



Meeting Minutes:

Date: 16/04/2026

Time:

Location:

The Power of Purpose, Connection, and Meaning in Recovery

Why This Matters for Your Recovery

- * Recovery is extremely difficult without a sense of meaning and purpose.
- * Your recovery journey is built on a foundation. First, you need your basic needs met (food, safety). Second, you need strong social connections. Only then can you build a life of meaning and purpose.
- * There is a direct link between the quality of your recovery and the strength of your social relationships with non-drug using friends.
- * There is also a direct, positive relationship between engaging in meaningful activities and the quality of your recovery.

What's Happening in the Brain and Body

- * Living without purpose can cause real physical harm. It is linked to negative changes in your body's stress and inflammation systems, which can damage your heart and brain over time.
- * In contrast, living a life with purpose has clear health benefits. It is associated with a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and heart disease, as well as better overall brain health.

The Addiction Lens

- * A life without purpose often leads to a pattern of avoidance. When you live to avoid stress and pain, you are more vulnerable to addiction, as you may turn to substances to escape difficult feelings.
- * In active addiction, social circles shrink, often leaving only connections with other users (drug-using acquaintances) who may not have your best interests at heart. This isolation makes recovery harder.
- * Recovery involves rebuilding your life from the ground up, starting with meeting your basic needs (like safe housing), then re-establishing healthy social connections, which then allows you to find and live a life of meaning and purpose.

Core Model or Framework: A Simple View of Maslow's Hierarchy

The session simplified Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs into three essential levels for recovery:

1. **Basic Needs:** This is the foundation. It includes physiological needs (food, water) and safety (a secure place to live).
2. **Social Connection:** This is the next level. It involves feeling a sense of belonging, love,



and respect within a community or "village".

3. **Meaning & Purpose:** This is the top level. This is about self-actualisation and living a life that feels significant to you. It is what gives you a "why".

What This Looks Like in Real Life

- * **Building Connections:** You can't just "change your friends." You need to actively build a new social circle. For example, you could start volunteering, join clubs based on your hobbies (like bingo or a sports team), or participate in peer support groups.
- * **The "Yes Week":** One person found success by having a "yes week" once a month, where they had to accept any safe, social invitation to push themselves out of their comfort zone and build new connections.
- * **Eudaimonia vs. Extremes:** A life of pure pleasure-seeking (hedonism) is empty. A life of purpose without any joy is grim. The goal is "eudaimonia" – a healthy, harmonious balance of both joy and purpose.

Practical Strategies for Recovery

- * **Build Your Social Circle:**
 - * Volunteer for a cause you care about.
 - * Join groups or clubs that align with your interests.
 - * Consider saying "yes" to more safe social opportunities, even if you don't feel like it.
 - * Find a peer support group (like AA or SMART Recovery) that feels right for you. It may take several tries to find your "tribe." Keep an open mind.
- * **Find Your "Why":**
 - * Start by identifying your core values. Your values will guide your purpose.
 - * Your purpose will help you set meaningful goals.
 - * Your goals will determine your daily actions and tasks.
- * **Inject Meaning into Daily Life:** You don't need a grand, world-changing purpose. You can find meaning in everyday actions, just like the stonemason who saw his work not as chipping rocks, but as "building the house of my God."

Key Take-Home Messages

- * Purpose gives you the strength to endure challenges.
- * Rebuilding your social circle with non-using peers is one of the most powerful things you can do for your recovery.
- * Recovery isn't just about stopping substance use; it's about building a life that is so full of connection and meaning that you no longer need to escape from it.
- * Look for commonalities, not differences. Judging others or yourself creates division when you need connection.

Optional Reflection Questions

- * Do I have my basic needs met? Is my housing secure and safe?



- * Who are my friends? Am I actively building connections with people who support my recovery?
- * What are my core values? What is truly important to me?
- * What is my purpose? What gives my life meaning?
- * What is one small, meaningful action I can take today that aligns with my values?