

The Four Elements of Recovery

Following are four versions of the Elements of Recovery as proposed by Madelize's interest in Jon Brett's knee surgery. The third version addresses the concept through an Emergently lens that spirals through the Elements from a dynamic, ecological perspective.

Note that the word *recovery*, implies returning to a previous state. The ego-system may desire to go back in time, but the eco-system continuously evolves, perhaps returning to a similar state, but always in a new context with additional history.

Emergently emphasises next-step strategies for continuous improvement, with an expectation that natural evolution will result in unanticipated advantages i.e. synergy happens when acting in tune with Nature.

1 Madelize's Four Elements of Recovery

► An insightful response to Jon Brett's knee surgery.

Earth: Recovery needs a solid foundation

Strong foundations build lasting recovery

- Rest is non-negotiable
- Small, consistent steps build strength
- Let go of 'shoulds' and focus on what is here and now

Air - Healing begins with clear, compassionate thinking

Recovery invites clarity

- Plan for what's next without pressure - take your time
- Use the pause to rethink priorities and perspectives
- Routine and structure support progress

Water - Recovery flows with care and connection

Compassion heals what medicine alone cannot

- Be kind to yourself - especially on the slow days
- Emotions may rise - let them!
- Nurture your spirit, not just your knee

Fire - Recovery is a chance to re-ignite purpose

The fire is still burning and recovery fans the flame.

- Celebrate every small win - standing, walking, dancing!
- Visualise what you are retiring to, not just recovering from
- Let your story inspire others!

2 Generic TetraMap with Emphasis on Element Descriptors

- ▶ Instead of being applied to just my knee surgery, this is intended to be more generic, using Firm, Clear, Calm, Bright explicitly.
- ▶ Air's *healing* and *compassion* are reflected in Water.
- ▶ Air is more about continuous improvement.

Earth: **FIRM foundations build lasting recovery**

- Build on what is here and now, and let go of 'shoulds'
- Build on Nature's cycles, don't fight them, consider long-term and precessional outcomes, e.g. rest is non-negotiable
- Build strength through small steps and persistence.

Air – **CLEAR diagnosis invites and fuels progress**

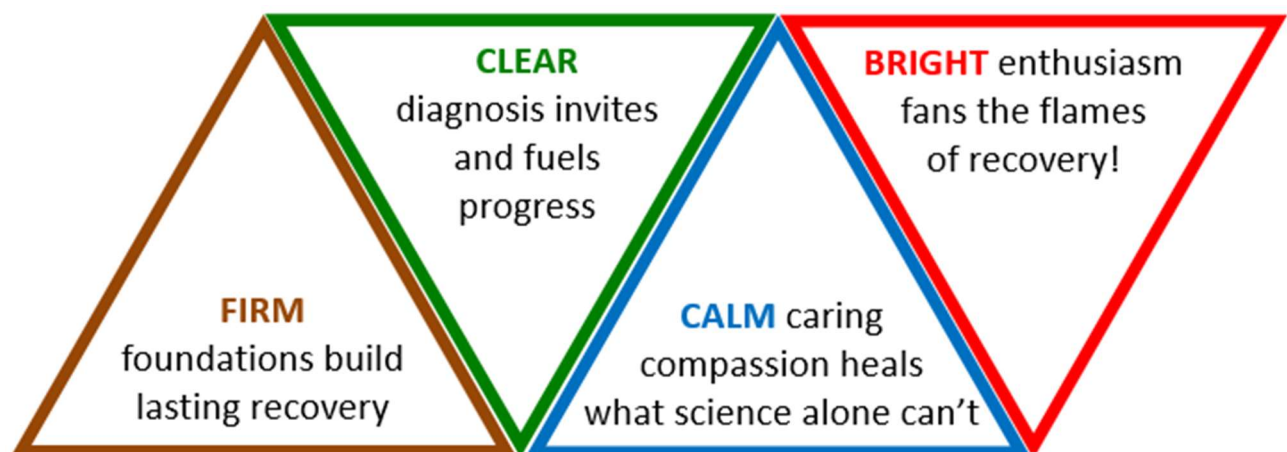
- Pause to rethink priorities and perspectives
- Plan for what's next without pressure - take your time
- Routine and structure support progress

Water - **CALM caring compassion heals what science alone cannot**

- Be kind to yourself - especially on the down days
- Emotions may rise - let them both rise and dissipate!
- Nurture your spirit, not just the physical.

Fire – **BRIGHT enthusiasm fans the flames of recovery!**

- Celebrate every small win - standing, walking, dancing!
- Visualise what you are recovering to, not just recovering from
- Tell your story and inspire others!



3 Recovery Spiral with Emphasis on the Emérgently Verbs

- ▶ Kept the TetraMap adjectives but changed the focus to the Emérgently verbs.
- ▶ Interestingly the order remains the same.
- ▶ When considering emergence, the focus is on continuous improvement rather than on outcomes. Thus, we continue spiralling through each new improvement and observe it develop toward something unknown... hopefully better than what could have been anticipated!

Earth – SOLIDIFY recovery on firm foundations

- Let go of what could be, and solidify what is here and now
- Rather than seeking short-cuts, build on Nature's cycles. Consider long-term and precessional outcomes, e.g. rest is non-negotiable
- Small steps and persistence solidify strength

Air – TRANSFORM hope for recovery into clarity of next steps

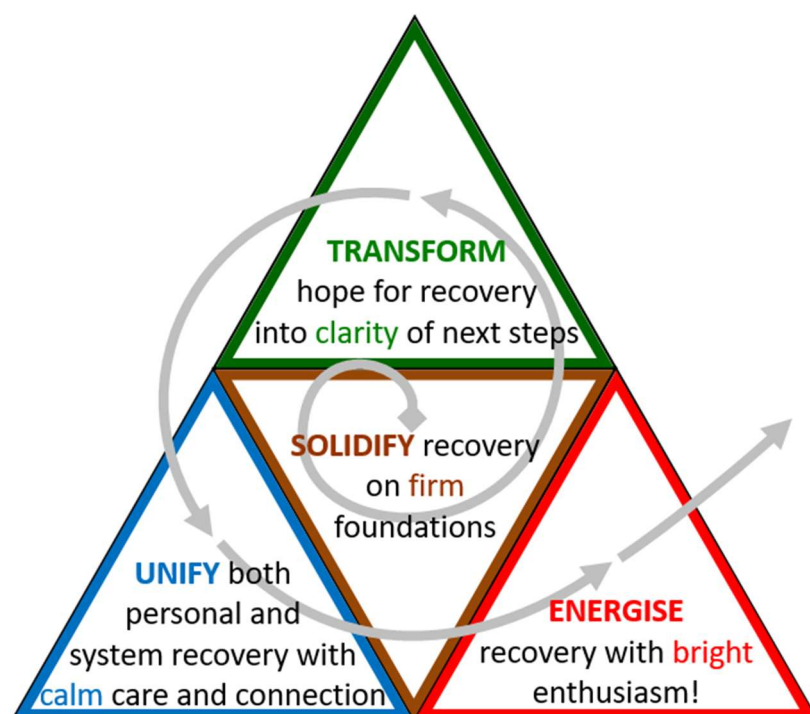
- Pause to transform priorities and perspectives.
- Take your time to plan and recognise transformation.
- Continually transform routine and structure to support progress.

Water – UNIFY both personal and system recovery with calm care and connection

- Be kind to yourself and others - especially on the down days.
- Embrace emotions - let them both rise and dissipate.
- Nurture spirit, as well as the physical.

Fire – ENERGISE recovery with bright enthusiasm!

- Celebrate every small win to energise further progress - standing, walking, dancing!
- Visualise creative next steps and be energised by persistence, not just recovery.
- Tell your story and energise others!



Example: Jon's Knee Surgery Story

I chose to have bilateral knee replacement. Yes, both knees at once to get it over with quickly, accepting a slightly higher risk of complications.

Earth – SOLIDIFY recovery on a firm foundation

Although the surgeon did not recommend doing physiotherapy before surgery, when I asked about it, he said it was a good idea. I also chose to have the surgery at the end of summer when I was most likely to be at my fittest. That seemed to be a firm foundation for recovery.

Let go of what could be, and solidify what is here and now

It was expected that I would be up and walking the same day as the surgery. However, my right foot was scarily still numb and immobile. I had to accept my situation and trust that it would improve overnight. No point in trying to walk when my body was not ready.

Rather than seeking short-cuts, build on Nature's cycles. Consider long-term and precessional outcomes, e.g. rest is non-negotiable

My focus that night was to let the body heal itself in its own time, and hope that perhaps the extra rest would hasten the healing of the surgery. Waiting for the foot to wake up was non-negotiable.

Small steps and persistence solidify strength

So, the day after surgery, I stood up and walked with the help of the physiotherapist and a nurse, plus an armpit high walking frame to hold my weight. They set the context for starting as quickly as possible and with as much help as possible. Then it was up to me to persistently make more and more effort, but GENTLY!

On the third day, the physiotherapist gave me crutches to practise with. I ventured out into the ward further and further each time I practised walking, letting my body (not my brain) tell me when to rest. The following day, the physiotherapist exclaimed, "*what planet are you from?*". She couldn't believe I could walk so well in such a short time.

Air – TRANSFORM hope for recovery into clarity of next steps

It was clear from the surgeon that everyone has different journeys, and that everyone ends up with some compromises in physical ability. It was pointless imagining a "*complete recovery*", because it never is. The primary desired outcome was simply to have less pain and more mobility. Hope was focussed being clear about the small steps that were immediately achievable within a day or two.

Pause to transform priorities and perspectives.

I had to let go of the business-as-usual things that I would normally have done and prioritise rest to allow my body to heal. Any small progress with my knees or energy levels justified my procrastinating on all the other jobs that needed doing.

Take your time to plan and recognise transformation.

Continually transform routine and structure to support progress.

At first, I could not lift my legs up onto the bed without pulling them up with my hands, but when I first swung them up by themselves, I almost didn't notice. No big deal? No, I belatedly recognised the significance and then thought, what is the next simple milestone? How can I do it more deliberately and slowly build more strength, perhaps relying less on

momentum and more on muscle? What additional structure shall I add to my daily routine to build on what I have already achieved and accelerate transformation?

Water – UNIFY both personal and system recovery with calm care and connection

Back home, on Good Friday, my left knee became quite swollen and suddenly a small tear in the stitching caused a huge pool of bloody fluid on the floor. An ambulance took me to hospital after we stopped the bleeding.

Be kind to yourself and others - especially on the down days.

So, there I was in a noisy, frantic Emergency Department in a stable condition, without pain but surrounded by people desperate for help. This was my down day, but I had to be grateful not to be in pain, or even in a rush.

Embrace emotions - let them both rise and dissipate.

Disappointed! But not for long. Saturday morning the Doctor, said I needed full surgery to flush the wound and restitch it with meticulous attention to sterilisation in the hope of avoiding infection. It wouldn't happen Saturday, and probably not Sunday as being a public holiday, things are typically chaotic. Disappointed again! But grateful my condition was clearly such low priority.

Nurture spirit, as well as the physical.

Compared to the others surrounding me, I was fine physically, so the best I could do was be kind to the stressed staff. A nurse went to find me a pillow, but there were none available. However, the person in the bed opposite had an extra one she wasn't using. She happily surrendered it to the nurse, and my gratitude plus the brief distraction from her pain seemed to nurture her spirit.

Fire – ENERGISE recovery with bright enthusiasm!

It was a huge relief to get to surgery Sunday morning, wake up with repaired stitching, and feeling ready to go home. But no, I needed to stay another 48hrs on an antibiotics drip. Disappointed again, but nauseous too!

Celebrate every small win to energise further progress - standing, walking, dancing!

I had to be grateful for fitting my surgery in amongst the other more serious cases. And surprisingly, the knees continued to improve, despite the sensitivity of the surface skin. My stomach reacting to the antibiotics was debilitating but at the same time, I was energised by the steady progress with my knees.

Visualise creative next steps and be energised by persistence, not just recovery.

Recovery was far over the horizon. Focus was on the next meal. What could I eat that would stay down? How could I keep moving my legs to facilitate healing, but without making me nauseous? Gradually things improved and I returned home with strict instructions to take it easy. Back to the simplest exercises and lots of rest for a whole week, and then start pushing the boundaries again, one small step at a time.

Tell your story and energise others!

Recovery implies that the desired outcome is to return to a previous state, but that is seldom possible. *Regeneration* might be more appropriate, as we know each generation is always different. Although we repeat the four seasons each year, every year the weather is different, so perhaps we also reframe the idea of *cycles* as more like *spirals* to emphasise continuous change but with somewhat predictable patterns – like evolution where unanticipated diversity naturally emerges.