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SHE RECOVERS EVERY DAY

MEDITATIONS FOR WOMEN

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(HAZELDEN)
MEDITATIONS

She Recovers Every Day

Daily Meditations for Women in Recovery

[Hazelden Publishing logo]

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January

January 1

She Recovers

In September 2018, the incredible poet and meditation teacher Sarah Blondin shared an astonishingly lovely meditation that she wrote for our women's recovery community. It was aptly titled "She Recovers," and as you might imagine everyone in the audience was moved to tears and gratitude as she shared it from our conference stage at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. I practically weep every time I rewatch it on our YouTube channel. The meditation is about 15 minutes long and filled with a barrage of poignant thoughts and ideas, but one line above all the rest captures my heart and takes my breath away each and every time I hear Sarah read it. That line is "She recovers, because she learned how to love in the face of unlove." In the face of unlove. That's it. Despite feeling unloved when I was younger, or unloving myself when I was in the depths of despair and addiction, I have recovered. I learned how to love. Myself. My past. I do not take my recovery for granted. I recognize it as both the privilege and the gift that it is. But also. I fought my ass off for it.

In the name of love and under the umbrella of love, she recovers.

January 2

Beginning Again

One of the most common social media posts I see in our women's online recovery group is the simple declaration 'Day one . . . again.' It's almost always followed up with a short narrative of defeat underscored with hopelessness. But I wonder what it would be like if we encouraged each other to celebrate making the decision to try again rather than confessing or apologizing for it. Maybe we could add an exclamation mark to our 'back to square one' statements. Think about how different it feels to write or read 'Day one . . . again!' Sharing pride in our tenacity rather than lamenting our new beginnings will surely breathe new resolve into our efforts.

If I've learned anything in recovery, it's that shame gets us nowhere and that success can only be ours if we don't give up. Like Elizabeth Gilbert reminds us, "You can measure your worth by your dedication to your path, not by your successes or failures."

I can decide to begin again, proudly.

January 3

Stop the Behavior

Taking note of a behavior that I want (or need) to stop rarely (if ever) translates into the immediate ability to stop. Stopping requires time, thoughtfulness, and sustained effort. I start off by pondering or writing about the behavior and how it's hurting me or others. Then I think about how good I will feel when I stop doing it. I usually write or speak aloud my commitment to stopping and I might tell another person for accountability. Finally, I come up with a replacement behavior. Throughout every step, I try to be mindful and always kind to myself. I accept that sometimes I may have to start stopping—all over again.

Kudos to you if you have been able to stop using a drug, food, a relationship, work, perfectionism, procrastination, shopping or some other behavior to change the way you feel. If, on the other hand, you are currently struggling with something that you know needs to change, simply admit that truth to yourself for now. Congratulate yourself for being honest. Then think about it some more tomorrow.

We can stop the behavior, one minute, hour, or day at a time.

January 4

Recovery Is Not Linear

Most of us who have achieved long-term recovery will tell you that our early recovery was made up of stops and restarts, regardless of what we are recovering from. Few people can stop an unhealthy behavior one day and never, ever pick it up again. Good on those who do, but they are as rare as unicorns. I'm thankful to have learned the value of stopping destructive behaviors and even more grateful to have been able to stay stopped for many years. I only got here by stopping the behaviors for one day here, an hour there, or at times, one minute at a time. I'm okay with all the times that I couldn't stop something because I know that recovery is a process, not an event. I hope you know that too. And I hope that if you stumble in your recovery, as I have done in mine, that you remember to have compassion for yourself, not judgment.

I add up all of the minutes, hours and days that I am moving in the right direction and celebrate them all.

January 5

Know Your Value

One of the symptoms of addiction is self-loathing, which translates effortlessly into low self-worth. What might this look like? We accept less monetary compensation than we should for our work or our services, often for much longer than we should. We lack the confidence to even ask for more money. Other times, we give our time away freely and unconsciously, forgetting that time is our most valuable asset and can never be replenished.

To illustrate the point even better, switch out words like “money” and “compensation” and “work” and “services” for other, less tangible things like “appreciation” and “respect” and “support” and “love.” This is to show that the greatest way we undervalue ourselves is not transactional and has little to do with jobs and money. It’s about the inherent value that we place on ourselves. It’s much easier for us to identify the value that others bring into our lives. We know their worth because they model their belief in themselves. We need to start believing in our own intrinsic value and treat ourselves accordingly. The people around us will fall into line once they see the price tag that we are putting on our own worth. And they will stop expecting discounts.

Slowly but surely, I am recovering my sense of self-worth and acting accordingly.

January 6

Honesty

Until I got honest about my addiction to drugs and alcohol, my codependency, my workaholism, there was no hope that I would recover from any of these things. Honesty about the things that are harming us can come in fits and starts for some of us. It starts with self-honesty, the inner knowing sometimes accompanied by a sinking feeling that the gig is up, coupled with the inner knowing that something has got to give, go, or change. Maybe you remember when that moment was for you? The moment that you got honest with yourself.

The other moment, equally powerful, is when we speak our truth aloud to someone else. Sometimes we get honest with a partner, another family member, friend, physician or therapist. Other times we share in a meeting full of strangers. Who did you get honest with, for the first time? It's also possible that you haven't had either of these moments of honesty, yet. That's okay. Each in our own time.

Getting honest with ourselves and then others, are big steps.

January 7

Life Is Not a Test

There was a time in my life when every question or opportunity in front of me felt like a test that I was unlikely to earn a good grade for. That aligned with my belief that life was out to get me and that I would bomb where others would soar. Looking back, I realize what a paranoid and punishing perspective that was. I'm grateful that I no longer feel that way. It's true that we might freeze when presented with multiple choices about something that matters to us, but we can lean into that pause and feel our way to the right response. On an ongoing basis, we are called upon to sort out what is true and what is false, which is tricky in today's world, but we can research and discern what is truest for ourselves. Our character can be tested by people or events, but we can always respond kindly and authentically (okay maybe not always). Life isn't a pass or fail endeavor. We always get marks for effort.

Life is just life. If I'm breathing ... I'm making the grade.

January 8

On Abstinence, Broadly Speaking

I've learned that how other people recover is none of my business and deserves none of my judgment. For the first decade or so of my recovery from substance use, I was adamant that recovery could only be called recovery if a person was completely abstinent from all substances. I mean, I really, really insisted that was the case. Then, as now, I fully support abstinence-based recovery. I choose it for myself. I respect that committed members of Twelve Step programs choose it for themselves, too. But I no longer believe that everyone must be abstinent to recover.

Recovery from a substance use disorder is about so much more than the substances we ingest, and abstinence as the basis of a universal definition of recovery fails to account or allow for individual contexts and experiences. A rigid commitment to the ideal that only abstinence equates recovery leaves out too many people—people who may not be abstinent but are still working hard at doing better and becoming healthier. Not respecting other people's pathways is problematic at best, and potentially fatal at worst.

Substance use recovery happens along a continuum and I can choose where I fit along it.

January 9

On Abstinence for Me

In early recovery, I made a commitment to being completely substance-free. I wasn't invited to consider any other pathway (that's a different story). When I found recovery, I was ready to follow an abstinent pathway because I needed to do something different, having already (unsuccessfully) tried to moderate my substance use for ten years at that point.

So, I set out to quit everything completely, but I couldn't do it. I was able to give up cocaine, alcohol, and benzodiazepines (and never pick them up again) but for the first several years of my recovery I smoked marijuana. That was my harm reduction period and I'm grateful for that two-year bridge to abstinence because it took me those years to become ready to live in full-blown reality, to feel my feelings, to deal with my wounds and my traumas. That was my version of harm reduction. Yours could be different, I don't know. But I know this: Harm reduction can save lives. It saved mine.

When it comes to recovery, I'll do me and you do you.

January 10

Recovering from All the Things

Today, I consider myself recovered from a substance use disorder, cancer, and domestic violence. The laundry list of things that I am *still recovering from* is mostly manageable, most of the time. I identify as being in active recovery from trauma, workaholism, anxiety, and perfectionism—with a lingering touch of codependency to keep life interesting. Bonus points for you if you can see how those five things are interrelated. I've been doing recovery for a very long time, and thankfully by this point in my life, I have learned to listen to my intuition and know when I need to peel back another layer in my recovery. To keep growing, I generally do a lot of research, and ask others for help and direction. I like to have a lot of different options when I am embarking on a new level of growth. My recovery is always going to be a patchwork built upon intuition first, thrown in with a bit of concerted personal effort, elements of other women's recovery journeys, and a dash of professional guidance. It's a practice, so I just keep practicing.

We are all recovering from something.

January 11

Acknowledge Resilience

I often forget how resilient I am. I see someone else experiencing a personal hardship or a tragedy and I think, “How on earth are they doing it? How are they able to get out of bed every morning? How are they *smiling*? I would never survive.” I forget that I have survived some very hard things myself. Addiction. Domestic violence. Cancer. Losing my mother and others who I loved.

Resilience doesn't mean that we don't experience heartache and hardship, it means that bad things happened to us, and we are still here. When we are in the eye of our storms, we don't realize we are growing stronger, but we are. Look around you. The women who have experienced severe challenges are often the most courageous, inspiring women you will ever know. Now, reflect on your own past for a moment. It isn't very comfortable to revisit the darker times in our lives – but think for just a moment how miraculous it is that you are here now. Focusing on your recovery. Doing the best that you can, despite all that you have been through.

I am still here. And you are too.

January 12

Hold on Pain Ends

I'm forever grateful for the small seed of hope that another recovering woman planted in me very early in my recovery. I was brand new and crying my eyes out in a Twelve Step meeting, unable to comprehend what others were sharing until I heard a woman explain that the four letters in the word 'hope' stood for 'hold on pain ends.' By that time in my life, I'd been telling myself to just hold the hell on, for years. My ears perked up. I hadn't thought about hitching my wagon to the idea of hope prior to that moment, but something about the sincerity in her voice convinced me to just give hope a try. That seed of hope kept me coming back for more, and the hope multiplied. The pain lifted enough that I started to hope that one day I might even be okay, and eventually I was.

If you are feeling hopeless and desperate about something in your life today, please hold on. Pain ends. A wise woman once told me so.

There's a reason that hope is called the gateway drug to recovery.

January 13

Reaching Out

It took me years to master, but now I'm good at reaching out for support when I need it. Being a member of a lot of recovery groups on social media means that I can share what's going on for me any time of day or night and know that someone, somewhere will acknowledge and respond to me. Back in the day (I sound so old) we used to have to pick up an actual phone and dial a number. I'm not talking cell phones here, I mean actual house phones with heavy handsets, and even rotary dialing. Technology makes reaching out easier these days, but it's still one of the hardest things that we do in recovery.

The best advice that I've ever heard around this is to practice reaching out when things are going well. Practice just saying 'hey' to people you are connecting with in your recovery circles. Doing so will help pave the way for you to reach out when you are in distress.

I feel honored when women reach out to me for support, I should return the favor.

January 14

Inching toward Our Dreams

Even in recovery, it can be easier to stay in dreaming mode than it is to do the work to make a dream come true. Until one day, we just know it's time to go for it. Then we learn or remember that the dream needs a plan, and the plan needs to be translated into lists, each one of which needs to be broken down into dozens or hundreds of baby steps. When we look at the big picture, we get overwhelmed. There's only one way forward. We take one small, easy baby step. And the next day, we take the next baby step. When babies start walking, they wobble and sometimes fall. We can wobble and fall too, but we keep getting up and we keep moving forward. Sometimes we ask somebody to hold our hand to steady us. As we build up our confidence, we take bigger steps and inch ever closer to making our dream come true.

My dreams will be accomplished one baby step at a time. I'll celebrate each baby step I take in the direction of my dreams.

January 15

To Do (and Not To Do) Lists

I couldn't organize much in my life before I got into recovery but shortly after I stopped using drugs, I replaced some of my substance-related rituals with a list-writing ritual. I've since become a spectacular list maker. When I need to complete or accomplish a project, I grab one of my pretty pens and my lovely, lined notepad and settle down to get organized. There's just something about writing down things 'to do' that speaks to me. Writing a list brings me great satisfaction, almost as much as completing everything on it. But there's another side of list writing for me, and that is that making lists can also feed my tendency to overwork or overdo in my life. At those times, I need to practice another ritual of mine – writing a 'not to do' list. As with all things recovery, finding balance also means not overdoing things that I love to do.

Writing lists feeds my need for order and helps me stay organized, but it can also feed my tendency to want to do too much.

January 16

Morning Rituals

My name literally means 'break of day' so it makes sense that early morning holds special meaning for me. Over the past several years, I have become very intentional about the first hour or so of every day, in large part inspired by what other women in recovery have shared about the benefits of their own morning rituals. I've listened carefully, tried on different things, and designed my own nurturing morning practice.

I get up at 5:30 am to enjoy quiet, solo time. I don't like being rigid, so the order in which I do things varies but the things I do are very consistent. There is always a decaf latte, and ten to twenty minutes sitting in silence which may or may not take the form of meditation. I write or journal, read from a daily meditation book and pull a tarot card. I top everything off with a scalding hot shower. Towards the end of the shower, I pour a few drops of essential oil into the palms of my hand, rub them together, breathe in the vibrant scent, and say a prayer of thanksgiving.

Morning rituals, big or small, get my day started on the right foot.

January 17

Triggers Gonna Trig

When I first got into recovery, I don't remember anybody in my treatment center talking to us about triggers. I don't know if there was a lot of knowledge about triggers at that time. Maybe they just talked to us about our habits, or things they knew would worry, or scare, or upset us. I recall being told to avoid people, places and things that could lead us back to using substances. I really just don't remember the word trigger being used.

But now we know all about them. The trick is to figure out how you're going to respond to triggers when they happen because, inevitably, they will. If you're new in recovery, you can identify a list of things that you know are going to send you out of your mind. And then you can come up with a plan for how you're going to react when those triggers arise. Being prepared is absolutely your best tool to deal with triggers. At the end of the day, there's nothing you can do to stop them. But you don't have to let them take you down.

Pay attention to what sends you out of your mind; those are your triggers.

January 18

Life Is Full

As a recovering workaholic, I have had to closely examine my attachment to busyness. In the not-too-distant past, I was addicted to being busy, and to complaining about being busy. Busy was my badge of honor, and it made me feel important when very little else did. Explaining how busy I was to others kept them at a distance, which in turn enabled me to work more.

Today, I try not to use the word 'busy', but it still slips out of my mouth now and then. What I try to say instead is simply that 'life is full.' Because it truly is. My life is made up of work, play, passion projects, time with people I care about in and out of recovery, and as much time alone as I can carve out. It can be a lot but viewing and talking about my life as full (rather than busy) brings me into a place of gratitude as soon as the words are out of my mouth.

I am grateful for my full but spacious life.

January 19

Tea As Tradition

Nothing makes me quite as happy as a hot, sweet cup of tea. My Irish grandmother and my mother taught me that stopping for a cup of tea was a sacred, necessary pause for the women in our family. Having a small cup of milky tea was a treasured treat when I was a small girl; being invited to sit at the table and drink a full cup at age twelve was a true rite of passage. When I was fifteen my new best friend Val taught me that tea drinking was even cool for teenagers in social settings. Nobody else in our crowd bought into that radical notion, but we bonded over tea then and still do.

Tea is one of my self-care rituals, a daily constant that sustains me and always brings me joy. I'm grateful to the women in my life who taught me that it would.

A cup of tea can be so much more than just a beverage, if you let it.

January 20

Finding Hope

Since devoting myself to recovery, I've never been without hope. I've experienced some really dark times in recovery, and there have been times when hope was all that I had. There's an Italian proverb that says, "Hope is the last thing ever lost." How beautiful. How inspiring. I now understand that sharing hope is the most important thing that I can do. Hope can be planted like a seed. I confess I was once a dope dealer, now I'm a hope dealer. I can share my experience and my knowledge to inspire hope in others. I can show them how to share their hope. And hope will spread. Hope will grow.

Hope is really about believing that things just might be okay. We can hope for healed relationships. We can hope for fresh starts. We can hope to make it through the next hour, next day, next week, next month, and next year in our recovery. We can hope to feel joy again. Hope means glimmers of light in the darkness, in the darkest of despair.

We all have hope. Somewhere. We might have to dig deep, but it's there.

January 21

Yes . . . And

The ‘yes . . . and’ principle is something that I pull out frequently to help balance my heart and my thinking. Yes, I am a gentle, patient, and warm woman, and I’m also a badass warrior who can rage against the patriarchy. Yes, you have messed up some things royally due to your addiction, and you are also a strong sounding board and support for other people who are messing up. Yes, we need to be in community and connection in order to grow and heal, and we also need solitude and introspection to move beyond the things that can still cause us grief.

I try to use ‘yes...and’ to replace my instinct to say ‘yes . . . but.’ Yes, but shuts people and ideas down. Example. “Yes, you want to try to practice moderation with your drinking, but you won’t be able to for long and you will find yourself back in self-loathing again.” Contrast that with, “Yes, you want to practice moderation, and you know that you need to find strong support and a different approach to be successful in the long term.” In the latter, “and” joins ideas together, positively. Can you practice “yes . . . and” today?

Two things can be true at once, even if they are seemingly opposite.

January 22

A Deeper Wisdom

Many years ago, when I was new to recovery and enrolled in a women's studies program that made me question everything about everything, I did some research into alternatives to the Twelve Step program that was, despite its outdated and male-dominated language, still working for me. I found a few different frameworks, including a re-writing of the Twelve Steps by Patricia Lynn Reilly packaged as *A Deeper Wisdom: The 12 Steps from a Woman's Perspective*. Patricia, who had found her own recovery with regard to food, beautifully revises each of the twelve 'traditional' steps, but I've always been partial to her reinterpretation of Step Two. In AA, the second step reads "We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity." Fair and true enough, in my case. But Patricia's presentation is more inclusive and works better for those who might be hesitant about the higher power concept. She defines Step Two as "I have come to believe in the deep wisdom of my own inner life. I stop flailing and am restored to the sanity of a loving and respectful relationship with myself." How powerful is that?

I trust my own wisdom to bring me back into alignment with myself.

January 23

Being in Remission

Why is no consideration ever given to the idea that the endpoint of the process of recovery from addiction could be that one is *recovered*? Not just “in recovery” but “recovered.” There’s a difference. Even those of us who achieve that current ‘gold standard’ of substance use recovery—abstinence—are never considered to have achieved *remission*. How do we feel about that? I celebrated being in clinical remission from cancer after I had been cancer-free for five years. It was a very big deal for me, as it is for many people who achieve five years free from other biomedical conditions. Yet, despite decades having passed since I took a substance to change how I feel, I don’t get to claim to be *recovered*. Even though substance use, and mental health disorders are often considered diseases, it is not acceptable for me to say *I am in remission from a substance use disorder*. How much further along might we be in eradicating shame and stigma if people could, after five years, declare that they are recovered from their disorder? Just thinking out loud, here.

How we speak about ourselves and our recovery matters.

January 24

At the End of the Day

One of the recovery practices that I was introduced to early in my recovery was the practice of reflecting on my day before I go to sleep at night. I don't always remember to do it, but it really is an incredibly empowering and informative practice. In the evening, look back over your day before you close your eyes and recognize the moments where you absolutely got something right, and reflect upon areas where you know you want to do better tomorrow. Do a quick gratitude list in your head. Don't beat yourself up for where you feel short in your day, that's not the point of it. Awareness precedes growth. So just be aware.

One of my favorite quotes speaks directly to this concept and practice. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense." Old nonsense indeed. Let it go, and tomorrow build on your strengths.

In our daily inventory, we count our blessings and identify opportunities for growth.

January 25

Rediscovering Recovery

I have fallen in love with recovery a few times in my life. The first was when I found and joined a Twelve Step program in my late twenties. I'd had no idea that I could live a life without substances and chaos, and I loved my new friends and life. I slowly drifted away from that program after about six years. I stayed abstinent but stopped doing the work of recovery, of self-discovery. Later, when my baby sister hit a hard bottom in addiction, I returned to that program to introduce it to her, hoping it would save her life too. It did, and I found myself enamored with recovery again. I recommitted and experienced another personal growth spurt, which came in handy when I nearly died from cancer. After cancer, I moved away from recovery again, this time towards workaholicism. And after six years of overworking, I hit an intensely hard bottom, and chose recovery again. My healing has looked vastly different over the past decade or so than it did in its first few iterations, but I love it as much as ever.

We can breathe new life into our recovery, and we should.

January 26

H.A.L.T.

If you have spent much time around people in recovery, then you will know that slogans and acronyms are a thing. Some are mildly annoying, but some are quite powerful. For example, the acronym H.A.L.T. is one of the most useful recovery tools I picked up in early recovery, and I still use it frequently. H.A.L.T. works like a built-in self-care warning system. The idea behind it is that when you are feeling vulnerable in your recovery or even just out of sorts in general, that you can stop and ask yourself if you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then that thing needs to be addressed. Taking a short cat nap, if possible, will do wonders if you are tired, and a snack or meal will fix your hunger. The best antidote for loneliness is a visit or call with a close friend, and anger might require that you deal with whatever is making you mad, or at least take a brisk walk to displace the negative energy. H.A.L.T. is a brilliant tool, in my view. Were you familiar with it before now?

Stopping to check in with ourselves is always a good practice.

January 27

Letting Go of Regret

I try hard not to have regrets in my life, small or large. Unfortunately, being human and all, I still do things that I wish I hadn't, or don't do things that I wish I had. I probably always will. But if the regrets mount up, I hope that I do what my mom did as she was nearing the end of her life. She shared with me a few of her most painful regrets. There was absolutely nothing she could do to change the things that she did or didn't do, but I could sense her spirit getting lighter as she shared them. I also got to share back that I was okay with the things she talked about that affected me personally. I was able to ask her to let them go. I like to think she did. I hope she did.

I can't change the past, but I can let go of my attachment to regrets about it.

January 28

A Few Things I Learned in Therapy

I've been very privileged to be able to access a lot of therapy over the decades of my recovery, including free therapy. I hope that if you need therapy, you can access it. I'm one of those odd specimens that really loves therapy, even though it's often hard. Scratch that, it's always hard. But so far, it's always been worth it. The things that I have learned about myself in therapy have changed my life. Here's my short list of things learned. Hearts broken in childhood take a lot of time to heal. Missing someone is not the same as grieving someone (now that one blew me out of the water). Anger is almost always inner pain turned outward. I like to mother the people I love (could be responsible for my nickname 'Mama Dawn'). I don't like goodbyes (builds on an earlier awareness from therapy that I don't like transitions). I can and prefer to love unconditionally, but I couldn't always. Getting to know these things about myself has been life changing. I'm excited to keep going, to keep learning more about who I am and what I want and how I want to show up in this lifetime.

It's okay to seek therapy before it seeks you.

January 29

Past As Prologue

As much as I don't love that this is true, there is a predictable pattern that unfolds before I find myself sunk back into my workaholicism. It usually goes something like this. I forget how much I love my life when it is spacious and I have the time to read the novels, play with the grandkids, go for drives with the husband. I forget to think carefully before I say yes to some other contract, project, or exciting shiny thing that is happening in our She Recovers community. I realize that I am going to have to juggle more than I want to juggle. Then I get anxious. I start juggling more than I want to juggle. I feel inadequate, I fear that I will let somebody somewhere along the way down, and I pick up speed, moving into hyper-competent mode. I get up earlier and stay up later to work. I begin to burn out. I remember I am a workaholic and I stop. I re-evaluate. I disappoint someone, probably. But I regain my footing and my life, and I go on. More slowly. I feel the grace of having survived myself again.

I can disrupt the pattern earlier, but I've not figured out how to stop it completely yet.

January 30

Recovering from Infant Loss

My dear friend Lisa has shared so much with me about the deepest sorrow that a parent can experience – the loss of a child. When Lisa and her lovely husband welcomed their son, Rowan, they were grateful to share only a few breaths earthside with him. Years later, Lisa struggles to describe losing Rowan. As Lisa reflects, “What word is there, really, to describe the experience of deeply loving someone you had never met but know better than anyone who had come before?” Lisa generously shares her experience of profound loss to help other women know that if they are recovering from infant loss--or the loss of a child at any age--that their loss is valid, their pain is real. As Lisa reminds us, grief isn't something you get over, it is something you move through. Lisa isn't looking for closure over losing Rowan, she doesn't believe she will ever have it. She knows that every year, the changing of the seasons, the anniversary of his death, and the date he was due to come into the world will be marked in her heart. She will hold the sacred memories of feeling his skin against hers. Forever.

Grief lives on as long as love does. We move through it gently.

January 31

Tiny Giants

Carley, one of our She Recovers community members, regularly refers to her three little children as her "tiny giants" when she shares at our online meetings. Curiosity got the better of me recently and I asked her why she called them that. Carley disclosed that back when she was actively self-medicating, she would refer to them as her little monsters, because so much of what they did felt like a monstrous assault on her nervous system. In recovery, she began to feel all her feelings, acknowledge the traumas she had been hiding from, and over time began to nurture her body and clear out her mind. New realizations soon followed, including one that her sweet little babies were not in fact monsters out to get her, they were simply giant souls in tiny bodies, learning about their world and themselves. Just like Carley, and all of us, they are truly doing the best they can. Today, Carley expresses deep gratitude for all the gifts and the lessons that she receives from being a mother to her tiny giants.

Perceptions and outlooks change in recovery, and benefits of the changes soon follow.

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Dawn Nickel, one of the founders of the international movement and nonprofit organization SHE RECOVERS® Foundation, presents a daily meditation book that acknowledges the specific needs of all women in any type of recovery and includes important topics such as codependency, love addiction, workaholism, eating disorders, and beyond.

As a survivor of intimate partner violence and cancer, with over thirty-five years of recovery from substance use, Nickel recognizes the greater risk women in recovery have for developing a co-occurring disorder. “Recovering from all the things” is the phrase she uses to recognize the complexities behind recovery.

In this book, Nickel provides help for anyone who identifies as a woman who is also in recovery or seeking recovery in any area of life. Those struggling with substance use, mental health, and related life challenges will benefit the most from her insightful, non-judgmental writing.

These daily meditations will inspire hope, reduce stigma, and empower all women in recovery.



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