishment. It's an invitation to finish the work.

So last night I did the next right thing. I submitted requests for reevaluation and flag removal to the four companies that flagged my site. I told them plainly who I am now and that the site is new. No defending, no explaining away. Just the truth, and a request.

By this morning, one of them had already removed its flag.

What the other three decide is up to them. My job is to clean up my side of the street and leave the results alone.

I can't rewrite the old pages. But I can live in a way that

makes the new ones worth visiting.

That chapter doesn't embarrass me. It was just a game, one that came back to haunt me.

Just for today, I only have to be honest about it and do my part.

The Ladder

Written October 21, 2026

This morning I've been thinking about how we move from the invincibility of youth into the brittleness of older age. Nobody hands you a notice. One day you just find out.

My ankle taught me. Two years ago I broke it in two places. Today there's a plate on my fibula and nine screws holding my left ankle together. It's healed, but it remembers. A ladder isn't just a ladder anymore. One small misstep on a rung, and I'm back where I started, or worse.

For years I cleaned my own gutters. My parents' gutters too, and the neighbors'. I was the one people called. I liked being that guy.

This fall I hired a handywoman to do mine. I've also hired a man to take care of the bushes, the hedge, and the general yard work. I did that once before, right after the break, when I couldn't even mow the lawns. Back then I could tell myself it was temporary.

I can still mow the lawns myself, at least.

Asking was harder than it should have been. I already know we all need help sometimes. I've told other people

that plenty of times. It's different when it's my turn.

What I'm learning is that the invincibility I had wasn't really strength. It was just not having been tested yet. Pride wanted me to keep climbing because I always had. But there's a still small voice I've learned to listen for, and it asked a simpler question. What's actually true now?

Letting go of the ladder is a small surrender. But I'm finding that the small ones are where the real practice lives.

I also had this realization: For a long time I was the one doing the helping. This time somebody else gets to be useful, and I get to give them the work. Help doesn't stop. It just changes direction over a lifetime.

The gutters are getting cleaned either way. The difference is I'll still be walking at first light, instead of nursing a second break.

Today I'm grateful for a body that still carries me, hardware and all, and for the humility to let someone else do the climbing.

Small Letters

Written October 22, 2026

This morning I was working on my website as a first order of business. Google emailed me that it couldn't find some of my pages, so I spent a while setting things right.

One small file wasn't working. It's a simple note that tells search engines where they're welcome to go. I'd written it, uploaded it, and checked it off my list. It was sitting right there, and nobody could see it.

The trouble was that I'd named it in all capital letters. The server treats capitals and small letters as two different things. Google was asking for the quiet version, and I'd answered with a shout.

I laughed when I saw it. Then I recognized myself in it.

I've done the same thing with people. I've had something worth saying, and I've said it loudly, with my jaw set and my mind made up. It was all there, and it never landed, because nobody was listening for it in that form.

I've done it at public meetings, when I was sure I had the facts, and I've done it at home, when being heard mattered more to me than hearing.

Each time, I blamed the listener. They weren't paying attention. They didn't want to understand. So I'd repeat myself louder, as if volume were the cure. It rarely occurred to me that the problem might be in how I'd delivered it.

Being right was never enough. What I had to offer still needed to arrive in a way the other person could receive.

Humility isn't thinking less of what I bring. It's speaking in a voice that fits the one I'm speaking to. It means slowing down long enough to ask how the other person listens. It means lowering my voice when I most want to raise it, and trusting that the truth doesn't need me to shout it.

The fix took less than a minute. I renamed the file in small letters, and it was found right away. Nothing in it had changed except the way I'd presented it.

Just for today, I'll try to speak in lowercase.

Quiet Joy

Written October 23, 2026

I am a very happy person. Sometimes it doesn't look that way from the outside.

I'm not the one shaking every hand in the room, laughing loudly, or working the crowd. Most of the time I sit or stand off to the side and let the room go on socializing around me. My peace is real, even when it's silent.

People sometimes take that for seriousness, or even distance. It's neither. It's contentment, and it doesn't need an audience.

I've learned that joy doesn't have to be loud to be genuine. For a long time I measured myself against people who seemed to be having a better time than I was. That was a trap. Comparing my insides to someone else's outsides never ended well. It took me years to see that.

Small talk has never been my gift. Big talk is. Give me five minutes about what matters, such as what we've been through, what we've learned, and what keeps us going, and I'm fully present. I'd rather spend an evening in one honest conversation than a dozen polite ones.

I've stopped apologizing for that. Honesty begins with being who I am, not who the room expects. Trying to be the life of the party only left me tired and a little false.

Acceptance has been one of the best gifts I've received. When I stopped trying to be someone else, I found there was plenty of me to work with.

There's a place for the cheerful greeter, and I'm grateful for those people. There's also a place for the one who sits or stands quietly, listens well, and is ready when someone needs a real conversation. Often the most important talk of the day begins when one person is simply willing to listen.

Today I'll be comfortable in my own skin. I won't force a laugh to meet anyone's expectations. I will greet people from where I am with a genuine smile and eye contact. If they'd like to talk, I'll be ready. If not, we've still shared a moment.

Letting God Pick the Ending

Written October 24, 2026

At one time I thought praying about a resentment meant praying about the person. I asked that they would see the light, or change, or finally understand what they'd done. I called it prayer. It was really a request that the world rearrange itself to suit me.

It never worked. The person stayed the same, and so did my resentment.

What I finally saw was simple. If I'm the one carrying the weight, then I'm the one who needs to be lightened. The other person isn't losing sleep over this. I am.

So now I pray only for myself. I don't pray for them to change, and I don't pray for them to be punished. I leave them to God, because the resentment is mine, and so is the work.

My prayer is short. May God's will be done for me.

That's all of it. I don't tell God how this should turn out. I don't pick the ending. I ask only to be willing to accept whatever is meant for me, and to be freed from this grudge in whatever way is best.

Praying only for myself isn't selfish. The selfish part was believing I could run everyone else's life. Asking only for my own freedom, and handing the rest to God, is the opposite of that, and it makes me easier to live with.

At first, a prayer this short didn't feel like enough. I thought a prayer needed to do something about the other person. But I'm not in charge of them. I'm only in charge of my own side of the street.

When I say that prayer and mean it, something lets go. The argument I've been rehearsing in my head runs out of steam. I stop needing to be right. Sometimes I even feel a little room open up where the anger used to sit.

I've learned that the resentment loses its grip when I stop feeding it with my plans for someone else.

Just for today, I'll leave them to God, and I'll ask only for myself.

The Push Start

Written October 25, 2026

Long ago I owned a motorcycle with a broken starter. I never fixed it. I simply pushed it, and it never once failed me.

There is a lesson in that. The engine was fine. What was broken was the part that was supposed to get things going. So I learned to do the part that was mine to do, which was to get moving.

An engine will not start while standing still. I had to lean into the bike, run beside it, and build some momentum. Then I dropped the clutch, and the engine did what it was built to do. I never made the power. I only made it possible for the power to arrive.

Many mornings are like that. I do not always wake with the starter working. The willingness is not always there, and the energy is not always there. Waiting to feel ready would leave me standing in the driveway.

So I push. I get out of bed and take the next step in front of me, even when it feels like dead weight.

Just after I hit the button on the coffee pot, I sit down for a few minutes of meditation. That is the push, and I do it

whether I feel like it or not. I routinely call it starting my spiritual motor. Then I get quiet, I let the chatter settle, and I make myself available. Somewhere in the stillness, something greater than my own effort engages, and the day begins to run.

Hours later, at first light, I take my walk. By then the engine is already turning over, and the walk is simply the bike rolling down the road.

On the bike, it was my own physical strength that got the engine turning. The push was mine to give. The power that carried me down the road was not.

Half measures never worked on that bike. A weak push and a strong hope would have left me stranded. I had to put in the work.

Once the engine was warm, it was different. A short bump was all it took to get it going again. The long run was for the cold start in the morning. The rest of the day works the same way. When I stall, a pause, a breath, or a quiet word is usually enough to get me rolling. The warm engine is the gift of the cold start.

Today, I will not wait for the starter to be fixed. I will push, I will sit, and I will trust that the power is there.

Sick Too

Written October 26, 2026

All drivers know the moment. When I drove commercially, it hit especially hard, as our rigs couldn't stop or brake like passenger vehicles can.

The moment itself was over fast. The driver who cut me off was gone in seconds. I was the one who carried it the rest of the way over the hill.

Resentment works the same way. I replay the offense and rehearse what I should have said. I give a stranger a free room in my head. He never knows he's there, and I'm the only one paying rent.

It never slowed him down. It only slowed me. It shortened my patience, was on my mind at work, and left me less useful to the people right in front of me.

Here is what a mentor taught me to try instead. I ask myself whether that person might be sick too. Not sick in the body, but troubled in spirit, driven by fear, pride, or pain I can't see. Maybe he was late. Maybe he was scared. Maybe he just hasn't found any peace yet.

I know something about that. I have been the careless

driver in someone else's day, and I never noticed. Some people showed me patience anyway.

None of this comes naturally. My first reaction is still anger, and it's quick. I've learned that I don't have to act on it. I only have to pause long enough to ask the question. The change begins in that pause.

When I see a person as sick, the whole picture changes. I wouldn't hold a grudge against a friend with a fever. I'd want to be patient with him, and maybe even helpful.

This doesn't excuse what was done. Whatever he owes is between him and God. It only releases me from carrying it.

So when the next offense comes, in traffic or in town, I can say a short prayer for myself. God, save me from anger. Thy will be done for me.

Then I can drive on with a lighter load.

Nothing Lives Alone

Written October 27, 2026

I have always believed in a Power greater than myself. Nothing I've seen has talked me out of it, and a great deal of it has talked me further in.

Here is my evidence. Nothing on earth lives alone.

Look at the lichen on a bare rock. It looks like one plant, but it is two living things. A fungus gives shelter and holds on to the stone, and an alga inside it turns sunlight into food. Together they live where neither could live alone.

A coral reef works the same way. Tiny algae live inside the coral and feed it with light, and the coral gives the algae a home. Out of that one partnership comes a whole city of fish, shellfish, and sea life.

Salmon spend their lives in the ocean, then swim up our rivers and die. Their bodies feed the bears, the eagles, and the insects, and the forest along the bank grows on what the sea gives back to the land. The ocean, the river, and the forest are one system, though no part of it knows that.

My own body is the same. Trillions of tiny organisms live in me and help me digest my food. I couldn't live without

them, and they couldn't live without me.

I can't prove what's behind all this. Chance might build one lucky partnership. I find it hard to believe chance built a whole planet of them, each depending on the next, every one holding something else up. That doesn't look like an accident to me. It looks like a design too large for any of us to see at once.

Whatever made it works through interdependence. Nothing in it succeeds on willpower or self-sufficiency.

I wish I had seen this sooner. I spent years trying to run my life alone, on my own power, and it nearly finished me. Everything around me was showing me otherwise, and I wasn't looking.

Today I'm looking. The Power that holds the reef and the river together can hold me too, if I'll quit trying to do it all by myself.

The Contract Nobody Signed

Written October 28, 2026

A wise mentor once told me that every expectation I carry is a small contract. The trouble is that the other person never signed it.

I expect a thank-you for a favor. I expect a call back, a fair shake, a little respect, a job done my way. I don't say anything about it; I just keep a tally in my head. When someone fails to meet terms they never heard, I feel wronged.

That is how my upsets begin. When I look back over them, great and small, I find the same root every time. Underneath the hurt was a demand, and underneath the demand was a dependency. I was leaning on someone to behave a certain way so that I could feel all right. The harder I leaned, the louder the demand got. When the person stepped aside, my peace went with them.

Leading others has shown me this plainly. When I hand someone a job, I have to let them do it. If I then hover and expect it done exactly my way, I've taken the job back. They feel it, and I end up carrying the very worry I thought I had handed off.

An expectation also hobbles me. It ties my well-being to someone else's behavior, and I don't control that. I can make a request. I can state a standard or set a boundary. Those are honest and out in the open. The unspoken expectation is the one that does the damage, because it hides from everyone, including me.

There is a plain test. If I ask and the answer is no, I can accept it and move on. If I can't, then it was never a request. It was a demand I had learned to word nicely.

I can't talk myself out of the lean by willpower. I've tried. What works is noticing the lean and asking for help to let go of it. God, take this one from me.

Today I'll watch for the moment I start keeping score. When I catch it, I'll stop and ask what I'm depending on this person for. Then I'll hand that back and go do my own part.

Patching What We Find

Written October 29, 2026

Most of you know that I am a decades-long computer geek. Lately the news has been full of serious security flaws, found and then patched, in the world's various computer systems. In many cases, the flaw was first found by someone with bad intentions.

What struck me most was that the flaw was already there. It sat hidden inside the code, doing no visible harm, until someone discovered it and tried to exploit it.

Our character works much the same way. We can run for years with defects we never examine. Resentment, pride, fear, and self-pity can sit in the background. Everything seems to function, so we assume everything is fine.

But a defect we refuse to look at is still a defect. It simply waits for the wrong moment, the wrong stress, or the wrong person to expose it.

In the IT field, nobody patches a vulnerability they will not admit exists. The work begins with an honest audit. Someone has to go through the system, line by line, and take stock without flinching. The same is true of us.

A searching and fearless look at ourselves is not an exercise in self-punishment. A good technician does not hate the

code for having bugs. He simply wants the system to run well. We can look at our own flaws in that same spirit, without excuses and without despair.

Seeing the defect is only half the work. I cannot patch my own character by willpower alone. I have tried, and so have you. The real repair comes when I admit the flaw, become willing to let it go, and humbly ask for help from something greater than myself.

Then comes the part that keeps the system healthy: maintenance. A patch is not a one-time event. We keep watching, we keep taking stock, and when we find something new, we deal with it promptly.

The result surprises me every time. Each flaw we face honestly stops being a hidden danger and becomes a place where we have grown. We become steadier, more useful to others, and more at peace with ourselves.

So today, let's not be afraid of what we might find in there. The flaw was already there. The only question is whether we look at it on our own terms, or wait for life to expose it for us.

Look honestly. Ask for help. Apply the patch. And keep going.

Have a good day, friends.

Where the Trail Crosses Mill Creek

Written October 30, 2026

My spiritual condition stays fit only when I exercise faith and trust, and not when I lean on my own strength. Two years ago, I got a test of that.

I slipped into a gully on slick, uneven ground in the community forest. The bones in my ankle broke with an incredible snap, and I fell back against the side of the trail.

Self-reliance would have had me fighting the situation, or panicking, or trying to figure out how to fix it. Instead, my first thought was to pray.

“God, I don’t know why, but I am aware that everything happens for reasons known only to You. Thy will be done.”

Then I did the next thing in front of me. I called my wife and calmly told her what had happened. I called emergency services and gave them directions. After that, I stayed as calm and positive as I could.

Then I began looking for the little miracles, and they were there.

I had two bars of cell coverage. A few years back, that spot would have been a dead zone.

I had landed in what seemed a perfect seat: dry, with a backrest and a place to brace my good leg while I crossed the injured ankle over it. It was as comfortable as it could be.

After half an hour, a walker with two dogs came upon me. He went up the trail to meet the rescuers and give them better directions.

The ambulance had staged at the end of First Road, unsure how to proceed. A man and woman on a quad happened by. The rider knew exactly what "where the trail crosses Mill Creek" meant. He set off, met the man with the dogs along the way, and found me.

He lifted me onto the back of his quad and drove me out to the ambulance. The Fire District, already mobilizing, was called off.

I was in remarkably little pain, given the injury. At St. Joe's, the attending physician was a woman with many years of experience and a residency in orthopedic surgery. My ankle was reset and splinted, and I was given crutches. I rode home with my wife after about six hours.

I slept through the night. It was my left ankle, and I drive an automatic. The next day I went to work and did the

bank deposits, as I do every Saturday morning.

Three days later, a community member I had never met gave me a knee scooter, free of charge. It fits in the back of my RAV4 without folding, and its knobby tires are made for the forest, my meditative place.

What I have shared here is only the beginning. The little miracles keep coming, even now.

I could not have arranged any of it. Not one piece. Had I relied on myself, I would have seen only the break. Because I relied on faith and trust, I saw the help that was already on its way.

That is the lesson. Faith and trust are not something I earn once and keep. I have to exercise them daily, the way a body stays fit only by use. When I do, I see the miracles, not only with my eyes, but with the knowledge that God is using me for His purpose.

I use what I learned on that trail to help others get through their own problems. What was given to me is meant to be passed along. That, I am beginning to see, is part of the purpose.

I may never know the whole reason for that fall. What I do know is that my faith and trust are stronger than ever.

God is good, even when the day looks dismal to my human eyes. His eyes are bigger.

An ankle grows stronger with use, and so does faith. Now, I am off on my morning walk.

Little Miracles

Written October 31, 2026

Yesterday's reflection also spoke of little miracles, and the subject deserves a second look. Today I come at it from the side of the skeptic.

I am, by nature, an evidence type of guy. Faith has never come easily to me. Reaching out and acting on trust alone ran against my grain, and I needed to see something before I could believe in a power greater than myself.

The first evidence was hard to argue with. For decades I drank against my own will, unable to stop no matter how sincerely I tried. Then, in a single moment, the obsession was removed. Something profound and inexplicable happened in that short span of time, and I have never found a way to explain it away.

Still, one great event can fade into memory. My mentor understood this. He encouraged me to go looking for the little miracles, the everyday occurrences that have scant chance of being random coincidence. He promised that if I looked for them, they would appear.

He was right. A friend calls on the very day I am struggling. A stranger says the exact words I needed to hear. I think of

someone I have not seen in years, and they cross my path that week. Once I began paying attention, the evidence kept arriving.

Carl Jung studied these moments and gave them a name: synchronicity. He described meaningful coincidences that link our inner lives with outward events in ways that ordinary cause and effect cannot account for. It comforts me that a careful thinker took them seriously.

I have long been aware of how the natural systems of this world, and of the universe itself, are engineered to work in symbiosis with one another. Little miracles seem to me the same design at a smaller scale, woven into the course of a single human life.

These small signs show me that a Power greater than myself is leading the way. My part is simply to pick up on the cues. Each one I notice builds a little more faith and trust, and with that faith, my way through life becomes far easier to navigate.

I no longer need to understand how it all works. My job is to stay willing, keep an open mind, and pay attention. The evidence I once demanded has been here all along.

Today, I will look for the little miracles, and I will be grateful for each one I find.

November

A Fresh Start Begins with an Honest Look

Written November 1, 2026

Most of us come to a fresh start only after we have run out of what we thought were answers. We look up one day and realize that life has become hard to manage.

The change is usually gradual. Worry, grievances, and plans that never quite pan out begin to crowd the days. We keep rearranging the people and circumstances around us to suit ourselves, believing our security depends on getting it right.

Some of the weight is not ours to blame. Simply covering the basics can leave a hardworking person with nothing at the end of the month. We can feel for those carrying that load, and be grateful for whatever footing we were given. Even where the burden is real, we still choose how to meet it: with candor, with open hands, and with help.

Whatever its source, the strain only grows when we push harder. We become like an actor trying to direct the whole production, and the production is not going well.

The turning point is a simple admission. Our own best thinking has not brought the peace we wanted. Saying so

is not defeat. It is the truth, and the truth opens the door.

We are not asked to be perfect, or to have everything figured out. We are asked only to be willing to set down the job of managing everything and everyone.

Once we let go of the controls, calm begins to find its way back. We become open to help from others and from a Power greater than ourselves, however we understand it. Asking is no sign of weakness. It is where relief begins.

The relief doesn't end there. Having been helped, we discover that we have something to offer. When we give it freely, our attention shifts from our own troubles to someone else's, and calm takes the place of worry.

So today, one question is worth asking: where am I still trying to control what was never mine to control?

Name it, and release it for today.

A fresh start needs no new calendar and no new address. It needs only a willing heart this morning.

Today I will be honest about where life has felt unmanageable. I will ask for help when I need it, and I will help someone else.