PART OF THE MILE MARKER LIBRARY

1

RIGHT NOW

DON'T PANIC

THE FIRST HOURS AFTER YOU STOP

What to Do When You Stop Drinking or Using

STEPHEN DEASON

Alder Creek EDITIONS

Don't Panic: The First Hours After You Stop

With Thanks

These books are offered at a low price in print and free online through the generous support of Matthew Marberry and the Michael Marberry Family Fund.

Thank you, Matthew, for helping put these books in the hands of the people who need them.

Stephen Deason

NOTES

You are enough.

One thing to try right now: Eat a piece of candy, or anything sweet you have.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

DON'T PANIC

If you are in danger, call 911.

If you are in crisis, or thinking about suicide, call or text 988.

For free help finding treatment, call 1-800-662-4357.

If you think this is an emergency, turn to page 19 now.

NOTES

One day, sometimes one hour, at a time.

One thing to try right now: Call someone just to hear a voice. You do not have to say why.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

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BOOK 1 · RIGHT NOW

Don't Panic:

The First Hours

After You Stop

What to Do When You Stop Drinking or Using

Stephen Deason

Alder Creek EDITIONS

NOTES

Getting through today is the whole job.

One thing to try right now: Put on one song you know all the words to.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Don't Panic: The First Hours After You Stop

What to Do When You Stop Drinking or Using

Part of The Mile Marker Library

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NOTES

You asked for help. That was the hard part.

One thing to try right now: Make tea or coffee and hold the cup with both hands.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out


Alder
Creek
EDITIONS

NOTES

A craving is a feeling. It rises and it falls.

One thing to try right now: Step outside for five minutes, even if it is just the doorway.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

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NOTES

You do not have to feel good to stay sober.

One thing to try right now: Take a warm shower.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Recovery Books

The Mile Marker Library: standalone books and tools for people getting into recovery on their own. Each one is numbered and labeled by what it helps with. Start with any of them.

RIGHT NOW

1. *Don't Panic: The First Hours After You Stop* **This book**
What to Do When You Stop Drinking or Using

2. *Wallet Crisis Card* **Free Printable**
Numbers to Call, Ready to Print

3. *Free Help Directory*
Meetings, Helplines, and Low-Cost Care

4. *Medications for Addiction, Explained*
What They Are, How to Ask, and How to Pay

DAILY PRACTICE

5. *Tools You Can Use on Your Own*
A Guide to Self-Directed Recovery

6. *Cravings and Hard Hours Workbook*
A Companion to Tools You Can Use on Your Own

7. *One Day at a Time, Written Down*
A 90-Day Gratitude Journal, in General and Christian Editions

8. *Daily Reader, 365 Days* **Forthcoming**
For Any Recovery Path

9. *Worksheet Library* **Forthcoming**
Every Journal Page and Exercise, Ready to Print

NOTES

Nobody does this alone.

One thing to try right now: Text one person a single word: hey.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

REBUILDING

10. *Money in Early Recovery*

Budgets, Debts, Benefits, and Credit

11. *Work and Recovery*

Finding a Job, Keeping It, and What to Tell Employers

12. *Finding a Safe Place to Live*

Sober Housing and What to Check Before You Move In

13. *Court, Probation, and Recovery* **Forthcoming**

What to Ask a Lawyer and What Records to Keep

PEOPLE AROUND YOU

14. *For Families*

When Someone You Love Can't Get to Treatment

15. *Group Facilitator Guide*

Running Free Peer Support Groups with These Books

16. *Employer Guide* **Forthcoming**

Hiring and Keeping People in Recovery

NOTES

Eat something. Drink water. Decide later.

One thing to try right now: Squeeze a stress ball, or fidget with keys or a pen.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Who This Book Is For and How to Use It

You picked up this book because you are stopping, or thinking about stopping, drinking or using. The first three days are often the hardest. This book is here to help you recognize when to get medical help, find support, and get through the next few hours.

If something feels wrong right now, go straight to Chapter 1. It lists the signs that mean you need help today.

If you do not need emergency help right now, read Chapters 1 through 3 before you continue. They take about fifteen minutes. Chapter 2 tells you who to call before you stop.

Then fill in My 72-Hour Plan on page 45. Use the Hour-by-Hour Log to get through each day in small pieces.

Keep this book where you can reach it. You do not have to read it all at once, and you do not have to do this alone.

Three numbers to keep close

Emergency: 911

Crisis or thoughts of suicide: call or text 988

Free treatment referrals: 1-800-662-4357

How to Contact the Helpline

The SAMHSA National Helpline is free, confidential, and open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, in English and Spanish.

NOTES

The next hour is the only one you have to get through.

One thing to try right now: Walk to the end of the street and back.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

- Phone: call 1-800-662-HELP (4357). TTY: 1-800-487-4889.
- Text: send your 5-digit ZIP code to 435748 (HELP4U) to find local resources. Texting is in English only.
- Online: visit FindTreatment.gov to search for treatment providers anonymously.

The helpline gives information and referrals. It does not provide medical treatment or crisis counseling. If you are in crisis or thinking about suicide, call or text 988.

NOTES

Rest is not quitting.

One thing to try right now: Change rooms. Any room will do.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

1. When to Call 911

Call 911 or go to an emergency room right away if you or someone with you has any of these:

- A seizure (shaking and jerking, or passing out and not responding)
- Seeing, hearing, or feeling things that are not there
- Confusion: not knowing where you are, what day it is, or who people are
- Chest pain, a racing or pounding heartbeat that will not slow down, or trouble breathing
- A high fever, or heavy sweating with shaking and confusion
- Vomiting or diarrhea so bad you cannot keep water down
- Fainting
- Someone who will not wake up, is breathing very slowly or not at all, or has blue or gray lips or fingertips. That can be an overdose. Turn to Chapter 3.

If you are thinking about suicide

Call or text 988 now. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. Dark thoughts during withdrawal are a reason to get help today.

If you are pregnant

Get medical care before you stop alcohol or opioids. Call a doctor, a clinic, or the SAMHSA helpline today, or go to an emergency room.

NOTES

Your body is working on it right now.

One thing to try right now: Eat something salty and crunchy.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

What to say when you call 911

Give your exact address first. Then say what is happening in plain words, such as "My friend had a seizure" or "Someone is not breathing." Follow what the dispatcher tells you.

Most states have laws that may protect a person who calls for help during an overdose, and the person who overdosed, from some criminal charges. The details vary by state. Call anyway.

If you cannot pay

Most hospital emergency departments must give you a medical screening exam even if you cannot pay. If they find an emergency, they must treat it until you are stable or arrange a proper transfer.

NOTES

Call someone before you decide anything.

One thing to try right now: Stretch your arms overhead and roll your shoulders ten times.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

2. Before You Stop: Who to Call

Stopping some substances suddenly can cause dangerous withdrawal. This book cannot tell you whether it is safe for you to stop on your own. The people below can help you decide.

Alcohol, most days or in large amounts

Withdrawal from alcohol can be life-threatening. Before you stop, call a doctor, a clinic, or the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-662-4357, or go to an emergency room.

> *What to say: "I want to stop drinking and I am worried about withdrawal. Who can tell me whether I need medical help to stop?"*

Benzodiazepines, prescribed or not

These include Xanax, Klonopin, Ativan, and Valium. The FDA warns that stopping them suddenly can cause serious withdrawal reactions, including seizures. Before you change how you take them, call the person who prescribed them, another health care provider, or a pharmacist.

> *What to say: "I take a benzodiazepine and want to stop. Who should decide how I do that?"*

Opioids

These include heroin, fentanyl, and pain pills. A doctor, a community health center, or the SAMHSA helpline can

NOTES

Hard is not the same as impossible.

One thing to try right now: Wrap up in a blanket and sit down.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

talk with you about withdrawal care and about medications for opioid use disorder (Chapter 6).

> *What to say: "I use opioids and want to stop. What are my options for withdrawal care?"*

Anything else, a mix, or you are not sure

Call a doctor, a clinic, or the SAMHSA helpline before you stop, and tell them everything you have been using.

> *What to say: "Here is what I have been using. Do I need medical help to stop?"*

If you have been mixing them

Alcohol, benzodiazepines, and opioids taken together can stop your breathing. Tell the person you call everything you have been taking. If anyone is hard to wake or is breathing slowly, call 911.

Detox

Medically supervised withdrawal is often called detox. Chapter 6 lists ways to find it for free or at low cost.

NOTES

You have already done the hardest part: starting.

One thing to try right now: Write down what you would say if a friend asked how you are.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

3. Overdose: Signs and What to Do

Signs of an opioid overdose

- Will not wake up, or cannot talk
- Slow, shallow, or no breathing
- Choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds
- Blue, gray, or pale lips and fingertips
- Very small pupils

What to do

1. Call 911. Give the address and say, "Someone is not breathing."
2. Give naloxone (Narcan) if you have it. Follow the instructions on the package.
3. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.
4. Stay with the person until emergency help arrives, even if they wake up.

Naloxone's effects can wear off before the opioid's effects do. Call 911 every time, and follow the dispatcher's and the EMS crew's instructions.

Naloxone is safe to give even if you are not sure opioids were involved. It does not reverse an overdose from alcohol, benzodiazepines, or stimulants alone, so call 911 every time.

Getting naloxone

Naloxone nasal spray is sold without a prescription. Many health departments and harm reduction programs give it

NOTES

Shaky hands still turn pages.

One thing to try right now: Put on something you have already seen and liked.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

away free. Keep it where people around you can find it, and show them how to use it.

If you use again

After even a few days without opioids, your body loses tolerance. An amount you used to take can now stop your breathing. Do not use alone. Keep naloxone within reach of someone who is with you.

NOTES

Tell one person the truth today.

One thing to try right now: Wash the dishes in the sink.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

4. Getting Through the Hours

Set up your space

- Get rid of any alcohol or drugs where you are staying, or ask someone to take them.
- Keep your phone charged and nearby.
- Stock water, a sports drink or other fluids, and simple foods: crackers, toast, rice, bananas, soup.
- Have blankets, a change of clothes, and something to watch, read, or listen to.
- Do not drive if you feel shaky, dizzy, or foggy.

Take care of your body

- Sip fluids often, even if you can only take small amounts.
- Eat small amounts every few hours.
- Rest if you can.
- Take a warm shower or bath if you want one.

When a craving hits

- Ride it out. Notice where you feel it in your body. It will rise, peak, and fall.
- Check HALT: are you hungry, angry, lonely, or tired? Fix the one you can.
- Delay. Tell yourself you will wait ten minutes, and do something on your list while you wait.
- Ground yourself. Name five things you see, four you can touch, three you hear, two you smell, and one you taste.

NOTES

You can change your mind about tonight.

One thing to try right now: Pet an animal, yours or a neighbor's.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

- Play the tape through. Picture the whole night and the next morning, not just the first few minutes.
- Move. Change rooms, step outside, or walk around the block.
- Call or text someone. Say, "I'm having a hard time. Can you talk for five minutes?"

Ten-minute list

Write down things you can do for ten minutes when a craving hits.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Take it one hour at a time

Seventy-two hours is a lot to think about. One hour is not. Use the Hour-by-Hour Log starting on page 49.

NOTES

Small steps count. They all count.

One thing to try right now: Put on clean socks.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

5. Telling Someone

Ask someone to check on you. They can call for help if you cannot. Pick one or two people you trust. They do not need to be experts. They need to answer the phone and know when to call for help.

What to say

> *"I'm stopping drinking (or using) today. The next three days may be rough. Can you check on me tonight and tomorrow morning? If I don't answer, please come by or call 911."*

A text you can send

> *"Starting today I'm quitting. Can I text you a couple of times a day for the next 3 days so someone knows I'm okay?"*

Tell them the danger signs

Show them Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, or take a picture of those pages and send it. Tell them where your naloxone is if you have it.

If you have no one to call

You still have options. Call or text 988 to talk with someone any time. Call the SAMHSA helpline for help finding care. Join an online meeting, where you can listen with your camera off. The meetings are listed at the back of this book.

NOTES

You are worth the trouble this takes.

One thing to try right now: Breathe in for four counts and out for six, ten times.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

What you do not have to share

You decide how much to tell. "I'm stopping, and I need someone to check on me" is enough.

NOTES

You do not owe anyone an explanation today.

One thing to try right now: Chew a piece of gum.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

6. Free and Low-Cost Help

Emergency rooms

Most hospital emergency departments must give you a medical screening exam even if you cannot pay. If they find an emergency, they must treat it until you are stable or arrange a proper transfer. Go if you have any sign in Chapter 1.

SAMHSA National Helpline

Free, confidential, 24 hours a day, in English and Spanish. They can refer you to local programs, including state-funded programs for people without insurance and programs that charge on a sliding scale.

1-800-662-4357

You can also text your ZIP code to 435748, or search FindTreatment.gov.

Community health centers

Community health centers see patients with or without insurance and charge based on income. Many offer addiction care. Find one at findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov.

Medications for opioid and alcohol use

Medications for opioid and alcohol use disorders exist, and doctors, nurse practitioners, clinics, and telehealth providers can start them. Ask a community health center or the helpline where to start.

NOTES

Ask. People want to help more than you think.

One thing to try right now: Open a window and listen to what is outside.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Health coverage

You may qualify for Medicaid, especially if your income is low or you just lost a job. Ask the helpline or a community health center to help you apply.

Pharmacies

Pharmacists can answer medicine questions for free, and most sell naloxone without a prescription.

Support groups and online meetings

Free groups meet in person and online at all hours. See pages 59 and 61.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org. It helps with substance use crises too.

NOTES

This hour will end.

One thing to try right now: Count ten things in the room that are the same color.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

7. After the First Three Days

Getting through the first three days is a real start. If sleep, mood, energy, or cravings are still hard, that is a reason to see a doctor or a community health center.

What to do next

- For medical follow-up, call a doctor or a community health center this week. Say: "I stopped using about ___ days ago. Do I need any follow-up care?"
- Go to a support group or an online meeting in the next few days.
- Keep eating regular meals, drinking water, and going to bed at the same time.
- Plan for the hardest times of day and the hardest days of the week.
- Keep naloxone nearby if you have ever used opioids.
- Write things down. A daily journal helps you see progress when it is hard to feel.

Keep going

The Mile Marker Library has other books for the weeks ahead, starting with One Day at a Time, Written Down, a 90-day gratitude journal. See the list of Recovery Books on page 11.

NOTES

You can start over at any hour of the day.

One thing to try right now: Make your bed.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

My 72-Hour Plan

Fill this in before you stop, or as soon as you can.

Date and time of my last drink or use:

What I have been using, and how much:

Who I talked to about stopping (Chapter 2):

What they told me:

The person who will check on me:

Name and number:

My backup person:

Name and number:

Where I will stay:

What I have ready (water, food, medicine, phone charger):

The nearest emergency room or urgent care:

NOTES

Keep the plan where you can see it.

One thing to try right now: Plug your phone in across the room and sit down.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

The times of day that will be hardest:

What I will do during those times:

Places and people I will stay away from:

Why I am doing this:

Where my naloxone is (if I have it):

Who I will call with a medical question:

Signs that mean I call 911: seizure; seeing or hearing things; confusion; chest pain or trouble breathing; high fever; cannot keep water down; someone will not wake up.

NOTES

Fear passes. Keep breathing.

One thing to try right now: Say out loud what time it will be one hour from now.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Write the time, rate how you feel from 0 (awful) to 10 (good), and note what you did. Fill in as many rows as you need.

Time	Feeling (0 to 10)	What I did or what helped

Tonight, one thing that went right:

NOTES

You have survived every hard day so far.

One thing to try right now: Look at a photo of someone you love.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Write the time, rate how you feel from 0 (awful) to 10 (good), and note what you did. Fill in as many rows as you need.

Time	Feeling (0 to 10)	What I did or what helped

Tonight, one thing that went right:

NOTES

Let somebody carry part of it.

One thing to try right now: Fold a load of laundry.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Write the time, rate how you feel from 0 (awful) to 10 (good), and note what you did. Fill in as many rows as you need.

Time	Feeling (0 to 10)	What I did or what helped

Tonight, one thing that went right:

NOTES

Do the next small thing.

One thing to try right now: Sort one small thing: a drawer, a wallet, a pile of mail.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

If I Use Again

If you use again, this book is still yours. Get safe first, then use this plan. Fill it in now, while you are steady.

If you return to opioids after a period of not using or using less, your tolerance may be lower than it was before. Do not use alone. Keep naloxone (Narcan) nearby, and make sure someone with you knows how to use it.

The first person I will call:

If they do not answer, I will call:

A safe place I can go:

What I will do in the next hour:

Who else needs to know (doctor, counselor, group):

What I will do tomorrow morning:

If you are in danger, call 911. For crisis support, call or text 988.

NOTES

There is no gold star. There is just tomorrow.

One thing to try right now: Suck on a mint or a hard candy.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

People and Resources

Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number
Name	Number

Crisis: call or text 988
988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, 24/7. Chat at 988lifeline.org.

Emergency: 911

Treatment referrals: 1-800-662-4357
SAMHSA National Helpline, free and confidential, 24/7, English and Spanish. Text your ZIP code to 435748 or search FindTreatment.gov.

NOTES

Your worst day sober still counts.

One thing to try right now: Set a timer for ten minutes and wait it out.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Free Support Groups

These groups are free to attend. Most meet in person and online. Try more than one until you find a room that fits.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) aa.org
12-step groups for people with a drinking problem.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) na.org
12-step groups for recovery from any drug.

SMART Recovery smartrecovery.org
Skills-based groups with no religious content, for any addiction.

LifeRing Secular Recovery lifering.org
Secular peer support, in person, online, and by email.

Recovery Dharma recoverydharma.org
Peer-led groups based on Buddhist practices.

Celebrate Recovery celebraterecovery.com
Christ-centered 12-step groups, usually hosted by churches.

Women for Sobriety womenforsobriety.org
Support groups for women.

For family and friends al-anon.org
Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, and SMART Recovery Family & Friends.

NOTES

Be as kind to yourself as you would be to a friend.

One thing to try right now: Eat a spoonful of peanut butter.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Online Meetings

Online meetings run at every hour of the day and night. You can use a first name only and keep your camera off. Many also have a phone number you can dial in to with no internet at all.

In The Rooms intherooms.com
Free live video meetings every week for many recovery paths, 12-step and others. A free account with a username is all you need.

AA Online Intergroup aa-intergroup.org
AA meetings by video, phone, chat, and email, around the clock.

Meeting Guide app aa.org
AA's free app lists in-person, online, and phone meetings.

Virtual NA virtual-na.org
Narcotics Anonymous meetings online and by phone.

SMART Recovery Online smartrecovery.org
Online meetings, chat, and message boards.

LifeRing Online lifering.org
Video meetings, chat, forums, and email groups.

Some recovery websites show phone numbers that connect to treatment centers selling their services. For free, neutral referrals, call the SAMHSA National Helpline:

1-800-662-4357

Alder Creek Editions is not connected to any group or website listed in this book. Websites change. If one stops working, the SAMHSA helpline can point you to current options.

NOTES

Write it down. It gets lighter on paper.

One thing to try right now: Join an online meeting and listen with your camera off.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

About the Author

Stephen Deason has been in Recovery for more than eleven years and still begins and ends each day with meditation and gratitude. He has spent more than thirty years building teams and companies in healthcare and technology.

Stephen writes from his own experience about recovery, economics, business, and social enterprise.

You can find more about Stephen and his work at aldercreekeditions.com and at his personal website, stephendeason.com.

NOTES

Hold on. Help is closer than it looks.

One thing to try right now: Write the name of one person you will call tomorrow.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

Alder Creek EDITIONS

Also from Alder Creek Editions

The Mile Marker Library

Standalone books and tools for people getting into recovery on their own, and for the people around them. Free printable editions are at aldercreekeditions.com.

1. *Don't Panic: The First Hours After You Stop*
2. *Wallet Crisis Card*
3. *Free Help Directory*
4. *Medications for Addiction, Explained*
5. *Tools You Can Use on Your Own*
6. *Cravings and Hard Hours Workbook*
7. *One Day at a Time, Written Down*
8. *Daily Reader, 365 Days*
9. *Worksheet Library*
10. *Money in Early Recovery*
11. *Work and Recovery*
12. *Finding a Safe Place to Live*
13. *Court, Probation, and Recovery*
14. *For Families*
15. *Group Facilitator Guide*
16. *Employer Guide*

NOTES

You are not behind. You are here.

One thing to try right now: Drink a full glass of water, slowly.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

The Weakest Link: A Story About the Systems We Never See

Book I. A business fable about a family caring for an aging parent, and the failures that happen in the handoffs between the people and agencies involved.

The Invisible Architecture: A Story About Senior Care as a System

Book II. The same family returns as care needs grow, and the story widens to show senior care as a system whose structure decides who ends up carrying the work.

The Space Between: Institutional Architecture and Coordination Costs **Forthcoming**

Book III moves from story toward the system itself: why coordination costs fall on the person least able to refuse them, and how organizations can be designed to carry those costs.

The Family Integrator's Handbook

A workbook for the family member who coordinates a parent's care, with the calls, records, schedules, and decisions organized in one place.

NOTES

Take the win, even a small one.

One thing to try right now: Brush your teeth and wash your face.

How I felt before:

How I felt after:

Draw, doodle, or map it out

The Paid Last Series

Residual Claimants **Forthcoming**

The Owner's Arithmetic **In development**

Capital and Governance **Planned**

Standalone Titles

Valued: How Purpose-Driven Businesses Can Conquer Addiction and Marginalization in America **Forthcoming**

Case studies of companies that hire people in recovery and others shut out of work. Each one earns its place in the market by serving customers first, then carries its social mission alongside.

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