HeartMind Recovery – In Three Stages
The HeartMind Healing System of Recovery, Personal Growth and Transformation
With Matthew Sweigart, Transformational Wellness Leader

Introduction

The HeartMind Recovery process draws its overall structure from John Bradshaw’s seminal work, Healing the Shame That Binds You. In that master work we find an outline for three stages of recovery. In this brief report I will draw out for you these three stages in practical working terms, with practical action steps you can take on your own personal journey to recovery.

Let’s begin with the basic understanding of what we mean by the word Recovery. Recovery can be narrowly defined as breaking any cycle of addictive behavior, or it can be more broadly defined as recovery from any traumatic experience or shifting out of any repetitive destructive pattern. In the context of this report, I will also be looking at describing the valuable resource, the HeartMind Healing System, and how it can play a role in all the stages of any recovery process.

The three stages of recovery follow a progressive pattern, but recovery itself is a circular, evolutionary process. All three stages are present at any point. They have a synergistic and mutually supportive interaction. To the extent that recovery progresses, however, it can be seen that there are foundation pieces that are essential to have in place for the deeper layers of recovery to be actualized.

In this report, I will outline the three stages, describing each one, one at a time. And I’ll show how the HeartMind Healing System can provide essential support all along the way. I’ll explore how each stage creatively supports the work of all the other stages. What’s important here is that I will be outlining a process that you as an individual can follow for your own healing purposes. And you will see that you can also apply the principles in your professional practice, to support your clients in their healing and transformation.

Overview of the Three Stages

Stage One recovery we call Resourcing, Making Self-Sustaining Choices. At this stage repetitive negative behavior is intentionally redirected, and the fact that the traumatic triggers are no longer actively present is realized. Simply getting out of reactivation or hyper-vigilance, and getting safe and supported is the work of this stage.

In Stage One you realize that hyper-vigilance involves the activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System, fight or flight mechanisms. This is not the place where healing and recovery
take place. In actual danger, this response is necessary to keep you alive. After the danger has passed, you need hyper awareness, through activation of the Parasympathetic Nervous System, rest and digest, to recover, heal and awaken.

If you are not in mortal peril, keeping fight or flight or freeze energies activated will only burn you out. Activation of the Para-Sympathetic nervous system, the “rest and digest” system is required for healing. The processed of Resourcing in Stage One recovery are essential to dropping into the para-sympathetic nervous system, where healing takes place.

Stage Two recovery is where we do the work of Regression and Healing of Original Wounds. This involves creating a container within which it is safe to revisit and heal the dramatic influences and violations that brought about the painful experiences in the first place. We begin to integrate and make sense of past negative experiences, so that we no longer need to perpetuate them in negative reaction patterns. This is ultimately a necessary condition for the alleviation of prolonged suffering. The healing promise here is profound.

The quote “You need to feel it, to heal it” is the key phrase of Stage Two recovery. But you need to “feel it” from a space of safety, rather than risk being re-traumatized. From a place of safety, well-resourced, you can realize that it is okay to “feel it.” You no longer need to respond to the pain with some sort of medication, dissociation or numbing response. If you find yourself craving some false comfort, this is a sign that you are being activated once more. This is how, Stage Two recovery needs to be undertaken carefully, with Stage One self-sustaining behaviors firmly in place.

Finally, Stage Three is called Surrendering and Realizing Spiritual Awakening. This is a profound stage of complete healing and transformation through an acknowledgement of higher, deeper, broader mysterious forces at work in the unfolding of all occurrences. The phrase “that which is right is unfolding” is fundamental to this stage.

Ultimately, stage three recovery grants us the capacity to be fully resolved and reconciled. Here we are reconciled in faith to the greater mystery of all occurrences. We find ourselves beyond any need to ever recreate the negative patterning, behaviors or situations ever again. A negative occurrence set the painful path in motion in our lives in the first place. And repetition of those occurrences is a natural impulse. We are trying to grasp the significance of all that intensity. Essentially we tend to repeat the intensity of experience until we’ve integrated the lessons it was meant to bring us.

Knowing that you are in connection with a divine, limitless source of power and possibility is essential for the full realization of Stage Three recovery. Here you can finally realize the lesson, and no longer need to recreate the intense conditions that were at the root of your suffering.

With these three stages in mind let’s explore each more deeply, and see how the HeartMind Healing System supports the process of recovery.
First Stage Recovery: Resourcing and Making Self Sustaining Choices

Central to all recovery is “The Story of My Life in Five Acts.” Many of you may have heard this classic story before. Read through it now with new eyes and ears, and let’s explore it more deeply in relation to the three stages of recovery.

Act I.
I walk down the street. I fall in a hole. It hurts! It’s not my fault. I get out of the hole, brush myself off and walk on.

Act II.
I walk down the street. I fall in a hole! It hurts!! It’s not my fault! I get out of the hole, brush myself off and walk on.

Act III.
I walk down the street. I fall in a hole!! It hurts!!! It’s my fault. I get out of the hole, brush myself off and walk on.

Act IV.
I walk down the street. I see the hole. I walk around it!

Act V.
I walk down a different street.

Act V is indeed the ultimate realization of recovery. You make a different choice. It comes out of the painful experiences of Acts I, II and III. The pivotal moment comes in Act III, with recognition of taking full responsibility for your life. From that pivotal recognition, you empower yourself to make a new choice in Act IV. And finally in Act V, knowing that you indeed can make new choices, you find an entirely new path forward.

These Act III, IV, and V choices represent your path to empowerment in making positive changes in your life. So, what might that look like? And how might the HeartMind Healing System support you in creating a solid sense of personal empowerment?

First, if your “hole” is an addiction, be it to a substance (alcohol, drugs, junk food), or a process (TV, shopping, snooze alarm, gaming), then the first stage involves effectively and consistently making different choices. Stop drinking, or smoking. Stop eating junk foods. Turn off the TV. Avoid the video console. You need to change, stop, shift away from whatever behavior or set of choices you are making that is destructive and counterproductive to your health and your world.

If you are addicted to any one of these behaviors, you know that that simply stopping the behavior is much easier said than done. If you are reading this report, though, there is hope
that this is possible, and can be done! Here’s where Resourcing comes into play. You must discover and develop adequate, satisfactory and compelling alternatives to the choices you’ve become habituated to. You need tools to help you with your choices.

There’s also an important fact here that you need to be aware of. It’s likely that these behaviors you were engaging in have been distractions away from feeling or experiencing something difficult in your life. To one extent or another, for good or ill, they behaviors have numbed you out. They’ve helped you temporarily to blot out the difficult memories or experiences.

So, when you quit these behaviors, you will inevitably be opening yourself up to feeling everything that you have been escaping. This is not easy, and you will need support. And you will need to develop resources that can adequately support you as those old buried feelings arise.

What do some of these resources look like, and how might you go about actually activating them in your life?

To begin an empowered recovery, we start with First Stage resourcing choices. You need to explore and discover new lifestyle options for structuring your daily life. Nutrition, exercise, and mindfulness meditation are three powerful and essential areas where you must develop skillful means. Instruction and support in these areas are an essential aspect of the coaching you receive within the HeartMind Healing System.

**Getting the Proper Nutrition**

First, let’s look at nutrition. Inadequate nutrition is the sneaky underlying cause of a lot of bad behavior. If you are eating the wrong foods, or not getting enough of the right foods, then you are cruising for trouble. Inadequate nutrition can lead to unstable moods, irritability, foggy thinking, lack of sustained energy and a myriad of auto immune conditions. These all can lead to an entire array of misguided choices. Finding the right nourishing foods for your body type and lifestyle demands, and properly nourishing yourself through a wholesome diet and adequate hydration is essential. It is really a non-negotiable step in recovery. You simply have to eat well.

There is a plethora of information in the marketplace on healthy eating, and it is not my intention in this short report to go into an in-depth study of diet and nutrition. From my experience, diet is not a one size fits all proposition. The right diet for you, is the right diet for you. And no two people are exactly alike in their dietary and nutritional needs. And ultimately there is not even one diet that is right for you for your entire life. The important thing is to be pragmatic and not dogmatic about your dietary choices, and seek skilled support around your dietary needs and choices.

Generally speaking, a farm fresh, naturally sourced, non-chemically treated, non-gmo, primarily plant-based diet is the best bet. In addition, grasping the energetic qualities of your foods is
essential. Some foods cool you down, some warm you up. Some are strengthening, some are cleansing. Learning which foods do which is critical information in making good choices to meet your nutritional needs.

In the HeartMind Healing System, we don’t offer a full dietary/nutrition service, but there are a few “go-to experts” in the study of nutrition and diet that we refer to, to help you shape the best path forward. Teachers like Paul Pitchford or Daverick Legget and Dr. Miles Nichols are teachers who have devoted their lives to researching the energetic nature of foods based on the sophisticated model of Chinese Medicine and modern scientific studies. We refer our clients to their works to provide essential guidance in learning which foods will be best to meet your personal nutritional and recovery needs.

An essential missing piece in most dietary work, is the place that healing touch plays in adequate digestion of the foods you choose to eat. This is where HeartMind Shiatsu Therapy provides the important missing piece. Any diet you undertake will only get you so far! There’s a deep, literal truth in the statement “touch is food.” A good diet will go a long way to assisting your recovery, but if you are not digesting what you eat, you might as well just flush all that good food down the toilet! Here is where quality healing touch is an essential ingredient in aiding the overall digestive process. HeartMind Shiatsu provides you with high quality healing touch tailored to your energetic needs.

You probably heard the old phrase “You are what you eat!” Well, that is not exactly true. What’s more true is, “You are what you don’t eliminate!” Or expressed positively, “You are what you assimilate.” Assimilation of good nutrition is the key! The superior healing touch methods of HeartMind Shiatsu promote proper and effective assimilation.

Clinical studies done in the 1930s identified a syndrome called “deprivation dwarfism.” These landmark studies (though inhumane, and God forbid they ever be repeated) yielded profound information. They were conducted in orphanages and demonstrated a “failure to thrive” in infants who were deprived of cuddling, stroking and interactive physical play. Proper nutrition and hygiene alone were proven insufficient to build thriving, healthy children. Healing contact and touch were the essential ingredient that assured healthy growth in the children studied.

Another famous discovery was made in a neo-natal care unit, where premature twins were separated into two different cribs. The stronger twin was doing well, but the weaker twin was in trouble. A compassionate nurse saw that the weaker twin was in trouble, and in that moment, made a bold choice. She put the two children together into the same crib. Immediately the stronger of the two infants put his arm around his struggling sibling, and within moments all the life signs of the weaker child responded and became stronger! The caption on the photo has now become famous, “Rescuing Hug.”

So, the instruction here is to eat well, AND receive regular healing touch, such as that delivered by HeartMind Shiatsu, to help you assimilate all that good nutrition.
One final word on this, and this is important. Not all touch is created equal. There is a quality of positive, supportive healing contact that is essential to identify. As the highly respected clinician, Leon Hammer, MD, OMD says it. “We all need contact. Enough contact to remain intact. In the absence of positive contact, negative contact will do. And in the worse case scenarios, negative contact has become a way of life.”

So, creating positive contact in your world, is an essential part of the work of First Stage recovery. You need to remove yourself from negative contact patterns that have become a main feature of your addictive choices. Instead, begin to surround yourself with conscious people and positive contact. Skillful healing contact, carefully given in a context of proven care, safety and love, is an essential ingredient in allowing your nervous system to calm down. If you are always in fight or flight mode, you simply will not assimilate your nutrition, and you will regularly slip back into old behavior patterns that may be comfortable and familiar, but ultimately do not serve your recovery. Quality therapeutic healing touch soothes your nervous system, and promotes a state of deep, healing relaxation.

Indeed, cultivating a state of deep relaxation is a profound aspect of Act V of your story. This is an avenue in life with no hidden potholes and false promises! Here is the place where you will be cared for, where your guard can relax, knowing that you are safe from harm, so you can rest and recover.

**Exercise that Works for You!**

In addition to good nutrition, and healing touch therapy the other essential components of excellent self-care are proper exercise and some form of mindfulness meditation practice. These are essential skills to develop in First Stage recovery. The HeartMind Healing System is first and foremost a practice of mindfulness. “HeartMind” is a Chinese concept. In the Chinese language there are not two separate words for heart and mind. Rather, there is just one word, Xin, which best translates as, HeartMind. This points to the awareness that heart and mind are actually one deeply intertwined life system. The HeartMind integrates thought, emotion and feeling into a unified whole. This is the essential ingredient in the HeartMind Healing System. This unity of consciousness brings all the stages of recovery into an elegant symphony of whole healing.

Let’s explore the place that exercise plays in your overall well being. First, like healing touch, physical exercise has the benefit of supporting proper assimilation and utilization of nutrient intake. At the same time, it has a positive stabilizing effect on your nervous and endocrine systems. Regular exercise, tailored to fit your age and capacity, leads to greater calm, reduction of anxiety and fewer hormonal mood fluctuations. Good healthy exercise actually increases your peace of mind!

There are many excellent exercise programs available in the world. Depending on your age, life conditions and health, and your wellness and fitness goals, it is important to find the exercise program that is right for you. Dance, Gymnastics, Circuit Training, Cardio and Strength Training,
Swimming, Yoga, Pilates, Qigong, Tai Chi or Martial Arts are all possible avenues. What I recommend in any exercise or fitness pursuit is that you match your mind with your body. Personal awareness is key.

Finding the right exercise program for you is possible. With the plethora of fitness clubs and health coaches in the world, you can find the coaching and the teacher that resonates for you. Heading down to your local health and fitness club, or consulting your local area for any of the approaches mentioned above, can be a good start. Do your research. There is an exercise or mindful movement program out there that is right for you.

In the HeartMind Healing System, we teach HeartMind Meridian Qigong, a system of mindful movement drawn from the Eastern traditions of qigong and meditation. And with it, we can help you interpret your experience with any exercise system that you practice. What’s important is to make sure that the exercise you find for you, is one that you enjoy and will pursue effectively. The right exercise program for you is essential on your road to recovery.

In the HeartMind Healing System, HeartMind Shiatsu and HeartMind Meridian Qigong provide essential support for any personal exercise regimen. Healing touch and mindful movement together soothe muscular tension and support the movement of the body’s energy and fluids. The combined power of the approach relieves blockages, disperses unnecessary tension, and encourages good energy flow throughout your body through assisted stretching and mobilization, and proper acu-point stimulation. A skilled HeartMind Healing System professional reads what your body/mind needs, applies the proper healing touch and teaches you targeted movement and mindfulness practices to assist and enhance your recovery.

**Turning Inward, The Art of Mindfulness**

Now, to compliment the outward, physical activity of most exercise and movement systems, you will also need to implement the inward turning art of introspection, meditation and awareness. Learning to simply sit or lie still and watch your breath moving in and out of your body provides an incredible boost to your ability to be calm, grounded and centered. These abilities are essential if you wish to make good healthy, clear headed, and whole-hearted choices in the new Act V of your life.

Put simply, meditation gives you the power of simply being present in the moment. It allows you to let go of concerns and worries over what has happened in your past, and what might happen in your future. Life is complicated, and filled with billions of sensory impressions. To slow down and not be overwhelmed by the plethora of stimulation coming your way is an essential life skill.

Receiving skilled support from a practitioner skilled in the HeartMind Healing System supports your ability to hit the “pause button,” go inward, and get out of the fight or flight mode. They
help you clear away all the posturing and contortions you’ve taken on in your navigation of a world filled with potholes!

The HeartMind Healing System helps you develop a deep, mindful practice! Our goal is to help you to be fully present, in the moment. We want to connect you with your breath rhythm in a direct and fundamental way. To provide you with a chance to let go of any hyper-vigilant stance you’ve taken toward the world. And to help you pause long enough to not simply be in “reactive mode” to all that is coming your way, but to create a restful and empowered approach to living in the world with freedom and skillful means.

Now, I have a lot to say about HeartMind Shiatsu and HeartMind Meridian Qigong as mindfulness tools. But for now, just know that the many tools in the HeartMind Healing System, in the hands of a competent well trained professional, can provide you with key support at every stage of your recovery journey. The essential tools of the HeartMind Healing System can help you reset all the working systems of your body, mind and spirit.
Stage Two Recovery: Regression, and Healing the Original Wound

So far, we’ve looked pretty deeply at Stage One Recovery. As we did so, we began to hint at what ultimately is the work of Stage Two: Regression, and Healing the Original Wound. Let’s dive a little deeper into this next stage of recovery.

Triggers, a Cautionary Note

As we begin the exploration of Stage Two recovery processes, it is essential that I send out this caution. When you are diving into your pain, you will be touching on myriad triggers. Triggers are those painful conditions that caused you to reach for temporary relief and comfort in the first place.

Truth is, when you feel any pain, the first impulse you have is to reach for the substance or the activity that will assuage that feeling. As you do Stage Two recovery work, and drop into your memories of painful experience, it is really easy to relapse back into old habits. This is why it is vital to be certain that Stage One recovery tools are firmly established. As you take the steps into exploring the deeper wounds that set you on the journey of seeking relief from your pain in the first place, you might easily be re-triggered and relapse back into old habitual patterns.

If the pain relief you found was rooted in reaching for something “outside” of you, either through substances or habits, then the relief you found was likely temporary at best. But it does represent the brilliance of your system to survive even the worst of circumstances.

But know that all those painful “holes” you “fell” into in Acts I, II in “The Story of My Life in Five Acts,” have caused you to set yourself into a state of hyper-vigilance and reactivity. Your fight or flight mechanisms did not just come up out of the blue. In fact, they were learned, programmed or conditioned into you through layers and layers of complicated, painful interactions with the world that have made up your life story to date.

Stage Two involves taking responsibility for your life and choices as you drop back into your story as it has unfolded. Here you actively discover and review the injuries and insults, the knots, twists and turns that put you into the place where you find yourself. This includes the messages that you took on, the stories you told yourself, or that were told to you. The beliefs you took on, your attitudes, opinions, your “body of knowledge,” your skills, your working assumptions for how to go about doing things in a skillful way. All of these responses have been built up over time, and have grown out of your life experiences. Some of them were laid on you by family, culture, and other important influential figures in your life. And of course, all of these are a part of your experience as well.

Now a lot of what you learned could be helpful. If you’ve learned to do your own laundry, to practice good hygiene, eat well, brush your teeth and take care of your body with exercise and meditation, these are essential life skills. These are the basic, important skills of Stage One recovery. At the same time, you have likely learned some helpful attitudes, beliefs, knowledge
and skills that help you orient toward your life choices in a positive way. But at Stage Two, we focus on those lessons in life that were not so well-learned, or not so well-done, or even done poorly done, repeatedly! This includes ignorance, power plays, manipulations, oppressions and violations. And it also includes the more mundane vicissitudes of life such as death, divorce or other losses, great and small.

These rough, challenging and traumatic experiences triggered you to go down your path, and keep falling into ever more painful situations. This is the place where you need to get out of the blame game and step into responsibility for your own life and choices, and all the growth that it has provided to you.

Remember what Dr. Hammer said about contact? We all need it. And any contact, even negative contact will do. In the worst case it has become a way of life. It is the unravelling of these negative contact patterns that is the work of Stage Two recovery.

Now, if you thought there was a lot of different ways to do Stage One... diet, exercise, meditation and basic life skills. The ways to do Stage Two are equally prolific. There are many, many ways to go about unwinding the twisted, negative patterns that have accumulated in your life. Essentially, this is Act III work, where you pull yourself up from that painful fall into that hole, and you take personal responsibility for having fallen in the hole in the first place!

Counseling, Coaching, Psychotherapy, Regression Therapy, Recovery Groups, Support Groups, Leadership Training, Healing Arts, Transformational Therapy, Gestalt, Family Systems, Family Constellations, Marriage and Family Therapy, Parenting, Personal Empowerment and the list goes on. The HeartMind Healing System consists of a huge body of knowledge that can support all of these approaches with grounded, touch-based energetic care to your body, mind and spirit as you make the powerful journey of Act III.

What is important in all of these approaches is being able to strip away features of your social biography that have laid a grip on you and twisted you into being out of integrity or out of alignment with your true self. And as you strip away the false sense of self that has been built upon layers of negative contact, you allow your true self to emerge and realize a sense of deeper fulfillment. Your HeartMind Healing System professional can provide you with support to take these steps.

Essentially this is the path to ultimately living into the Act V promise of your life. Not just walking down a different street, but walking down the street that is your chosen street, without the potholes of your unconscious or conditioned reactivity. A street filled with the experiences and opportunities that lift you up and inspire your creative genius to shine.

One of my clients many years ago, who had done a tremendous amount of work on discovering her true self and her own path to personal fulfillment said a very interesting thing. “There is no curse worse than to live an unexamined life.” Do you get what she was saying there?
It is a gift, indeed a necessity, to take the time to reflect on your life choices and to examine what you’ve been through. To see where you’ve gone astray, and forgive yourself is essential. Then call yourself gently back to a path that is aligned with your highest good, and truest, deepest expression of your gifts in this world.

This is the work of Stage Two. To examine your life in a compassionate, forgiving, conscious and loving way. In Act III of “The Story of My Life in Five Acts,” you begin this journey. In Acts IV and V, you apply it! And you know, this work is huge, and not to be undertaken lightly. And I dare say it is critical to have a skillful guide, and make connections with conscious companions along the journey. Being surrounded by people who are also making different, more conscious, healthy choices is an essential aspect of growth.

**Growth, Support and True Allies**

A therapist I worked with years ago said it this way. “When you grow, you lose friends.” That stuck with me. And it also made me sad. Indeed, I don’t think it has to be exactly that way. In fact, it could be better said. “When you grow, you break contact with acquaintances that don’t serve your highest good.” Or better yet, “When you grow, you begin to surround yourself with relations that support you in being your highest, truest self.”

What’s ultimately fulfilling about this is that you don’t actually lose friends. What you lose are false friends. True friends will actually come along with you, and even be inspired by you!

If you hang out with a bunch of drunks who do drugs, because you drink and do drugs yourself, and then you wake up and realize you need to stop drinking and popping pills or you’re going to kill yourself... then you likely will need to stop hanging out with that crowd of people. Because it is no fun to be sober around a bunch of drunks. And so, if you thought those old drinking buddies were your friends, just see what happens when you stop drinking!

One or two of them may stop with you! They are the ones you might count as your true friends. Another couple of them will pat you on the back and say, “Good on you!” and “You’re better than I am!” and still others will shun you as boring and a kill-joy. You ultimately have to decide for yourself what is best for you, regardless of the various opinions thrown at you by your peers.

And there it is. Opinions thrown at you by your peers. Powerful poison there. And it’s not just your peers who throw opinions at you. There’s Peers, and Parents, and Children, and society and your own monkey-mind, judging, judging, judging your every move.

Your social biography looms large in this work of self-examination. Put simply, your social biography is this: “Everything anyone ever said about you, that you chose to believe.”
“He’s an old drunk!” “He’ll never amount to anything!” “She’s a loose woman, a slut!” “She’s an airhead!” “He’s a snake and a cad!” “He’s a good man!” “She’s an exemplary woman!” All of it, the good, the bad, the ugly, the beautiful. You know they’re out there saying it. And so... what?

Inside your head, it’s echoing, echoing, reverberating. Did you believe them? What messages did you take on? What have you decided about yourself that really isn’t even true? Or what have you known about yourself that you have chosen to hide? What aspect of who you are is too dangerous, too threatening to the status quo, to bring out into the court of public opinion?

All these things are at play in Stage Two recovery. You could call this the “software” or the “operating system” that has been installed in the “hardware” of your body, mind and spirit. It’s based in a multitude of habits, beliefs and attitudes that have been fixed in your unconscious mind. And they express themselves in your behavior without a conscious thought. And they will continue to do so, until you change it.

And here is where the HeartMind Healing System can be highly supportive of your process of bringing all these unconscious drivers to consciousness, so that you can review them, and change the ones that are faulty. It can be painstaking work to examine and review a whole lifetime of experiences and iterations. But that is what is called for in Stage Two recovery. You’ve got to get inside the programming and write a new story!
Stage Three Recovery, Spiritual Awakening

The Third Stage of Recovery is powerful and profound, and also carries with it a deep challenge. Coming to a realization of spiritual awakening is a highly personal journey, and therefore it is not easy to talk about, and also, certainly should never be legislated. You simply cannot legislate someone’s spiritual journey. And yet, there is a level of imperative here that is essential in assuring recovery. And that imperative is the ability to awaken to a power that is greater than your personal egoic consciousness.

There are simply truths about life on this planet that are beyond grasp. The Earth circulates around a star, on a fringe of the galaxy, in the vastness of a universe filled with galaxies. All the life that resides upon this massive rock hurtling through space represent an awe inspiring testimony to the vast mystery of creation. We creatures of the human sort exist as a strand in the web of life that resides on this precious blue planet.

It is humbling, and at the same time awe inspiring to enter into contemplation of life and all its manifestations on Earth. Not to mention the mind boggling possibility that many more life forms might exist on other planets at distances so vast we can barely fathom. And at the same time, as we are in awe of this realization to be able to move to the perspective of understanding that in all this, we were somehow given the life we have, and also given all the supports necessary to sustain that life. And to hold in this perspective a clear feeling of gratitude for all that we have been given.

Now the truth is, not everything that life has given us feels right or good, or helpful. There are challenges and difficulties that abound. And yet, to face each of these challenges and difficulties, we are also endowed with creative minds that can discover a way forward. Learning to develop that mind, to discover our deeper capacities for growth and understanding, is at the crux of the third stage of recovery.

We actually have choices in this world, we are not the unwitting victims of circumstance or behavior. We are actually self-empowered actors on the stage of life. You could understand it this way. “The cup of coffee does not reach for you. You reach for the cup of coffee!” And that is the key. Since you are the one doing the reaching, you can decide what to reach for, and chose to reach for that which sustains you rather than debilitates you. You have the power of choice and decision, and that is what you must finally exercise in the final stage of recovery.

The truth about spiritual awakening is that there is no “Deus Ex Machina” delivering a divine being in the last moment to sort out all your troubles. No. You are the one who must awaken to your gifts and your choices and begin to make the choices that enliven and uplift you. And it’s not just a one-shot deal. You need to exercise this muscle to see possibilities and make conscious choices in each and every moment of your life walk. With this in mind, let’s explore some of the actions and insights of third stage recovery to help you to grasp the way forward.
Your Issues are in Your Tissues

Let’s begin with the phrase, “Your issues are in your tissues!” In the HeartMind Healing System, we see that all the beliefs, attitudes, and messages that you take on as a result of life experience, get lodged in the very memory of your cells. So much of life experience is simply way beyond the possibility of your conscious mind to ever recall in any great detail. It’s a massive amount of data. Given that, let’s see how the work of Stage Three of Recovery; Spiritual Awakening helps us to sort this all out, and stay on top of our life.

First, it is important to realize that nearly all of your bodily functions are maintained automatically, without the aid of your conscious mind! They are literally maintained by some unfolding life force that was given to you from the time of conception, and that will stay with you until the hour of your death. And this life force is an extension of that great mystery of life on our planet, in our solar system, galaxy and the vast universe.

In The HeartMind Healing System we acknowledge that all of these bodily functions are expressions of Organ Networks in action. Your Lungs, Heart, Kidneys, Bladder, Liver, Gall Bladder, Stomach, Large and Small Intestines, as well as reproductive organs, nervous system and endocrine system all conduct their business without any direction from your conscious mind!

You could think of all of this like a big organization or business. The conscious mind can be seen as the chief executive, while the organ networks are the various employee teams. Basically the employees do all the company work, but the executive oversees the big picture and helps direct all the various interactions between the employees that facilitate the overall effective functioning. Like employees working in a company, your internal Organ Networks really appreciate getting all the support they need to do their jobs, and acknowledgment of a job well done goes a long way!

Chinese Medicine, which is at the foundation of the HeartMind Healing System, refers to all these functioning systems in your body as Organ Networks. Hawaiian traditional teachings also have a wonderful manner of speaking about this that it is very well aligned with the HeartMind Healing System. The Traditional Hawaiian model calls the unconscious working parts of your body, the “uni’hipili” or “friendly unconscious.” And the Organ Networks of the uni’hipili, go about the business of running your body day after day, tirelessly for as long as you live.

The question is then, how do you compensate these tireless employees? How do you support them in doing their jobs well? The trick is to provide them with good fuel, water and air. Nutrition, hydration and exercise! And to express your gratitude with each breath. Here’s where our consciousness comes in. By simply choosing to appreciate your Organ Networks through excellent daily choices, you can create an optimum working environment.

If you feed your body alcohol, white sugar, and processed food products, you are just providing your organs with inferior fuel, and poisons that overload and clog them up. If you change that
up and provide pure fresh water, high quality fresh food, avoid alcohol and sugary foods and drinks, you will be providing your organs with the high quality fuel that will keep them running well for years.

To assist all this to work well, experts in the HeartMind Healing System can provide you with healing touch in the form of HeartMind Shiatsu and HeartMind Meridian Qigong that provides you with healing contact, mobilization of joints, stretching of muscles and stimulation of meridian channels and acu-points that inspire your breath and promote a healthy mindful consciousness, that supports optimal functioning on all levels of body, mind and spirit. The HeartMind Healing System specialist is equipped with an extensive working knowledge of the systems of the body, mind and spirit, and how they interact with one another.

From my experience, though there are a many bodywork modalities that can also reach this level of application, the HeartMind Healing System stands out amongst the crowd. It draws upon the deep wisdom traditions of Classical Chinese and Japanese medical teachings, and the insights and inspiration of Taoist, Zen and Yogic philosophies as well as the western somatic sciences. It offers a sophisticated and powerful model of harmonious life functioning that can support all stages of recovery. This holistic approach takes into account your whole being on all levels of body, mind and spirit, is essential to support you on the path of complete recovery.

Beyond the simple feel-good focus of a good massage, and the creation of a safe space for you to relax and calm down from a hyper-vigilant reactive mode of being, the HeartMind Healing System specialist can read the patterns and signs of your distress, provide expert personalized support to assist you right where you are, and help you craft a course to meet your needs. The work can help you to untangle years of accumulated tensions resultant from wounds and insults that often were first delivered to you in childhood.

_Healing Deep to the Unconscious and Beyond_

There are certain deep wounds that hang on, and on and on, and often submerge themselves deep in our unconscious. The HeartMind Healing System draws upon the use of mindful stimulation of selected acu-points, combined with breath and consciousness to unlock these old stored patterns, release them from your body, and help you begin to construct a new way forward.

In “The Story of My Life in Five Acts,” there is an Act V choice to consciously return to each of the times you fell in that hole, in Acts I, II and III, and make amends, make a new story, redress old wrongs, heal old wounds, and practice accountability, integrity and forgiveness.

We all do the best we can with what we understand to be true in any given moment. In many respects, you could see this stage of recovery as an Act IV action, walking around that hole with intention and forgiveness. If you fell in that hole 1000 times, you might need to walk around it 1001 times to clean up and heal all the bruises, cuts, and gashes that your acquired from those many falls.
As we grow through this new consciousness, and new experiences bring us new and fresh perspectives, then a new, more mature and awakened understanding can help us to make better less destructive choices.

Full and complete recovery is deep. Having trusted allies on this part of your journey is key. Find someone who’s been through what you’re going through, and has found solutions that have lifted them up and shifted the pattern away from negative contact, into positive contact. Let them be an inspiration to you, that you can heal those old wounds as well, and find a new, better way forward. The HeartMind Healing System is here to provide you with a skilled ally and mentorship on your road to full recovery.

**Going Deeper into Third Stage Recovery**

Now I want to go a little deeper into third stage recovery by exploring a model that understands that your Being is made up of three parts; the body, the mind and the spirit. In the HeartMind Healing System we draw from several world traditions that have profound teachings. Two that we will explore here are the traditional Hawaiian model of Ho’oponopono and the Chinese model of the Three Treasures. These two systems correlate strongly with each other, and are brought together in our system to support you in your Third Stage Recovery: Spiritual Awakening.

Earlier, I mentioned the Uni’hipili, or friendly unconscious. But now I want to develop this thought a little more fully. Begin by understanding that the uni-hipili is is just one of the three parts of your overall being. And it might even be called the “lowest” aspect of your being. For you see, above the friendly unconscious level of the uni-hipili, there lies the conscious mind. That conscious mind resides in the Heart. The Hawaiians name it, the Uhane, the spirit of your Conscious Will. With the Uhane, you can direct your awareness to any aspect of your life and from there you make conscious choices about how you live your life.

But it doesn’t stop there. “Above” the level of the Uhane, exists yet another level of Being, the A'u'makua. This is the pure divine spirit of life that is the spark of divine inspiration that imbues each living being with life itself. We can call this the “super-conscious.” The super conscious is that intuitive awareness, that sense of interconnectedness of all things, the “sixth sense” it might be called, that which connects our individual consciousness to the greater force of life that flows within through and around the entire universe.

So these are the three layers of Being as seen through the traditional Hawaiian model. Now let’s look at this same three-part nature of Being through the lens of Classical Chinese medicine. Here we find the concept of the Three Treasures. These three aspects of your being are termed the Jing, Qi and Shen. Jing is the essence of physical expression in this life, literally the matter and tissue of your body. Qi is the energy of conscious awakening, awareness, choice, understanding, perspective and intellectual and emotional intelligence. Shen is pure spirit, the
light in your eyes, the sense of an eternal self, interconnected with all your relations and all living interconnections.

This understanding underpins your Stage Three recovery efforts. This is the work of seeing the entire picture of the story of your life from a higher perspective and seeing that you are connected to a much greater universe. Each stage in recovery of course plays its essential part. But how the third stage of recovery works, practically, is in simply recognizing that there is so much data and content involved in deep aspects of any original wound, that there comes a point where your small ego self must simply must throw in the towel regarding ever having the vast resources necessary to resolve every single past wrong that was ever committed in your life, either by you or against you. This is where you literally call on a “higher power” or the “kind, benevolent spirit of life itself” to assist you in resolving and letting go of the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.”

From the Hawaiian perspective, Dr. Hew Len Hale'akala teaches that for every conscious memory there are one million unconscious memories. And the truth is that you will never ever be able to track down each and every one of the intricate interconnections of looping consequences that arise from any given occurrence. An old Jewish wisdom story comes to mind to illustrate this beautifully.

**The Remedy for Gossip**

It happened that a man was concerned that he had gossiped in an unfriendly way about a person of his acquaintance. He was afraid that the gossip could do major damage to this person’s reputation. And so he went to his Rabbi with this concern, seeking remedy for the wrong he may have perpetuated. The Rabbi gave him a simple task.

“Do you have a feather pillow?” the Rabbi asked.

“Yes,” the man replied.

“Good! Please take it, and a sharp knife, and go up on the highest hill you can find on a windy day. Cut that pillow open and let all the feathers fly to the winds. Then come back and see me.”

The man took this advice and did just as the Rabbi instructed. It was a beautiful windy day, and the feathers blew out of the pillow and across the country side. Satisfied that every single feather was out of the pillow and cast to the winds, the man returned to the Rabbi.

“Rabbi, I have done as you have instructed. I released all those feathers to the winds. Now, will the wrong I committed in my gossiping be healed?”

“Ah, good! Well done!” the Rabbi replied. "Now there is one more thing that you must do to complete the healing. You must now go and pick up all those feathers and put them back in the pillow case!”
The man looked down at his feet, and understood the impossibility of the task, and he now felt deeply how far reaching the effects of his gossiping would travel.

The Rabbi then looked at the man with compassionate eyes, seeing that the lesson had been learned. And he gave the man this final task. To sincerely apologize, to ask the creator for forgiveness, to feel the forgiveness of the creator, and to express his gratitude and love in each and every moment from then on.

Indeed, this is the Hawaiian teaching as well. The teaching of Ho’oponopono, or reconciliation. For every one conscious memory there are a million unconscious memories, and millions and millions of unconscious moments span back over time and generations. Seeing one, we grasp the enormity of them all.

So, what do we do with all that immensity? We apologize, sincerely. We seek forgiveness. And we open up to gratitude. We allow love and grace to ride on each breath that we take.

The great teacher Eckhart Tolle in his seminal work The Power of Now teaches us that everything happens in the present moment. The past is gone, the future has not yet arrived. So, healing too, only happens in the present moment. You cannot heal in the past, or the future, you can only heal in the present. You can be aware of the past that has happened, you can anticipate the future to a certain extent. You can learn from the past, and make different choices today that will yield a different future result. And you do all of that in the present moment.

As your recovery progresses, you begin to cultivate this Spiritual Awakening, Stage Three awareness. There is a mystery at work, greater than your consciousness will ever fully grasp. It’s called the Great Mystery for a reason. And the weight of all the actions of the past builds up into an immensity that your conscious mind can never calculate. Yet your conscious mind can be aware, and can awaken, and it can give it all over to the mystery.

In Chinese medicine, there is an understanding of the great flow of life as the expression of an endless set of changes. The Five Elements characterize each of the various phases of these endless changes. One in particular is the element called Metal, which is involved with the exchanges we all make with our environment, it can be summarized as the many gains and losses of life. The instruction in the midst of loss is to give your losses back to Nature. Great Nature, often seen as the Earth Element. composites all things, takes all things back, and transmutes them, through the action of the Fire Element, into something new.

It is said in Buddhist teachings that all suffering can be attributed to clinging. Clinging onto something is a kind of sickness, a stagnation that blocks the flow. It is only in flow that life can continue to express itself. Indeed, there is a time to dam things up, to create a boggy wetland for a certain kind of life fermentation to take place. But there is likewise a time to break the log jam and let the river flow free once more!
Spiritual awakening, as the capstone of all the stages leading to recovery and self realization, may be summarized in your coming into your five freedoms. You have the freedoms to perceive, think, feel, desire and choose for yourself. And these five freedoms derive from your inner truth and awareness at each stage of your journey, enlightened and informed by the higher perspective of your infinite nature. To do this, you undertake the journey of self-discovery and personal empowerment. You come to know that what you perceive, think and feel are reliable guides that support you in pursuing your true desires, and in making the optimal choices for a life well lived.

Now that we’ve looked at some of the basic lessons and concepts of all three stages of recovery. I hope you have seen how these stages provide a structure on your journey to recovery. HeartMind Healing, in its essence is a deep study of the myriad changes that are ever ongoing in the course of a life well lived. Skillful healing touch, movement and mindfulness practices, along with conscious daily life choices work with you in the ever-present moment, to release the blockages and stagnations from the tissues of your body. Through those releases, this helps you to your own complete recovery. When you recover, you free your mind and spirt from the prison of past wounds and indignities of life, and you let go any concerns that you may carry about future insult and injury.

Indeed, full recovery takes a path through all three stages, round and round and round, as you build resiliency, and a more whole and fortified sense of your true self, in body, mind and spirt. At the heart of it all, are the empowered choices you make each and every day of your life with each and every breath and step that you take.

Where to Go From Here, The HeartMind Healing - HeartMind Recovery Program

After reading this report, you might feel you have all the tools you need to simply to walk your path of recovery on your own! If that’s the case, I’m excited for you, and wish you all the best. But if you find as you approach the unique challenges of your own recovery that going it alone just doesn’t bring you the progress you desire, then the HeartMind Recovery Program is here to support you more fully. And Beyond the self-paced HeartMind Recovery Program, HeartMind Healing Professional Coaching is also available to provide you support through the tougher parts of the journey. Whichever path you choose, I encourage you to continue moving forward with all your consciousness toward the goal of your personal freedom, and the highest creativity that emanates from your heart and soul.

I hope this report has inspired you, and whatever path forward you are thinking about for yourself right now, I want to encourage you to schedule an initial free private consultation with me today. I’ll be happy to support you where you are at, and answer any questions you might have about the HeartMind Recovery Program. Below I’ve outline a bit of the logistics of the program, and beyond that, let’s schedule a time to talk!
The HeartMind Recovery Program includes step-by-step modules for implementing all three stages of recovery on your own self-guided, personal healing journey. It is designed to help you hold up a mirror and a magnifying glass to get a good look at yourself, helping you build the strength and insight you need for complete recovery. Your inward journey to true self-knowing and healthy self-expression is the power tool at the center of the work. You work your way through, lesson by lesson, gaining insight and adding skills with each day of your recovery journey.

If you find along the way that you want or need more professional accountability support to stick with the intensity of the program, and to tailor specific tools and approaches to meet your unique situation, then you can hire a HeartMind Healing System Professional Coach for one-on-one coaching. We’ll be happy to walk along with you through all stages of the program, helping to ensure optimal results toward you realizing your goals. Private coaching compliments your self-paced journey through the program, and truly helps to boost your morale, and hone your choices for optimal benefits, all along the way.

If you find yourself called to be a coach yourself one day, you may wish to consider entering the full HeartMind Healing System professional training! It’s only natural that once something benefits you, you will want to turn around and provide that benefit to others! But... one step at a time now! Let’s begin with what is right before us. Start implementing your recovery program today. Welcome to our HeartMind community dedicated to growth and recovery.

Please reach out with any questions or reactions to any and all of the content in this report. Or take the next step and get registered for HeartMind Recovery today. I am honored and humbled to be service to your personal recovery and to the liberation, healing and empowerment of all beings.