A Living Guide to Freedom, Focus, and Fulfillment

So You're Recovering… Now What?

 www.rotationlearningsystems.com

✨ Introduction Page

Friends,

Welcome to the *RLS 3712 Alliance* course, designed for those who have achieved sobriety or healing in some form and now ask the deeper question: *Now what?*

This course blends the timeless principles of **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People** by *Stephen R. Covey*[1] with the transformative framework of the **12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous*[2]. These are the foundational guides that have helped many—including myself—survive and thrive for decades. Without them, I would have lost my way. With them, I found a return path even when my mind tried to lead me down dangerous sidetracks.

Whether you're recovering from addiction, trauma, mental illness, or grief, this course offers not just survival, but **a map to a fulfilling life**—one filled with purpose, peace, and personal control. Here, you'll find practical strategies, emotional support, and spiritual insight.

Let us walk with you. We're here to help pull you out of darkness and into light. Spend as much time as you can with grace, peace, and serenity—while we're still here, still alive, and still walking this path together.

Footnotes

1. Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change.* Free Press, 1989.
2. Alcoholics Anonymous. *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism.* 4th ed., Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001.

📑 Table of Contents

- Reflection, Listening, and Emotional Honesty

Section 6: Building True Community and Purpose

- Steps 11–12 + Habit 6: Synergize
- Interdependence and Giving Back

Section 7: Continuous Growth and Resilience

- Daily Practice + Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw
- Rituals for Recovery and Renewal

Case Studies

- Story 1: *Finding the Quiet Path* (Lena's Journey)
- Story 2: *The Quiet Return* (Tom's Journey)

Reflection & Practice Modules

- Journaling Prompts
- Habit-Step Tracker
- Application Exercises

Bonus Tools & Resources

- Emotional & Self-Regulation Challenges Summary
- Affirmations and Daily Ritual Templates
- Supportive Readings and External Resources

Let this be your new beginning.

So you’re recovering… now what?

Now you live.

Friends, here's a compelling course introduction and overview tailored to people who have achieved a path to recovery and are seeking a new foundation for living with purpose, peace, and personal control. It blends the timeless principles of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey1 with the transformative framework of the 12 Steps from Alcoholics Anonymous2—creating a new guide for living beyond addiction: It is the foundation that has kept me alive for 47 years. Without these principles and other spiritual guides, I would have suffered beyond my ability to endure. This is what has helped me to come back to the path when my own mind took me on so many dangerous sidetracks. This course and membership is designed to help people that are recovering: Here are some of the challenges that this system will help many to live, truly live, at times joyously even though that is rare for me. Chase away the darkness and come into the light of humanity when you can. We are here to give you our hand to pull you out. Grace, peace, and serenity are our goals. Spend as much time with those blessings as you can while we are still here and alive. How many people worldwide consider themselves recovering from alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, grief, childhood trauma, adult trauma, divorce, separation, depression, anxiety, social media addiction, compulsive buying disorder, eating disorders, PTSD for veterans, or any chronic self-destructive trauma?

Course Title:

"So You're Recovering... Now What? A Living Guide to Freedom, Focus, and Fulfillment"

Course Introduction:

You've done something remarkable—**you are recovering.** Whether it's been 30 days or 10 years, recovery is not the end of the journey, it's the beginning of a new one.

But here's the truth: **just deciding you need help to recover doesn't fix everything.**
Anxiety creeps in. Panic attacks surface. Depression lingers. Obsessive behaviors find new forms. Old wounds scream louder in the silence of sobriety. And somewhere in the stillness, you start asking:

"I'm not drinking anymore—but am I really *living*?"

This course is designed to help you build a *new way of life*—a life of emotional stability, spiritual alignment, purpose-driven habits, and meaningful relationships.

Using the **wisdom of the 12 Steps** as the foundation and the **practical power of Covey's 7 Habits** as the structure, we'll walk through a practical, personal, and powerful process for healing, growth, and long-term transformation.

🧭 Course Introduction & Overview

This course is tailored to individuals who have achieved a path to recovery and are now seeking a **new foundation for living**—one grounded in purpose, peace, and personal control.

It blends the timeless wisdom of:

- **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by *Stephen R. Covey*
- **The 12 Steps** from *Alcoholics Anonymous*

This unique integration creates a **practical, spiritual, and deeply personal guide for living beyond addiction** and into a life of sustained wellness.

"It is the foundation that has kept me alive for 47 years. Without these principles and other spiritual guides, I would have suffered beyond my ability to endure. This is what has helped me come back to the path when my own mind took me on so many dangerous sidetracks." (John Hayden)

🤝 Who This Course Is For

This course and community membership is designed to support those recovering from any chronic self-destructive condition, including:

- Alcoholism
- Drug addiction
- Gambling

- Grief
- Childhood trauma
- Adult trauma
- Divorce or separation
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Social media addiction
- Compulsive buying disorder
- Eating disorders
- PTSD (including for veterans)
- Other long-term destructive coping behaviors

🌍 Estimated Global Recovery Population

While exact numbers vary, research and global health data estimate the following people are in active recovery worldwide:

Category	Estimated in Recovery Globally
Alcoholism	~100 million
Drug addiction (all substances)	~60 million
Gambling addiction	~10 million
Grief (acute recovery stages)	~200 million

Category	Estimated in Recovery Globally
Childhood trauma recovery	~100 million
Adult trauma recovery	~150 million
Divorce / separation recovery	~50 million
Depression recovery	~150 million
Anxiety recovery	~120 million
Social media addiction recovery	~20 million
Compulsive buying disorder recovery	~15 million
Eating disorder recovery	~25 million
PTSD (veterans and others)	~30 million
Chronic self-destructive behavior	~50 million (overlapping others)

🧠 Biggest Social-Emotional Challenges in Recovery

- **Low self-esteem**
  Feeling unworthy, inadequate, or hopeless about personal growth.
- **Chronic guilt and shame**
  Overwhelming regret about past behaviors and harm caused to others.
- **Difficulty trusting others**
  Fear of betrayal, abandonment, or judgment, even from those offering help.
- **Social isolation**
  Withdrawal from community due to fear, guilt, or emotional pain.
- **Emotional numbness**
  Disconnect from emotions as a defense mechanism.
- **Fear of vulnerability**
  Reluctance to ask for help, express needs, or reveal emotions.
- **Attachment issues**
  Difficulty forming or maintaining healthy, balanced relationships.
- **Anger and resentment**
  Ongoing bitterness toward oneself, others, or life circumstances.
- **Loneliness and abandonment fears**
  Persistent feelings of being left out, unwanted, or unlovable.

- **Difficulty identifying emotions**
  Trouble naming, understanding, or processing internal emotional states.

🔁 Biggest Self-Regulation Challenges in Recovery

- **Impulse control struggles**
  Acting on emotion or craving without thinking, often leading to relapse.
- **Poor stress management**
  Easily overwhelmed by stress with few effective coping strategies.
- **Mood instability**
  Emotional highs and lows that feel unmanageable or unpredictable.
- **Delayed gratification issues**
  Difficulty sticking to long-term goals without instant rewards.
- **Avoidance behaviors**
  Escaping difficult feelings through work, food, media, or other compulsions.
- **Relapse triggers from emotions**
  Intense feelings (anger, sadness, joy) triggering cravings or regressions.
- **Rumination and overthinking**
  Replaying mistakes, fears, or "what ifs" repeatedly.

- **Black-and-white thinking**
  Seeing self or others as all good or all bad, increasing conflict or despair.
- **Difficulty setting boundaries**
  Saying “yes” when one means “no,” or overcorrecting by cutting people off.
- **Inconsistent routines**
  Struggles with maintaining the habits (sleep, eating, hygiene, exercise) that support emotional balance.

🌟 Our Invitation to You

- Chase away the darkness and walk into the light of your humanity—when you can, for as long as you can.
- We are here to extend a hand when you’re ready to take it.
- **Grace, peace, and serenity are our goals.** Spend as much time with those blessings as you can—while we are still here, still alive, and walking this path together.

RLS 3712 Alliance:

Course Overview

🔑 Section 1: The Foundation of Freedom

The 12 Steps + Habit 1: Be Proactive

- A new way of seeing: powerlessness + personal power
- Taking full responsibility for your healing
- Moving from victim to creator
- Identifying triggers and reclaiming your response

🧭 Section 2: Designing a Life Worth Living

Steps 2–3 + Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind

- Developing a spiritual blueprint for your life
- Creating a personal vision statement
- The Higher Power and higher purpose connection
- Living with intention, not reaction

⚖️ Section 3: Taking Ownership of the Present

Steps 4–5 + Habit 3: Put First Things First

- Inventory, priorities, and what truly matters
- Time management for emotional well-being

- Handling anxiety and panic with grounded focus
- Building a calm center amid life's chaos

💔 Section 4: Healing Relationships and Self-Worth

Steps 6–9 + Habit 4: Think Win-Win

- The healing power of amends
- Understanding codependency and boundaries
- Replacing shame with shared strength
- Learning healthy love and mutual respect

🔍 Section 5: Mindful Communication and Authentic Living

Step 10 + Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

- Handling obsessive thought patterns and emotional spirals
- Active listening to yourself and others
- Honest reflection without self-destruction
- How to stay open without becoming overwhelmed

🤝 Section 6: Building True Community and Purpose

Steps 11–12 + Habit 6: Synergize

- The spiritual power of connection and service
- Building a new community: chosen family and tribe

- Finding purpose through giving back
- From isolation to interdependence

🌱 Section 7: Continuous Growth and Resilience

Daily Practice + Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

- Building a rhythm of renewal: body, mind, heart, and soul
- Managing depression and the “gray fog”
- Rituals for staying grounded and growing
- Living every day with peace and possibility

✅ What You'll Gain from This Course:

- A blueprint for post-sobriety life that’s emotionally and spiritually sustainable
- Practical tools to handle anxiety, depression, and obsessive thoughts
- A deepened sense of purpose and self-worth
- Habits and rituals that empower your mind, emotions, and spirit
- Supportive strategies for creating meaningful relationships and contributions

---

🧠 Who This Course Is For:

- People who have completed early recovery or entered recovery but feel stuck or overwhelmed
- Those managing mental health challenges (like anxiety or depression) in sobriety
- Individuals seeking a life of depth, meaning, and alignment after addiction
- Counselors, sponsors, or spiritual mentors looking for integrative tools

---

So you're recovering... now what?

Now you *live*—and this course is your map.

Read on to find a fictional story that illustrates what recovery can look like, and you never had to drink or do drugs to need this healing we can create together.

Here's a **deep, anecdotal short story**: It **shows a person struggling with the full list of emotional and self-regulation issues**, and **finds their recovery path by blending Covey's 7 Habits and the Big Book principles**, just like your beautiful course introduction sets up.

This story is fictional but honest, soulful, and aligned with the tone of *grace, peace, and recovery through spiritual principles*.

Story: "Finding the Quiet Path"

Lena sat in the parking lot, staring at the steering wheel, chewing on the inside of her cheek until it bled. Another day, another meeting she didn't want to go to.
Another day carrying her backpack of shame, anger, loneliness, and broken promises.
Another day feeling like a stranger to herself.

She had survived two years clean from opioids after a decade of chaos. But survival wasn't the same as living.
She couldn't control her emotions. She couldn't trust anyone. She couldn't trust herself. She was stuck — furious, scared, and drowning in her own head.

Low self-esteem whispered: *You'll never be good enough*.
Chronic guilt screamed: *Look at everything you ruined*.
Loneliness clutched her chest: *Nobody wants you around*.
Impulse and mood swings made every relationship brittle.
Stress sent her spiraling.

Avoidance kept her trapped behind screens and sarcasm.
Her routine was a wreck; some days, she barely showered or ate.

"I might as well be using again," she muttered. "At least then I wasn't pretending."

Still, something small — stubborn maybe, sacred even — made her open the car door.
Inside the meeting hall, under harsh fluorescent lights, she met Carl.

Carl was an old-timer with a face like worn leather and eyes like warm campfires.
He didn't talk much. But after the meeting, he handed her two books:

- A battered *Big Book*
- A copy of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* with sticky notes poking out from every other page.

"**You wanna learn how to live, not just stay sober?**" he said. "**Start here. Read them both. Not like a student. Like someone finding the pieces of their soul again.**"

At first, Lena rolled her eyes. *Another "program," another "fix."*
But something about Carl's quiet peace haunted her. He wasn't just clean. He was alive.

She started slowly:
Step 1: She admitted she was powerless not just over drugs, but over her *emotional chaos*. Covey's Habit 1 ("**Be Proactive**") lit a

match in her mind —
"You are response-able. You can choose."
She wrote it on her bathroom mirror.

Step 2: She built a Higher Power — a quiet, loving presence she imagined sitting beside her on bad nights.
Covey's Habit 2 ("**Begin with the End in Mind**") blended perfectly.
Lena journaled her vision:
"I want peace more than I want to be right. I want love more than I want to win. I want a life, not just survival."

Step 3: She started making tiny commitments and keeping them: brush teeth, call one person, stretch for five minutes.
The Big Book said, *"We claim spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection."*
Covey said, **"Put First Things First."**
They weren't fighting. They were speaking the same language.

Slowly, her impulse control improved. She noticed before she exploded. She paused. She prayed. She chose.
When loneliness screamed, she practiced Habit 5 — **"Seek first to understand."**
Instead of hiding, she asked others about their day. Instead of assuming rejection, she listened. And when grief overwhelmed her, she used Habit 7 — **"Sharpen the Saw."**
Walks. Breathing. Music. Rest.

Of course, she fell down.
There were nights when the depression was a black hole so big she thought she might never crawl out.
There were days when she hated everyone, especially herself.

But now she had tools: The Steps. The Habits. And the grace of others holding out a hand.

One year later, Lena sat under a tree, sunlight warming her face, a dog curled up beside her.

She still wrestled with low days.
She still carried scars.
But she lived with a foundation now:

- **Grace** instead of shame.
- **Vision** instead of fear.
- **Connection** instead of isolation.
- **Response** instead of reaction.
- **Progress** instead of perfection.

And sometimes — not every day, but sometimes —
she felt the lightness of real joy.

Lena smiled and whispered to the sky:
"Thank you for letting me live long enough to learn how to live."

🎯 **Themes Touched:**

- Every social-emotional and self-regulation bullet point you listed
- Direct, real application of Covey's 7 Habits + Big Book principles
- Tone matches your introduction: humble, hard-won grace, no "false promises" of constant happiness, but *real hope and structure*.

📘 Case Study + Course Module: “The Quiet Return”

Short Story: *The Quiet Return*

Tom used to be the guy everyone leaned on.

U.S. Army, 22 years. Three tours. Bronze Star. A shoulder others cried on, a wall that never cracked. But when he got home, the walls he built overseas turned inward. He didn’t cry — he didn’t even speak much. And when he did, it came out like broken glass.

He hated crowds. Slept with the lights on. The hum of a ceiling fan could send him spiraling into a night convoy ambush.
And when that happened, he didn't reach for a weapon — he reached for his phone.

Online poker. Blackjack. Sports betting.

He could sit for hours, barely blinking, riding the edge of adrenaline and numbness. It wasn’t about winning. It was about not feeling. The rush was safer than silence. Safer than memories.

Eventually, the gambling emptied his accounts and isolated him from his daughter, his brother, the few friends who had stuck around.

When the VA counselor asked, “Do you think this is how you want to live?”
Tom just laughed. “I don’t think about anything at all. That’s the point.”

The Turn

One night, he found himself staring at a message on a veteran recovery board:

"You've survived worse than this. You can survive yourself, too. Find the path back to purpose. You're not alone."

The message came from an old Marine named Frank. They met for coffee. Frank handed Tom two books: a tattered Big Book and a highlighted copy of *The 7 Habits*.

"**You want peace? You'll need principles.**" Frank said. "**You want to stop gambling? You'll need a reason to start living.**"

The Integration

Tom joined a 12-Step group for gambling addiction, and with Frank's help, began combining it with Covey's habits:

- **Step 1 + Habit 1: Be Proactive**
  → *Tom admitted powerlessness — but also saw he had a choice in every response.*
- **Step 2 + Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind**
  → *He visualized the father he wanted to be. He kept a picture of his daughter next to his laptop as a daily reminder.*
- **Step 3 + Habit 3: Put First Things First**
  → *He started a strict morning routine: wake, pray, stretch, journal. No screens before 9AM.*

- **Step 4 + Habit 5: Seek First to Understand**
  → *He made amends and started listening to others instead of retreating into silence or anger.*
- **Step 10 + Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw**
  → *He learned meditation. Walked trails with other vets. Got a rescue dog. Even tried watercolor painting.*

For the first time in years, Tom felt grounded.
Not healed — but human.
And most of all, **connected**.

He no longer fought the war alone.

📘 Course Lesson: Reflection & Practice Module

Module Title: *"The Quiet Return: Rebuilding Life After Trauma and Addiction"*

🎯 Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will:

- Recognize how trauma and addiction can intertwine with behavioral escape patterns (like gambling)
- Understand how blending **The 7 Habits** and **12 Steps** can offer a pathway to emotional and behavioral stability
- Practice personal reflection using narrative, habits, and spiritual recovery tools

🧠 Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Tom’s story did you identify with most? Why?
2. What emotional coping strategies have you used that felt “safe” but were actually harmful?
3. What does "beginning with the end in mind" look like in your own recovery journey?
4. How could you apply **Habit 1: Be Proactive** to your current emotional challenges?
5. What is one part of yourself you’re ready to stop escaping from?

✍️ Journaling Prompts

- Write a letter from your future self, five years into stable recovery. What have you built? Who are you becoming?
- Reflect on a moment when you acted out of pain or fear. How might you respond differently now with awareness?
- List 3 core values you want to build your “new foundation” on. Then describe how each one could show up in your daily routine.

🔁 Application Activity: Habit-Step Tracker

Day	Habit Practiced	Step Worked	How I Applied It
Mon	Habit 1	Step 1	Chose to call my sponsor instead of betting
Tue	Habit 2	Step 3	Wrote a goal for who I want to become as a parent
Wed	Habit 5	Step 10	Listened deeply during group without interrupting
…	…	…	…

Repeat for 1 week, then share one insight with a trusted partner or journal it.

🌟 Encouragement Closing

"Grace, peace, and serenity are our goals. Spend as much time with those blessings as you can while we are still here and alive."

This story shows it's possible — even after trauma, even after years of self-destruction — to walk back into the light. One habit. One step. One honest moment at a time.