

# 12 Steps for Recovery from Adversity, Trauma, and Abuse (Part 1)

Pursuing Podcast Episode 5

April 1, 2019

Notes	
<b>Introduction to the 12 Steps for Recovery from Adversity, Trauma, and Abuse</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. We admit that we are powerless over another's choices, behaviors, and commitment to healing, while recognizing and claiming the power we have over our own choices, behaviors, and healing.</i></li><li><i>2. We come to believe that there is within us an innate ability to heal and an inner knowing that can guide us on our healing journey.</i></li><li><i>3. We make a decision to trust in the process of healing.</i></li><li><i>4. We make a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.</i></li><li><i>5. We acknowledge and admit the truth of the experience, our role in that experience, and the role of others involved.</i></li><li><i>6. We forgive ourselves for our role in this experience and make amends with ourselves as necessary. We forgive others for their role in this experience and release them to their own healing.</i></li><li><i>7. We fully commit to doing the work that is necessary for healing.</i></li></ol>

	<p>8. <i>We honor our emotions by acknowledging them, allowing them, and accessing the information they hold.</i></p> <p>9. <i>We identify core beliefs that have led us to this place, challenge them, and change those that hinder our growth and healing.</i></p> <p>10. <i>We identify and restructure distorted thought patterns.</i></p> <p>11. <i>We commit to behaviors that are consistent with our healthier emotions, thoughts, and beliefs.</i></p> <p>12. <i>In our pursuit of progression, we continue to do our own work and bring awareness and support to others on their healing journey.</i></p>
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<p><b>Step 1:</b></p>	<p><b>Main Points:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first part of this step can feel terrifying, but in reality it is actually freeing and empowering. It is terrifying because when we have been through trauma or abuse, we want more control, not less. But only in realizing and accepting the truth that we cannot control another do we find the door through which we can make change.</li> <li>2. The second part of this step is the doorway to our real point of power. Yes, sometimes things are done <i>to</i> us that we really have little or no control over. But the hope—the light in this darkness—is that after the experience or event, even if it doesn't feel like, we do have control over our "<i>what next?</i>".</li> <li>3. Our energy goes where our attention flows, so it is critical that our attention be on what we can control and on our own healing.</li> </ol> <p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This can make us feel powerless—we want more control, not less. But only in realizing and accepting the truth that we cannot control another do we find the door through which we can make change.</li> <li>● We must be mindful to not personalize the events and make them all our fault.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accept what we can control, and let go of what we cannot.</li> <li>● “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”</li> <li>● The power of this statement to facilitate our healing is recognizing that we have control over our own choices, behavior, and healing. Yes, sometimes things are done <i>to</i> us that we really have little or no control over. But the hope—the light in this darkness—is that whatever the event or experience, even if it doesn’t feel like, we do have control over our <i>what next?</i></li> <li>● We begin to explore what we can control and take steps in that direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find out about and access resources of support (e.g., crisis centers, specialized departments of law enforcement—for a list of resources you can also visit my website <a href="http://www.pursuingperspective.org">www.pursuingperspective.org</a> under the tab “Victim to Victor”)</li> <li>○ Find small places to claim your power: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gain knowledge (books, online, professionals)</li> <li>■ Reconnect to self and our inner knowing/truth</li> <li>■ Begin working on our healing, which will help us deal with the situation and/or help us get out</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● We often spend a lot of our energy trying to change things that are beyond our control. Getting past this requires a cognitive shift, or changing the way we perceive and react to the situation. Accomplishing this shift involves determining what we can and cannot control, then accepting and letting go of those things we can’t control in order to refocus our energy on what we can. Our energy goes where our attention flows, so it is critical that our attention be on what we can control and on our own healing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2</b></p>	<p><b>Main Points:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our body is evidence that we have an innate ability to heal, which provides us the hope that healing is possible for us mentally, emotionally, and energetically.</li> <li>2. We all have within us an inner knowing that is connected to truth and love. This is what allows us to move from fear to faith and move forward with confidence knowing that we are guided and supported on our path.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Our body is evidence that we have an innate ability to heal.</li> <li>● Our inner knowing is a connection to our highest self, to the Divine</li> <li>● The metaphysical text <i>A Course in Miracles</i> teaches that the presence of fear is a sure sign you are trusting in your own strength. Trusting in a higher power helps us connect into the true source of hope and love.</li> <li>● The research study in connection with the National Institutes of Health that was published in 2005 in the <i>Annals of Family Medicine</i>, titled, “The meaning of healing: transcending suffering” summary of findings states: “Healing was associated with themes of wholeness, narrative, and spirituality. Healing is an intensely personal, subjective experience involving a reconciliation of the meaning an individual ascribes to distressing events with his or her perception of wholeness as a person” (Egnew, 2005, p. 2).</li> <li>● Spirituality is tied to our healing.</li> <li>● We are supported—we have full access to unconditional love and support. The universe does indeed have our back. “Remember, the Universe will never give you anything that you cannot handle. No matter how difficult your universal assignment may seem, you can find comfort in the fact that the Universe is always supporting what is of the highest good. By embracing the Universe as your support system, you’re no longer relying solely on your own power to solve your problems” (Bernstein, 2016, p. 47).</li> <li>● “I choose to serve faith rather than fear They cannot co-exist, so I will experience a lighter heart and increased spiritual depth. I desire the tranquility that comes from an abiding faith” (Marilyn Beecher Thaxton).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Main Points:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trusting in the process of healing gives us the strength to get through the difficult parts and the commitment to see it through.</li> <li>2. Healing is a process that is not always rainbows and unicorns. We have two options: Resist the process or relax into it. One hinders healing, the other promotes healing. The choice is ours.</li> </ol> <p><b>Details:</b></p>

- There is power in choice, in making a decision.
- This is about surrender, not submission.
  - Surrender is about trust, which comes from faith not fear. Submission is different and deals with control. Our will and divinity is always honored, and it is our divine right and destiny to heal and experience joy.
- Sequence of events leading to physical healing:
  - Trauma
  - Injury
  - Wound
  - Healing
  - Note: Trauma does not always result in an injury—our level of healing, protection, and strength can help to create the possibility of coming out of an experience without injury.
- Injury creates physical responses:
  - Pain (is a warning system to be listened to—a request for attention and sometimes change)
  - Protection—helps us get away from the source of the injury (fight, flight, or freeze)
  - “Healing doesn’t happen on the battlefield” (Dr. William Blake, Episode 2).
    - Perform triage when we can (stop the bleeding)
    - Get safe and away from injury when possible
    - Learn about things we can do to help avoid further injury
    - If you can’t leave now, begin to make your safety plan and build your support system
    - The honeymoon phase in the abuse cycle allows the time for us to work on healing, which can allow us to recognize and prepare for the other stages of abuse (strengthen)
- Go through the four phases of healing:
  - Hemostasis (stop the bleeding, survival)--mentioned above
  - Inflammation (blood sent there to help heal and take away anything that shouldn’t be there; pain is part of this process)
  - Proliferation (tissue and other resources sent to the area; this is when we pull in all the resources to aid in healing; growth)
  - Remodeling (also known as maturation; where all of the materials sent to the wound are organized and utilized)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We have two choices when the change required for healing is in front of us: resist or relax into the process. “Change is inevitable, resistance is optional” (Halaway, 2018, p. 5).</li> <li>● “When we resist the changes that life brings us, it’s because we’re afraid to relinquish control. Changes come into our lives to improve it, but when we react to change fearfully, if we believe that change means losing control, we resist. You may think that by resisting a situation, you’re taking control of it, but in reality, you’re just making it worse. In fact, living in a state of fear and resistance creates a whole host of problems, and before you know it, you’re living in a maze of destructive behaviors that you created. Resisting change is how we find ourselves ten years down the road saying, “I feel hopeless. I feel like I’m in quicksand. I feel like I’m dying. I feel like I can’t get out. It doesn’t happen overnight, it happens over time. Ultimately, your life reflects the energy you put into it, so if , through your thoughts, words, and actions, you plant the seeds of negativity, resistance, and fear, your life will become overgrown with those things” (Halaway, 2017, pp. 5-6).</li> <li>● On this process of healing, we must check if we are in resistance. Watch for tight or tense energy and ask, “What am I resisting?” Then look at <i>why</i> you are resisting.</li> <li>● Evolve or repeat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b></p>	<p><b>Main Points:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We only find information when we search for it. The information we find through introspection is the map for our road to recovery.</li> <li>2. Partial information or untrue information will alter our path and possibly have a negative affect on our recovery and healing. Transparency is what leads to transformation. We have to be fearless in our willingness to be vulnerable in the searching process to see everything in truth.</li> </ol> <p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We begin by simply observing our thoughts and feelings without judgment.</li> <li>● We do this through mindful observing</li> <li>● Mindful observing involves focusing our attention and intention. We must choose to become aware of our thoughts. Mindfulness helps us become more aware, intentional and</li> </ul>

participatory in our own life, and present in each moment.  
The benefits are profound.

- Mindfulness is about being present and this is best done with intentional focus and in a relaxed state (e.g., through meditation)
- “Discovering the wonder that’s yours alone,  
Is an adventure second to none.  
Exciting, enticing, and laced with intrigue,  
It’s a quest infinitely begun” (Marilyn Beecher Thaxton)
- “The realization comes to me that if I’m fortunate, the answer to the question, ‘Who am I?’ will seldom warrant the same response. Ideally, I will continually learn and grow, constantly change and become” (Marilyn Beecher Thaxton).
- **“Loving, accepting, and having patience with myself will help to awaken the healer within”** (Marilyn Beecher Thaxton).
- Scarcity is the belief that there isn’t enough and that we aren’t enough.
- “The counterapproach to living in scarcity is not about abundance. In fact, I think abundance and scarcity are two sides of the same coin. The opposite of “never enough” isn’t abundance or “more than you could ever imagine.’ The opposite of scarcity is enough, or what I call *Wholeheartedness*” (Brown, 2012, p. 29).
- Brown (2012) says that while there are many tenets of Wholeheartedness, at its very core is vulnerability and worthiness, which she explains is “facing uncertainty, exposure, and emotional risks, and knowing that I’m enough” (p. 29).
- You are enough for this journey. You have enough strength to do this. You have enough of whatever you will need for this. When we believe there is enough, it allows the universe to show up and support us.
- This belief allows us to be “fearless” in our inventory and show up with the strength of being vulnerable.
- Brene Brown (2012) said, “Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren’t always comfortable, but they’re never weakness” (p. 37).
- The vulnerability prayer: “Give me the courage to show up and let myself be seen” (Brown, 2012, p. 42).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who <i>refuse</i> to self reflect will not know growth. Those who <i>only</i> self reflect will not know peace. Those who <i>act</i> on their self reflection will experience transformation.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Item</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to work through the first four steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We admit that we are powerless over another's choices, behaviors, and commitment to healing, while recognizing and claiming the power we have over our own choices, behaviors, and healing.</i></li> <li><i>We come to believe that there is within us an innate ability to heal and an inner knowing that can guide us on our healing journey.</i></li> <li><i>We make a decision to trust in the process of healing and in the guidance of the Divine.</i></li> <li><i>We make a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.</i></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	<p>Bernstein, G. (2016). <i>The universe has your back</i>. New York, NY: Hay House, Inc.</p> <p>Brown, B. (2012). <i>Daring greatly</i>. New York, NY: Avery.</p> <p>Covington, S.S. (1994). <i>A woman's way through the twelve steps</i>. Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden Publishing.</p> <p>Egnew, T. R., (2005). The meaning of healing: transcending suffering. <i>Annals of Family Medicine</i>. 3(3), 255–262.</p> <p>Halaway, D. (2017). <i>Being called to change</i>. Lifestyle Entrepreneurs Press.</p>