



KATHY NOTES

RECOVERY EDITION

The Stuff I Wish Somebody Had Handed Me at the Beginning

K
A
T
H
Y

KNOWLEDGE. Learn what's happening.



ACTION. Do something with what you learn.



TOOLS. Learn healthier ways to handle life.



HEALING. Work on what's underneath.



YOURSELF. Because ultimately, this is your life.



One day at a time. Progress, not perfection. Faith over fear.



*You are not alone.
There is hope.*



Kathy Simmons, CRC
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KATHY NOTES

KATHY'S RECOVERY TOOLBOX

Knowledge. Action. Tools for Healing Yourself.

When Life Happens... Grab a Tool.

Nobody hands you a toolbox and says:

"Good luck. Figure out which one does what."

Well...

sometimes recovery kinda does. 😊

We're told:

"Use your coping skills."

"Use your recovery tools."

"Regulate your emotions."

"Challenge your thinking."

"Set boundaries."

"Don't react."

Okay.

BUT HOW?

What tool do I use when I'm anxious?

What do I do when I'm pissed off?

What about when somebody betrays me?

What do I do when I'm defensive and I KNOW I'm about to say some shit I shouldn't say?

What about grief?

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Shame?

Loneliness?

Trauma triggers?

Resentment?

Overwhelm?

A craving?

What do I do when my brain simply will NOT SHUT THE FUCK UP? 🤔

That's what this toolbox is for.

You don't need to memorize every recovery concept you've ever heard.

You need to learn how to recognize what is happening and ask:

1. WHAT AM I EXPERIENCING?

2. WHAT TOOL FITS THIS MOMENT?

3. HOW DO I USE IT?

4. CAN I PRACTICE IT BEFORE I REACT?

Because here's the thing about tools:

A TOOL DOESN'T HELP IF IT STAYS IN THE TOOLBOX.

You have to pick the damn thing up.

And sometimes you'll use the wrong tool.

Sometimes you'll forget you have tools altogether.

Sometimes you'll remember the perfect tool approximately seventeen minutes AFTER you completely lose your shit. 🤔

That's okay.

Go back.

Look at what happened.

Learn from it.

And practice again.

That's recovery.

Not perfection.

PRACTICE.

Because every time you practice another response, you're teaching yourself that there's another way.

So open the toolbox.

Find what you're feeling.

Grab a tool.

Use it.

And if it doesn't work?

GRAB ANOTHER DAMN TOOL.



— **Kathy Simmons, CRC**

Founder & President

The Other Side of Rock Bottom, Inc.

KATHY NOTES

Knowledge. Action. Tools for Healing Yourself.

RECOVERY TOOLS FOR REAL LIFE

Recovery gives us a lot of tools.

The problem is...

Nobody always tells us **which damn tool to use when we actually need one.** 🙄

So let's make this simple.

You don't need to memorize everything.

You need to learn to recognize:

WHAT AM I FEELING?

WHAT DO I NEED?

WHAT TOOL CAN I USE?

THE TOOLS

1. PAUSE — PRAY — PROCESS — PROCEED

USE IT WHEN:

You're angry, triggered, defensive, hurt, or about to react.

PAUSE: Don't respond yet.

PRAY: Ask God for wisdom, clarity, or simply enough strength to shut your mouth for five minutes. 🙏

PROCESS: What happened? What am I feeling? What are the facts? What's mine?

PROCEED: Choose the response that protects your recovery.

REMEMBER:

You don't have to attend every argument you're invited to.

2. CATCH IT — CHECK IT — CHANGE IT — CHOOSE IT

USE IT WHEN:

Your own thoughts are beating the hell out of you.

CATCH IT:

What am I telling myself?

CHECK IT:

Is it actually true? Is it a fact or a feeling? Am I assuming, predicting, catastrophizing, or reacting from my past?

CHANGE IT:

Replace it with something more truthful and helpful.

CHOOSE IT:

Practice the healthier thought AND behavior.

Then?

CHOOSE IT AGAIN.

Your old pathway has had years of practice.

The new one needs practice too.

That's neuroplasticity in action.

3. 5 — 4 — 3 — 2 — 1 GROUNDING

USE IT WHEN:

You're anxious, panicking, overwhelmed, dissociating, or triggered.

Find:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch or feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Your brain may be screaming:

"WHAT IF?!"

Grounding brings you back to:

"WHAT IS?"

4. HALT

USE IT WHEN:

You're irritable, emotional, craving, exhausted, or suddenly convinced your entire life sucks.

Ask:

H — Am I Hungry?

A — Am I Angry?

L — Am I Lonely?

T — Am I Tired?

Take care of the basic need before making a major decision.

Sometimes you need deep emotional healing.

Sometimes you need a sandwich and a nap. 🍷

5. DELAY — DISTRACT — DISCUSS

USE IT WHEN:

You're having a craving or strong urge.

DELAY:

Don't make a decision for the next 20 minutes.

DISTRACT:

Change your environment. Walk. Shower. Clean. Color. Journal. Listen to music. Do something with your hands.

DISCUSS:

Tell another human being:

"I WANT TO USE."

Don't sit alone negotiating with addiction.

6. THE NEXT RIGHT THING

USE IT WHEN:

You're overwhelmed, scared about the future, or trying to fix your entire life TODAY.

Stop asking:

"How am I going to fix everything?"

Ask:

"WHAT IS THE NEXT RIGHT THING?"

Make the call.

Fill out the form.

Go to the appointment.

Eat.

Shower.

Tell the truth.

Go to the meeting.

Don't use.

Then ask:

"What's next?"

7. CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE

USE IT WHEN:

You're frustrated with people, circumstances, court, family, relationships, or things that aren't going your way.

Ask:

WHAT CAN I CONTROL?

My words.

My behavior.

My boundaries.

My effort.

My recovery.

My next decision.

WHAT CAN'T I CONTROL?

Other people.

Other people's opinions.

Other people's forgiveness.

The past.

Every outcome.

Put your energy where you actually have power.

8. NAME IT TO TAME IT

USE IT WHEN:

You're triggered or having a huge emotional reaction.

Say:

"I AM FEELING ____."

Then ask:

What happened?

What did it bring up?

Is this happening NOW—or is something happening now reminding me of THEN?

Naming an emotion can help you step back from it instead of becoming completely consumed by it.

9. ALLOW — EXPRESS — CONNECT

USE IT WHEN:

You're grieving.

ALLOW:

Give yourself permission to feel it.

EXPRESS:

Cry. Write. Pray. Talk. Create.

CONNECT:

Let another safe person know you're hurting.

Grief doesn't only happen when somebody dies.

We can grieve:

Relationships.

Childhoods we didn't get.

Time lost to addiction.

Children.

Health.

Safety.

Dreams.

Versions of ourselves.

You don't have to "get over" grief.

You learn how to move forward while carrying what mattered.

10. BOUNDARIES BEFORE REACTION

USE IT WHEN:

You feel betrayed, disrespected, manipulated, pressured, or unsafe.

Before deciding the entire future of the relationship, ask:

"WHAT DO I NEED RIGHT NOW?"

Space?

Time?

No contact tonight?

A conversation later?

Support?

Safety?

More information?

A boundary isn't controlling somebody else's behavior.

A boundary decides what YOU will do.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY WITHOUT SHAME

USE IT WHEN:

You screwed up.

Ask:

What did I do?

What part belongs to me?

Who was affected?

Can I repair anything?

What needs to change?

Then change the behavior.

"I did something wrong" is accountability.

"I AM something wrong" is shame.

You don't have to destroy yourself to take responsibility for yourself.

12. REACH BEFORE YOU RETREAT

USE IT WHEN:

You're lonely, isolating, ashamed, depressed, or thinking:

"Nobody wants to hear from me."

That's exactly when you reach.

Call somebody.

Text somebody.

Go to a meeting.

Sit with safe people.

Tell somebody:

"I'm not doing great today."

You don't have to have a crisis before you're allowed to ask for connection.

OKAY KATHY... BUT WHICH TOOL DO I USE?

😱 ANXIETY

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Come out of "**What if?**" and return to "**What is?**"

😞 ANGER

PAUSE — PRAY — PROCESS — PROCEED

Don't let your first emotion make your next decision.

DEFENSIVENESS

PAUSE + CHECK IT

Before defending yourself, ask:

"Is there even 5% of this that I need to hear?"

You don't have to agree with everything someone says to learn something from it.

😵 OVERWHELM

THE NEXT RIGHT THING

Shrink your world.

Don't solve next year.

Handle **next**.

BETRAYAL

BOUNDARIES BEFORE REACTION

You don't have to make permanent relationship decisions while you're actively hurting.

GRIEF

ALLOW — EXPRESS — CONNECT

Feel it. Give it somewhere to go. Don't carry it completely alone.

SHAME

ACCOUNTABILITY WITHOUT SHAME

Ask:

"Did I DO something wrong, or am I telling myself I AM wrong?"

GUILT

REPAIR

If you've caused harm:

Own it.

Apologize.

Repair what you reasonably can.

Change the behavior.

Then let consistency speak.

FEAR

THE NEXT RIGHT THING

You don't need enough courage for the whole future.

You need enough courage for **the next step**.

SPIRALING THOUGHTS

CATCH IT — CHECK IT — CHANGE IT — CHOOSE IT

And then:

CHOOSE IT AGAIN.

RESENTMENT

LOOK UNDERNEATH

Ask:

"What am I actually hurt about?"

Sometimes resentment is pointing toward hurt, disappointment, grief, fear, or a boundary that needs attention.

LONELINESS

REACH BEFORE YOU RETREAT

Your brain says isolate.

Recovery says:

CONNECT.

TRIGGERED

NAME IT TO TAME IT + GROUND

Ask:

"Is this NOW—or is this reminding me of THEN?"

Come back to the present.

FRUSTRATION

CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE

Stop spending today's energy trying to operate other human beings by remote control.



CRAVING

DELAY — DISTRACT — DISCUSS

Don't fight addiction silently.

Say:

"I WANT TO USE."

^{zzz} EVERYTHING SUCKS

HALT

Hungry?

Angry?

Lonely?

Tired?

Check the basics before declaring the apocalypse.



I WANT TO GIVE UP

SHRINK THE TIMEFRAME + CONNECT

Forget forever.

Can you make it through today?

Too much?

The next hour.

Still too much?

Give me ten minutes.

Then another ten.

THE TOOL UNDER ALL THE TOOLS

If you forget every acronym in this packet, remember one word:

PAUSE.

There is a space between what happens and what you do next.

Sometimes it's tiny.

Recovery helps us make that space bigger.

And inside that space:

NOTICE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

PICK A TOOL.

MAKE THE NEXT HEALTHIER CHOICE.

You won't do it perfectly.

Nobody does.

But every time you practice another response, you're walking that new pathway again.

KNOW IT.

PRACTICE IT.

CHOOSE IT.

THEN CHOOSE IT AGAIN. ♥

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH TOOL TO USE...

You're not always going to remember everything in this toolbox.

You probably won't be standing in the middle of an emotional meltdown thinking:

"Hang on. Kathy had a tool for this. What page was that?"



That's okay.

If you can't remember anything else, remember these four words:

PAUSE.

PRAY.

PROCESS.

PROCEED.

These four steps can become the handle on your entire recovery toolbox.

PAUSE.

Don't react yet.

Something happened.

You're angry.

You're scared.

You're triggered.

You're hurt.

You're defensive.

You're craving.

Your brain is screaming:

DO SOMETHING!

Okay.

But you don't necessarily have to do something **right now**.

Pause creates the space.

Take a breath.

Walk away if you need to.

Put the phone down.

Don't send the text.

Don't make the decision.

Don't pick up.

Just...

PAUSE.

PRAY.

You don't have to figure everything out alone.

For me, this is where God comes in.

My prayer doesn't have to be beautiful.

Sometimes it's:

"God, help me."

Sometimes:

"God, show me what belongs to me here."

Sometimes:

"God, help me shut my mouth before I make this worse." 🙄

And sometimes:

"God, I don't know what the hell to do next."

That's still prayer.

You don't need perfect words.

You need enough willingness to stop and ask for guidance before letting fear, anger, addiction, or impulse make the decision.

PROCESS.

NOW OPEN THE TOOLBOX.

Ask:

What am I actually feeling?

What happened?

What story am I telling myself about what happened?

Is this NOW—or is this reminding me of THEN?

Is this something I can control?

Am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired?

Do I need grounding?

Do I need a boundary?

Do I need connection?

Do I need to challenge my thinking?

Do I need to sit with this feeling instead of trying to make it disappear?

Am I craving?

Do I need help?

Then grab the tool that fits.

Maybe it's:

Catch It → Check It → Change It → Choose It.

Maybe it's grounding.

Maybe it's HALT.

Maybe it's Delay → Distract → Discuss.

Maybe it's reaching out instead of isolating.

Maybe it's setting a boundary.

Maybe it's accountability.

Maybe it's allowing yourself to grieve.

Maybe it's simply asking:

"What's the next right thing?"

That's processing.

You're no longer automatically reacting.

You're choosing your tool.

THEN...

PROCEED.

Now ask yourself:

"WHAT RESPONSE PROTECTS MY RECOVERY?"

Not:

"What will make me feel better for the next five minutes?"

Not:

"How do I win this argument?"

Not:

"How do I make them understand?"

Not:

"How do I make this feeling disappear?"

Ask:

"What choice moves me toward the woman I want to become?"

Then do that.

Even if it's uncomfortable.

Even if the old response feels easier.

Even if your brain says:

"We don't normally do it this way."

Exactly.

THAT'S THE POINT.

You're practicing another way.

You're walking through that tall grass again.

You're building another path.

You're teaching yourself:

"WE HAVE TOOLS NOW."

AND IF YOU SCREW IT UP?

Because you will sometimes.

So will I. 🤖

Recovery isn't:

Pause perfectly.

Pray perfectly.

Process perfectly.

Proceed perfectly.

Recovery is noticing sooner.

Learning.

Repairing when necessary.

And trying again.

Maybe today you realized what happened an hour later.

Next time maybe it's twenty minutes.

Then five.

Then while it's happening.

And someday you may catch yourself BEFORE you react.

THAT'S GROWTH.

YOUR TOOLBOX STARTS WITH A PAUSE

That's the thread running through everything in this book.

Anxiety?

PAUSE.

Anger?

PAUSE.

Defensiveness?

PAUSE.

Betrayal?

PAUSE.

Shame?

PAUSE.

Grief?

PAUSE.

Craving?

PAUSE.

Overwhelmed?

PAUSE.

Triggered?

PAUSE.

Because before you can choose a different response...

YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOURSELF A MOMENT TO CHOOSE.

Then:

PAUSE.

Create the space.

PRAY.

Ask for guidance.

PROCESS.

Figure out what's happening and grab the right tool.

PROCEED.

Make the choice that protects your recovery.

And tomorrow?

Do it again.

Because recovery isn't about never having another difficult feeling.

It's about learning:

"WHEN LIFE HAPPENS, I DON'T HAVE TO REACH FOR THE OLD THING."

I can reach for a tool.

I can reach for another person.

I can reach for God.

I can reach for recovery.

And I can choose what happens next.

PAUSE.

PRAY.

PROCESS.

PROCEED.

Then keep going. ♥

— Kathy

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

You can have every tool in this book and still have days when you need another human being.

THAT'S NOT FAILURE.

That's recovery.

There will be days when you need a meeting.

Days when you need someone to listen.

Days when you need to laugh.

Days when you're struggling.

Days when you're doing GREAT and just want to be around people who get it.

And days when all you can manage to do is show up.

SHOW UP ANYWAY.

The door is open.

THE OTHER SIDE OF ROCK BOTTOM, INC.

Recovery • Healing • Connection • Hope

All pathways of recovery are welcome.

We believe there is no single right way to recover.

Come as you are.

You don't have to have everything figured out.

You don't have to say anything.

You don't have to pretend you're okay.

Just come.

FREE ONLINE RECOVERY MEETINGS

EVERY SINGLE DAY

☼ MORNING MEDITATION

8:00 AM Eastern

Start your day with recovery, reflection, connection, and intention.

♥ MIDDAY MOTIVATION

2:00 PM Eastern

Real-life recovery conversations, education, encouragement, tools, and a little laughter along the way.

EVENING RECOVERY

8:00 PM Eastern

Come exactly as you are and end the day surrounded by people who understand.

JOIN US ON ZOOM

Meeting ID

831 1998 2784

Passcode

recovery

Passcode is all lowercase.

NEED TO REACH US?

CALL OR TEXT

(475) 307-9586

VISIT US ONLINE

TheOtherSideOfRockBottom.org

Find recovery information, free resources, workbooks, meeting information, and ways to connect with our community.

KEEP THIS INFORMATION

Put it in your phone.

Take a picture of this page.

Write the meeting ID in your journal.

Save the number.

Stick it on your wall.

Because you don't have to wait until you're falling apart to reach out.

Come when you're struggling.

Come when you're celebrating.

Come when you're angry.

Come when you're lonely.

Come when you're confused.

Come when you've had an amazing day.

Come when you've had a shitty one. 🤔

You don't need a crisis to deserve connection.

FROM KATHY

There was a time when **I needed Tina Klem.**

Today, I get to come back through those doors carrying recovery tools for the women coming behind me.

I couldn't have imagined that when I was here.

That's why I want you to remember something every time you look at this page:

YOUR STORY ISN'T FINISHED.

Keep learning.

Keep practicing.

Keep reaching out.

Keep choosing recovery.

And when life happens...

PAUSE.

PRAY.

PROCESS.

PROCEED.

Then do the next right thing.

And keep going.

Because there really is...

ANOTHER SIDE OF ROCK BOTTOM. ♥

Kathy Simmons, CRC

Founder & President

The Other Side of Rock Bottom, Inc.

(475) 307-9586

TheOtherSideOfRockBottom.org

Zoom Meeting ID: 831 1998 2784

Passcode: recovery

Daily Meetings: 8:00 AM • 2:00 PM • 8:00 PM ET