So It Will Stand Still

Morning Reflections

VOLUME ONE

January 1 to October 17, 2026

Scott W Binder

Why I Write

Every morning since the first day of this year, 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.

If one of these speaks to you, I'd love to hear about it. You can write to me at reflections@kapone.net.

Scott W Binder
McKinleyville, California

Contents

January 2026

Just Another Morning....14
Eight Thousand Steps to Grace....16
The River of Surrender....17
From Resentment to Service....18
Assembling Joy One Piece at a Time....20
The Pilgrimage of Right Now....21
Today Is the Only Day....23
The Stone You Carry....24
The Hidden Cost of Asking for Help....25
Choosing Your Hard....28
Letting the Mud Settle....30
Anger as a Shield....31
The Poison I Drink Myself....32
One Soul at a Time....34
The Passenger and the Pilot....35
The Scarab at the Window....37
Losing True North....39
The Next Spiritually Indicated Action....41
When Willpower Isn't Enough....43
Psychological Kin....45
Divine Orchestration....47
The Kindness That Came Back Around....49
The Deleted Scenes of My Life....51
One Shelf at a Time....55
Faith, Fellowship, and Service....57
Bankrupt of Spirit, Rich in Grace....58
The Reset Button of Presence....60
Sharpening the Tools of Prayer....61
Drop the Rope....62
Belief Arriving in Fragments....64

The Technology of Service....65

February 2026

Seeds in the Garden of Spirit....67
Fear Fades Where Spirit Grows....68
The Latin Roots of Acceptance....69
A One Hundred Percent Success Rate....71
Acceptance Is Not Agreement....73
Nature as a Sacred Message....75
Ripples in a Pond....76
A Forest From One Wildflower....77
The Mask That Isolates....78
Until the Flower Becomes You....79
The Path of Least Resistance....80
The Classroom of Daily Life....81
Nature Doesn't Check a Clock....82
The Silent Observer of Thoughts....83
Day One of a Lifelong Project....84
Chained to the Craving....85
The House Built One Brick a Day....87
A Deep Breath for the Spirit....89
The Whole Book, Not the Cover....90
The Cost of a Cynical Heart....91
When We Stop Forcing the Outcome....92
Respect Before It's Earned....93
Confessions of a Fixer....94
Closing the Circle of Gratitude....96
Debugging My Spiritual Life....97
Spirituality by Subtraction....99
Testing a Feeling by Its Fruit....100
I Can't, God Can, Let Him....101

March 2026

Letting Spirit Do the Clearing....103

The Person Hard Work Makes You....104
Water Dripping on Stone....105
The Bridge Already Built....106
A Field, Not a Tightrope....107
Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide....108
A Ripple From Hello....110
I Don't Tell God What to Do....111
The Poisoned Well We All Share....112
Giving Away the Keys to Happiness....115
Letting Go of the Steering Wheel....117
The Season After the Storm....119
The Story I Told Myself....120
Service Is Where Value Begins....123
A Source That Never Runs Out....124
Pain as Prison or Purpose....126
Tracing Gratitude Back to Someone....128
Painting the Hull of a Sinking Ship....130
Something Much Older Than the Drink....131
The Blindness of Certainty....132
Show Me Who I Am....134
Sobriety Was Never My Decision....135
Pain, the Touchstone of Growth....137
Training for the Fears We Already Have....139
My Spiritual Doppler Radar....141
Easy Does It....143
Peace With What You Have....145
Shortcomings That Once Saved You....147
The Architect of Your Own Peace....148
The Most Honest Thing I Ever Did....149
God Speaks in Whispers....151

April 2026

Right Here, Right Now....155

Trading Hope for Familiar Misery....157
The Readiness to Say I'm Here....159
Patience as Surrender....161
Turning Outward From Fear....162
The Wisdom to Let Go....164
The Gift I Didn't Earn....166
One Long Thank You....168
Trickles That Become a River....169
Maintaining a Fit Spiritual Condition....170
Building a Storm in Your Head....172
No Checkbook Can Mend a Spirit....174
The Inlet and the Outlet....176
You Can't Carry Someone From a Burning House....177
Why an Alcoholic Can't Just Stop....178
The Luxury of Second-Guessing....180
The Humility of a Child....182
Undefeated So Far....184
My Father's Quiet Voice....186
The Lotus Blooms From Mud....187
When a Volunteer Fell, Others Stood Up....188
Letting Someone Hit Bottom....190
The Self-Will Behind My Helping....191
An Honest Start, Right Here....193
Being a Bridge, Not a Recruiter....195
The Bow, the Arrow, and the Aim....197
The Movie Playing in My Head....199
Acting Your Way Into Right Thinking....201
When Instinct Cannot Be Trusted....202
No Room for Debate....204

May 2026

Two Rituals, One Healing Journey....206
No Longer at War With the World....207

Keeping It by Giving It Away....209
Feelings Are Not Facts....210
A Channel Open at Both Ends....212
Friction as an Invitation....213
Growing Toward the Light....214
Taking Off Into the Headwind....216
Smashing the Illusion of Self-Sufficiency....218
Growing Up at Last....220
The Purpose of a Lonely Path....222
A Bird Doesn't Ask the Wind Its Meaning....224
The Part the World Cannot Warp....226
The Freedom From Seeking Approval....227
The Peace of Keeping Your Word....229
The Storm Is the Road....230
Volunteering as Medicine for the Soul....232
Leaping Before It Makes Sense....234
Money Has a Ceiling....235
Spiritual Checklists for Other People....237
When God Closes a Door....239
From Asking to Listening....240
A Position of Neutrality....242
The Boring Routine Is the Real Test....243
This Dirt Is in My DNA....244
Witnessing Thoughts Without Acting....246
Nobody Wakes Up Wanting Recovery....247
Holding Circumstances Differently....249
The Trap of Our Own Certainty....250
When the Performance Finally Cracks....251
Coming Like a Beggar, Not a Wish List....253

June 2026

From Performance to Overflow....256
Can't Reason Someone Out of a Feeling....258

An Open Journal, Typed Out Loud.....260
The Universe Doesn't Negotiate.....261
Sitting With Reality Instead of Arguing.....263
The Practice of Being Unbothered.....265
Terminal Uniqueness.....267
Judging Strangers on a Screen.....269
The Strength to Say I Don't Know.....271
Resentment Was Never About Them.....273
Ninety Minutes That Lift the Spirit.....275
Love I Didn't Have to Earn.....277
The Work Happens First.....278
A War With No Negotiation.....280
Launching Out Despite the Doubt.....282
Innocent Versus Pure.....284
Comparing My Insides to Their Outsides.....286
Too Heavy for One Set of Hands.....288
Safety Was Never About Control.....290
Picking Up Trash to Quiet My Head.....292
A Pile of Easy Things.....293
When the Voice Steps Back.....294
The Secret Is in the Dishes.....296
When Good Things Become Obstacles.....297
Enough Light for the Next Step.....298
Rehearsing a Disaster That Never Comes.....299
Quiet Power in Routine.....301
The Holiday Problem Drinkers Dread.....303
Surrender Is Not a Last Resort.....305
Serenity Was Never the Absence of Trouble.....307

July 2026

My Own Declaration of Independence.....310
Trusting the Hammer.....312
Giving My Bad Motives Nice Names.....313

The Demand Underneath the Disturbance....315
Busy on Purpose, or Busy to Avoid....317
Acceptance First, Accountability Second....319
Gratitude Underneath the Checkout Line....321
Giving the Day Its Shape....323
Nice Is Fear Wearing a Smile....325
People Find What They Seek....327
Someone Else's Puzzle Piece....329
Trust Built From Evidence You Collected....331
Approval, Our First Addiction....333
Some Defects Are an Assignment....335
Readiness Comes After You Start....337
Disagreement Without Contempt....339
Guilt Loops, Accountability Moves....341
The Daily Gifts We Overlook....343
Buried Under His Own Reputation....344
Out of Our Own Resources....346
The Cost of Borrowed Opinions....347
Godshots and Glimmers....349
From Getting to Giving....351
One Cloud at a Time....353
One Honest Sentence....355
Resentment Feels Like Justice....357
Part of Me Stayed Nineteen....358
Willingness Before Readiness....360
The People We'd Rather Avoid....362
Fear Talks, Pride Waits....364
Good Enough for Now....366

August 2026

Somewhere Else to Look....368
Never Meant to Do This Alone....370
The Ones Who Stopped Needing Control....372

Today's Portion....374
When the Floor Gives Way....376
Exactly on Track....378
How the Reflex Was Built....380
The Half-Second After....382
The Spiritual Malady....384
Only a Channel....386
What My Dad Knew....388
Walking Toward, Not Away....390
The Order I'm Living Inside Of....392
Looking for an Exit....394
That Still Small Voice....396
New Neighbors....398
Brakes and Maintenance....400
Getting on the Bus....402
Disappearing from the Room....404
One Knee Scooter....406
Looking Inward....408
I Was That Person....410
The Way I Wanted to Feel....412
Walking Toward the Gate....414
Conditioned by the Heat....416
Naming It....418
The Ground I Needed....420
When Asking Feels Wrong....423
Common Sense and Trust....425
Go Pick Up Trash....427
Steadier Ground....429

September 2026

Local, Small, and Mine....432
Loosening My Hands....434
He Picked Up the Phone....436

It Was Always Within You....438
Not Taking the Credit....440
The Elegance of Simple....442
What Is Healing?....444
Nothing Left to Forgive....446
Different Rooms, Same Habit....448
Landing in the Middle....450
A Steady Hand....452
A Story I Carried for Forty Years....454
The Body Catches Up....457
Righteous or Selfish....459
Who Built the House....461
Where Learning Takes Place....463
Feeding Someone Else....465
To Teach, To Learn....467
A Danger That Doesn't Announce Itself....469
Only the Next Step....471
Steering Around People....473
One Stretch at a Time....475
When Nobody's Checking....477
The Whisper Never Says I....479
Setting It Down....481
Peace Received, Peace Shared....483
We Become What We Think About....485
Grateful I Didn't Get My Way....487
One Hundred Percent of My Days....489
The Door Opens Wider....491
More to Life....493
Her Name Was Liberty....495

October 2026

The Longer Answer....498
Instrument, Vessel, Channel....500

Exercise for the Soul....502
Still Accepting Updates....505
Fear and Conscience....507
Quiet and Stoic....509
An Open Hand....511
Listening Before Deciding....513
The Bigger Picture....515
Connected or Not....517
Checking the Roof....519
Not the Center of the Clock....521
Looking for Beauty....523
Turning Over What I Can't Control....525
My First Memory....528
One Less Angry Voice....530
Once a Year....532

January

Just Another Morning

Written January 1, 2026

New Year's morning. I was up at 3:30, same as always. The house is quiet, and the coffee's still hot.

For most of my life, January 1 came with a promise to myself. Stop drinking. Stop smoking. Finally get it together. I never wrote any of it down. I just thought it, meant it, and carried it around in my head. It never stood still long enough for me to look at it. By the middle of the month, it had drifted off, and so had my conviction.

I don't make those promises anymore. Not because I've stopped wanting to grow, but because I've learned how growth actually happens for me. It doesn't come in a year. It comes in a day.

A year is too big to hold. I can't carry twelve months of good intentions. I can barely carry one morning's worth. But one morning I can do. I can get up, get quiet, and ask what's needed of me today. Then I can try to do that one thing.

Today, the calendar says everything is new. But honestly, it's just another morning. The same sun

coming up over the neighbor's house. The same choice in front of me that's been there every day: run my own show, or trust something greater than myself to run it.

That choice doesn't wait for January. It shows up every morning, whether I've made a resolution or not.

Later today, I'll head to my usual noon meeting. Holidays can be hard on people who are struggling, and New Year's can be one of the hardest. If someone walks in needing help getting through it, I want to be there. Somebody was there for me.

So here's my only resolution this year. Show up tomorrow and do it again.

Happy New Year.

Eight Thousand Steps to Grace

Written January 2, 2026

When I walk my 8,000 steps every day, I am doing more than just helping my ankle heal; I am practicing a discipline that keeps my whole body healthy. I've realized that my spiritual life works the exact same way. Just as my ankle gets stiff if I stop moving, my spirit starts to feel heavy or disconnected if I neglect my daily walk with God.

The hardest part is that if I skip just one day, it becomes so much easier to make excuses the next day. This momentum of neglect is dangerous because it turns a small break into a deadly habit. By sticking to my daily steps, I remind myself that consistency is the key to staying strong. I have to show up for my spiritual health every single day with that same dedication, knowing that skipping out only makes the journey back to health much harder.

As the author Douglas Coupland noted, "If you don't have a spiritual practice in place when times are good, you can't expect to suddenly develop one during a moment of crisis."

I shall persevere.

The River of Surrender

Written January 3, 2026

The spiritual flow of power happens when you stop trying to control everything and instead trust in a Higher Power to guide you. It is like a river; when your life is "flowing," you are moving in the same direction as this Power, making things feel natural and much less like a struggle. This Power provides you with the strength, hope, and peace you need, especially during hard times when your own willpower isn't enough.

When you are in this flow, you might notice your intuition gets sharper and you feel more connected to the world around you. By letting go of your own ego and opening up to this greater force, you become a channel through which the Higher Power's energy can move to help both you and the people around you.

From Resentment to Service

Written January 4, 2026

In active alcoholism, my world was dominated by a "thinking problem" rooted in persistent resentment and bitterness. I found myself trapped in a cycle of negativity, constantly replaying past hurts and perceived injustices that fueled a sense of victimization and entitlement. This all-consuming internal dialogue served as an emotional anchor, making it impossible to see beyond my own grievances and justifying my continued self-absorption as a form of escape. My focus was entirely inward, not because of the alcohol itself, but because I was using it to numb the loud, angry voices of my own mind.

Recovery began when I started to dismantle this mental architecture, trading blame for personal accountability. As I learned to release these long-held grudges, the mental space once occupied by hostility naturally began to open up. This shift wasn't just a byproduct of sobriety; it was a deliberate transition from self-obsession to connection. Today, by quieting the resentments that once dictated my reality, I have regained the clarity to turn my attention outward. I no

longer view the world through the lens of what I am owed, but through the lens of how I can contribute, finally allowing me to be of genuine, selfless service to those around me. That change in psyche automatically took me from “How can this benefit me?” to “How can I help?”

Today I am a helper. If you think that you are alcoholic, please reach out. Recovery is available to anyone, if you have the capacity to be fundamentally honest. PM or text/call 707-599-5623.

Assembling Joy One Piece at a Time

Written January 5, 2026

Living a happy life is like putting together a puzzle without stressing over the final picture. Instead of worrying about how much is left to do, you find joy in the small "clicks"; those little daily moments when things just work out, like a good cup of coffee or a kind word from a friend. Much of our sadness comes from trying to make our lives look like someone else's puzzle box, but real happiness starts when you stop comparing and focus on the unique pieces you have right in front of you.

One also has to remember that every puzzle needs darker pieces to create a beautiful image. This means that hard times aren't "mistakes"; they are just the shadows that help the bright, happy parts of your life stand out more.

When you get overwhelmed, you simply step back to get a fresh view, or you invite a friend to help you sort through the mess. By focusing on one piece at a time and enjoying the process, you'll find that a beautiful life is built slowly and steadily, with peace found in every small connection you make.

The Pilgrimage of Right Now

Written January 6, 2026

I used to think that "being present" meant just sitting still, but I've learned that radical presence is actually a very active way to live. For me, it means I stop carrying around a heavy "backpack" of expectations about how things should go and instead focus entirely on what is happening right in front of me. I try to treat my past and future like they are just stories I tell myself; one has already happened and the other doesn't exist yet, so the only real place I can actually "walk" or take a step is right here in this moment. It's about using all my senses to really notice the world, whether I'm just listening to the sound of my own breath or paying close attention to the way my Contigo mug feels in my hands.

When I live this way, I don't get as overwhelmed by big goals because I've realized that the only way to finish any "pilgrimage" is to focus on one single step at a time. I stop trying to control every outcome and instead try to be a "witness" to my own life, accepting my thoughts and feelings without judging them as good or bad. This simple shift makes me feel much more capable and calm because I'm no longer fighting against things that

haven't happened yet. It turns my daily routine into a series of small, meaningful choices, where I'm fully "in" my body and my life rather than just watching it pass me by.

Today Is the Only Day

Written January 7, 2026

Real change isn’t something that just happens to you while you sit and wait; it’s an agreement with a Higher Power that requires you to move. It is easy to think you need to wait for the "perfect time" or a loud sign, but faith is demonstrated through action. You have only the present moment to make a choice, and today is the only day that truly exists in which you can enact change.

When you take even a tiny step forward today, you stop being a bystander and start walking the path that has been prepared for you. Don't waste the gift of Today by looking toward a tomorrow that isn't here yet; get moving and trust that the way will open up as you go.

The Stone You Carry

Written January 8, 2026

Holding onto resentment is like carrying around a heavy, jagged stone in your heart every day. Whether the event happened long ago or very recently, replaying the memory over and over keeps the pain alive, making your body feel like the hurt is happening right now. This constant stress can make you feel tired, angry, or lonely, and it acts like a "slow poison" that hurts the entirety of your health (mental, physical, and spiritual) and stops you from enjoying Today. Essentially, resentment makes you a prisoner to the past, making it hard to trust others or feel truly happy today.

One solution is to practice "surrender and release" through prayer and meditation. This means choosing to hand over your heavy burden of anger to a Higher Power, rather than trying to carry it yourself.

Many also find peace by praying for the person they resent, not to excuse what they did, but to free their own soul from being a prisoner to the past. By replacing bitter thoughts with a focus on gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion, you create space for healing power to enter your life.

The Hidden Cost of Asking for Help

Written January 9, 2026

A couple of people yesterday asked me why it is so hard to ask for help with alcoholism or addiction when it's very easy to ask for help in other areas of their lives, or with routine life tasks.It's because alcoholism isn't just a "thing you do." It's tangled up with who you think you are, how you cope, and how you survive. In my instance, it largely became my identity.

Asking for help with routine life stuff (fixing a car, moving furniture, learning tech, filling out a form) doesn't threaten your identity. It doesn't ask you to admit anything painful about yourself. It doesn't touch shame. It's practical, external, and socially neutral. No one hears "I need help changing a tire" and quietly judges your worth as a person.

Alcohol is different.

For a lot of people, drinking started as a solution. It helped with anxiety, loneliness, grief, stress, boredom, fitting in, or just getting through the day. So asking for help with alcoholism can feel like admitting the thing that helped you survive is now hurting you. That's

emotionally risky. You're not just asking for assistance, you're questioning your own coping system.

There's also shame layered in. Society still treats addiction as a moral failure rather than a human response to pain. Even when we know that's wrong, we've often internalized it. So asking for help can feel like saying: I'm weak, I failed, I should have handled this better. None of that is true, but feelings don't care about facts.

Then there's fear of exposure. Routine help keeps your inner world private. Asking for help with drinking means letting someone see behind the curtain. It raises scary questions.

And finally, there's grief. Even when alcohol has become a problem, it's still been a companion. Letting go, or even thinking about letting go, can feel like losing something familiar, predictable, and reliable. Asking for help means acknowledging that loss.

So the difficulty isn't weakness. It's depth.

The irony is that the moment someone asks for help with alcoholism, they are already doing something profoundly strong: choosing honesty over hiding,

connection over isolation, hope over habit. That step takes far more courage than asking for help with almost anything else.

Choosing Your Hard

Written January 10, 2026

It's okay to admit that you're tired of holding yourself up. We all look for a place to rest, and sometimes that place becomes a person, a bottle, a distraction, or a habit that promises to carry the weight for us. There is no shame in wanting the relief of a crutch when the world feels too heavy to bear on your own; leaning into something external is a natural response to being overwhelmed. But even that relief comes with its own kind of "hard." It's a quiet, heavy difficulty; the weight of knowing you aren't fully present in your own heart, and the fear of what happens if that external source ever disappears. It is the hard path of feeling yourself drift away, piece by piece, into a fog that offers comfort but takes your agency in return.

The other path is to stand on your own, and honestly, that is incredibly hard too. It's the "hard" of the quiet moments where you have to be your own sanctuary. Without that external source to muffle the sharp edges of the day, everything feels a little louder, a little colder, and much more vulnerable.

This is the Hard of Healing. It's the brave, exhausting

work of learning how to breathe through the discomfort instead of running from it. It's choosing to stay in the room with yourself, even when you don't like what you're thinking. It isn't a loud or flashy kind of strength; it's a soft, persistent courage that says, "I will be here for myself today, even if it's uncomfortable."

You are essentially choosing between two different types of struggle, but one of those struggles actually loves you back. One leads to a hollow end, while the other leads to a version of you that is whole, steady, and free. If you're going to pour your energy into something difficult, let it be the difficulty that helps you grow. You don't have to do it all at once, and you don't have to be perfect; you just have to be willing to try standing, even if your knees are shaking. Choosing your "hard" doesn't mean you have to be a warrior every second. It just means choosing the path that leads you back home to yourself.

It's hard…but it's your choice, and willingness is the key.

Letting the Mud Settle

Written January 11, 2026

When you get angry, your mind loses its natural balance and peace. Think of your mind like a clear pool of water; anger is like someone throwing a heavy stone into it, stirring up mud and making it impossible to see the bottom. In this state, your "thinking brain" shuts down and your "emotional brain" takes over, which overrides your accumulated wisdom and your ability to act rationally. Because your focus narrows only on the problem, you lose your connection to your spirit and your inner calm.

To find freedom from anger, many spiritual paths suggest looking at it as a form of "inner fire" that hurts you more than the person you are mad at.

Instead of fighting the anger, you can practice being a quiet observer of your feelings. By taking a deep breath and realizing that your peace is more valuable than being "right," you allow the mud in the water to settle. This shift helps you move from a place of reaction back to that place of compassion, reminding you that true strength comes from a steady, quiet heart rather than a loud or forceful one.

Anger as a Shield

Written January 12, 2026

Why do we choose anger, even though we know that doesn't solve anything?

We often choose anger over peace because it acts as a mental shield. When we feel hurt, ignored, or powerless, anger steps in to give us an instant boost of confidence and strength. It is much easier to feel "tough" and "right" than it is to admit we are feeling sad, scared, or embarrassed. In the heat of the moment, the mind views this rush of power as more useful for our protection than staying calm, even if it leaves us feeling drained and unbalanced later on.

Over time, this reaction becomes a deep-seated habit. We start playing God. If we are used to using anger to get our way or to defend ourselves, our mind begins to take that path automatically whenever things go wrong. We often hold onto rigid ideas about how the world "should" work or how people "should" behave, and when reality doesn't match those expectations, we feel personally attacked. This sense of unfairness makes it feel justified to get angry, distracting us from our deeper feelings and making us prioritize winning a conflict over keeping our inner peace.

The Poison I Drink Myself

Written January 13, 2026

I've come to realize that anger shows up when I lose touch with my inner spirit and let my ego take the wheel. The ego is the part of me that feels separate and needs to defend its pride. When I feel offended or things don't go my way, anger becomes a shield to feel powerful again. In those moments, I forget that my true nature, what I call my birth spirit, is calm, grounded, and connected. Instead, I get pulled into a false self that believes it has to fight to be seen or respected.

Anger also comes from attachment. I hold onto ideas of how life should look and how people should behave. When reality doesn't match my expectations, friction follows. Many spiritual traditions say anger is a poison I drink while hoping someone else suffers. I cling to it because I haven't fully learned acceptance, the ability to let life unfold without trying to control it. I think anger will change the world, but it only burns down my own inner house.

When I need to return to center, I offer this simple prayer:

Spirit, help me release the need to be right and the desire to control. Quiet my ego and soften this anger. Remind me that my peace comes from within, not from the world around me. Help me see others with compassion and return my heart to balance.

One Soul at a Time

Written January 14, 2026

It is natural to feel a deep moral call to stand against what is wrong. We carried the light of those who came before us and refused to stay silent. But if we spend all our energy fighting the darkness, we can forget the light we are trying to protect. Without love, our desire for justice can make our hearts hard and our spirits impatient.

To create a better world, we must do more than talk about it; we must live it. A world of dignity grows one soul at a time through simple kindness.

Before rushing out to fix the world, ask yourself: *Who is near me right now that needs help?* By showing up for others with a quiet heart, we practice the most sacred form of change there is.

The Passenger and the Pilot

Written January 15, 2026

Living as your conscience dictates is essentially a journey of moving from noise to stillness. The ego is like a loud, restless passenger in your mind who insists on being ignored, forgotten, or mistreated. It thinks it has to fight for everything. But your conscience is like the steady pilot who already knows the way home. To hear that pilot, you do not need to kick the passenger out of the car; you just need to stop letting them grab the steering wheel. You do this by realizing that the loud, defensive voice in your head isn't actually you. It is just something you are hearing. Once you realize you are the listener and not the noise, the ego starts to lose its power over your choices.

Spiritual growth happens in the small moments when you feel a squeeze in your chest. That is the ego wanting to be right, to get even, or to look important. In those moments, you choose to breathe and let that feeling pass instead of acting on it. Every time you choose kindness over being right, or honesty over looking good, you are feeding your spirit and starving your ego. You do not have to be perfect; you just have to

be willing to be quiet enough to hear that still, small voice inside you. Over time, as you trust that inner voice more, the ego's demands start to feel less like commands and more like background noise that you can simply ignore. It will always be there, but with awareness we are able to choose.

The Scarab at the Window

Written January 16, 2026

Imagine a person standing at a crossroads in life, feeling as though they are shouting into a silent void. They are looking for a sign or a sense of direction, yet the world around them appears to be nothing more than a series of random, disconnected events. Then, at the height of their uncertainty, a bridge suddenly forms between their spirit and the physical world. A specific song plays on the radio the moment they think of a lost friend, or a stranger repeats a phrase that had been circling in their mind all morning. These are spiritual coincidences, moments where the clockwork of the universe seems to pause to deliver a personal message.

These occurrences suggest that there is a hidden rhythm to existence that transcends simple cause and effect. The psychologist Carl Jung famously captured this phenomenon through his experience with a patient who was trapped by her own rigid logic. While she was describing a dream about a golden scarab beetle, a real beetle with a metallic gold shell began tapping at the office window. When Jung caught the insect and presented it to her, the sheer impossibility of the timing

broke through her skepticism. It was a physical manifestation of her internal state, proving that the boundary between spirit and the environment is much thinner than we often believe.

When such an event occurs, it feels less like a mathematical fluke and more like a wink from God. It invites a person to stop viewing themselves as an isolated observer and instead see themselves as an active participant in a living, breathing tapestry. Whether we call it synchronicity or a miracle, the effect is the same. It provides a profound sense of belonging and the comforting realization that, even in moments of deep isolation, we are being heard.

These events happen every day. We just need to expect them, seek them, and call them what they are: the Hand of God working in our lives.

Losing True North

Written January 17, 2026

When you force your own self-will over the natural guidance of your spirit, you are essentially choosing a path of friction that slowly wears down your inner peace and spiritual strength. Think of your spirit as a compass designed to lead you toward growth and fulfillment; when you ignore it to chase ego-driven desires, you lose your internal "true north" and begin to feel a deep, nagging sense of restlessness or emptiness. This misalignment can lead to "spiritual stagnation," where you feel stuck or "lukewarm" in your life, losing the passion and joy that come from being truly connected to your purpose.

Over time, this damage shows up as a heavy exhaustion that rest cannot fix, because your energy is being drained by the constant effort of pretending to be someone you aren't. Spiritually, you may feel unprotected or vulnerable, as if you've stepped out from under a shield of divine grace and are now struggling against life's challenges entirely on your own. That still inner voice, which once whispered gentle guidance, may begin to feel like a "roar" of anxiety or dissatisfaction as

it tries to redirect you. Ultimately, forcing your own way robs you of the blessings and ease that come when you surrender to a higher flow and allow your spirit to lead.

The Next Spiritually Indicated Action

Written January 18, 2026

Many of us have heard the expression 'Just do the next right thing.' What is the next right thing, anyway?

Doing the next right thing is a simple way to walk through life with peace, especially when the path ahead looks foggy or overwhelming. Instead of trying to figure out your whole future or fix every problem at once, you simply quiet your mind and ask what God or the universe is asking of you in this very moment.

It is an act of deep trust, believing that if you take just one faithful step, the light will move forward to show you the next one. This practice keeps you grounded in the present, where your spirit actually lives, rather than letting your mind drift into worries about yesterday or tomorrow. When you focus on doing the small, kind, or necessary thing right in front of you, you are aligning yourself with a higher purpose and finding a quiet rhythm that leads you exactly where you need to be.

Those in my orbit know that I call it something else: Taking the next spiritually-indicated action. This shifts

the focus from my own willpower to a sense of divine guidance. I'm not just making a random choice, but I'm listening for a "nudge" from a higher source to show the way. If a proposed action sits on my heart in a serene fashion, I am confident that it was inspired and the 'right thing.'

When Willpower Isn't Enough

Written January 19, 2026

I was chatting with a couple of guys this morning who want to stop drinking, but they keep trying to do so on their own, using the same method, sheer willpower. It's evident that isn't working, yet they are not willing to try something different.

People keep repeating the same old thing because alcoholism hijacks the brain's "common sense" center. When someone is stuck, their brain's logic gets replaced by a survival habit that fears change more than it fears the problem. They keep trying "willpower" because it's the only tool they know, even if that tool is broken. This creates a loop where they feel like they just need to "try harder" next time, rather than realizing they need a completely different strategy. Their mind is essentially stuck in a rut, and the more they struggle using their own strength, the deeper that rut becomes.

A different solution is to stop fighting and "surrender." This doesn't mean giving up; it means admitting that your own way isn't working and asking for help from a Higher Power, however you understand it. By letting go of the need to be in control, you quiet the "panic" in

your brain and become open to new ideas. This shift moves you from a lonely battle of willpower to a path of faith and connection. It replaces the empty "void" that people often try to fill with substances with a sense of peace and purpose, making the old habits lose their power. Old thoughts and ideas give way to new, more healthy thoughts and ideas…and we simply just go from there.

Psychological Kin

Written January 20, 2026

Why is it that when strangers with a common problem instantly start feeling like family when gathered in a group?

It’s a powerful feeling, and it mostly happens because the "wall" we usually

keep up around strangers disappears when we realize they truly understand our internal world. In everyday life, we often have to explain ourselves or hide our struggles to fit in. But in a group with a common problem, that exhausting work stops. You don't have to translate your pain or frustration because everyone else is already speaking your "language." This creates an instant sense of safety and validation that usually takes years to build with friends or family.

Psychologists also point to something called identity fusion. When we go through a hard time, it becomes a huge part of who we are. When we meet others going through the same thing, our brains stop seeing them as "others" and start seeing them as an extension of ourselves. Because you share the same struggle, your

brain treats them like psychological kin. You aren't just two strangers talking; you are two people surviving the same storm, which triggers a deep, ancient survival instinct to protect and trust one another like a tribe.

Finally, there is a unique freedom in these groups because there is no history or judgment. Unlike real family, who might remember your past mistakes or have expectations of who you "should" be, these strangers see you exactly as you are in the moment. This "uncluttered" connection allows for a level of honesty that is rare in normal life. You feel like family because, for the first time in a long time, you feel completely seen and accepted without having to prove anything.

…and it's a wonderful experience to have.

Divine Orchestration

Written January 21, 2026

Imagine a man arrested for a DUI. His wife is at the end of her rope with his drunkenness, and is likely to move on with her life. The man decides to go to a certain recovery meeting, get some literature to prove to her that he went in order to smooth things over. He didn't intend on getting sober. He just wanted to get out of trouble. He liked what he heard at that meeting, and kept going back. In the process, his life changed forever for the better and he hasn't had a drink in years now.

If the man had never been arrested for a DUI, then he never would have felt the desperate pressure to save his marriage. If he hadn't been trying to "fake" his way into his wife's good graces, then he never would have stepped foot into that specific recovery meeting to get the literature. Finally, if he hadn't been sitting in that exact room at that exact time, then he never would have heard the specific message that finally changed his heart.

Divine orchestration is the idea that a higher power is quietly organizing the events of your life behind the scenes. It suggests that there are no accidents, only hidden plans meant to help you grow or find the right

path.

This belief teaches that even when things seem chaotic or disappointing, everything is happening at the perfect time. Instead of seeing a setback as a failure, you see it as a setup for something better. It's like being part of a giant song where even the wrong notes are eventually used to make a beautiful melody.

This perspective offers a sense of peace in the face of life's unpredictability. It suggests that even the most painful mistakes can be repurposed into a fresh start. By trusting that a larger plan is at work, a person can find the strength to move forward, knowing that today's struggle might be the very thing that leads to tomorrow's transformation.

The Kindness That Came Back Around

Written January 22, 2026

An elderly man named Elias noticed a young traveler looking distraught over a flat bicycle tire near a bench at Hiller Park. Without a word, Elias brought his tools from his old pickup truck and fixed it, refusing any payment. "Just pass it on," he said with a wink.

The traveler, a college student named Leo, felt a surge of gratitude. Later that afternoon, he stopped by Ramone's for a coffee. Inside, he noticed a frazzled employee drop a tray of pastries. While others stared, Leo jumped up to help her clear the mess and left a generous tip he had originally saved for a souvenir.

The server, Sarah, touched by the stranger's grace, went home with a lighter heart. That evening, instead of collapsing on the couch, she took the time to check on her elderly neighbor, Mrs. Morgan, bringing her a bowl of soup she had made the previous evening.

Mrs. Morgan, feeling seen and cared for, decided to call her son to recount her day. It's been a while since they have spoken. Her son, a busy account manager in

Eureka, chatted with his mother for a while and hung up the phone with a smile. The next morning, he walked into his office and, instead of criticizing John, a junior sales associate, over a mistake, he offered to mentor him through the fix.

The young associate went home less stressed and finally found the patience to play catch with his young son at Hiller Park. As they played near the playground, a man sitting on a nearby bench watched them and smiled, his own weary spirit lifted by their laughter.

That man was Elias. The kindness he had planted at that very place had traveled through many hearts, only to find its way back to him in his favorite local park when he needed a smile the most.

In small communities, kindness creates a chain effect of forward-facing gratitude. When you do something nice for a neighbor, that feeling doesn't just stop there; it moves from person to person, growing as it goes. As people tend to be more connected, the good energy you put out into the world has a beautiful way of traveling through others and eventually finding its way back to where it started in the first place.

The Deleted Scenes of My Life

Written January 23, 2026

In my late teens, I was confident I could achieve anything through discipline and proper planning. I joined the military, served my tour, and excelled in my duties. After my discharge, I entered the restaurant industry, starting as a dishwasher at a small, upscale restaurant in Trinidad and working my way up to become a skilled line cook. My natural ability to multitask made success feel seamless.

Eventually, I moved to Eureka to code custom software for a distribution firm's new IBM PC, a role I landed using skills I had garnered over years as a computer hobbyist. After that, I returned to Arcata and ended up managing the best pizza place in town. At every turn, I succeeded; I felt happy, secure, and capable.

Years later, I met and married my wife, Miss K. To provide the home she dreamed of, I took a leap into a commission-only wholesale distribution job with zero prior experience. I learned as I went, my confidence grew, and I eventually built the route into a lucrative business. We bought our brand-new house, but with that mortgage came a new, terrifying companion: "future

tripping." I began spiraling into imaginary fears, obsessing over "what if" scenarios where we lost everything. Having never doubted myself before, this mental siege was paralyzing, and I turned to alcohol to cope.

Drinking didn't solve the fear; it simply made me stop caring about it. But that relief was a trap. I fell into a vicious cycle of full-blown alcoholism, resulting in immense wreckage. My fear finally became tangible: I had lost the power of choice. No amount of willpower could stop me from picking up the next drink.

Many years later, I found recovery when I wasn't even looking for it. Though I stopped drinking, the self-doubt and irrational anxiety remained.

Regaining my sense of worth took time and the heavy lifting of a supportive fellowship. They encouraged me to step out in faith once again, just as I had years prior.

I wanted to give back, so I applied for a seat on the McKinleyville Community Services District (MCSD) Parks and Recreation Committee. I served there for two years, bolstered by others who insisted I had much to contribute. That gave me the courage to run for the

MCSD Board of Directors in 2020. My community rewarded me with their votes, and I am now in my second term, having served as Board President in 2024. That same year, I was honored as the Grand Marshal of the Pony Express Days Parade. Today, I serve concurrently as Vice Chair of the McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee and find deep fulfillment directing the Senior Center.

This transformation happened because others saw a potential in me that I couldn't see myself. When I was stuck in self-doubt, it was like looking at my life through dirty glasses. I was so focused on my internal flaws and "behind-the-scenes" mistakes that they obscured everything else. I mistakenly believed my worth was defined by my nerves and my near-failures. While I was living inside the messy process of being human, others were watching the results.

They had a clearer perspective because they were standing further back. They weren't tuned into my insecurities; they saw my actions, my kindness, and my resilience. They saw the "final cut" of my life while I was obsessing over the deleted scenes. Now, I no longer suffer from that crippling doubt, though I remain

teachable. My mission now is to help others see their own value and encourage them to step out in faith, because I know firsthand that if I can do it, so can they.

One Shelf at a Time

Written January 24, 2026

Imagine you have a massive, cluttered garage that has been stressing you out for months. If you look at the whole mess and think, "I have to get this entire thing spotless," you'll likely feel defeated and just close the door.

Instead, you decide to rely on a bit of faith and just focus on cleaning one single shelf today. You stop worrying about the boxes in the corner or how long the whole project will take; you just commit to doing that one small part and letting go of the rest for now.

By focusing only on that one shelf, you wake up tomorrow with a clean shelf. You've removed a tiny bit of the "wreckage" from your environment, and you didn't burn yourself out trying to be a superhero. Because you weren't relying on your own limited energy to fix everything at once, but rather a steady discipline to just do one thing, you find that the task becomes manageable. One shelf at a time, the stress begins to lift, and eventually, you look back to realize the entire space has transformed. It happened not through a massive explosion of willpower, but through simple, daily

faithfulness.

This philosophy of cleaning "one shelf" at a time can transform almost every part of our lives because it trades the pressure of being perfect for the power of being consistent. In our health, we often fail because we try to change every meal and exercise habit overnight. Instead, if we just focus on eating one healthy breakfast or getting outside to walk even a small distance, we stop fighting our own exhaustion. Over time, those small choices add up and pay off, not because we did something heroic once, but because we did something small every day.

Faith, Fellowship, and Service

Written January 25, 2026

In simple terms, our life's journey is about moving away from being selfish or just caring about "things" and instead focusing on being better, kinder people.

This shift happens when we use three main tools: faith, fellowship, and service. Faith is about letting go of the need to control everything and trusting that there is a bigger, better plan for us, which brings us a sense of peace. Fellowship means we don't try to go through life alone; we connect with others, support each other, and realize that we are all in this together. Finally, service is the simple act of helping someone else, which actually helps us get out of our own heads and feel more useful.

When we live this way, even the toughest problems in our relationships start to get better because we are focused on giving rather than just taking.

Bankrupt of Spirit, Rich in Grace

Written January 26, 2026

For a long time, I lived behind a fortress of my own making, fueled by the belief that if I just tried harder, thought faster, or controlled more variables, I could fill the emptiness inside me. I viewed my struggles as obstacles to be crushed and my emotional pain as a weakness to be hidden. But eventually, the walls I built to protect myself became my prison. My "bottom" wasn't a dramatic crash, just one quiet morning when I realized that every tool I possessed was utterly useless against the weight of my own life. I was bankrupt of spirit, standing at the end of a long, dark corridor with nowhere left to turn.

In that moment of total defeat, something strange happened: the fighting stopped. I didn't "win" or "solve" anything; I simply ran out of the strength required to keep pretending. I slumped in my chair and admitted, for the first time with total honesty, that I was finished. This wasn't a surrender of my life, but a surrender of my illusion of control. In that space where my ego used to be, a sudden, inexplicable stillness took root. I realized that this feeling of brokenness was actually the only

thing that could make me honest enough to change.

As I began to walk forward from that point, the pain didn't vanish, but its nature changed. I stopped seeing my past as a series of failures and started seeing it as a necessary education. Under this new lens of grace, the burden of my old regrets began to form into something far more valuable. I found that I could look at another person in the depths of their own despair and, instead of judging them, I could offer them a hand because I had been there. The reality of my own pain, which I once spent so much energy concealing, became the very thing that allowed me to connect with others on a level I never thought possible.

Today, the end result is a life that feels lighter and far more grounded. I no longer live in fear of the next crisis, because I have learned that the difficult moments are simply more fuel for growth. I am not perfect, and the journey is slow, but I am moving. I now realize that my greatest suffering was not a detour from my life, but the very foundation upon which a new, authentic self could be built. I am no longer a victim of my history; I am a student of it, finding that in letting go, I finally given the grace to stand.

The Reset Button of Presence

Written January 27, 2026

Just for today, I need to unplug and reconnect with something bigger than myself. I've realized that finding that spiritual alignment feels way more grounding than any material success or physical comfort ever could. I'm looking for that deep, inner stillness where I can truly feel God's presence. Even just a second of that connection hits the 'reset' button on my stress and the chaos of daily life. It leaves me feeling whole and balanced, giving me the energy to actually show up for the people around me. That connection is the ultimate healer. I just need to lean in and feel it.

Sharpening the Tools of Prayer

Written January 28, 2026

Think of your time in prayer and meditation as the moments you sharpen your tools; if you cut that time short to stay busy, you might end up working for hours without actually accomplishing anything meaningful. Divine perspective is different from ours; it values quality and spiritual readiness over raw "busyness." To a master craftsman, a dull tool that grinds away all day but produces poor results is far less valuable than a sharp, well-prepared instrument that is used for only a short time but produces flawless work.

Just for today, I resolve to remain sharp and well-prepared for the work that He may assign.

Drop the Rope

Written January 29, 2026

A mentor once said to me, “If it isn’t going to bother you in an hour, don’t let it bother you for a minute.” There’s a lot of truth to that, and it can cause real damage. Let’s face it; most of life’s irritations are of this variety.

This problem starts when something small goes wrong and you "hook" onto it. It could be a spilled drink or a grumpy person in line, but instead of letting it pass, your mind grabs it. You start a conversation in your head about how unfair it is or what you should have said back. This is your ego trying to fix the past. It turns a tiny, one-minute blip into a heavy weight that you carry around, making you feel tired, tense, and distracted from the good things happening right in front of you.

The solution is to simply "drop the rope." Imagine you are in a tug-of-war with a problem that doesn't actually matter. To win, you don't have to pull harder; you just let go. When you feel that spark of annoyance, take one breath and remind yourself that this moment is already over. By choosing not to feed the thought, you keep your spirit light. You realize that your happiness is

worth way more than being "right" about a small mistake, so you just leave it behind and keep walking… and keep your peace.

Belief Arriving in Fragments

Written January 30, 2026

Belief in a source of strength greater than myself didn't happen overnight. It arrived in fragments, sparked by listening to others describe challenges I hadn't yet faced with a clarity I didn't yet possess. Witnessing them navigate life's storms with a quiet, internal resilience gave me the hope that I, too, could tap into that same grace.

Eventually, I realized that a spiritual foundation that remains steady regardless of external circumstances is truly attainable. Today, that connection, combined with a commitment to honesty, an open mind, and a willingness to do the inner work, provides the serenity I once thought impossible.

The Technology of Service

Written January 31, 2026

We often hear that helping others "makes us feel good," but the truth runs much deeper. In almost every spiritual tradition, service is considered a vital technology for dissolving the ego. When we focus on another's needs, we momentarily step out of that place of constant worry and comparison and enter a state of interconnectedness.

By serving, we stop seeing the world as a collection of separate pieces and start experiencing it as a single, living whole. This is the path of spiritual reciprocity: the more we empty ourselves of "I" and "mine," the more room we create for inner peace, clarity, and grace to flow in. Altruism isn't just a moral choice; it is a spiritual practice that reminds us there is no "other" to serve. We are simply one soul looking after itself in many different forms.

When you reach out a hand, you aren't just changing someone else's world; you are realigning your own. In the quiet act of giving, we find the very thing we were searching for all along: a sense of belonging to something infinite.

February

Seeds in the Garden of Spirit

Written February 1, 2026

We don't have to surmount great challenges to accomplish great goals. Just focus on doing the little things, the tiny actions that each of us can take every day to make things just a little nicer for others and yourself. Simple little kindnesses have a tremendous cumulative effect as we go forth in the world.

When we focus on small, faithful actions, we are participating in a spiritual law of growth. Just as a tiny seed holds the blueprint for one of our Redwood trees, our smallest daily efforts such as a moment of prayer, a kind word, or a breath of gratitude, plant seeds in the garden of our spirit. We often look for grand miracles or sudden shifts, but the Divine usually works in the quiet, steady rhythm of the "now."

By staying consistent, we demonstrate a deep trust that every little act of love is seen and valued. Over time, these brief moments weave together into a life of peace and purpose, showing us that greatness isn't found in the big things, but in taking those tiny actions as we walk the path of life one small step at a time.

Fear Fades Where Spirit Grows

Written February 2, 2026

One can learn to release anxiety because fear is a negative energy that fades when an individual connects with the strength of their own spirit. When someone makes space for this inner power, fear naturally loses its grip. It is a weight that holds back personal growth and simply cannot exist alongside true reliance on innate spiritual guidance.

Though the world is currently heavy with worry as people fear poverty, isolation, or war, it is not necessary to struggle against these feelings through sheer force. Instead of fighting fear, an individual can lean into this resilient power within themselves. By deepening the connection to their own spirit, they will find that they simply outgrow those old terrors. One should never use fear or the threat of judgment to influence others, as that is not the way of a centered mind. By trusting that a more peaceful path exists and looking inward for guidance, an individual allows their own spirit to show them the way.

The Latin Roots of Acceptance

Written February 3, 2026

Today's topic at the noon meeting was 'acceptance.' Many definitions and applications for acceptance were shared in that hour, and I wanted to highlight three that come to mind.

Acceptance is the cornerstone of our shared path, serving as the bridge from a shattered past to a stable present.

The first is accepting the truth about ourselves. For a long time, we lived in a state of refusal, convincing ourselves that we were in control while our lives crumbled. Acceptance begins when we stop fighting the reality of our condition. It is the exact opposite of the denial that once blinded us; it is the honest admission that things are as they are, that they are affecting us, and that we are powerless to change them through our own will alone. There has to be at least a modicum of acceptance present in one's mind to decide to give recovery an initial shot and walk through the doors for the very first time.

The second is accepting that we are not alone. We do

not walk this path in isolation. Our group is a collective of individuals who have faced the same devastating struggle and found ourselves defeated by the same enemy. Acceptance in this fellowship means recognizing that we are not unique in our suffering. By joining together and embracing a single, proven solution, we find a strength that none of us possessed individually. We identify as alcoholics in our meetings. The Latin root of the word identity is identitas, meaning 'oneness' or 'sameness.' At the end of our meetings, we accept the hand of the person next to us, knowing their struggle is our own.

The third, and deepest, is accepting help as a gift. This requires an 'acceptionem,' the Latin root meaning a receiving or an acceptance of a gift. We acknowledge that our own resources have failed us, and we open ourselves to receive a spiritual solution from a Power greater than ourselves. This is not a begrudging surrender, but a willing reception of grace and guidance. By accepting this higher help, we find the peace and direction necessary to build a new way of living.

A One Hundred Percent Success Rate

Written February 4, 2026

As I scroll this morning down my Facebook timeline, I see a lot of fear. Every day seems to be the same; people are scared of what might happen tomorrow. I was no different. I lived this way for years. It was almost like I was either looking for a new problem to dwell upon, or imagining a worst case scenario for a problem that I already have. That's a heck of a way to live; choosing familiar misery. I knew how to survive that, but it certainly didn't contribute to a good quality of living.

One thing never occurred to me, and when it did, it was life-changing: I've had a lot of challenges throughout my life, but look at where I am: I've made it through every single tough break and seemingly impossible moment life has thrown my way. That's a 100% success rate, and that kind of history isn't just luck. It's a telling sign that I've been watched over and given the strength to keep standing, no matter what.

It's okay for me to breathe a little easier knowing I don't have to carry the future all by myself. I've already

proven that with a little faith and trust in the universe, I can handle anything. By leaving the big stuff in God's hands and trusting His timing, I can stop worrying about the "what ifs" and just focus on what I need to do today. After all, the track record speaks for itself. 😉

Have a good morning, friends!

Acceptance Is Not Agreement

Written February 5, 2026

There are a lot of things that people "can't accept" in this world: the loss of a loved one, the unfairness of a career setback, or the sudden end of a long-term relationship. We often use that phrase to describe the sheer weight of our shock or the deep sense of injustice we feel, as if this acknowledgment would somehow mean we agree with it. That isn't the case at all.

Acceptance is the act of looking at a painful situation and saying, "This is real, and this is affecting me." It is a vital concession that the problem is not a figment of your imagination or something that can be wished away; it is an actual, tangible presence in your life. By validating the reality of the obstacle (and it IS an obstacle), you honor the weight of its impact on your emotions and your peace of mind. Refusing to downplay the situation allows you to stop gaslighting your own experience, providing the honest foundation required to begin the work of moving through it.

By admitting that the problem truly affects you, you drop the mask of "being fine" and allow yourself to process the actual gravity of the moment. This

recognition is not a weakness, but a tool that one can use to legitimize reality; you cannot fix a leak if you refuse to admit the floor is wet. Once you acknowledge the actuality of the burden, you can finally stop trying to faux-carry it and start finding the practical resources or inner strength needed to overcome this crippling form of denial.

Nature as a Sacred Message

Written February 6, 2026

Nature is the physical form of God's thoughts on beauty. You might find it helpful to treat every part of the natural world as a sacred message, much like an inspired thought. Seeing the world through this lens can reveal a fresh, new energy for life. By staying close to nature through its highs and lows, you may find yourself opening up to receiving deep spiritual blessings.

This perspective matters because healing often comes not just from intellectual beliefs, but from experiencing the spiritual presence in a simple flower or its scent. Living with this awareness allows you to experience the peace of a world without blemish, even if but for a moment; a life that can be defined by pure joy.

Ripples in a Pond

Written February 7, 2026

In a personal form, the Butterfly Effect is the concept that even your smallest actions or thoughts act like tiny ripples in a pond, eventually growing into large waves that shape your entire life and the world around you.

It shows that your smallest choices act like seeds that grow into your future reality. For example, if you choose to start your morning with a few minutes of meditation instead of checking the news headlines, then you shift your energy from stress to abundance, which changes how you react to everyone you meet that day. Similarly, if you listen to your intuition and offer a sincere compliment to a struggling friend, then you might provide the exact spark of hope they need to keep going, creating a ripple of positivity that extends far beyond that single conversation. These tiny moments prove that you are never powerless; every small "if" creates a "then" that shapes the course of your life.

Just for today, I will strive to consciously plant one small seed of kindness or light. I know firsthand the benefit of becoming a channel for spiritual flow, and its effect sustains me until the next opportunity arises, and such opportunities seem to be endless.

A Forest From One Wildflower

Written February 8, 2026

To connect with your spirit, you must first quiet your heart and let your senses fall still. While your senses link you to the physical world, they act like static when you're trying to reach a spiritual level; you have to tune them out to truly connect.

Search for the good in everyone and cherish it. Stay humble, spread love, and keep life lighthearted. Just as a wildflower scatters its seeds on the wind to bloom in places it will never see, the joy you plant today will grow into a vast forest of happiness that lasts for generations.

The Mask That Isolates

Written February 9, 2026

When you choose to be dishonest, you create a split within your own spirit. You are essentially trying to live two different lives; one that is true and one that is a mask, which drains your energy and replaces your inner peace with a constant, quiet anxiety. This builds a wall between you and the light of truth, making you feel isolated even when you are surrounded by people.

Each lie acts like a small weight on your heart, gradually hardening your conscience until it becomes difficult to feel genuine joy or connection.

By abandoning the truth, you distance yourself from your spirit, the part of you that is connected to the divine or the universe. This fracture makes it harder to trust others because you begin to project your own deceit onto the world around you. Ultimately, dishonesty doesn't just trick someone else; it imprisons your soul in a shadow version of reality, preventing the growth and freedom that can only come from living with an open and honest heart.

Until the Flower Becomes You

Written February 10, 2026

The universe is always with you. Just as a beautiful flower is an expression of a wonderful idea, you are an expression of the universe's highest qualities.

Think of yourself as a reflection of the best parts of existence. Because of this, try to care for your inner spirit, your mind, your health, and even how you present yourself. Aim to be the best possible version of who you are.

Absorb the beauty around you. When you truly notice the grace of a tree or a flower, it leaves an imprint on your soul that shows up in how you act.

Even during difficult times or when facing challenges, never stop looking for the beauty in the world.

Look at a flower until its beauty feels like a part of you. Later, you will give that beauty back to the world through a smile, a kind word, or a helpful thought. Listen to the birds and let their music settle into your heart. Laugh more, love more, and remember that you are never alone. You are connected to everything.

The Path of Least Resistance

Written February 11, 2026

Inner peace and a clear heart are the foundation of a conscious life. Always choose the path of least resistance. Overthinking is just a mental trap that creates unnecessary complexity; life only gets heavy if you allow your mind to clutter it. If you give all your energy to your shadows and struggles, it displaces today's serenity.

Remember: you have the power to resolve a challenge, release it to the universe, or substitute it for deeper grace. Honor the small, sacred moments. Your standard for success should never be the ego's pursuit of wealth and power, but the richness of your own spirit.

The Classroom of Daily Life

Written February 12, 2026

The messy parts, the boring routines, and the unexpected challenges of daily life aren't distractions from your spiritual growth; these form the actual classroom where that growth happens. Instead of waiting for life to get easier or quieter so you can focus on your faith, this perspective encourages you to see your current situation as the specific tool being used to shape your character. Every difficult conversation, stressor, or moment of joy is an opportunity to practice patience, trust, or gratitude in real time.

Essentially, spiritual progress doesn't happen in a vacuum or only when you are sitting in a quiet room praying. It happens when you are forced to deal with reality. If you are facing a hardship, the belief is that the hardship isn't a roadblock standing in the way of your "real" spiritual life; rather, the way you navigate that hardship IS your spiritual life. By embracing your circumstances instead of fighting them, you allow your experiences to refine you and deepen your understanding of yourself and your beliefs.

Nature Doesn't Check a Clock

Written February 13, 2026

I often mention that my life is run by the clock, the calendar, and my task list. If I'm not careful, my days become nothing more than a series of boxes to check and minutes to account for. While these tools keep me organized, they can also make me feel like I'm just another cog in the machine, disconnected from anything deeper.

That's why I make it a point each day to step outside and get into nature. When I'm in the forest or alongside the Mad River or the ocean, the pressure of my task list finally stops buzzing in my head. The clock doesn't matter as much because nature moves at its own pace; the sun rises and the seasons change without needing me to manage them. It's the best place where I can truly quiet my mind.

Taking this time isn't just a break; it's how I stay human. It reminds me that I am more than just my productivity. By putting "nature time" on my calendar, I'm actually making room for my soul to breathe. I come back to work feeling more grounded and steady, knowing that even though my schedule is full, my spirit is happy.

The Silent Observer of Thoughts

Written February 14, 2026

Peace comes when you stop fighting with the way things currently are. When you settle your thoughts and simply accept the truth of this moment, the heavy weight of your worries starts to lift. By meeting life exactly where it is, without adding extra drama or fear, you find that the path ahead naturally becomes smoother and your heart feels much lighter.

To quiet the noise, you must first recognize that you are the silent observer of your thoughts, not the thoughts themselves. This being realized, you're more able to move through this awareness without having to grab onto them.

Day One of a Lifelong Project

Written February 15, 2026

Think of a decision to embrace a higher calling. It's the moment one stops standing on the sidelines and actually starts the work. It's the Day 1 of a lifelong project.

For me, spirituality just means focusing on the internal stuff that actually matters, like my character, rather than just chasing money or status. It's about trying to live the way my Spirit would want me to live.

When I'm doing it right, I feel things like unconditional love, joy, patience, and humility. But when I let my ego take over with selfish, dishonest, or resentful motives, I lose that connection.

I'm not trying to be perfect; I'm just trying to be better than I was yesterday.

Chained to the Craving

Written February 16, 2026

To break a habit or a mindset that controls you, you first have to face a hard truth: you are responsible for where you are because, at some point, you gave in to it. If you feel like a slave to your impulses or selfishness, it's because you chose to let those parts of yourself take the lead. On the flip side, the only way to find peace is to intentionally choose to align yourself with a higher spiritual power.

We see how this works in the smallest ways. You might tell yourself, "I can stop whenever I want," but you usually can't. If you try, you'll realize just how much that habit actually dominates you. Small acts of selfishness or the need for instant gratification can quickly turn into a mental prison.

Once you let a craving take over, thinking "I must have this right now", you become chained to it, even if you hate the person you've become.

No amount of human willpower alone can break the chains of a character built on giving in to every urge. Only a true spiritual transformation is strong enough.

You have to let go of your pride and surrender to the Universal Source of life and healing. It's easy to talk about being free while still living as a prisoner to your own impulses. True freedom only happens when you stop trying to do it all yourself and let a higher power lead the way.

The House Built One Brick a Day

Written February 17, 2026

In our daily lives, it's easy to feel like the little things, such as having a glass of water before your morning coffee, don't matter much in the moment.

However, trusting your path means understanding that these small efforts that you do each day are like bricks. One brick doesn't look like much, but if you keep laying them daily, you eventually look up to find you've built a house.

Modern life often leads us to expect instant results, which can make a long term path feel far away. We see people's seemingly overnight successes on social media and feel like we're not keeping up. But a brighter tomorrow is created in those quiet, unglamorous moments when nobody is watching.

When you trust the process, you stop worrying about how far the finish line is and start focusing on the quality of your effort TODAY.

Ultimately, what you do today is a gift to your future self. By putting in the work now, you are clearing obstacles out of your way. It doesn't matter what it is

that you're working toward; today's effort becomes tomorrow's freedom. You don't need to see the whole map to take the next step; you just need to believe that moving forward, no matter how slowly, changes your trajectory for the better.

As always, it's those little things that add up to be big things over time. I can't build a house in a day, but I can easily lay a few bricks.

A Deep Breath for the Spirit

Written February 18, 2026

When the world starts feeling extra crazy, going outside helps. Nature doesn't care about the news cycle or your task list . A tree just grows, and a river just flows. Being around them reminds you that you are a part of a bigger, quieter life happening all around us. It feels like taking a deep breath for your spirit. It's a simple way to unhook that overthinking brain and remember that you are connected to something steady and peaceful.

In nature, you don't have to do anything or be anyone special. You can just walk and use your senses the way they were intended. This quiet time helps the loud thoughts in your head settle down. It's like the earth is reminding you that even when the world feels messy, there is still beauty and a natural rhythm that stays the same. It makes you feel like you belong and helps you stay calm in this stormy world.

The Whole Book, Not the Cover

Written February 19, 2026

Comparison is a normal part of being human, because it allows us to understand our place in this world. But we typically don't compare our whole self to the other person's whole self.

Think of yourself as a whole messy beautiful book, while everyone else is just showing you their front cover. Realizing who you are means stepping away from the scorecard and seeing your own worth as something that can't be measured by a job title or seeming popularity amongst peers. You aren't a collection of stats to be compared; you are a living, breathing person with your own unique path and pace. When you stop looking sideways at others and start looking inward, you see that you're already enough, exactly as you are.

This observation was inspired by a post that a friend made on their time line. If this resonates with you, please know that I see and value the whole person you are; the hard parts, your growth, and your unacknowledged wins, not just the cover of your book. <3

The Cost of a Cynical Heart

Written February 20, 2026

Whenever you feel the urge to judge others, immediately face that impulse and acknowledge your own flaws instead. If you don't, you'll start to become cold and cynical. It's not just the world that reacts to our negative actions; those actions change us from the inside. The real cost of repetitive toxic behavior is that it settles into your character, eventually becoming so normal that you lose the ability to see how much it's actually harming you.

When We Stop Forcing the Outcome

Written February 21, 2026

Finding clarity in life often happens when we stop trying to manipulate things toward our expectations. When we stop demanding that things happen on our schedule and on our terms, we open ourselves up to a much more natural flow.

Most people who practice mindfulness or spiritual connection notice that things tend to fall into place in unexpected, positive ways once they let go of the need for total control. Even during the hardest times, those struggles eventually reveal new strengths and lessons we wouldn't have found otherwise. Eventually, you realize that even the most difficult experiences have a way of working out for the best in ways you couldn't have predicted.

Thanks for letting us kno

Respect Before It's Earned

Written February 22, 2026

When you give respect to someone before they've done a single thing to earn it, you are acknowledging their humanity. It's a way of saying, "I see your spirit, and I know it has value because you exist." Starting from this place of grace means you aren't waiting for them to prove they are good enough for your kindness. Instead, you offer it freely as a reflection of your own inner peace.

Choosing to lead with respect is a practice that keeps your own heart open. If you walk around guarded, waiting for people to earn your decency, you end up living in a world of judgment. But when you treat every person as a brother or sister from the start, you invite a higher energy into the room.

You become a channel of grace, showing that your character is steady and doesn't depend on how others behave.

Even if someone eventually shows they aren't ready for your closeness, you can walk away knowing you stayed true to your path. You didn't let their shadow dim your light; you kept your spirit high by choosing to see the best in them until they showed you otherwise.

Confessions of a Fixer

Written February 23, 2026

I recently got a phone call from someone who was overwhelmed by a situation they couldn't control. Although they initially called for advice, the conversation became more about emotional support. I realized that by focusing on listening rather than jumping to solutions, I could help lower their anxiety, which is necessary before any logical problem-solving can happen.

Listening to someone in distress serves to offer them a steady, strong presence during a difficult time. At the present moment, you can't solve their external problem, but you can ensure they don't have to face it alone. By resisting the 'fix-it' reflex and simply staying present, you give them the mental space to settle. This support helps quiet their panic, eventually leading to a more manageable state of calm. One cannot follow advice while their mind is going in all directions at once.

I initially wanted to jump right in and fix things. That is one of my primary character defects; I was always a 'fixer' throughout my life. Today I see my tendency to 'fix' as a defense mechanism; a way to control my own

anxiey in an attempt to manage the world around me. When I see a situation in chaos, it makes me feel so uncomfortable that I rush to solve it just to stop my own internal stress. Focusing on a solution keeps me busy and safe, allowing me to avoid the vulnerability of just sitting with a difficult emotion.

Ultimately, this shield keeps me at a distance. When I jump to fix things, I'm often managing my own nerves instead of truly being there for the other person. I'm learning that my urge to intervene is usually more about my need to feel in control than it is about their need for help.

I'm still learning, one day at a time.

Closing the Circle of Gratitude

Written February 24, 2026

This morning, as I sat down to write my monthly column for the Mad River Union, my mind kept drifting to the idea of gratitude. It's a word we use often, but in this moment, it has taken on a very specific shape for me: a circle.

Years ago, the Senior Center was a lifeline for my parents. When they were in a place of need, the Center was there for them, providing community, support, and a place where they could belong. It gave them, and our family, a sense of peace during a challenging time.

Today, I find myself at that very same Center, but the roles have shifted. Now I am the one showing up to help, to participate, and to give back. It's a humbling feeling to realize that I am closing that circle.

Being there now isn't just about work; it's a way of saying "thank you" to a place that was there for my parents when it mattered most. Gratitude, I've realized, isn't just a feeling we keep inside. It's something we act on to make sure the door stays open for the next person who needs it.

Debugging My Spiritual Life

Written February 25, 2026

I spent a good deal of my morning fiddling with an old computer, trying to get Linux to run while one error message after another popped up on the screen. It was darn frustrating, but as I sat there troubleshooting, I realized this is exactly how my spiritual life works. I often try to install my own plans or follow my own rules, only to have everything crash or stall out. I used to see those mistakes and screw-ups as total failures, but this morning I realized that they are actually the most important part of the process.

When I finally stopped trying to force it my way and sought some help, everything clicked into place. I didn't just end up with a working computer; I ended up with a much deeper understanding of how the whole system works. My spiritual growth is the same way. I don't learn much when things are easy, but when I mess up and rely upon Spirit to find a way through the problem du jour, I gain a kind of wisdom I couldn't get any other way. Those glitches in my character force me to slow down, look at the right way to live, and try again with more humility.

Now, I feel more fully alive because I'm not afraid of hitting an error. I've learned that getting past a mistake isn't just about fixing a problem; it's about building the experience I need for the future. Just like I'm now slightly better at handling Linux, I'm becoming better at handling life because I've once again been shown that Spirit's direction is always better than the path that Self attempts to chart.

Spirituality by Subtraction

Written February 26, 2026

Becoming spiritually-led changes your perspective so that selflessness happens naturally. Instead of it being a goal you have to work toward, it is an organic result of how you are living. This process is more about subtraction than addition; you aren't trying to add new "good" behaviors to your life, but are instead shedding the heavy layers of the ego that once made self-interest feel necessary.

Normally, the ego is busy trying to protect you or stay in control, but as you grow spiritually, those old selfish urges simply begin to thin out and fade away. You aren't forcing yourself to be a "good person"; you are simply dropping the weight of always putting yourself first. As that ego-driven part of you stops running the show, kindness and service fill the empty space naturally.

Testing a Feeling by Its Fruit

Written February 27, 2026

A lot of our inner struggle doesn't come from some deep-seated flaw, but from simply not understanding how our own minds and hearts work.

To figure out if you should lean into a specific feeling, try to look at the fruit it will bear. Is it selfless? Is it true? Is it morally right? Is it beautiful?

If following that emotion leads to a version of yourself you don't respect, let it go. But if a feeling feels like a spark of genuine, positive inspiration and you ignore it, you'll end up feeling drained and stuck. The more powerful the inspiration, the worse you'll feel if you don't act on it.

When you feel that internal fire start to glow, don't overthink it. Don't make excuses or worry about whether it's practical or logical in the moment. Just protect that energy, stay connected to Spirit, and let it lead you.

I Can't, God Can, Let Him

Written February 28, 2026

Real change starts when we stop faking it. It begins right now in the authentic, honest reality of our lives, including our flaws and fears. We do not have to fix ourselves before we reach out for help; we just need to show up exactly as we are.

When we drop the act and admit we do not have all the answers, we finally make room for a deeper wisdom to step in. This kind of surrender is not about giving up, but about being real enough to finally become teachable. By simply being honest with where we are, we let ourselves be guided into the light and toward a life filled with meaning and purpose.

I can’t. God can. Let Him.

March

Letting Spirit Do the Clearing

Written March 1, 2026

When Ego sneaks in and highlights an old pattern or a mistake, don't rush to "fix" it. Your only job is to step into the light of awareness and let Spirit do the clearing for you.

Living spiritually means being radically honest with yourself the moment you feel out of alignment. If you're stuck in self-mode, you'll get defensive or try to justify your actions with excuses. When you feel that internal nudge that something is off, don't hide. Just acknowledge it. Let God handle the heavy lifting. If you try to argue for your limitations, you're just going to spin your wheels.

How do you know you're actually shifting away from ego-driven living? Life will give you plenty of tests to show you how much you've grown, or what you need to work on. You may find yourself in a situation that used to trigger your resentment or anger, and suddenly, you'll realize you're at peace. When that shift happens, it's undeniable. You'll be constantly amazed at the transformation that has taken place.

We don't forget the past; we use it as benchmarks to measure progress.

The Person Hard Work Makes You

Written March 2, 2026

Stop worrying about what you can't change. Focus on what you can. Let go of the future and trust that life will unfold exactly as it should. Don't let old hurts ruin your spirit; heal them, forgive others, and move on. When you stop judging people, you start seeing the good in them.

Stop living in the past or fearing tomorrow. Be here in the present. Stop complaining or acting like a victim, and take an honest look in the mirror. Remember that love always beats hate and light always wins over darkness.

The best part of hard work isn't the reward. It's the person you become. Stop cheating yourself out of what you could become. The past is gone and tomorrow hasn't happened yet. Prepare for the future, but live your life Just For Today.

Water Dripping on Stone

Written March 3, 2026

Your conception of God is within you in this very moment, indeed in every moment. Don't let fear or doubt get in the way, His love and support for you are limitless. Your success isn't going to happen all at once; it's built through the tiny consistent things you do every single day.

Think of it like water dripping on a rock. It doesn't look like much at first, but that steady persistence eventually wears down even the hardest obstacles. That same consistency will clear your path and put you in a position to help others, too.

So, keep moving forward with confidence. Don't overthink it; just know that your back is covered and you have access to the strength you need.

Amazing things have already started happening, and there is so much more coming; more than you can even imagine. Trust the process and tell yourself 'all is well' through everything. Because it really is.

The Bridge Already Built

Written March 4, 2026

Spirit leads with constant support, reminding us that we are held by a Higher Power and that small, human fears are unnecessary. While faith is the foundation we stand on, trust is the active step we take as we follow that lead.

Imagine a person walking through a beautiful, sunlit forest, but their peace is ruined by the fear of a river they might not be able to cross. All the while, a bridge has already been built. This person has a Guide who has scouted the path and guaranteed that every need will be met. Faith means believing the bridge exists; trust is the act of actually walking across it.

It is time to let go of anxious thoughts and move with Spirit, refusing to get caught up in the problems of tomorrow. When we turn our internal faith into the outward action of trust, we can simply wait for the way to unfold.

A Field, Not a Tightrope

Written March 5, 2026

Real growth starts with how you act every day. When you live according to your own spiritual guidance, you grow more ready to understand deeper truths about life. Think of it like a conversation: as you mature, you can handle more wisdom. Upon each instance of growth, you are enabled to see the world from a wider perspective.

But going higher brings new challenges. Sometimes, you'll feel a push to be 'perfect' in a way that feels stiff and frightening, like walking a tightrope.

That isn't real growth. True progress should feel like stepping onto a wide, open field; it gives you more room to breathe and move freely. You aren't just following rules. You are gaining more freedom.

To see if you've grown, look back at who you were last year. The best sign of progress isn't just avoiding old mistakes, but having new "aha" moments that you didn't have before. These insights show up because your character is finally ready for them. The secret to keeping this going is to use what you learn immediately. When you get a new piece of wisdom, build it into your life right away to stay ready for the next one.

Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

Written March 6, 2026

Yesterday, someone mentioned having an ‘Angel on their shoulder’, and it caused me to reflect on how I might interpret that oft-used phrase. I often use the expression ‘Let your conscience be your guide’, and that makes much more sense to me.

I’m certain that there is something quietly walking with me. A presence I can't see but can feel. Maybe it's Spirit watching over me. Maybe it's the clearest, most honest part of myself; the part that existed before life got complicated. Either way, it feels real, and it feels good.

This presence acts like a compass. It doesn't get confused by my pride or my fears the way I do. When I'm about to do something I'll regret, it slows me down. When I feel completely empty, it gives me just enough courage to keep going. It doesn't live my life for me, but it quietly reminds me that I am capable and that I matter, even when I've lost sight of that.

Living with this kind of awareness means paying attention. It means getting honest and still enough to actually hear that small quiet voice instead of drowning

it out. It means treating my everyday choices as opportunities to do the next right thing…not perfectly, but sincerely.

I used to think that grace was something that had to be handed to me from above. I've come to believe it often it was already there, waiting beneath all the noise, fear, and bad habits I had piled on top of it.

Whether I call this presence God, a Higher Power, or simply my own conscience at its best, learning to listen to it has changed everything. I spend less time reacting out of fear and more time moving with purpose. And doing that one day at a time seems to be enough.

A Ripple From Hello

Written March 7, 2026

Talking to a stranger is like building a sudden bridge between two lives. For you, it's a way to practice trusting your gut and stepping out of your own bubble. It reminds you that you aren't the only one who has a story, which helps you stay humble and open-hearted. By following that little nudge to speak up, you're basically telling the universe you're ready to be a teammate in making the world feel a bit friendlier and more connected. We needed this during the Covid social disconnection, and we need it today.

For the other person, your random hello might be the exact moment of kindness they were hoping for. You might say something small that feels like a huge answer to a problem they've been chewing on, or you might just make them feel seen during a lonely day. These quick chats act like a ripple in a pond; your positive energy shifts their mood, and they carry that better vibe into their next interaction. It's a simple way to honor the shared humanity in someone else and remind them they aren't walking through life alone.

I Don't Tell God What to Do

Written March 8, 2026

I don't tell God what to do. I've realized that when I try to dictate the "right" outcome, I'm just building a wall between myself and the Universe. My ego wants to manage outcomes, but my soul knows that my limited perspective can't see the whole picture.

I've moved away from using prayer as a way to fix things the way that I think that should be done, or argue my case. That old approach only left me feeling disconnected; without the constant contact that brings me serenity. It made my heart feel heavy, like I was swimming upstream in a fast-moving river.

Now, my only practice is to stay open and aligned. I've stopped handing out instructions and started asking only for Spirit's will to be done. By letting go of my own agenda, I've found a sense of ease that actually sustains me.

I'm no longer trying to force the world to suit my vision, Spirit is changing me to suit His.

The Poisoned Well We All Share

Written March 9, 2026

When we hate someone or something, we think we are hurting them. But our hate doesn't live in the other person. It lives in us. It festers in the working part of our minds, and colors the way we see everything around us. And it doesn't stay contained. Hate leaks out in the way we talk, the way we treat people, the small cruelties we pass along without even noticing.

The well is not just our inner life. It is the shared life we all draw from: the interconnectedness of our families, our communities, our world. When we poison it, everyone drinks from it.

Resentment is hate's quiet cousin, and in many ways it's more dangerous because it hides better. My Twelve Step friends are quite familiar with this. The word itself comes from the Latin re-sentire, meaning "to feel again." Resentment is the false solution of replaying old wounds, of going back to the hurt over and over as if something will finally be resolved by feeling it one more time. It never is. Instead, each replay deepens the groove, makes the bitterness more familiar, and more powerful. We begin to depend upon the story of what was done to

us because it has become part of our identity. The person who wronged us may have moved on entirely, or may even be long gone, while we are still at the well, still poisoning it, still waiting for them to suffer. But others are drinking too. Our children. Our friends.

Strangers who never had anything to do with our old wounds.

The solution is forgiveness. Not the soft, superficial easy kind. True forgiveness means looking clearly at what happened, acknowledging that it was wrong, and then choosing to release your claim on it anyway. Not just for your own sake, but for everyone who shares the well with you. When you carry hate and resentment, they shape how you show up in the world. Forgiveness is not only a personal act. It is a communal one.

Forgiveness begins with honesty. Sit quietly with yourself and simply name what you're holding. See it clearly, without excusing it or avoiding it. When it comes into focus, you also see how far beyond you it reaches. From there, forgiveness is less a single moment and more a repeated responsibility to those around you. Every time the mind reaches back for the old wound, you notice it, and you choose not to go there. Over time,

this is how the water clears. Not through one dramatic act, but through the

quiet, daily resolve to stop adding poison to something everyone depends on. The world has no shortage of poisoned wells. I don't have to contribute my own.

Giving Away the Keys to Happiness

Written March 10, 2026

In Twelve Step programs, we learn that anger can literally kill us if we do not rein it in completely and in time. If we do not master these emotions, they have that power because they lead us straight back to the insanity of addiction. To become free from anger, we first have to realize that our peace of mind is our most valuable possession. When we get angry, we are essentially giving someone else the keys to our happiness and letting them decide how we feel.

We can start to find freedom by seeing anger as a heavy chain that only hurts us as the ones wearing it. Instead of trying to fight these emotions, we try to look at them with curiosity. We ask ourselves what part of us is feeling hurt or scared underneath the heat. When we identify our underlying hurt, the anger often starts to melt away on its own because it is now exposed to reality and no longer has a job to do.

Staying free means practicing a pause between what happens to us and how we react. In that tiny moment of stillness, we can choose to stay calm instead of biting the hook that someone else threw at us. We begin to

understand that the rudeness or mistakes of others are about their own inner struggle and have nothing to do with our worth. By choosing to let go, we are not saying that what happened was okay, but we are deciding that we deserve to be happy more than we need to be right. This shift in focus allows us to realize that we do not have to win every fight to be at peace.

Letting Go of the Steering Wheel

Written March 11, 2026

Trying to force life to go our way only leaves us exhausted and cold toward the people we should be helping. When we try to run the show entirely on our own strength, we inevitably get crushed by the weight of our expectations. We become so overwhelmed by the pressures of work, family, and the world that we lose our internal anchor. In this state of self-will, we start seeing the people around us as obstacles to be managed or problems to be solved rather than human beings to be loved. This hardness of heart is a clear sign that we've disconnected from our spiritual source and the focus has turned inward rather than outward.

To find relief, we have to stop the frantic activity and reconnect with a higher sense of purpose. Real peace doesn't come from fixing every external crisis; it comes from a daily practice of letting go and seeking a quiet, conscious connection with the Divine. When we stop trying to "play God" and instead ask for the strength to be of service, our perspective shifts. We begin to look at even the most difficult people with patience and compassion rather than resentment. By staying

grounded, we move from being overwhelmed by our burdens to becoming an instrument of grace for everyone we encounter.

Just for today, I will let go of the steering wheel and simply be the channel that I was meant to be.

The Season After the Storm

Written March 12, 2026

Spring brings a message of hope.

It's more than just nature waking up after a long winter; it's a reminder that our own dark seasons, our times of struggle, mistakes, or pain, can also pass. No matter how deep the conflict or hardship, we can always emerge into a fresh, vibrant new beginning.

Nature does this effortlessly because it stays in sync with the natural rhythm of life.

In the same way, when we choose to live in harmony with a higher purpose and align ourselves with integrity and the natural order, we can turn chaos into balance and replace discord with peace. A life defined by compassion and unity is the natural result of moving out of the shadows and into the light.

The Story I Told Myself

Written March 13, 2026

Today I had an interaction with someone, and at the end of the interaction, I was asked if I assumed that an outcome was to come to pass. I told the man that I've learned to not assume anything, and just let it go at that.

"I've learned not to assume anything."

And I meant it. It's not something that came naturally; it took time and experience, and a lot of honest self-examination with a mentor to get there. To develop the habit of catching myself before a story hardened into something I'd carry around as fact.

Because that's what the mind does. It doesn't just register events. It instantly explains them. The brain is always filling in gaps, pattern-matching, using past experience and fear and ego to construct a narrative. And it does it so fast and so seamlessly that by the time the story arrives in my consciousness, it already feels like reality. Not interpretation. Not a guess. Just what 'really' happened.

That's the part that used to get me. I wasn't experiencing my assumptions as assumptions. I was

experiencing them as truth.

And once I was convinced of the truth of something, I'd start carrying it. Replaying it. Building a case. The emotional charge would grow, sometimes way out of proportion to whatever actually happened. The other person may have moved on completely, or may not have even known there was a problem…but inside me, the wound would stay fresh. Fed by every replay. Growing with every retelling.

That kind of unresolved anger and hurt is exhausting. It creates a constant inner disturbance; a low hum of agitation and self-pity that colors everything. For a lot of people that's just unpleasant. For me, it was a lit fuse. My whole history had taught me that alcohol was what made that feeling stop. The part of me that knew better got completely drowned out by the noise. So I'd reach for the one thing that had always worked, at least for a little while.

And one drink was never just one drink. It brought the next one. And the one after that. Whatever I'd been feeling in the first place became a distant

memory, replaced by something that cost me far more than the original hurt ever could have.

All of it traceable back to a story I told myself, about something that may never have been quite what I thought it was.

Service Is Where Value Begins

Written March 14, 2026

True greatness starts with service. Think of the Universe as the ultimate partner, always ready to back you up in anything good you do. That higher strength is always there, but it won't force its way in; you have to use your free will to invite it.

Even though this support is a total gift, you still have to step up and sincerely ask for it. Living to help others is the highest path you can take. We're here to be of use to the world, and that's where our real value begins and ends.

A Source That Never Runs Out

Written March 15, 2026

Challenging times are upon us, where we feel pulled in many directions at once.

This isn't a bad thing. You may have values, people, or a sense of purpose that matters to you, but your inner peace is fragile. When life gets hard, you slip back into old habits and unhealthy patterns; things that don't actually help you or move you forward. If you're honest with yourself, you know that self-will alone has never been enough. You have tried to manage life on your own terms, and it hasn't worked.

When things go dark, do you give up on what you believe in? Do you abandon your values, your relationships, your sense of who you are? This darkness is actually part of the process. If you can sit with it, you realize something honest: you weren't really committed to growth. You were just enjoying life when it was easy. And when it got hard, you reached for something (like alcohol) to make the discomfort go away. That is the nature of the problem. It's not a lack of willpower, but a deep, restless inability to sit with life as it is.

The solution isn't more effort or more control. It is surrender. Not giving up, but letting go of the exhausting idea that you can manage everything yourself. This means becoming open to a Power greater than yourself. One you don't have to fully understand or define. You simply have to be willing. Willingness is the key. Many people who never considered themselves spiritual have found that an honest admission of powerlessness, followed by a simple openness to help beyond themselves, changed everything.

Can you let go of the need to always feel good and just be still, even when it feels empty and pointless? In that stillness, through honest self-examination, making things right with others, and staying connected to something greater than yourself, you begin to find a peace that circumstances cannot shake. You are developing a kind of inner toughness that nothing can break. Then, no matter how chaotic life gets, you stay steady.

Not because you have finally gotten strong enough, but because you have stopped relying on your own strength alone, and started drawing from a Source that never runs out.

Pain as Prison or Purpose

Written March 16, 2026

Everyone has that moment. You stop, look back, and think, "Damn. I've really been through it."

And you have. The hard things were real. I know mine sure were. I caused it. It brought a lot of pain to those who I was closest to, particularly to Miss K.

But here's the question nobody asks. “What are you going to do with it?”

Because there are two roads. The first one feels good immediately. You talk about it, people validate you, and for a little while that feels like enough.

But collecting sympathy isn't the same as healing. And when everything wrong in your life is always someone else's fault, you've handed all your power to people who already hurt you once. That's a bad deal.

The second road asks something of you. Honest self-reflection. Cleaning up your own mess. Staying humble. Doing the work even when nobody is watching.

It's harder. But what's waiting on the other side is actual freedom. The kind that doesn't depend on

anyone else's apology.

And then something shifts. You stop being someone who is defined by what happened to them, and you become someone who reaches back for the person still in the middle of it. Not with all the answers. Just with presence. I know this place. You're not alone. Here's my hand.

Your pain can become your prison, or it can become your purpose. That choice belongs to nobody but you.

Tracing Gratitude Back to Someone

Written March 17, 2026

Gratitude doesn't really exist in a vacuum. When I trace almost any feeling of thankfulness back to its source, I find a person. Someone made a decision, took a moment, or put in effort that landed in my life in a way that mattered. That's what makes gratitude relational at its core. It connects me to someone else, even if they never know it.

Think about the things I felt grateful for today. My hot mug of coffee exists because someone grew the beans, someone shipped them, someone made my coffee maker. A kind word from a friend took intention and care. Even something as simple as a smooth drive into Eureka happened because other drivers were patient and other people maintained the roads. The further I trace it, the more people I find.

This is why gratitude, when practiced honestly, tends to make me more generous. Once I see how much of my day is built on other people's effort, it becomes hard to see myself as self-sufficient. I start to notice how often I

am on the receiving end of something, and that naturally makes me want to give back.

It also changes how I see strangers. The person ahead of me in line, the delivery driver, the cashier. They are all, in small ways, part of what holds my day together. Gratitude trains me to notice that.

That's probably why my journaling practice feels so right. Listing who helped me and who I helped isn't just bookkeeping. It's a way of acknowledging that I am not living my life alone, and that the people around me both known and unknown, are woven into the entirety of this.

Painting the Hull of a Sinking Ship

Written March 18, 2026

Treating a symptom while ignoring the root cause is like trying to fix a sinking ship by painting the hull; it might look better for a moment, but the water is still coming in. IfIn my struggle with alcoholism, I could spend all my energy covering up the shakes or using cologne to hide the smell (the "symptoms") but the illness will continue to destroy my life until I address the spiritual malady at my core. Just as I found that managing external issues wasn't enough without healing that internal disconnection, I see California spending $19 million to "fix" its image as a cosmetic adjustment that ignores the state's own soul-level crisis. A state only earns a genuine recovery when it stops managing its reputation and starts addressing the fundamental misalignment of its values, because just as I cannot market my way out of a spiritual void, a government cannot PR its way out of a reality that has lost its way.

Something Much Older Than the Drink

Written March 19, 2026

I used to believe my drinking problem was one specific thing. One habit, one behavior I needed to get under control. What I discovered was that underneath it was something much older. Unhealed wounds. Fear running the show. A deep disconnection from myself and from other people.

The solution I found was simpler than I expected, and harder. It asked me to be honest about who I was and what I'd done. It asked me to lean on others instead of isolating. It asked me to trust in a Power greater than my own will and my own thinking.

Very slowly, things changed. Not just the behavior on the surface, but the roots underneath. The fear quieted. The chaos in my relationships calmed. I began to feel like I belonged here, in this life, among my community.

I share this because I know I'm not the only one who has felt broken beyond repair. You're not. There is a way through, and you don't have to find it alone. Please reach out if you need help. You are worth it, and the hard things are worth doing.

The Blindness of Certainty

Written March 20, 2026

There's a particular kind of blindness that comes not from ignorance, but from certainty. When we've already decided we know about ourselves, about our patterns, about why we are the way we are, we become unreachable. Not because the truth isn't available, but because we've quietly stopped looking for it. The door is locked from the inside.

And the painful irony is this: the mind will always mistake understanding a thing for being changed by it.

Insight alone changes nothing. What changes us is the daily, unglamorous practice of bringing that insight into contact with real life…with the moments that irritate us, the places where our old instincts still reach for familiar shortcuts, the quiet friction of just showing up differently than we used to. That's where transformation either happens or it doesn't.

Until we've been moved in those ordinary, unwitnessed moments, there's a deep wisdom in speaking less and sitting longer. In letting the truth do its slow work before we try to carry it anywhere. In recognizing that

a depth we haven't yet become is still just a beginning,
however sincere.

The question isn't whether the light
has reached us. It's… “Are we
willing to be changed by it,
quietly?”

Show Me Who I Am

Written March 21, 2026

Today I am free from the chains of alcoholism. Freedom is not a single moment, but a daily practice. Old patterns still whisper at the edges of my life, reaching for my identity, my longings, even the visions I hold for my future. But I know this: without vision, without hope, the soul has nothing to move toward.

So I turn inward. I do the deeper work.

I call on the Divine; that limitless Source of strength within and beyond me, to walk with me toward the one I have spent so long avoiding: myself. My authentic self. The person I was created, at my core, to be. Not the version shaped by pain or numbed by survival, but the whole being underneath it all.

Until I face that truth, I am only ever running, exchanging one cage for another. But the moment I stop running, real freedom begins.

And so I pray. And I listen. Every morning. Every day. Show me who I am. Show me what freedom truly feels like.

Sobriety Was Never My Decision

Written March 22, 2026

My sobriety didn't begin with a decision to stop. It began with God showing up. On one very special day, He made Himself known to me briefly and unmistakably, and in that moment something cracked open. For the first time, I found myself willing to believe that He was real, that He wasn't distant or indifferent, and that He could actually do something in my life.

That willingness was enough. The sobriety that followed wasn't something I produced. It was a gift, plain and simple.

Because here's what I know about myself: my drinking wasn't really about the alcohol. It was about Ego. I was convinced, deep down, that I could run my own life, that if I just thought hard enough or tried hard enough, I could make everything work out. And even when I occasionally put the bottle down through sheer willpower, I quickly realized I hadn't actually changed anything. I was sober, but I was still the same person white-knuckling his way through life. That wasn't freedom, and that sobriety was always very short-lived.

The real issue was that I kept putting myself at the center of everything. My decisions, my plans, my way. And it kept falling apart. What finally shifted things wasn't trying harder. It was letting go. Becoming genuinely willing to have God step in and clear away whatever was standing between me and a different kind of life.

That willingness isn't a one-time thing, though. I have to come back to it every day. Each morning I get quiet and ask God to show me how He'd have me show up; to work through whatever still gets in my way so I can be useful to someone else who's hurting. When I stay in that place spiritually, something remarkable happens: the pull toward drinking simply isn't there. Life gets lighter. Things open up.

The freedom I walk in today isn't something I earned or maintain on my own. It's what naturally happens when I stay connected. It’s what happens when I let my Spirit lead rather than trying to take the wheel myself, one day at a time.

Pain, the Touchstone of Growth

Written March 23, 2026

Problems are one of the ways life, or God, or the universe, depending on your belief, shapes us into who we are meant to become. Just like fire refines gold, difficulty refines the human spirit. When something hard hits you, it is rarely random. There is often something in it meant to wake you up, redirect you, or strip away what was never truly serving you in the first place.

The blessing comes when you look back and see what the problem made possible; the door it closed so another could open, the person it brought into your life, the version of yourself it forced you to become. What felt like loss often turns out to be preparation. What felt like a setback was quietly a setup for something better, or something deeper.

The lesson is the gift hidden inside the pain. It asks you to be honest with yourself, to look at what you may have ignored, what you needed to learn about trust, patience, surrender, or faith. A wise man once wrote that pain is the touchstone of ALL spiritual progress, and there is a profound truth in that. It is rarely

comfort that changes us at the root. It is the ache, the struggle, the problems that cracks us open wide enough for real light to get in. Spiritually, no experience is wasted. Every trial carries a teaching, and when you receive it with an open heart instead of a closed mind, it transforms you rather than eating you from the inside out.

Wisdom is what remains. It is the quiet knowledge you carry forward. The compassion you now have for others who are suffering, the steadiness you feel in new storms because you survived the last one, the faith that grows not from easy times but from hard ones endured with grace. In this way, a problem is never just a problem. In the hands of a willing spirit, it becomes one of the most powerful tools for growth there is.

Training for the Fears We Already Have

Written March 24, 2026

Most of us live in a fog of worry. Money. Relationships. What people think of us. These fears linger because there's no clear way to fight them. They just… sit there.

For the Artemis II crew heading to the Moon? Fear looks completely different.

Their threats are specific. A mechanical failure. A system malfunction. Things they have rehearsed thousands of times. So when something goes wrong 240,000 miles from Earth, they don't freeze. They act. Their training turns panic into a checklist.

They're not braver than you or me. They just have better tools.

And here's what's wild. They actually trade the unpredictable stress of everyday life for the high-stakes pressure of space. Because as terrifying as hurtling back to Earth in a fireball sounds, at least they know exactly how to handle it.

Most of us never get that luxury with our daily fears.

So maybe the real question is: what would it look like to train for the fears you already have?

My Spiritual Doppler Radar

Written March 25, 2026

Okay, my morning task list is complete. Looking at the Doppler radar, it looks like I have time to get in a few laps around the neighborhood before it starts raining again. I use the radar on the NWS website frequently, and find that it is very accurate in terms of timing, because of the real-time nature of it.

I like to think of my spiritual practice as my own personal Doppler radar for my life. Just as I check the screen to see if a rain cell is blowing in before I hit the trail, I use my inner reflection to sense the "atmospheric pressure" of my day. It's an early warning system that picks up on the invisible winds of stress or the dark clouds of a bad mood long before the actual downpour of a conflict hits. By watching these patterns, I'm not caught off guard; I can see a "front" of anxiety moving in and decide to grab a spiritual umbrella of patience or simply wait for the turbulence to pass before I make a big move.

It also helps me spot those beautiful, clear windows of opportunity that I might otherwise miss. Sometimes life feels like nothing but overcast skies, but my spiritual

radar helps me find that one-hour break in the rain where I can step out in peace and get things done. I can't control the weather; I can't stop the storms from coming, but I can stay in sync with the shifts in my heart. Checking my radar keeps me from getting soaked by my own reactions and helps me walk through my life with a much better sense of timing.

Easy Does It

Written March 26, 2026

Easy Does It

Stop fighting. So much of our suffering comes not from our circumstances, but from our relentless effort to control outcomes that aren't ours to control. When a door won't open, the answer is rarely to kick it down.

More often, we need to step back, get quiet, and trust that it will open in its own time.

Progress is not a straight line, and pretending otherwise sets us up to fail. We will stumble. We will have days that feel like setbacks. That is not a reason to quit, it is simply the nature of the journey. The danger is in trying to solve everything at once, because when that inevitably fails, we use it as an excuse to give up entirely. Instead, we take the next spiritually-indicated action. Just today. Just this moment.

Once we have turned our will over to the care of a Higher Power, the work becomes trusting that decision, especially when we feel the urge to take it back. In those moments, we ask for guidance, we accept help from those around us, and we rest in the knowledge that

a Power greater than ourselves can do for us what we could never do alone.

The strength is already there. We find it not by pushing harder, but by letting go.

Peace With What You Have

Written March 27, 2026

Real peace comes from doing what you can with what you have, and letting go of what is beyond your reach. It means taking care of yourself as best you can. Not because life is perfect, but because you are worth caring for regardless of your circumstances.

This looks different for everyone. It might mean doing your best to manage your resources, however limited they may be. It might mean finding a small corner of order and calm in whatever space you occupy, whether that is a house, a room, a shelter, or simply the space within yourself. It means moving your body when you are able. Nourishing yourself with whatever is available. Taking a moment each day to breathe, to be still, to connect with something greater than your circumstances.

When someone tends to themselves with whatever they have, they build an inner foundation that circumstances alone cannot take away. Hard times will always come; financial pressure, uncertainty, watching someone you love struggle. But a person who has done what they could with what they had is more steady when those

moments arrive. They don't fall apart. They stay calm . They are able to be there for others.

Peace is not something only available to those with comfortable lives. It lives inside anyone who chooses, day by day, to do their best with what they have.

Shortcomings That Once Saved You

Written March 28, 2026

The term ‘shortcomings’ is funny because those traits often stick around for a very long time. For many of us, the things we now call "character defects" were actually the survival tools that kept us alive while we were struggling. It’s no wonder we hold onto them so tightly; they feel like old friends who protected us.

If you’re feeling stuck in anger or fear, try to picture a life where those feelings don’t control you. Ask yourself what you’re really afraid of. Are you scared you won't know who you are without those old habits?

Once you name that fear, you can move past it. Use your imagination to see the person you could become; someone peaceful and free. Your Higher Power has a beautiful vision for your life that matches your own deepest dreams. You don't have to be afraid of becoming your best self.

The Architect of Your Own Peace

Written March 29, 2026

“You are the handicap you must face. You are the one who must choose your place.”

- James Allen

We all carry unique burdens. Some are visible to the world and others hidden deep within our hearts. These "handicaps" aren't just physical; they can be heavy emotions, limiting beliefs, or a spirit weighed down by insecurity and illness.

While we didn't choose every challenge or thorn in our side, we must recognize that some of our suffering is self-created through our own attitudes. Spiritual growth begins when we distinguish between the hardships life gave us and the walls we’ve built ourselves.

By choosing to let go of our self-imposed shadows and meeting our unavoidable trials with grace, we claim our divine right to a full, purposeful life. Ultimately, we are the architects of our own peace, called to rise above our limitations and live out our highest, most authentic truth.

The Most Honest Thing I Ever Did

Written March 30, 2026

I remember that day in the fall of 2018 clearly; I finally reached a point where I had to admit that my own willpower wasn't enough to stop drinking. For a long time, I let my pride convince me that I could manage everything on my own, but that self-reliance eventually became a dead end. I had to face the uncomfortable truth that my best thinking had only led me further into a hole. It turned out that admitting I was powerless over the situation wasn't an act of weakness; it was the most honest thing I had ever done. It was the moment I stopped fighting a lonely, losing battle and started looking for a way out that actually worked.

By letting go of the demand to be "the master of my own fate," I found a strange kind of freedom. I realized that my ego had been blocking me from the very help I needed. Once I stopped trying to force my way through life and became willing to listen, I could finally see the path others had taken to find peace. This shift required me to set aside my old ideas and approach life with a new kind of humility, recognizing that I needed a Power greater than myself, found in faith and in the experience

and support of others to restore me to balance.

Today, I see that asking for help is the ultimate act of self-respect. It means I value my life enough to stop sabotaging it with my own stubbornness. By staying open and reachable, I've traded my isolation for a sense of belonging and my chaos for a design for living that actually works. I don't have to have all the answers anymore; I just have to be willing to follow the directions of those who have walked this path before me.

God Speaks in Whispers

Written March 31, 2026

A Higher Power rarely announces itself through crisis or the clamor of the ego. Its presence is more like a quiet, steady signal, one that only becomes audible when we stop drowning it out with our own noise. The whisper of God cannot be heard through the loud voice of ego and self. For those who have spent years driven by fear, resentment, or relentless self-will, this realization often arrives not as a thunderclap but as a subtle shift: a gentle sense of direction emerging precisely when human effort has run out of answers, and when the ego has finally exhausted itself into silence.

Yet sometimes God does arrive as a thunderclap. A close friend, following the advice of his spiritual mentor to continually seek the little miracles hidden in ordinary moments, watched three clouds move together across the sky until they broke into a single crack of thunder. He knew instantly, with the kind of certainty that bypasses argument, that his recently departed mother-in-law was still present and watching over him. God, it turns out, is fluent in more than whispers. He also speaks in signs, and those signs are as varied as the

people who need them. But even signs go unnoticed when the ego is busy narrating, interpreting, and demanding that reality conform to its expectations.

Hearing either whispers or signs requires preparation, and that preparation begins with quieting the self. The mental static created by dishonesty, selfishness, and unresolved guilt acts as interference, not because connection must be earned through perfection, but because ego and self simply crowd it out. They are loud, insistent, and convinced of their own authority. When a person does the honest, humbling work of clearing that wreckage and stepping out from behind the noise of self-will, something surprising happens: what once seemed like an occasional whisper reveals itself as a steady stream. Not commands, but quiet intuitions, gentle nudges toward what is right and useful, gradually replacing the obsessive, fearful thinking that ego once used to dominate every waking moment.

This guidance is sharpest at the margins of the day, precisely because those moments belong least to the ego. A few minutes of morning reflection, shifting the question from What do I want? to How can I be of service?, tunes the receiver. An honest pause in the

evening reinforces it. Over time, this practice builds what might be called spiritual fitness: not a dramatic transformation, but a growing capacity to set the self aside and hear what is actually being offered.

The proof is usually quiet. It shows up as steadiness where there used to be chaos, as clarity where there was confusion, as peace that holds even when circumstances don't cooperate, and sometimes as three clouds gathering in an ordinary afternoon sky. That peace, and those signs, are how we know something greater than ourselves is at work. They were always there. The only thing blocking them was us.

April

Right Here, Right Now

Written April 1, 2026

Right here, right now. There is only this moment. Just this.

And yet many of us spend our days looking backwards, trying to return to something that is already gone. We replay old memories, wishing we could feel that happiness again. Or we replay old hurts, hoping that somehow, if we think about them long enough, they will finally make sense.

But life keeps moving. It never stops. And no matter how hard we try, we cannot go back. The past is closed. Not as a punishment, but as a simple fact of how life works.

You are not who you were then. Nothing is the same as it was. And that is actually good news.

Because here is what you can do: you can take everything you learned from your past and bring it with you into today. Every hard season taught you something. Every broken relationship showed you something about yourself. Every mistake quietly made you wiser. None of that is wasted. It is all still yours.

And if good things happened even in your most difficult times, and they did, then even better things are possible now. You have grown. You are clearer. You are stronger than you know.

Your home is not in the past. It is right here. Right now. In this moment, in this breath, in this ordinary, quiet Friday.

The more fully you show up for today, the better your tomorrows become. Life opens up when we stop looking behind us and start paying attention to what is right in front of us.

I gently close the door on the past. I am grateful for what it taught me. And I turn my full attention to today, because this is where my life is actually happening.

Trading Hope for Familiar Misery

Written April 2, 2026

We often hear phrases like “don’t quit” or “keep going.” When life feels heavy or dark, it is helpful to remember that we aren’t the ones running the whole show, and we certainly don’t have all the answers. We can’t see what’s waiting for us just around the bend.

When a giant obstacle shows up, we have no idea what kind of grace or support might show up right along with it. Our ego wants to be in control, and sometimes it’s actually easier to just give up and accept defeat because at least then we know what to expect. We trade our hope for the comfort of a predictable ending. For years, my choice of embracing ‘familiar misery’ kept me from moving toward the terrifying unknown of change.

Whether we are fighting an old habit, walking away from a toxic connection, or facing a deep fear, we have to remember that life is always in motion.

This exact moment, however painful, cannot stay this way forever. We don't control the final result, but we do get to choose how we show up right now.

Instead of trying to force an outcome, we can choose to

stay steady and pour our heart into what is good. May I have the peace to trust the journey and the strength to simply do my part, leaving the rest to Spirit.

The Readiness to Say I'm Here

Written April 3, 2026

When life calls us toward something meaningful, many of us are too distracted to notice. We're lost in our own plans, our own noise. Being ready means more than having a good heart. It means knowing where you actually are, right now. We spend so much energy focused on where we want to go that we forget to pay attention to where we've been placed.

When the moment comes, the ready person simply says: "I'm here."

The person who shows up fully in this moment is the one who's ready when something real comes along. We hold ourselves back, convinced that our true purpose is waiting just ahead, some bigger, better version of our life. When something grand appears, we're suddenly available. But when the quiet, unglamorous work shows up, we're nowhere to be found.

Real readiness means being just as willing to do the small, invisible thing as the extraordinary one. Whatever is needed, you're there for it. You hear the call the way someone in love hears the voice of the

person they love, immediately, and with your whole self. Life asks us to show up wherever we're needed, in easy circumstances or hard ones, without resistance.

Stay open to the unexpected moments when something greater reaches into your ordinary day. A truly ready person never has to scramble. Think of how much time we lose rushing to catch up to a moment we could have simply been present for all along.

Everything is already alive with meaning. The only question is whether we're paying attention.

Patience as Surrender

Written April 4, 2026

Patience is the ultimate surrender of the self-will, a quiet acknowledgment that we are no longer the directors of our own lives. It represents a fundamental shift from the restless, irritable demand for things to go our way to a state of calm reliance on a power greater than ourselves.

When we stop trying to manage every outcome and manipulate every circumstance, we find that life begins to unfold with a purpose we couldn't have manufactured on our own. This wisdom is found in the realization that our greatest troubles often stem from our own stubborn insistence on a personal timeline.

By letting go of that grip, we find a new freedom and a peace that isn't dependent on our surroundings. The deeper work lies in the ability to walk through delays or difficulties without fear, trusting that as long as we keep our own house in order and stay of service to others, we are exactly where we are meant to be.

Turning Outward From Fear

Written April 5, 2026

Fear turns us inward. It pulls us into ourselves, where worries grow and the mind circles the same dark thoughts until it tells us there is no way out. This is the fruit of self-reliance taken too far: the belief that we alone must manage everything, figure out everything, fix everything. It never works. It has never worked.

We came to see that we needed a Power greater than ourselves.

This was not a defeat. It was the beginning of freedom. When we stopped insisting on running the show, something shifted. We could not think our way there. We could not will our way there. We had to admit that our best thinking had gotten us exactly here, and that was not good enough.

So we moved. We did something. We took the next right action, however small. We made the call we had been putting off. We helped someone without being asked. We got out of our own heads long enough to ask what we could give rather than what we could get.

In that giving, something was restored.

We found that we were not meant to live focused on ourselves. That way led only to fear and confusion. But when we turned outward, when we placed our lives in the care of something greater and gave our attention to others, the weight lifted. Not all at once, but enough for today.

We were not healed by figuring it out. We were healed by giving up that need, and by showing up for one another.

The Wisdom to Let Go

Written April 6, 2026

Going with the flow isn't being lazy or giving up. It isn't sitting around waiting for a miracle while you do nothing. In this way of life, it's called acceptance. It's the realization that there are things we can change and things we absolutely cannot.

Wisdom is knowing when to get to work and when to let go. You put in the effort where it counts, but you stop fighting the things you can't control.

Most of our misery doesn't come from our problems; it comes from our self-will; from trying to force life to go our way. We get hurt when we try to hold onto things that are already moving or fight a reality that has already happened.

Going with the flow means you stop the war with life. You still take the right steps. You still do your part. But you stop trying to force the results. You stop exhausting yourself trying to run the whole show.

You learn to be flexible. When life changes, you change with it. When things start going south, you stay grounded in your spiritual strength. This isn't being

weak; it's being sane. You finally realize that peace doesn't come from getting the world to do what you want. It comes from learning to move with the way things are.

The Gift I Didn't Earn

Written April 7, 2026

My sobriety didn't begin with a decision to stop. It began with God showing up. On one very special day, He made Himself known to me briefly and unmistakably, and in that moment something cracked open. For the first time, I found myself willing to believe that He was real, that He wasn't distant or indifferent, and that He could actually do something in my life.

That willingness was enough. The sobriety that followed wasn't something I produced. It was a gift, plain and simple.

Because here's what I know about myself: my drinking wasn't really about the alcohol. It was about Ego. I was convinced, deep down, that I could run my own life, that if I just thought hard enough or tried hard enough, I could make everything work out. And even when I occasionally put the bottle down through sheer willpower, I quickly realized I hadn't actually changed anything. I was sober, but I was still the same person white-knuckling his way through life. That wasn't freedom, and that sobriety was always very short-lived.

The real issue was that I kept putting myself at the center of everything. My decisions, my plans, my way. And it kept falling apart. What finally shifted things wasn't trying harder. It was letting go. Becoming genuinely willing to have God step in and clear away whatever was standing between me and a different kind of life.

That willingness isn't a one-time thing, though. I have to come back to it every day. Each morning I get quiet and ask God to show me how He'd have me show up; to work through whatever still gets in my way so I can be

useful to someone else who's hurting. When I stay in that place spiritually, something remarkable happens: the pull toward drinking simply isn't there. Life gets lighter. Things open up.

The freedom I walk in today isn't something I earned or maintain on my own. It's what naturally happens when I stay connected. It’s what happens when I let my Spirit lead rather than trying to take the wheel myself, one day at a time.

One Long Thank You

Written April 8, 2026

True gratitude isn't just a feeling. It's something you do. When someone does something kind for you, the best way to repay them isn't necessarily to pay them back directly. It's to turn around and help someone else. Being thankful means quietly recognizing the good things in your life, like the people who supported you or the safety you have now. But gratitude means actually doing something with that recognition.

Think of it this way: the gifts we receive aren't really ours to keep. They're meant to be passed on. When we see gratitude as an action rather than just a feeling, we stop simply feeling lucky and start actively making a difference for others.

Every time we help someone, by showing up, listening, or offering encouragement, we're honoring the people who once did the same for us. This keeps us from becoming too focused on ourselves and keeps us spiritually healthy. Our lives essentially become one long "thank you," and the most meaningful way to express that is to help the person who is now going through what we once went through.

Trickles That Become a River

Written April 9, 2026

Our lives are like rivers flowing through time. When we look back at the big picture, we see how even the small, ordinary days are connected. Every single day helps build our goals, our beliefs, and our relationships.

A river starts as tiny trickles of water that eventually join together to find strength and direction. Sometimes we chase big, intense moments and ignore the quiet ones. We might be used to a life that feels like a roller coaster of non-stop drama. It is exhausting, but it's never "boring." We will have many, many more trickles of water than we will have rushing streams in our lives, yet in the long run we still end up with the same volume of water.

As we grow, we learn that a quiet, steady day is actually a gift. Just showing up by sticking to a healthy routine, staying true to our values, and really being there for the people we love is what creates a meaningful life. Today, I'll try to see the value in the small, simple moments.

Maintaining a Fit Spiritual Condition

Written April 10, 2026

I need to be careful of any project or activity that pulls me away from my spiritual foundation, because that foundation is what keeps me sane. It's easy to get so wrapped up in doing things that I lose sight of the one thing that matters most. My primary purpose, above all else, is to maintain a fit spiritual condition. When I do, life feels lighter. The obsession to drink is removed, and I feel like someone else has my back.

But when I lose that spiritual condition, everything starts to feel crushing. Stress builds up, I burn out, and there's no room left for any kind of peace or quiet in my life. That's dangerous territory for me, because that's exactly the kind of insanity that used to send me straight to a bottle. When I stay rooted in my spiritual condition, though, the pressure lifts. I start to realize I was never meant to control the outcome, I'm just responsible for doing the things that keep me spiritually fit and keeping my side of the street clean.

I wasn't given a second chance at life, pulled back from

the wreckage that alcohol made of things, just to stay constantly busy and run myself ragged. I was given freedom from the insanity of alcoholism so I could be fully present, with other people, with the world around me, and with God as I understand Him. I don't need to drive myself crazy trying to figure out the grand plan or where I'm "supposed" to end up. My job is simply to maintain that fit spiritual condition and trust that a Power greater than myself is handling the big picture.

Right here, right now, wherever I am, I just need to show up spiritually fit. When I do that, everything else takes care of itself.

That's enough.

Building a Storm in Your Head

Written April 11, 2026

When we get caught up in overthinking, we are essentially living in a future that hasn't happened yet. This creates a kind of mental hangover for problems that aren't even real.

This habit of trying to control every possible outcome only leads to more anxiety and fear. It is like we are building a storm in our heads and then getting mad when it starts to rain. We become convinced that if we just think about it long enough, we can fix everything. However, this self-reliance eventually fails us because we cannot think our way into peace of mind.

The solution starts with a simple admission that our own thinking has become unmanageable. Real relief comes when we stop the tug-of-war with our thoughts and surrender the need to be in charge of the results.

By letting go of the demand to control the future and trusting in a Power greater than our own limited perspective, those racing thoughts start to look like nothing more than passing clouds.

When we focus on staying right here in the day we are

actually living, the mental storms naturally clear up. By cleaning up our side of the street and being of service where we can, we are left with a quiet mind and a sense of purpose.

No Checkbook Can Mend a Spirit

Written April 12, 2026

When we survey the chaos and suffering of our world, it becomes clear that money and material resources cannot fix what is truly broken.

Governments and charities often respond to human problems with material aid, and while such efforts are well-intentioned, no checkbook can mend a broken spirit. Throwing resources at a deep-seated problem without addressing its root can make things worse, not better.

The root, in fact, is spiritual. Because the problem is spiritual in nature, the solution must be as well. Real and lasting change does not come from human effort, better systems, or accumulated know-how. It comes from a change of heart. I know this firsthand. For years, alcohol had a hold on me that willpower alone could never break. It was only when I stopped relying on my own strength and began to seek something greater than myself that the obsession lifted. Not gradually, and not through gritting my teeth, but through a shift at the level of belief.

We see this pattern in many people who have hit rock bottom and, in that emptiness, found a power greater than themselves. When that interior shift takes place, it shows in how a person serves others, how they endure hardship, and how they begin to live with a discipline that was never there before. Even those with no religious convictions have observed that without this deeper transformation, people remain subject to their own worst impulses.

The most fundamental question any of us faces is how we stand in relation to our Creator. Once that is settled, a peace takes hold that circumstances cannot disturb. Fear of the future loosens its grip, because we are anchored in something that does not change. That relationship also reshapes how we see everyone around us. Recognizing that every person bears the mark of their Maker, we become less interested in controlling outcomes and more capable of living with openness and grace. We find

ourselves genuinely free to love and forgive, no longer driven by the old, exhausting habits of Self.

The Inlet and the Outlet

Written April 13, 2026

Think of spiritual power like a clear mountain stream filling a pool. For the water to stay clear and full of life, it needs a way to get out just as much as a way to get in. The inlet represents what you take in such as peace, wisdom, or inspiration while the outlet is what you give back to the world through your actions and kindness. If you only focus on taking in and never find a way to share it, the water gets backed up and eventually stops moving altogether.

When that flow stops, the water becomes stagnant. It loses its spark and starts to feel heavy or dull because it isn't being used. To keep your spirit fresh, you have to keep the circle moving. By helping others or being creative, you push the old water out, which naturally pulls new, refreshing energy in from the source. The more you give, the more room you make for a stronger, cleaner current to run through you.

You Can't Carry Someone From a Burning House

Written April 14, 2026

Not everyone we meet is in a good place. Some carry resentment like a weight they can't put down, driven by fear and pain they haven't yet faced. Some have made suffering their identity, and without realizing it, keep finding ways to stay stuck. Others are still in the grip of habits and compulsions that run their lives.

When we're working to stay spiritually fit, a person living in that kind of darkness can pull hard on us. It can feel like they want company down there. But we have a choice. We don't have to go. We can care about someone deeply and still step back. That's not cruelty, that's sanity.

Here's the truth: we cannot do for others what only God and their own willingness can do. We don't help anyone by losing our own footing. You can't carry someone out of a burning building if you're on fire yourself.

Getting pulled into someone else's chaos doesn't light their way, it just leaves two people in the dark.

Protecting our peace isn't selfish. It's necessary. And it's honest. We stay useful to others only when we stay grounded in our own spiritual footing.

Why an Alcoholic Can't Just Stop

Written April 15, 2026

Why can't an alcoholic just stop?

Because alcoholism is a progressive illness that eventually strips away the ability to choose. The mind is under a powerful delusion that it can handle one more drink. The body has developed a physical craving that overrides logic, willpower, and every good intention. And the longer the illness progresses, the deeper that delusion takes hold.

No human effort is enough to remove the obsession permanently.

Not your own strength, not the support of loved ones, not sheer determination. The root of the problem is a total lack of power. That's not a moral failing.

That's the nature of the illness.

So what does work?

Not white-knuckling through temptation. Not relying on grit. Not trying harder than you tried before. The solution is a complete change from the inside out. A

connection to a higher, spiritual power that transforms your internal state entirely.

When you stop fighting the urge to drink and instead focus entirely on improving your spiritual condition, something remarkable happens.

Through prayer, meditation, and service to others, the problem of alcohol is simply removed. It's not managed, not suppressed. You are placed in a position of neutrality where the obsession no longer exists.

You aren't spending your life resisting temptation. You are living beyond it.

That freedom is real. It isn't reserved for a special few. It's available to anyone willing to seek it, one day at a time. ✨

The Luxury of Second-Guessing

Written April 16, 2026

There comes a moment for many people when life simply stops cooperating with their plans. Relationships strain, efforts fall short, and that sense of being in control begins to fade. That moment, as painful as it is, can be the beginning of something better. But it requires one thing first: the willingness to accept that there is a better way forward than the one they have been trying on their own.

A person is ready when they allow a higher Power to take the lead and reveal what true peace feels like. It requires a willingness to stop obsessing over the things they once thought were so important and to let go of the wheel completely.

The real test of surrender is whether they can stop asking, "But what about my plans?" or "What about my problems?" Those questions are signs that they are still trying to control the outcome. The moment they truly hand it over, they stop worrying. They release the need to know how things will turn out. Surrender means giving up the luxury of second-guessing the process.

People often feel drained and empty because they have been trying to carry the whole load on their own power alone. They haven't yet learned how to tap into a greater strength. The only way out of that exhaustion is to stop fighting. When they finally stop struggling and hand it over, they are often amazed at how much lighter life feels. They realize they are being looked after and have been given a whole new way to live. If they aren't feeling that freedom, it is usually because they are still holding onto a piece of the old self or making things far more complicated than necessary.

The good news is that it is never too late to loosen the grip. Every moment is an opportunity to choose differently, to breathe, and to trust that something greater is already at work on their behalf.

The Humility of a Child

Written April 17, 2026

We are naturally driven by self-will, trying to manage and micro-manage every detail of our lives. We treat the unknown as a threat because we think we have to be the directors of our own show. But the path to freedom isn't found in being "mathematical" or calculating; it's found in a complete change of attitude.

Real strength comes from being certain of a Power greater than ourselves while being totally okay with not knowing what's around the corner. While the ego demands a "sure thing," the spiritual life is marked by a relaxed, open trust. To rely on this Power means we no longer have to fear the future or what a single day might bring. Instead of looking at the unknown with anxiety, we can face it with a sense of quiet expectation: we don't know the next step, but we know the One who does.

The moment we stop fighting and abandon our lives to this Power, the world begins to open up in ways we never could have planned. But if we get stuck in rigid "old ideas" or self-righteous opinions, we block ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. If we are just clinging to our own definitions of how things should be, we aren't

actually trusting; we are just worshiping our own intellect.

Living this way requires the humility of a child. A child doesn't worry about how things will work out because they trust they are being looked after.

When we stop playing God and get into a right relationship with the Universe, life becomes spontaneous and purposeful. We can simply let go and let the Power work. It is wonderfully unpredictable how the solution will appear, but as long as we stay open, it always does.

Undefeated So Far

Written April 18, 2026

In a world that feels increasingly chaotic, it is empowering to remember your track record. You have to acknowledge that you have survived 100% of the hurdles life has thrown your way. You are currently undefeated, and your capacity to make it through to tomorrow is much stronger than you think! Even if you do not consider yourself a person of faith, you can find a deep sense of peace by simply trusting the process that has carried you this far.

The secret to staying steady is not about having all the answers or figuring out the whole map. It is about a shift in focus by shrinking your world down to the single step right in front of you. When the future feels too overwhelming or the what-ifs start to pile up, stop and get right in the minute. You do not have to believe in a specific outcome to benefit from letting go of the burden of next week, or even an hour from now.

Your only responsibility is the very next thing that is in front of you to do. Ask yourself what the most honest and helpful task is right now, whether it is a simple chore, breathing, or reaching out to see how you can

help someone else. Often, the quickest way out of our own anxiety is to be of service to another person. Everything after that can wait. By placing your focus entirely on the immediate present, you stop fighting the storm and start walking through it. Do the next right thing with a quiet heart and trust that the path will continue to reveal itself as you go forth. That works for me, and it can work for you as well.

My Father's Quiet Voice

Written April 19, 2026

In a world that equates volume with authority, I've learned that the most profound truths usually arrive in a whisper.

My father was the most soft-spoken man I've ever known. He didn't need to shout to be heard; he chose his words with such intention that you couldn't help but lean in. Because of him, I've learned to tune out the loud voices to listen for the quiet ones.

There is a sacred power in the "still, small voice." When we stop chasing the clamor and the ego of the loudest person in the room, we start to hear the things that actually matter…the nuances, the deliberate wisdom, and the underlying truths that noise tends to bury.

Listening to the quiet isn't just a preference; it's a practice of presence. It's a way of honoring the soul of a person rather than their projection.

I'm grateful for the legacy of a father who taught me that you don't need to be the loudest to have the most to say. 🤍🤍

The Lotus Blooms From Mud

Written April 20, 2026

We tend to cheer for the good times and push away the hard ones, but both are here to teach us something. The good times show you what's possible. They remind you of who you are when things are flowing, when life feels right and easy. Enjoy those moments fully, but hold them loosely. Gripping them too tightly only pulls you out of the very joy you're trying to keep.

The hard times are where you actually grow. Pain has a way of stripping away everything that doesn't matter, leaving only what's real and true in you. You can't learn patience from easy days. You can't build real courage without going through something difficult. The strength and softness you most admire in people almost always came from something they had to survive, not something handed to them.

The lotus blooms from muddy water, not in spite of it, but because of it. Hard seasons work the same way. When it feels like nothing is happening, growth is quietly taking place beneath the surface. You may not be able to see it yet, but something real is being built inside you. Trust what's happening in the dark. Your breakthrough is coming.

When a Volunteer Fell, Others Stood Up

Written April 21, 2026

In life, things don't always go the way we envision them, but they work out according to a higher plan. When we face problems, it isn't up to us to understand the "why" behind every obstacle, even when those obstacles are as frightening as a friend's sudden health crisis. Instead, we are called to trust that God has it under control and simply execute the next indicated step. This faithful perspective was tested at the senior center when a volunteer may have suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized, leaving a sudden gap in the schedule.

Our activities are more than just games; they are vital anchors for the Center, and for those who depend on the social contact and other therapeutic benefits or our programming. Because our other volunteers were willing to be the hands that did the work, the Center maintains its operational resilience. Their flexibility allowed our programs that many people look forward to all week. In the end, their act of service showed that when we let go of worry and take that next right step, we become part of the reason

things work out for the good of the whole community. Their generosity is very appreciated. Your prayers for our hospitalized volunteer is likewise appreciated. <3

Letting Someone Hit Bottom

Written April 22, 2026

When we try to support someone, we have to realize that we aren't the ones in charge of the results. There is a greater power and purpose at work in every life, and sometimes that process requires a person to hit a "rock bottom" or face hard consequences before they can truly change. If we let our own feelings get in the way and try to shield them from those natural results, we are actually playing God. We think we know what's best, but by interfering, we might be cutting off the very experience they need to find a new way of living.

Real helpfulness means getting our own egos out of the way. We have to stop trying to manage or control the situation and instead place our full trust in the Universe. When we stop worrying about how *we* feel about their struggle, we become a much clearer channel for help. We find that our own self-pity and personal problems vanish because we are finally focused on being of service. By staying aligned with that higher path, we can let go of the outcome and trust that the right things will happen in the right time.

The Self-Will Behind My Helping

Written April 23, 2026

The ability to connect with something greater than oneself does not come from personal effort alone. It begins with admitting that everything cannot be managed alone and becoming willing to seek guidance beyond one's own thinking. When attention turns to others, it is not about being in control. It is about learning to trust a wiser direction and taking one's place in it with humility.

One of my biggest barriers to truly helping others is self-will. I can hold onto feelings and ideas that seem right, but are often rooted in my own fear, pride, or need to control. I may find myself wanting someone to change because their behavior makes me uncomfortable, not because it is truly best for them. I may also believe my way is the only right way. These patterns feel natural, but they are the very things I need to let go of.

When I get caught in this, my focus shifts back to me. I become attached to outcomes and frustrated when things do not go the way I think they should. I take things personally and push my own ideas. What I call helping starts to become a way of managing or

controlling. This happens more frequently that I would like.

Real support begins when I let go of that self-centered thinking. I ask for the right thoughts and actions, and I try to follow through with honesty and care. I stop trying to control results and instead offer what I can . I learn to show up with patience, understanding, and a sincere desire to be useful, trusting that I do not have to have all the answers.

And when I remember that I do not have to have all the answers or control the outcome, I can accept things just as they are, and that is okay.

An Honest Start, Right Here

Written April 24, 2026

The path forward isn't found by waiting for life to get easier or for our circumstances to change. We often find ourselves paralyzed by looking at all the things we lack, such as missed opportunities, lost time, or the resources we wish we had. Dwelling on what "should be" only keeps us stuck in the same place.

The solution starts with a simple shift: accepting exactly where we are right now. We stop fighting the world and instead look at the tools we actually possess. You don’t need a massive inheritance of strength or a perfect track record to begin. You only need the willingness to do the next right thing with the small amount of power you have today.

When we stop making excuses about our surroundings and start being of service with what is available, something remarkable happens. The heavy weight of the future disappears, and we find we have enough for just this one day. By focusing on the immediate task in front of us, we discover a source of strength that doesn't depend on our external conditions.

True change doesn't require a perfect environment; it only requires an honest start, right here and right now. If you're feeling stuck or just need someone to listen while you take that first step, please reach out.

Being a Bridge, Not a Recruiter

Written April 25, 2026

People who are truly grounded in their spiritual lives won't try to force their opinions on you or demand that you think exactly like them. Instead, they will encourage you to live by a higher set of principles. The goal isn't to memorize a book or follow a rigid set of rules. It is about connecting with something greater than yourself, whether you call it God, nature, the universe, or simply a force beyond your own understanding.

As we grow, we realize that real freedom isn't about doing whatever we want or winning arguments. It is about having a clear conscience and being useful to others. This means we stop trying to control every outcome and let go of the need to manage other people's lives. We stop judging others simply because they see the world differently than we do.

If we are actually living this way, we won't feel the need to push our views on anyone. Our only job is to be a bridge, helping others find their own connection to something greater. When we interact with people, we stay patient and kind, remembering how much grace and understanding we needed during our own hardest

times.

Being open-minded doesn't mean being a pushover or abandoning what you believe. Stay true to the principles that changed your life, and never apologize for them. Your purpose is to help others find a way out of the darkness, not to recruit them to your way of thinking.

The Bow, the Arrow, and the Aim

Written April 26, 2026

Patience is more than just gritting your teeth and getting through it. It's the deep understanding that our lives are part of a much larger design guided by a Power greater than ourselves. Think of your life like a bow and arrow in the hands of an expert. That Power is aiming at a target you can't see yet. There are times when life pulls you back, stretching and straining you until you feel like you're at your absolute breaking point. You might cry out, "I'm done, I can't handle this anymore!" But that higher guidance doesn't shake. It keeps up the tension until the aim is perfect. Only then does it let you fly toward your purpose.

Even when things feel like they're falling apart, we can choose to believe that the Universe has our back. This kind of trust isn't a flimsy feeling; it's a sturdy decision to stay grounded in the fact that the underlying force of life is good.

When you feel balanced, it's because you've connected to a truth that doesn't change based on your circumstances. Is there something in your life right now that's testing you? Maybe you feel lost or confused about

why things are happening the way they are. In those moments, remember that you aren't the one in charge.

The goal is a total surrender of the Self. There are still parts of our ego, little corners of our character, that we try to hold onto and control. But real freedom comes when we stop fighting and hand the wheel over completely. That's when life stops being a struggle and starts being an adventure. We develop a quiet peace that can face any situation without falling apart. We are being shaped into people who can live with real power, guided by a Spirit that is much bigger than our own limited perspective.

The Movie Playing in My Head

Written April 27, 2026

This internal struggle often stems from what we might call "the disease of self." It's a state of being where our minds are constantly racing, trying to protect us from perceived threats that don't actually exist. When we live this way, we are essentially reacting to a movie playing in our heads rather than the life happening in front of us. This creates a cycle of restlessness and irritability because no matter how much we change our external environment. Whether getting a new job, moving to a new city, or finding a new relationship, we take that same fearful storyteller with us.

The breakthrough happens when we realize that we cannot "think" our way out of a thinking problem. Trying to argue with these fearful stories only gives them more energy. Instead, we have to experience a shift in perspective where we stop relying solely on our own intellect and start trusting in a broader sense of order. This involves a daily practice of pausing when we are agitated and asking for the clarity to see things as they really are, not as our insecurities paint them. By focusing on how we can be of service to others rather

than how the world is failing us, ego begins to shrink, the stories lose their grip, and we find a quiet strength that was there all along.

Acting Your Way Into Right Thinking

Written April 28, 2026

Taking action is the foundation of a new way of living. We must recognize that while a higher power provides the strength to change, it will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. We cannot think our way into right living; we have to act our way into right thinking. This means we are responsible for the discipline and the daily habits that build a solid character. Taking the initiative means stopping the endless search for more information and finally following the path we already see clearly before us.

When we are nudged to do the right thing, we must act immediately. Hesitation is dangerous because it gives our old way of life a chance to take hold again. We need to be decisive: face the person we've avoided, make the amends we owe, and commit so thoroughly that we cannot retreat to our old habits. We can only start this work exactly where we are today. The goal is to practice these principles in all our affairs until they become instinctive. We will know we have found a new level of freedom when, the moment a crisis hits, we instinctively reach for spiritual help rather than our old escapes.

When Instinct Cannot Be Trusted

Written April 29, 2026

Rather than trusting instinct, my experience has shown that my untrained mind is fundamentally unreliable. I know I'm prone to self-deception, craving, and fear-driven perception. What feels like intuition may actually be my ego protecting itself, or old wounds coloring my present reality.

The path to clarity, for me, isn't deeper trust in my immediate feelings, but rather rigorous self-examination, humility, and openness to being wrong.

My resentments and fears are the very things that distort my 'gut feelings'; they are spiritual liabilities to be inventoried and released, not signals to be followed. True discernment comes not from within my isolated self, but through honest reflection, community, and guidance from something greater than myself.

By staying quiet and listening, I move out of the driver's seat and allow a higher direction to take over. This awareness is how I am kept safe and useful. When I find myself feeling uneasy, I try not to force a solution or rationalize the feeling away. Instead, I pause and ask

for clarity. When I trust that inner signal, I am practicing a reliance on a Divine source that sees the truth clearly, even when the world around me looks fine on the surface

No Room for Debate

Written April 30, 2026

Conscience is the inner voice that connects you to your highest sense of right living. When you focus on a Power greater than yourself, this inner voice clarifies the exact path you should take. The real test is whether you choose to follow this guidance. Relying on your own willpower and human instinct is not enough to live up to these standards; self-reliance eventually fails. True strength comes from relying on the spirit of the universe living within you. When you lean on this spiritual source, doing the right thing becomes natural and effortless, freeing you from your old ways of thinking.

This quiet, inner guidance does not shout; it speaks in a still, small voice that is easy to ignore if you are distracted, as this voice speaks in whispers. You keep this awareness sharp by maintaining a daily habit of looking inward and staying open to spiritual direction. If you begin to argue or rationalize what you know is right, you must stop immediately, as there is no room for debate when your inner voice speaks. Allowing even the smallest resentment, dishonesty, or selfish motive to cloud your mind blocks you from your spiritual source. You must let go of these obstacles instantly to keep your spiritual vision clear and stay connected to the truth.

May

Two Rituals, One Healing Journey

Written May 1, 2026

Every morning before the roosters start up behind the house, I practice two simple rituals to connect my body and my mind. I have always taken morning walks for exercise, but after a bad ankle injury in June of 2024, the habit changed. Now, this walk is therapy. It is how I free my body from pain. If I skip it, my ankle gets stiff and I walk with a limp. Moving in the early light removes that tension and gives me the energy to handle my daily work.

Prior to my walk, I ground my spirit through prayer and meditation. This is how I plug into a higher power first thing in the morning. If I miss this spiritual start, my whole day feels messy, I feel stressed out, and my actions might not reflect the path that Spirit suggests that I take.

These two habits are actually part of the same healing journey. Just like my body needs to move to shake off physical trauma, my spirit needs to open up to let go of mental weight. Healing my joints and grounding my soul work together, giving me the strength and focus to take on the day.

No Longer at War With the World

Written May 2, 2026

There's a trap most of us fall into at some point: we get so caught up in our own pain that it becomes the whole story. We replay old hurts, nurse quiet resentments, and convince ourselves that if we just think about our problems hard enough, we'll somehow think our way out of them. But this rarely works. In fact, the more we fixate on what's wrong, the more cut off we feel from other people, from joy, and even from ourselves.

Willpower alone won't fix this. Neither will simply deciding to feel better. Real change requires something deeper: an honest look at what's actually driving our thoughts and behaviors, and a genuine willingness to do things differently.

That shift begins with a pause. Not a distraction, not avoidance, but a real, intentional moment of stillness where we stop insisting that life conform to our expectations. When we loosen our grip on how things "should" be, something surprising happens. We find breathing room. We start to see our problems not as the whole of who we are, but as signals pointing to something deeper that needs attention. That perspective

alone can bring a sense of calm that no amount of mental struggle ever could.

But insight without action is just wishful thinking. Lasting change means putting new values into practice, every day, in small and ordinary ways.

That looks like taking honest responsibility for your own behavior instead of cataloguing everyone else's faults. It looks like extending patience to difficult people. Not because they've earned it, but because resentment costs you more than it costs them. It looks like actively looking for ways to be useful to the people around you.

When you live this way consistently, something changes. Gratitude stops being a platitude and becomes something you actually feel. You stop

fighting everything; circumstances, other people, yourself…and life opens up in ways that are hard to explain but impossible to mistake.

It's just what tends to happen when a person stops being at war with the world.

Keeping It by Giving It Away

Written May 3, 2026

A person finds their truest joy when they step away from their own worries and focus entirely on helping someone else. This act of self-forgetfulness instantly lifts the weight of personal fears and anxieties, offering a reliable path out of emotional darkness. By shifting attention to another person's struggles, an individual becomes a channel for hope and healing, which transforms past pain into a valuable asset. The difficult lessons learned along one's own journey become the exact tools needed to guide another person through their darkest moments.

This way of living creates a powerful paradox where a person can only keep the peace and freedom they have found by freely giving it away. Helping others is not a casual hobby or an occasional good deed; it is the very foundation of spiritual vitality and growth. When someone shares their scars to help heal another person's wounds, a deep bond is forged out of shared struggle. Watching another person's life transform and seeing them find their own footing provides a profound sense of purpose. It proves that a person's own trials were not in vain, but were meant to prepare them to serve. Now…who can I help today?

Feelings Are Not Facts

Written May 4, 2026

People often make poor decisions based on how they feel rather than what they think, treating temporary feelings as accurate facts. A common example of this pattern is a person becoming intensely angry over tiny, stupid things. When internal uneasiness arises, the undisciplined mind naturally reacts with a strong, reactive emotion like anger. Once that anger takes root, it becomes almost impossible to stop brooding without a shift in perspective or a spiritual solution. Many individuals reach this helpless state and default to substance abuse, because drugs or alcohol provide immediate relief, much like scratching a itch on one's back.

Breaking this cycle requires a person to actively avoid quick reactions and anger. This mental discipline must begin the exact moment an individual wakes up. Within minutes of opening their eyes, their mind will scan for emotional discomfort, questioning how and why they feel that way. The brain quickly manufactures an answer that is usually incorrect, restarting the negative cycle. To stop this loop, a person must train the mind by

viewing it as a separate, undisciplined entity that routinely overreacts to small things and amplifies unhappiness.

Because the mind resists discipline, an individual could read a meditation or practice a prayer of surrender first thing in the morning. This mental training is incredibly difficult at first. While people frequently use willpower to force themselves to diet or go to the gym, those physical tasks are easy compared to surrendering one's own mind and automatic reactions. Over time, real change occurs when a person seeks community support and calls a mentor or trusted guide early in the morning to establish an immediate human connection.

The most critical realization in this process is that the individual is not the one orchestrating these internal changes. When a person believes they are solely directing this progress, their ego takes credit, which ultimately derails the recovery. True transformation begins only when an individual

steps away from self-reliance, humbles the ego, and enters a spiritual realm of growth.

A Channel Open at Both Ends

Written May 5, 2026

The paradox of power is that people only get to keep what they are willing to give away. True strength and spiritual vitality are never possessions to be hoarded. They form a continuous current that must flow through an individual to others, or else that energy withers and dies.

When people try to lock away their blessings, insights, or peace out of fear, the spiritual lifeline quickly stagnates. Human beings are not the ultimate source of this power, but merely the channel for it. A channel must remain wide open at both ends to function.

By centering their lives around intense helpfulness to those who are still struggling, individuals renew their own supply. Sharing experience and carrying a message of hope is what keeps a person grounded.

It is through this constant, unselfish outlay of energy that people find themselves protected from their own destructive impulses. They connect to a design for living that grows stronger the more it is shared.

Friction as an Invitation

Written May 6, 2026

When people encounter friction or feel pressured in life, the natural human instinct is to get angry, resist, and force a personal agenda. However, this persistent internal discomfort is often a spiritual wake-up call guiding them to let go.

Instead of fighting life and trying to run the whole show based on self-centered desires, one can choose to pause and recognize that this pressure is an invitation from a Higher Power to yield to a wiser path. True strength and inner peace comes when one stops fighting everyone and everything, quits trying to control outcomes, and quiets their minds to listen for a deeper, divine direction.

By setting aside the ego and the habit of pushing back, one can trust that as they release their self-will, they will be granted the clarity and resilience to live in harmony with life.

Growing Toward the Light

Written May 7, 2026

Look at a wildflower growing in a field. It doesn't try to bloom. It simply grows toward the light and becomes exactly what it was created to be. The stars don't work at shining. They simply are what they are. People were designed the same way, not to perform, but to stay connected to the Source and let that connection do what it naturally does.

Most people make the same mistake when they decide to grow. They focus on themselves, monitor their progress, and put themselves at the center of their own story. That is precisely where things go wrong. The deep human instinct to manage and control everything keeps blocking what the Spirit is trying to do. People get in their own way.

Growth doesn't come from watching oneself grow. It comes from keeping attention on a Higher Power, moment by moment, and humbly admitting the inability to do this alone. That admission of need isn't weakness. It's the doorway.

The people who shape others most deeply usually don't

know they are doing it. They are simply living honestly, connected to something bigger than themselves, with no gap between what they believe and how they live. That kind of life doesn't persuade. It attracts.

There is no need to figure out how to be useful. Getting honest about the need for a power greater than oneself, turning life and will over to the care of that power, and letting go of the results is enough. A person stops trying to be good and starts becoming someone through whom goodness flows naturally, the way light comes through a clear window. The Spirit doesn't need people to be impressive. It just needs them to be available, honest, and connected. The rest, it handles.

Simply be what you were made to be, and trust the Source to work through that.

Taking Off Into the Headwind

Written May 8, 2026

Resentment, dishonesty, and fear are the heaviest weights we carry, completely draining our personal power. When we are full of resentment, we hand our emotional control over to other people and past events.

Dishonesty traps us in a web of cover-ups, cutting us off from reality and making us constantly afraid of being caught. Fear paralyzes us entirely, keeping us stuck in place because we are terrified of what might happen next. As long as these negative habits run the show, we are completely powerless to change our lives.

True spiritual growth begins the exact moment we stop letting these feelings control us. We pull the plug on their power by facing them with radical honesty and looking at our own mistakes instead of blaming others. When we systematically spot our fears, look at who we have hurt, and actively try to clear away that wreckage, these old habits lose their grip on us. We are no longer driven by the desperation to protect our own egos, which clears a space inside us for a higher sense of purpose and peace to take over.

This transformation works just like an airplane taking off. A plane does not launch with the wind at its back; it takes off directly into the wind. The headwind creates massive resistance, but because the plane has a powerful engine driving it forward, that very resistance becomes the force that lifts it into the sky. In the same way, the challenges of facing our resentments, fears, and dishonesty create a heavy emotional headwind. But when we use the spiritual tools available to us to drive forward through that resistance, we do not crash. Instead, the pressure pushes us upward, allowing us to gain spiritual altitude and achieve a level of freedom we could never reach on our own.

We do not need to be perfect. We need only to be honest, and possess the willingness to move forward. Spirit will handle the rest.

Smashing the Illusion of Self-Sufficiency

Written May 9, 2026

Pride is a dangerous trap because it convinces me that I can manage everything on my own, even when my life is falling apart. When selfish and self-seeking thoughts run the show, my ego tells me that asking for help is a sign of weakness. This mindset keeps me isolated and locked in denial, cutting me off from the very help that could restore me to sanity. It creates a false sense of control, making me believe I can conquer my struggles through sheer willpower, even though that method had failed me time and time again. I was stuck in this mental prison for years, convinced that if I couldn't stop drinking on my own, then no power on earth could do it for me.

True recovery could only begin when I smashed this illusion of self-sufficiency. I had to concede to my innermost self that I was without defense against the next drink, and that I could not manage life on my own terms. When my pride had been crushed, I stopped fighting and instead became willing to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore what I had lost.

This shift required rigorous honesty and a fearless willingness to look at the exact nature of my wrongs without reservation or excuse. It meant setting aside my old ideas entirely and trading a self-centered way of living for a new design based on honesty, humility, and service to others.

When I finally asked for help, I broke free from the bondage of self and found a fellowship that understood my pain from the inside out. I discovered that the willingness to be vulnerable is itself a great strength. By carrying my experience to others still suffering and placing their needs alongside my own, I keep self-will in its proper place. This daily practice of humility slowly removes the wreckage of old selfishness and fills it with a deep sense of purpose, so that pride no longer stands between me and the freedom I now enjoy today.

Growing Up at Last

Written May 10, 2026

When we were young, we worried constantly about what others thought of us. This is natural. But many of us found alcohol or were wounded by the drinking of others right at that formative age. Our growing up on the inside came to a halt. We never found that quiet, inner compass that comes from trusting God. Without it, we were tossed about by every opinion and judgment that came our way.

There is a kind of self-neglect that does us deep harm: never learning to trust what God has placed within us. We looked everywhere *outside* ourselves for direction, because we had not yet found God speaking *within* our own conscience and heart.

But in recovery, something wonderful begins to happen. As we grow in honesty, face ourselves with courage, and seek through prayer and meditation to know God's will, we begin to grow up at last. The emotional and spiritual growth that was arrested by our illness quietly resumes.

We learn, perhaps for the first time, that our feelings matter. That God speaks to us *through* our

conscience, our convictions, and our God-given interests. We come to rely on God rather than on the approval of others. We ask simply: *What does God want for me? What is His will?*

This daily practice of honest reflection, prayer, and meditation builds in us what the world could never give; a genuine relationship with ourselves and with the God of our understanding. We are no longer ruled by fear of what others think. We are guided, one day at a time, by a Power greater than ourselves.

Just for today, I will seek God's will in my own heart, trust what He has placed within me, and live according to His guidance rather than the opinions of others.

The Purpose of a Lonely Path

Written May 11, 2026

When a person finds themselves walking a lonely path, it is not a sign of abandonment, but an invitation to step away from the noise and connect deeply with a Higher Power. This isolation is a purposeful design, meant to clear away distractions so an individual can achieve a profound, internal oneness with the source of all life.

To experience this alignment, a person must ask themselves if they are willing to cooperate with this spiritual awakening, or if they are still stubbornly trying to run the show on their own self-will. Spiritual growth requires surrendering the illusion of total independence and letting go of the demand that the universe bend to personal desires.

The universe does not exist to fulfill ego-driven plans, nor does it consult anyone before introducing difficulties, losses, or trials. These painful experiences are allowed into a person's life to serve a higher evolutionary purpose, acting as a crucial turning point.

If someone faces life's hardships with defiance, an insistence on having their own way, and a reliance on

self-knowledge, they will inevitably spiral into resentment, fear, and cynical fault-finding. However, if they meet these challenges with a spirit of complete surrender, daily affirming a desire for a Power greater than themselves to direct their life, these same difficulties will transform them into a kinder, more noble, and more useful person.

Consolation and peace come from this absolute trust, knowing that a loving, universal Wisdom is operating through one's life, which completely insulates a person from bitterness. Individuals are being guided toward an unbreakable spiritual connection, and the universe will keep nudging them until they fully let go and allow that transformation to happen.

A Bird Doesn't Ask the Wind Its Meaning

Written May 12, 2026

A bird doesn't ask the meaning of the wind. It simply learns how to fly through it. 

Most of us don't begin searching for something greater until the life we built on our own terms has crumbled. When things were going our way, we needed nothing beyond ourselves. But when the storm arrived, and for many of us it arrived with a violence we never anticipated, we discovered that self-will alone could not see us through.

Suffering has a way of doing what comfort never could. It shows us, with brutal honesty, that we are not the architects of the wind. We can exhaust ourselves fighting it, bargaining with it, demanding it answer for itself. Or we can surrender, not in defeat, but in the deepest act of courage most of us will ever know.

That surrender asks something specific of us. It asks us to admit we were wrong about our own power. To set aside the illusion that we were running the show. To become open, honest, and willing, and in that

willingness, to find a foundation that no storm can touch.

Real growth doesn't begin when everything goes right. It begins the moment we stop trying to master the wind, and instead place our trust in something that was carrying us all along.

The Part the World Cannot Warp

Written May 13, 2026

There is a part of you the world cannot warp.

Your thinking mind can be twisted by fear, by pain, by years of just trying to survive. But your original spirit, your conscience, sits beneath all of that, untouched. It was there before the armor went up. It's still there now.

For a long time, many of us relied on willpower and grit just to get through the day. We hid from our feelings and treated life as something to be endured rather than lived. Those defenses kept us alive during dark times, and there's no shame in that. But staying locked inside them meant missing the life that was waiting on the other side.

When we stop relying solely on ourselves and trust something greater, everything shifts. We no longer need to hide, numb out, or white-knuckle our way through. Safety stops being about control and starts being about trust.

That quiet, unwarped part of you, your conscience, your original spirit, already knows the way. The work is learning to listen to it.

That freedom isn't waiting somewhere in the future. It's available today.

The Freedom From Seeking Approval

Written May 14, 2026

Many people hear the advice that to receive more love and respect, they must work harder to earn it. However, trying to change to please the world is an exhausting trap that never actually works. The real secret to peace is not about fixing how others see a person, but about changing how that person sees themselves.

No one has to fight or alter who they are to force people to appreciate them. True peace comes from looking inward and cleaning up one's own side of the street, rather than trying to control how other people think or act.

When individuals stop demanding that the world treat them a certain way, they free themselves from resentment.

By focusing on honesty, humility, and being of service to those around them, their perspective naturally changes. They begin to find a quiet strength that does not rely on the applause or approval of others. Living this way

means facing life on its own terms with a calm and steady mind.

It requires relying on a deeper, spiritual source of strength rather than stubborn willpower. As people practice being honest with themselves and letting go of old grudges, the need for outside validation simply slips away. They start to treat others with kindness because it is the right thing to do, not because they are trying to buy affection. Ultimately, they discover that they are already grounded, whole, and perfectly taken care of, just as they are.

The Peace of Keeping Your Word

Written May 15, 2026

Keeping your promises brings a deep sense of freedom and peace. When you do what you say you will do, your mind stays calm. You no longer feel the heavy weight of guilt or worry. Instead, you get to live with a clean heart and a clear conscience. This builds a strong, quiet trust in yourself that helps you feel safe and confident.

Being dependable also changes how you feel about yourself. When you are reliable, your relationships get much better and stronger. People know they can trust you, which brings you closer to family and friends. You stop worrying about what others think because you know you are doing the right thing. The biggest reward is a peaceful mind and a good night's sleep.

Following through on your word gives your life a true purpose. You become a safe and helpful person for others to be around. This simple honesty brings a deep, steady happiness that nothing can take away from you. You feel truly free, happy, and content inside.

The Storm Is the Road

Written May 16, 2026

Every problem carries a lesson inside it. Most of us miss it because we are too busy trying to make the problem stop. But when we slow down enough to ask what it is teaching us, something changes. The problem does not disappear, but our relationship to it does. We begin to see it not as something happening *to* us, but as something happening *for* us.

When we take that lesson and carry it forward into how we live, how we treat others, and how we face the next hard thing, it stops being a problem. It becomes a blessing. Not in spite of the pain it caused, but because of what that pain produced in us.

Our past does not have to be a prison. Worked through with humility rather than buried in shame, it becomes our greatest asset. The darkness we have walked through is precisely what equips us to sit beside someone else who is stumbling in theirs. We cannot give away what we do not have, and we cannot have it until we have lived it and carried it forward.

That word, surrender, is so often misunderstood. It is

not weakness. It is not giving up. It is the action of releasing our grip on outcomes we were never meant to control. It is accepting that there is a design underneath the disorder, even when we cannot see it. Especially when we cannot see it.

If you are carrying something heavy today, you do not have to carry it perfectly. You do not have to have the lesson figured out yet. The only requirement is willingness, a cracked-open willingness to let the experience mean something, to let it build something in you that tomorrow will need.

The storm is not a detour. It is the road. The lesson is not the end. It is the beginning. And when you carry it forward, what once broke you becomes the very thing that sets someone else free. 🙏

Volunteering as Medicine for the Soul

Written May 17, 2026

Volunteering changes people from the inside out. When they turn their focus away from their own worries and place it onto the needs of others, the ego begins to quiet down, and that natural quieting reduces the internal anxiety and pride that so often drive their pain.

Selfless service is also powerful medicine for the soul. It breaks the isolation that comes from living a self-centered life, and by reaching out to help someone else, a person taps into a higher power and a deeper purpose that simply cannot be found when they are only looking out for themselves.

Helping others also creates a real sense of connection that heals feelings of loneliness and uselessness. When someone shares another person's burdens without looking for praise or reward, they learn humility and build a bridge of mutual respect.

Through that kind of action, a quiet strength begins to grow inside them. Old, negative habits are replaced with a fresh sense of belonging and joy, not because

they sought those things for themselves, but because they stopped seeking and started giving.

The greatest discovery in all of this is simple but profound. A person cannot keep the peace and contentment they have found unless they are willing to give it away to someone else.

Leaping Before It Makes Sense

Written May 18, 2026

When your inner voice tells you to change, do not hesitate. Backing away from difficult choices creates a bad habit that will quickly take over your life and stall your personal growth. You cannot expect your deeper intuition to always make logical sense to your brain, and waiting for a guarantee of safety is just your ego trying to stay in control.

The way to real progress requires you to stop overthinking, drop your need to manage everything, and take a bold leap into the unknown. While letting go feels risky and completely crazy to your intellect, it is actually the only way to find real peace and sanity. The next time fear paralyzes you during a crisis, surrender your worries, trust the process, and dive in.

Money Has a Ceiling

Written May 19, 2026

Think of someone who walked through something devastating, a diagnosis, a loss, a life rebuilt from nothing, and came out the other side somehow more themselves than before. What carried them?

Money helps. Let's be honest about that. Resources, security, and access to good care are real advantages, and pretending otherwise does a disservice to people who struggle precisely because they lack them. But money has a ceiling. Plenty of people with every material advantage still feel hollow, anxious, and lost. And plenty of people with almost nothing carry a kind of peace that others can't explain or buy.

That gap is where the inner life lives.

When we stop long enough to find that place, through prayer, reflection, time in nature, honest self-examination, something changes. We stop asking *what do I have?* and start asking *who am I, and what do I actually care about?* That question, sincerely asked, tends to change everything else.

It changes how we see each other too. People who have

done real inner work tend to be less brittle. They can sit across from someone with a completely different worldview and still find something they recognize, because they've already met it in themselves.

You don't have to call it God or spirit or anything at all. You just have to stop long enough to notice it's there.

Spiritual Checklists for Other People

Written May 20, 2026

We often think we know exactly how to fix another person. We rush in with our spiritual checklists and tell them, “If you just meditate more, read the right books, and pray, you will get over this.”

When we do this, we are actually acting out of our own anxiety, not true spiritual guidance. It is much easier to force a solution than to get out of the way and trust a Higher Power.

We would rather stay busy managing everyone else's lives than face our own lack of faith. We run around trying to play God, trying to control things we were never meant to handle. If we truly trust our Higher Power, we know that this Power will do for others what they cannot do for themselves.

We only lose hope for others when we forget the miracles that have happened in our own lives. Once we truly recognize how we were saved from our own rock bottom, we stop despairing about anyone else. But if we haven't done our our own housecleaning, we will panic. Our

urge to control others is a direct reflection of our own lack of spiritual experience.

Before we can help anyone, we have to look in the mirror. We must see our own flaws and the chaos we created when we relied entirely on our own willpower. When we finally get an honest look at our own egos and our capacity for self-delusion, we realize we are no better than anyone else. We see that without spiritual help, we are just as broken as the next person.

True spiritual awakening means giving up the illusion of control. When we stop trying to run the show, we can finally become a channel for a Higher Power to do its work.

When God Closes a Door

Written May 21, 2026

When things don't go my way, I can choose to stop fighting and trust God's plan instead. It helps to remember that I cannot see the future, and my own human strength is not enough to keep me safe. If a plan fails, a door closes, or a relationship ends, it is often God protecting me from a dangerous path.

True peace comes when I let go of control and stop getting angry about life's detours. When I work through the emotional pain of not getting my way, this spiritual healing changes how I see the world. Walking through this pain with a higher power builds a deep understanding of myself and others.

As my understanding grows, I become much more effective in my daily life. I no longer waste energy on useless fights or resentment. Instead, I gain the clear sight and strength needed to truly help the people around me.

Every setback is just a way to build my character, make me more useful to others, and get me ready for a safer, better future.

From Asking to Listening

Written May 22, 2026

Most of us begin our relationship with whatever we call God, or the universe, or life itself, by asking for things. Fix this. Remove that. Make this situation go away. It is an understandable starting point, born of fear and the exhausting effort of trying to manage everything alone. That's how I began.

But something changes in people who stay with the practice. The asking gradually gives way to listening. The frantic negotiating softens into a quieter kind of attention. Instead of arriving with a list of demands, they arrive with a question: *what is actually being asked of me here?*

This is where the real transformation begins. Not in answered prayers, but in a growing trust that something larger than personal willpower is at work. The person who once white-knuckled their way through every decision begins to notice that when they get quiet enough, a kind of inner knowing becomes available, one that feels less like opinion and more like direction.

Small things confirm it. A conversation that arrives at

exactly the right moment. A sudden clarity after days of confusion. The sense, looking back, that certain detours were not detours at all. Life begins to feel less like a problem to be solved and more like something being gently guided.

The ego doesn't disappear. But it loosens its grip. And in that loosening, something that might be called joy, steady, unearned, not dependent on circumstances, begins to take up more space.

This is available to anyone willing to get quiet enough to notice it.

A Position of Neutrality

Written May 23, 2026

True mental freedom comes from realizing that we cannot control the people, places, or things around us, but we can change how we respond to them. When we stop trying to run the whole show, we no longer need to strike back out of anger or twist ourselves into knots trying to please others.

Instead, we learn to pause when agitated or doubtful, asking a Higher Power for the right thought or action. This allows us to witness our passing thoughts and fears without letting them drive our behavior. By surrendering our demands for revenge and external validation, we are relieved of the burden of self-will and placed in a position of neutrality, finding a deep, quiet peace that anchors us through any storm.

The Boring Routine Is the Real Test

Written May 24, 2026

When people let fear run their minds, they get trapped in worry. They try to force everything and everyone to go their way. Peace begins when they stop fighting, let go of control, and trust a Power greater than themselves. This trust changes how they live. Instead of hiding in fear, they face life with new courage because they know they are not alone.

The hardest test of this new life is not a big emergency. It is the boring, normal, everyday routine. It is easy to ask for help when things are going south, but the real victory is staying calm and kind during a dull average day. People often expect huge, flashy changes when they start living in this fashion. Instead, they find that real happiness is much simpler. It comes from helping others right where they are and learning to face everyday life with a peaceful heart.

This Dirt Is in My DNA

Written May 25, 2026

This dirt is in my DNA. I was born in Eureka General Hospital, raised on these streets, and when my time comes, my ashes will be scattered in our Community Forest. Staying here is not because I lack options. It is a conscious choice to protect the future of the community that shaped me.

Because I know every corner of this town, I feel a deep responsibility to be a caretaker. My goal is to use my lifelong knowledge to make this place better for everyone. I do a lot of things, from board and committees, to work boots and gloves.

I do this freely, with a sense of paying forward a debt of gratitude. Others did this for me. Now it is my turn.

Staying in one place for life does bring challenges, like breaking out of old childhood labels and avoiding narrow thinking. However, I fight that stagnation by constantly learning and bringing fresh ideas back to my neighbors. Change is inevitable. How we take action to guide change charts this course.

Loving a town forever means seeing its flaws clearly and

doing the hard work to fix them. I am not just living here; I am actively investing my life into our local businesses, organizations, and governing bodies. I want to leave this town much better than I found it, ensuring it remains a wonderful place for the next generation to enjoy.

So far, so good.

Witnessing Thoughts Without Acting

Written May 26, 2026

I've found that emotional freedom comes from realizing that we cannot control the people, places, or things around us, but that we can change how we respond to them. When we stop trying to control every outcome, we no longer need to strike back out of anger or contort ourselves to satisfy others.

The practice that makes this possible is simple: we learn to pause when agitated or doubtful, asking a Higher Power for the right thought or action, instead of falling back on a self-based reaction. This allows us to witness our passing thoughts and fears without letting them drive our behavior.

By surrendering our demands for revenge and external validation, we are relieved of the burden of self-will and we find ourselves on neutral ground, settling into a deep, quiet peace that anchors us in any storm.

Nobody Wakes Up Wanting Recovery

Written May 27, 2026

Nobody wakes up and says, "I need recovery." That word feels like it belongs to someone else, someone whose problem is more visible, more severe, more obvious than yours.

But what if the thing you're carrying isn't something like alcoholism or drug abuse? What if it's anxiety that won't let you rest, or anger that keeps costing you relationships, or shame so old you've stopped questioning whether it's even true?

We all have something. A hurt we haven't named. A habit we can't break. A hang-up that keeps us stuck in the same place year after year.

That's not weakness. That's being human.

And here's what many have discovered: somewhere beneath the noise, beneath the defense mechanisms and the stories we tell ourselves, there is a still, small voice that has always known the truth. It never lies to you. It doesn't shout. It doesn't manipulate. It simply tells you what's real, if you're willing to get still enough

to hear it.

That voice is the beginning of healing. Not willpower. Not having the right answers. Just the courage to get honest with the truest part of yourself.

We don't have to have it all together. We just have to be willing to start.

Holding Circumstances Differently

Written May 28, 2026

Every day, you face a real choice. Not between problems and possibilities, but between circling in what's wrong and staying open to what's still possible. That's a harder distinction, and an honest one.

Peace doesn't come from getting your circumstances right. Most people discover that the hard way, like the way I did. It comes from slowly, imperfectly learning to hold your circumstances differently. Gratitude, faith, and a stubborn willingness to find joy aren't feelings that just show up.

They're habits you build, especially when you don't feel like it.

That's not a morning-affirmation thought. It's actually difficult. The people who've walked this will tell you it took suffering to learn it, not inspiration. Pain is a powerful and profound teacher.

So take a breath. Not as a ritual, but as a reminder that you're still here, still capable of choosing your next move. That's enough to start with.

The Trap of Our Own Certainty

Written May 29, 2026

It is so easy to fall into the trap of our own certainty. We get so caught up in our own lives, achievements, and unique worldview that we unconsciously start judging anyone who doesn't see things the same way. This is where intellectual arrogance and cognitive bias creep in. We start treating our specific life experience as the absolute blueprint for how everyone else should live, completely forgetting that real maturity is rooted in humility, open-mindedness, and empathy.

Your perspective is just one tiny piece of a massive, diverse, and complex puzzle. Real growth isn't about always being right or staying trapped inside an echo chamber. It is about dropping our personal defenses to practice genuine curiosity. Another person's lived experience, daily struggles, or view of the world is just as valid and real as yours, even if it looks completely different from your own history. When we stop dismissing or judging opinions that differ from ours, we break through our deepest blind spots and open the door to real, human connection.

When the Performance Finally Cracks

Written May 30, 2026

Most of us don't look for deeper help until we've exhausted every other option. We try harder, think smarter, white-knuckle our way through and still find ourselves hollow. That restlessness isn't a flaw. It's a signal.

There's a moment some people hit where the performance finally cracks. The self-sufficient version of yourself, the one who had it handled, turns out to be a fiction. And strangely, that collapse is the doorway.

Surrender isn't weakness. It's the first honest thing some of us have done in years. When we stop managing and start asking, something changes.

Not because we willed it, but because we finally got out of the way.

The sun rises on everyone. Basic existence is available to all. But there's a difference between existing and being genuinely alive to something larger than yourself. That aliveness seems to come only when we stop pretending we don't need it.

If your life has stopped making sense, that might not be a crisis. It might be an opening.

You don't have to have it together to ask for help. You just have to be empty enough to mean it.

Coming Like a Beggar, Not a Wish List

Written May 31, 2026

Most of us don't ask for help until we're completely out of options. We keep chasing something that feels missing, trying everything we can think of, and none of it works. That's actually the beginning of something good. When our best efforts finally fail us, we're forced to admit we can't fix ourselves.

And that admission, as hard as it is, opens a door. For the first time, we find ourselves considering that there just might be a Power greater than ourselves that could do for us what we could never do on our own.

When we stop trying to run everything on our own, life changes. We move from just going through the motions to actually connecting with a Higher Power, and suddenly even the small things start to matter in a way they never did before.

Getting there means letting go of the idea that we have it all figured out. A lot of us would rather go numb than admit how empty we feel inside. But that emptiness isn't something to be ashamed of. It's actually pointing

us somewhere.

We don't come to a Higher Power with a wish list. We come the way a beggar comes, with nothing, and nothing to prove. There's no embarrassment in that. A hungry person doesn't apologize for needing food. When we finally admit how desperate we really are, that's when we become ready to receive something we never could have given ourselves.

June

From Performance to Overflow

Written June 1, 2026

For a long time, my helpfulness was a loud performance.

I used service to balance an internal ledger, trying to prove to the world and to myself that I was important, valuable, and good. On the outside, I was doing the right things. On the inside, I was running on fumes, fueled by fear and a desperate need for validation.

Today, things look exactly the same from the outside. I am still doing the work, still showing up, still helping where I can. But on the inside, everything has changed.

Something in the motive quietly changed. I no longer serve to pay back a debt of guilt. I serve because my own cup has been filled, and helping is simply the natural overflow of that gratitude.

I don't need the applause anymore. I don't need the action to define my worth or fix my past. The ego has stepped aside, and what's left is just a quiet, steady calling to be of service.

Same actions. Entirely different spirit.

To anyone still trapped in the exhausting cycle of trying

to outrun their past: healing is possible. **You don't have to earn your right to exist.** True freedom comes when you stop performing and start pouring out the love you've been given.

Can't Reason Someone Out of a Feeling

Written June 2, 2026

What's on my mind this morning was an interaction with a community member who is ignorant of how things are accomplished in the realm of local government. It's frustrating, but there are tools that I can use to at least maintain my serenity and peace of mind.

Dealing with people who don't understand how government works, yet want to force their personal feelings onto everyone else, is absolutely exhausting. I've learned that the most important thing to remember is that I cannot reason someone out of a position they didn't reason themselves into. They aren't looking for a civics lesson or a factual debate; they are just looking for an outlet for their anger and an audience to react to them. Trying to explain facts or laws to someone driven entirely by raw emotion only drains my energy and leaves me frustrated.

The best way I've found to protect my peace is to stop engaging in the argument completely. I do not carry the burden of correcting their ignorance, and I don't owe

anyone a debate.

I always remind myself that a stable society runs on actual laws, not the loudest feelings in the room. I refuse to let their chaotic energy disrupt my day or dictate my mood. I save my valuable time and mental focus for meaningful, respectful conversations with open-minded people. I just let the emotionally charged individuals exhaust themselves while I step back, stay calm, and protect my own mental well-being.

An Open Journal, Typed Out Loud

Written June 3, 2026

Every morning after I meditate, I spend time reading, reflecting on life, and seeing how I may incorporate these reflections into today. During these quiet moments, I often get a fresh perspective, a spark of inspiration, or a deeper understanding of things.

Part of my daily spiritual practice is keeping no secrets, and sharing these reflections openly keeps me from hiding behind a carefully managed version of myself. Think of this as an open journal, where I type out loud what I am learning in hopes that it might be useful to someone else.

My hope is that by being completely transparent, these daily insights might offer a moment of peace, encouragement, or inspiration to anyone who happens to need it.

The Universe Doesn't Negotiate

Written June 4, 2026

Something gets in the way of a deeper life, and most of the time it's us. Not our circumstances, not other people. Our preferences, our comforts, the quiet deals we make with ourselves about how much we're willing to change. We offer up the easy parts and hold the rest back, and then wonder why nothing changes.

Here's what I've come to believe: the Universe doesn't negotiate. It isn't interested in the version of you that's been curated for comfort. It asks for all of it, including the parts you'd rather keep hidden, even from yourself.

The hardest thing I've ever done is let go of the illusion that I'm running my own life. Not because I gave up, but because I finally saw that my grip on control was the very thing holding me back. When I loosened that grip, something opened up. Life started feeling less like a problem to manage and more like something I was actually part of.

That shift doesn't come with a rigid set of rules. It comes as a quieter kind of listening, an inner voice that, when you pay attention to it, keeps pointing you toward the

next indicated action. The challenges don't disappear. But they stop feeling like obstacles and start feeling more natural, as if it were the path itself.

One thing I've had to watch for: the temptation to turn my own breakthroughs into instructions for everyone else. What cracked something open in me may not be what someone else needs. We each find our way in our own time.

What I can say is this: when you stop fighting what's in front of you and start trusting it, something in you relaxes. And that relaxation, that quiet willingness, has a way of reaching other people without you even trying.

That's the invitation. Not a demand, just a question worth pondering: What would change if you stopped trying to control the outcome?

Sitting With Reality Instead of Arguing

Written June 5, 2026

It’s easy to look at the world right now and feel like something has gone fundamentally wrong. The conflicts, the shouting, the sides drawn so hard and fast that nuance has no room to breathe. It can feel like humanity is failing some basic test.

But here’s what I keep coming back to: none of us are all the way good, and none of us are all the way bad. Every person carrying a sign, posting an angry comment, or digging into a position they won't budge from is also someone who has loved another person, felt afraid, and wanted things to be better. That doesn't excuse the harm people cause. It just means the picture is never as simple as the loudest voices want it to be.

The trap I fall into, and I suspect I'm not alone, is believing that if I just judge hard enough, analyze clearly enough, or find the right people to blame, something will change. It never does. What changes, at least for me, is when I stop auditing everyone else and get honest about my own part in the noise. That's not passivity. It's a

better place to put my attention.

Compassion isn't agreement. Tolerance isn't surrender. They are simply the decision to sit with reality where it is, rather than to argue with it. And from that steadier place, something closer to actual peace becomes possible. Not out there in the world first, but within myself.

The Practice of Being Unbothered

Written June 6, 2026

People who know me say I seem calm even when things go sideways. This is why.

It begins with a single, uncomfortable truth: most of my suffering is self-inflicted. I spend enormous energy demanding that people, places, and situations bend to my will, and they rarely do.

The moment I find myself upset, something in me has declared the world unacceptable. That declaration is unsustainable. It puts me in constant conflict with reality, which, as it turns out, does not negotiate.

Letting go of that fight is not weakness. It is the most practical thing I can do. When I stop insisting that everything conform to my specifications, something changes. Not out there, but in here. I become, almost without trying, harder to rattle.

This is what it means to be unbothered. It is not indifference. It is not detachment from life. It is the freedom that comes from focusing on the one thing I can actually control: my own attitudes and actions. Everything else is above my pay grade.

The goal was never perfection, because that is impossible. It was progress; slow, uneven, real. And the reward is not a life without difficulty. It is a life where difficulty no longer has the final word.

Some days I still get it wrong, but I know the way back.

Terminal Uniqueness

Written June 7, 2026

I used to think that I was so much different than other people, but today I know that I am not unique. Accepting this basic truth has become one of the most liberating discoveries of my life.

In the past, my ego constantly whispered that my struggles and my pain were entirely different from anyone else's, trapping me in a dangerous delusion of spiritual pride. This mindset acted as a barrier, convincing me that because my problems were special, ordinary paths to healing just wouldn't work for me.

It kept me isolated, relying entirely on my own broken willpower and rejecting the guidance of people who had already found their way through, which only kept me trapped in my own suffering.

Eventually, I realized that this insistence on being different was a form of self-centered fear. It allowed me to use my resentments and my past as an alibi to feel sorry for myself and avoid the rigorous, honest work required to change.

Freedom only came when I smashed the illusion of being

separate, let go of my pride, and stepped out of isolation. By accepting that I am just an ordinary person who needs the exact same spiritual principles and way of daily living as everyone else, I was finally able to connect with something greater than myself and a supportive community that helps me grow.

Today, I am simply another member of society, no better and no worse than anyone else walking this earth. Letting go of the need to be separate or special has allowed me to finally trade the heavy burden of isolation for the quiet peace of belonging.

I am just a regular person living a purposeful life, grateful to walk shoulder-to-shoulder with the rest of the human family as we all help each other grow.

Judging Strangers on a Screen

Written June 8, 2026

What's on my mind this morning is that I've noticed how quick we've all gotten to judge each other lately, especially online. Someone's politics, their choices, even just the way they word something, and the judgment shows up before we even decide to let it. I still catch myself doing this more than I'd like to admit.

I need to remember that letting go of judgment and resentment is what frees me from a kind of poison that blocks real peace and connection.

Acting superior is usually just my ego taking over, and it cuts me off from the very help I need.

The moment I feel the urge to pick apart someone else's flaws, that's my cue to turn inward. Instead of focusing on what they did wrong, I try to look honestly at my own behavior, selfishness, or hidden fears. That takes a good deal of internal housecleaning. Facing my own messes. Setting my pride aside. Staying focused on cleaning up my own side of the street.

Once I recognize how much I depend on something greater than myself just to get through, looking down on

anyone else becomes impossible.

Difficult people stop triggering my anger and start looking like people who are simply hurting. I wish I could say I get this right every time. Most days I'm still working on it, one scroll, one comment, one chance to choose differently. I'll try again today.

The Strength to Say I Don't Know

Written June 9, 2026

A friend once told me the strongest people he knew were the ones who'd stopped trying to prove they were strong. I didn't get it back then. I do now.

For years I ran on one quiet rule: figure it out yourself, and if you can't, pretend you did. It wasn't dramatic. It just meant I never called when I should have, never said the hard thing out loud, never let anyone see the parts that weren't working. I told myself that was strength. I now understand it as a form of disguised fear.

Most of us would rather struggle in private than look unsure in public. We avoid the phone call, the favor, the hard conversation, the appointment we keep putting off, and tell ourselves we're just handling it. But avoiding doesn't make us more capable. It just makes our lives smaller, one unasked question at a time.

There's a moment right before someone asks for help, a half-second where pride and need argue with each other. I notice it in other people now. I notice it in myself. The people who push through that moment tend to end up with fuller lives, not because asking solves everything,

but because it keeps them connected instead of slowly drifting into a life of solo workarounds.

The real strength isn't never needing anyone. It's being able to say "I don't have this figured out" and trust that saying it won't cost you anything you can't afford to lose.

If you're sitting on a question you've been meaning to ask somebody, today's as good a day as any.

Resentment Was Never About Them

Written June 10, 2026

For years I carried resentment like it was armor. I told myself I was just being honest, just calling things out, just refusing to let people walk over me. It felt like strength. It took me a long time to see it for what it actually was.

Resentment doesn't start as anger. It starts as self-will. I wanted people, institutions, and even the principles I believed in to operate the way I thought they should. When they didn't, when someone crossed me, or a system failed me, or the world simply didn't bend to what I thought was right, I got angry and called it justified. Underneath it, every time, was something simpler. I wanted control I never had.

The way out wasn't to relitigate who wronged me. It was to look at my own actions. Where had I been selfish. Where had I been afraid. Where had I expected the world to revolve around my idea of how things ought to go.

That kind of honest look is uncomfortable, but it's the

only thing that actually loosens resentment's grip, because resentment feeds on being right and starves when you stop feeding it.

Underneath almost every resentment I uncovered was fear. Fear of losing status. Fear of being powerless. Fear that if I couldn't control the outcome, I'd be left exposed. Fear runs through nearly everything if you're willing to trace it back far enough. It set things in motion in my life that I never intended and never saw coming, all because I was trying to manage things that were never mine to manage in the first place.

What changed wasn't that the people or institutions around me got easier to control. They didn't. What changed was that I stopped expecting to control them. I started asking a different question when the old anger rose up: what am I afraid of right now, and whose job was I trying to do that wasn't mine.

That question still works better for me than staying angry ever did.

Ninety Minutes That Lift the Spirit

Written June 11, 2026

I've learned that when I start feeling sorry for myself because life isn't going the way I think it should, one of the best remedies is to get out of myself and do something for others. It doesn't make my problems disappear, but it changes my perspective.

This morning is one of those opportunities. Every two months, volunteers from throughout our community gather for the **McKinleyville Community Trash Bash**, a 90-minute cleanup effort organized in partnership with the PacOut Green Team. The county provides a 15-yard dumpster, and together we clean roadsides, greenbelt areas, and public spaces of litter and debris.

It may seem like a small thing, but the impact is easy to see. In just an hour and a half, a group of neighbors can make a visible difference in the appearance of our community. More importantly, we connect with one another and share the satisfaction of doing something useful.

I've found that service works that way. When my focus shifts from what's missing in my life to what I can

contribute, my outlook improves. The circumstances may not change, but I do.

So this morning, we'll spend 90 minutes picking up trash. By the end, McKinleyville will be a little cleaner, and many of us will leave feeling a little lighter than when we arrived.

Sometimes the best way to lift our spirits is to lend a hand. This morning if you have some time to spare and need a lift of spirit, join us at 9:00am outside of North Coast Awning.

Love I Didn't Have to Earn

Written June 12, 2026

For most of my life I thought love had to be earned. I thought if I just confessed enough flaws, fixed enough character defects, tried hard enough, I'd finally be worthy of being loved. That kind of thinking will wear you out. It keeps your faith anxious instead of free.

What I'm finding out is that the love and the strength I need were never something I had to qualify for. They were already given. Free. No conditions attached. The real question isn't whether I'm good enough. It's whether I'm willing to stop obsessing over myself long enough to be useful to somebody else.

Real prayer, for me, stopped being about begging and started being about turning outward. Instead of "please fix me," it became "who needs me today." Instead of cataloging every flaw I could find, which is a project with no end, I started resting in the idea that I'm already accepted. Already safe. Already loved.

That rest is where the peace lives. Not in proving myself. Not in digging endlessly through my own wreckage looking for one more thing wrong with me. Just in trusting it's already taken care of, and getting on with loving the people in front of me.

The Work Happens First

Written June 13, 2026

What's on my mind this morning is that there were stretches of my life where I felt like I was doing everything right and getting nowhere. I'd put in the work, stay patient, stay honest, and still nothing on the outside seemed to move. I used to think that meant nothing was happening.

Looking back now, I can see what was really happening all along.

My life right now is the result of something I started a long time ago. Every relationship, every lesson, every hard season was shaped by choices I made when I had no idea what they'd grow into. The day I decided to keep going when I felt done. The thought I chose to hold onto instead of the one that would have pulled me under. All of it built the ground I'm standing on today.

So when I put in honest effort now and nothing changes right away, I try to remember this isn't wasted. I'm not always working for today. Some of what I'm doing now won't pay off for months, maybe years. The work happens first. Whatever comes from it shows up later,

on its own time, not mine.

I don't get to set the schedule. I just get to keep showing up and trust that the effort I put in today will still be there when I need it.

A War With No Negotiation

Written June 14, 2026

We rarely understand deep sadness. We just survive the pain and move on, because we never look at what's actually causing it. When we're young, we believe we can fix everything. Education, self-control, hard work, we think these will make life perfect. I spent years believing willpower alone would save me.

Life doesn't work that way. Sooner or later we run into our own dark, destructive habits, the defects in our character that no amount of willpower can outmuscle. This side of us wrecks our plans and throws everything into disorder. Many people won't accept this, because they think life should always be fair, or that self-will is enough to overcome it.

To grow, we have to admit this inner destructiveness is real, and admit we cannot defeat it alone. It's a war inside us, and there's no compromise, no negotiating with it on our own terms. Self-will fights to stay in charge.

Surrender is what actually wins.

When we stop trying to white-knuckle our way through

and instead hand the fight over to something greater than ourselves, our best self gets the room to thrive. This same battle plays out in everyone, every day. Facing this dark side and surrendering it is the only way to heal, and the only way to understand the pain in this world.

Launching Out Despite the Doubt

Written June 15, 2026

There comes a point in every kind of personal collapse, whether it's a relationship, a career, an addiction, or just a life that's quietly fallen apart, when we have to take a first step toward turning things around. That step is rarely comfortable and never feels like enough.

The biggest mistake we make is thinking we need to feel completely confident before we take it. Taking that first step means surrendering the illusion of control and admitting that our current way of doing things is unmanageable.

It means smashing the ego, stopping the fight with the universe, and facing the truth of our helplessness so we can finally start over. If we wait for our anxieties to disappear, we stay paralyzed by self-centered fear.

This step plays out differently depending on the wreckage we're facing. In a broken relationship, it means admitting we're powerless over how our partner feels or acts, ending the cycle of manipulation, and turning our attention to our own defects of character.

In financial or career ruin, it means setting pride aside,

ending the habit of hiding from our bills, and taking a thoroughly honest inventory of exactly where we stand.

With a secret obsession or habit, it means conceding to our innermost self that we cannot stop on willpower alone, and shattering the delusion that tomorrow will magically be different.

We cannot think our way into right living. We have to act our way into right thinking. Faith without works is dead, and trying to solve our emotional problems through willpower alone is a delusion.

When we're full of doubt, we have to stop staring at our own shadow and launch out on a course of vigorous action. Our fears are just a corroding thread running through our lives, and they start to vanish the moment we stop hiding.

We take our imperfect feelings with us and put our attention on being helpful to others. By cleaning up our own house, trusting a power greater than ourselves, and showing up for the day, clarity returns.

Innocent Versus Pure

Written June 16, 2026

I used to think being good meant I couldn't do much harm. Now I think it's the other way around.

The person who gets caught off guard isn't the dangerous one. It's the person who never thought he'd be tested at all.

There's a difference between innocent and pure. Innocent just means you haven't been tested yet. Pure means you have been tested, more than once, and you chose right anyway.

I'm not safe because I think well of myself. I'm safe when I stop pretending I'm above the same things that trip other people up.

The day I stopped expecting myself to be perfect, I started paying attention. Now I see trouble coming. I know what a bad choice will cost before I make it, not after.

This doesn't mean I've lost faith in people. I still believe in grace. I've just stopped pretending I'm above my own worst moments.

The most honest relationships I have aren't the ones

where everyone assumes the best. They're the ones where we've both stopped pretending we're above anything. That's not a weaker kind of trust. It's the kind that survives real life.

Comparing My Insides to Their Outsides

Written June 17, 2026

Comparing my life to other people never goes well. Comparing my marriage to a couple on TV goes even worse. Here's why I had to stop doing both.

We compare our insides to other people's outsides.

The doubts, the rough days, the slow stretches. All measured against the best parts someone else chose to show. It's not a fair fight.

TV couples make it worse. That relationship isn't even real. It's written. Fixed by the end of the episode. Real life doesn't work that way.

Most comparison starts with a wish that things look a certain way, by a certain time. When they don't, we don't get curious. We get unhappy. And unhappy turns into envy or feeling sorry for ourselves.

The fix isn't pretending other people's lives don't exist. It's looking at what's actually in front of me.

Accepting what's real opens a door that comparing keeps shut. You can't feel grateful and keep score at

the same time.

Everyone only posts their best moments. The bad days stay off camera. I am not exempt from this.

The years of non-glamorous work that make a marriage actually thrive never make it online.

Too Heavy for One Set of Hands

Written June 18, 2026

We say life is "unmanageable" all the time now. The bills keep coming, the cost of groceries keeps climbing, the paycheck doesn't stretch as far as it used to. We use the word like it just means "too much."

But "unmanageable" breaks down simply. Un- meaning not, manage, and

-able meaning capable of. The interesting word is "manage."

It traces back through the Italian word *maneggiare*, meaning to handle or to train a horse. That word comes from the Latin *manus*, meaning hand. To manage something originally meant to hold it in the hand, the way a rider holds the reins.

So when life feels unmanageable, it's not really about how much is happening. It's about whether you can still carry it alone. Something unmanageable isn't fighting you. It's just too heavy for one set of hands.

That's the truth behind a lot of our exhaustion. We keep trying to carry more by ourselves. More side hustles,

more willpower, more this or that. But the problem was never our strength. It was thinking one person should be able to carry that much in the first place.

There's real relief in admitting that. Not everything is meant to be carried alone. Some loads only become bearable when other hands take part of the weight.

The bills don't disappear. The math doesn't change. But a family member who can watch the kids for a weekend, a friend who shows up with no strings attached, a community that pulls together when one of its own is struggling, that changes what the weight feels like.

And there's a deeper hand in this too, one that doesn't show up in a budget or a calendar. Some people call it prayer. Some call it surrender. Whatever the word, it's the act of admitting that we were never built to hold everything ourselves, and that something larger than us is willing to take the other end of the load.

That's not a fix. It's something sturdier than a fix. It's not carrying it alone anymore, in any sense of the word.

Safety Was Never About Control

Written June 19, 2026

I used to think safety meant control. If I held tight enough to what I had, my plans, my reputation, my sense of being treated fairly, I figured nothing could really touch me.

It never worked that way.

The harder I gripped, the more afraid I got. Every loss felt like a betrayal. Every slight demanded justice. I was exhausted from defending a life that was never mine to defend in the first place.

The more I think about it, this comes clear: I'm not promised comfort or fairness. I'm only promised that wherever I'm led, I'll be carried through it.

That's a hard trade. It means letting go of outcomes I couldn't control anyway, and giving up the habit of keeping score on who wronged me. It means doing the next right thing and leaving the verdict to something bigger than my own judgment.

And the part I'd rather skip: I call myself a person of faith, but most days I run on my own common sense and

slap a higher name on it when it's convenient. I lean on what I can see and measure, when I'm supposed to be leaning on what I can't. I'm still trying.

Letting go of that grip isn't weakness. It's the only peace I've found that doesn't depend on getting my way.

Picking Up Trash to Quiet My Head

Written June 20, 2026

When my head gets loud, I've learned a trick that actually works. I go outside and pick up trash along my street. I've done this for years. This trick works well.

It sounds small. It is small. But something happens during that time spent that no amount of thinking my way out ever does.

My hands get busy. My eyes drop to the sidewalk. And somewhere in there, my mind quietly stops circling around me.

I start thinking about the neighbor who'll walk this way later. The kid on a bike. The street itself, looking a little better than it did an hour ago.

Most of my misery, if I'm honest, comes from too much attention turned inward. The same worries. The same self. Round and round.

Action breaks that loop in a way thinking never can. One piece of trash, then another, and somewhere along the way I stop being the center of the universe for a little while.

I come back lighter. Not because I solved anything. Just because I stopped carrying myself around for a bit.

A Pile of Easy Things

Written June 21, 2026

I used to think change required a complete overhaul. A new schedule, a new mindset, a new me by Monday.

So I waited for the big moment. The day I'd finally have enough willingness to do it right.

That day never came.

What came instead was easy things. A phone call I'd been avoiding, finally made. A drawer full of mail, finally sorted. The lawn, finally mowed.

Nothing dramatic. Nothing that took courage.

But easy things, done one after another, stop being small. By evening I look back and the day adds up to more than any single piece of it.

That's the part I keep forgetting and keep relearning. The big change was never going to arrive in one piece. It was always going to arrive as a pile of easy ones, stacked.

And the pile doesn't reset overnight. Tomorrow I start one teaspoon ahead, not at zero.

This morning, one easy thing. Then another. Let tonight surprise you.

When the Voice Steps Back

Written June 22, 2026

My spirit is that still, small voice in the background that never lies to me. If there's a deity, a God, this is how He reaches me, by impressing on my spirit what I need to know, and from there, onto me. My conscience is what happens when that voice meets a real moment, a real choice. Most days I don't feel two signals. I feel one. A pull, or a push back.

For years I had to work at this. I couldn't skip it. I'd look at a thought, then check it against what that voice was already telling me. I'd look at an action, then check that too. Were they selfless? True? Morally aligned? It took effort. Sometimes it wore me out.

Then, somewhere along the way, it stopped feeling like work. It just started happening on its own. If something feels right, I do it. If it doesn't, I don't. No long debate in my head. Just a clear answer.

I'm not saying this to brag. It actually surprised me. I thought the goal was to get better at checking myself all the time. Turns out the real goal was needing to check less, because listening to that voice had become part of who I am.

Here's what I still watch closely. When I start putting myself first again, the voice doesn't get louder. It gets quieter, almost like it's stepped back. And in its place, I feel restless. Irritable. Discontent, in a way that wasn't

there the day before. That's not random. That's a signal. It means I've pushed my own wants ahead of the voice that usually leads.

So that uncomfortable feeling isn't the problem. It's useful. It's a tap on the shoulder telling me something's off. When that happens, the fix is almost always the same. I look at where I went wrong. I admit it, right away,

without making excuses. Make amends where necessary.

Then I let things settle back down, and that still, small voice once again becomes audible.

Serenity doesn't return because life got easier. It returns because I got honest again, and I'm listening once more.

It’s actually pretty simple, yet not easy. Not being perfect. Just staying close enough to that quiet voice that I notice the moment it steps back.

The Secret Is in the Dishes

Written June 23, 2026

We do the dishes together every night. Miss K and I.

It's often the only "together" time we get outside of sitting down to eat. Today was such a day.

We didn't plan it that way. It just became ours, and somehow we began looking forward to it.

There's a temptation in this culture to believe intimacy has a price tag. That closeness requires a destination, a reservation, an event.

But real connection rarely arrives wrapped in something special. It shows up in the ordinary minutes we're willing to give our full attention to.

A sink full of dishes. A few quiet minutes. Two people, present, with nowhere else they'd rather be.

That's it. That's the whole secret.

Contentment isn't found by chasing bigger moments. It's uncovered in the willingness to be fully present in the small ones already in front of us.

Tonight, look for the version of this already happening in your life. It's probably smaller than you think, and worth far more than you may realize.

When Good Things Become Obstacles

Written June 24, 2026

There are things in my life that are good. Useful. Even things I'm proud of. But sometimes those very things stand quietly between me and the peace I'm trying to build. For a long time I thought growth meant adding 'more.' More effort, more willpower, more good habits piled on top of old patterns. That rarely worked.

What actually changed things was being willing to let go of something I valued, simply because it had become an obstacle to the life I wanted. That kind of letting go doesn't look like progress to anyone watching. It can look like loss, like backing away from something perfectly reasonable.

It isn't my place to decide what someone else needs to release. My only job is to stay honest about what's blocking me. I'm not whole yet. But I'd rather be incomplete and pointed in the right direction than polished and immobile.

Enough Light for the Next Step

Written June 25, 2026

Growth in understanding and effectiveness doesn't happen all at once, and it doesn't happen by sitting still waiting to feel ready. Insight tends to arrive in pieces, a little more disclosed each time we stay willing and keep showing up. We rarely get the whole picture ahead of time. We get enough light for the next step, and then we move.

That movement matters. Understanding deepens through action, not just reflection. We act on what we've come to see so far, and through that action, more becomes clear. Insight and effectiveness grow side by side, each one feeding the other.

We don't need everything figured out before we begin.

We just need today's portion, used as well as we can.

Rehearsing a Disaster That Never Comes

Written June 26, 2026

I catch myself doing it almost every day. Standing in the present, but my mind is already three steps into a future that hasn't happened yet.

My mind likes to write stories. And it almost never writes a good one. It picks the worst case, plays it out in full, and hands it to me like a fact instead of a fear.

The strange part is how real it feels. Like I'm being careful. Like I'm getting ready. But really I'm just suffering twice, once today in my head and once if it ever actually happens.

While I'm busy rehearsing disaster, the day right in front of me goes by unattended. The conversation, the task, the small good thing right here, all of it gets missed because I was not fully in today.

I've noticed too that the forecast almost never matches what actually happens. Real life has a way of showing up different than the version I built in my head, sometimes harder, most of the time easier, but rarely the way I rehearsed it. So all that worry didn't even prepare

me. It just cost me the time.

I don't have a future yet. I only have today. So lately I try to bring myself back, every time I notice I've wandered off into tomorrow.

Today is the most important day in my life, as today is the only day in which I might make a difference. Tomorrow can wait.

Quiet Power in Routine

Written June 27, 2026

As I go over today's task list and glance at my calendar, I notice something simple: I take comfort in the stability of it. I enjoy a good vacation as much as anyone, but I've always leaned toward comfort over excitement. And I've found that discovery doesn't require travel. It can happen right here, in the doing of what I routinely do.

There's a quiet power in that kind of routine. Excitement is often just another word for restlessness. It promises fullness, but tends to leave a person chasing the next, greater thing.

A steady life, built on the same small acts done daily, works differently. It doesn't ask for a peak experience to feel worthwhile. It finds worth in the ordinary, like right this very moment: quiet time with my coffee, a few pages of reading, some reflection, a little writing in my journal before the day even starts.

To me, that is the epitome of freedom. When you're not chasing the next high, you're not managing the crash that follows it either. My peace doesn't depend on circumstances lining up just right.

Routine also builds something excitement can't. Trust in yourself. Every day I keep the small commitments, waking at the same time, doing the work, telling the truth, and I prove to myself that I'm someone who follows through. That's a different kind of confidence than the one that comes from a thrill.

And there's room in a quiet life for real connection. Excitement tends to be a solitary pursuit, even in a crowd. Routine, especially the kind that includes reflection and service to others, opens space for people to actually know me and be known.

None of this means routine has to be dull. It just means the aliveness comes from depth instead of speed, from paying attention to what's already in front of me rather than always reaching for what's next.

The world's appetite for excitement isn't wrong, exactly. It's just often mistaken for a solution to something that quiet, steady living already resolves.

The Holiday Problem Drinkers Dread

Written June 28, 2026

There was a time when alcohol was my answer. It dulled the emotional pain I didn't know how to face, and for a while it worked. Drinking started out fun, but it didn't take long before I was using it as a medicine rather than a social lubricant.

Then it stopped working, but I kept reaching for it anyway. The relief was gone, replaced by an obsession I couldn't reason my way out of.

I knew exactly what I was doing to myself. I could see the slow damage as clearly as anyone watching from the outside.

And still I did it. Knowing and stopping turned out to be two completely different things.

That gap between what I understood and what I was able to do felt like a kind of madness. No amount of willpower closed it.

What finally helped wasn't trying harder. It was admitting I couldn't do this on my own, and letting that

honesty be the opening instead of remaining in bondage.

The Fourth of July is coming up, and for many problem drinkers, this is a day that they dread. They already know what's going to happen, and it always ends the same, in a bad way, whether they remember what happened or not.

If any of this sounds familiar, you don't have to take it on alone. Reach out to someone, a friend, a counselor, anyone you trust. I can help as well.

That first conversation can be the beginning of something different. If I can stop for good, you can too.

Surrender Is Not a Last Resort

Written June 29, 2026

I used to think I could handle the big moments if I just tried hard enough. Then I'd hit something too heavy to deal with, and I would reach for help, panicked, only when I had no other move left. That's not living within spiritual principles. That is not surrender. That is bargaining.

Real surrender is not a last resort. It is not something I save for emergencies and otherwise ignore. If I only lean on something greater than myself when I am desperate, I am still running the show the rest of the time. I am just borrowing power when it suits me.

That kind of half-measure is dangerous. It lets me feel spiritual without actually giving it up. I get the comfort of belief without the discipline of trust. And a little bit of faith, used that way, can pull me right back into my own head, my own plans, my own control.

The only thing that works for me is daily surrender. Not just handing over the crisis, but handing over the will underneath it. My preferences. My timeline. My idea of how things should go. Each morning, before I start my

day.

When I do that consistently, something changes. I stop trying to bend outcomes to match what I want, and I start paying attention to what is actually being asked of me. That is a completely different way to live.

It is slower. It is less dramatic. But it is the only version of trust that actually lasts.

Serenity Was Never the Absence of Trouble

Written June 30, 2026

I used to think that if I planned carefully enough, worried enough, controlled enough, I could keep disaster away.

It never worked. Life kept happening anyway, on its own schedule, with its own plans.

Somewhere along the way I had to trade that approach for a different one. Instead of trusting my own grip on things, I started trusting something larger than myself. Call it God, call it a higher power, call it the order of the universe. The name matters less than the change.

I am not here to run the show. I am here to take the next spiritually-indicated action, and do it without question.

Some days that means showing up to something ordinary. A conversation. A task. A person who needs a few minutes of my attention. Nothing dramatic. Just the part in front of me.

What surprised me is the more I let go of running things,

and the more I simply tried to do what seemed right in front of me, the calmer I got. Not because life slowed down or got easier. It didn't.

But somehow, when trouble showed up anyway, I could meet it without falling apart. Serenity was not the absence of hard things. It was what happened when I stopped trying to control them and started trusting instead.

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.