Session 53: Purpose After Survival: What This Life Is For Now

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 3 — Purpose & Vocation

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 53 handout (My Compass Sentence) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

Purpose in this curriculum is not a mystery to be awaited; it is a direction to be walked. SAMHSA names Purpose — meaningful daily activity, work, and service — as one of the four dimensions a recovery is built on, and Sessions 25 and 32 explored calling and gifts. This block does the adult work: a purpose stated in one sentence, tested against the calendar, and expressed in vocation — the work, paid or unpaid, that a life is actually spent on.

- Purpose is a direction, not a destination A purpose statement is a compass sentence, not a five-year plan: 'I steady newer people in early recovery while I build a trade with my hands.' It can be carried into any job, town, or season — and revised as you grow.
- Purpose survives job loss; a title does not Anchor identity in the direction and you can lose a job without losing yourself. Anchor it in the title and the first layoff becomes an identity crisis with relapse risk attached (Sessions 31, 58).
- The calendar tells the truth Purpose is audited in hours, not intentions. Lay the compass sentence beside last week's actual schedule: where do they agree, and where is the sentence still only a wish?

Goals for this session

☐ I can write a working purpose statement in one sentence: who I serve, with what, toward what end

☐ I can distinguish purpose from a job title, a role, and a feeling

☐ I can name one purpose-bearing activity already in my week and one that is missing

Check-in

When you were a kid, what did you think your life would be about? Say it plainly — no laughing it off.

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Read your compass sentence aloud. What word in it costs you the most to say?

2. Where does last week's calendar agree with your sentence — and where does it argue?

3. What did addiction promise your life would be about? What is the honest difference now?

4. What word in your compass sentence costs you the most to say?

Session 53 — Skill Practice

Compass sentence workshop (solo, then trios): each person drafts a purpose sentence from three ingredients — who benefits, what I actually do, toward what end — then work in trios to cut every word that is decoration. Test each sentence against the calendar: name one hour last week that matched it, and one hour next week that will. Write the final sentence on the workbook's first page.

My compass sentence — who benefits, what I actually do, toward what end:

One hour last week that matched it, and one hour next week that will:

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Live one deliberate hour this week inside your compass sentence — scheduled, not accidental. Write two lines: the hour, and what it felt like to be on-purpose on purpose.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.