

RRP 110 — Host Check-In

108 Miracles and Counting

Episode Details

- Presenters: **Julie P. Lewis & Peter B. Dowell**
 - Episode Length: **Approximately 55 minutes**
 - Release Date: **April 17, 2026**
 - Episode Type: **Host Check-In / Milestone Episode**
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Episode Summary

In this milestone check-in, co-hosts Julie P. Lewis and Peter B. Dowell pause from their usual guest format to reflect on two remarkable years of the Real Recovery Podcast. Peter opens up about his cancer diagnosis and treatment journey over the past year — a period during which the show never missed a single Friday release. Julie shares her own parallel story of job loss, new beginnings, and deepening recovery. Together, they look back at the guests who have shaped the podcast, celebrate their global reach, and cast a vision for year three, including planned round-table episodes, community events, and a grant application that could fuel the next chapter. This is a candid, heartfelt conversation between two people who have poured everything into this show and into each other.

Key Points

[00:02:00] Julie and Peter open the check-in, welcoming listeners to a guest-free episode recorded in Studio H. Peter introduces Boots, the cat who adopted his family.

[00:05:00] The hosts reflect on completing their second year of the podcast — 104 episodes released every Friday without exception.

[00:06:00] Peter shares his cancer journey: diagnosed with sublingual carcinoma (cancer at the base of his tongue) in March 2025. He lost 80 pounds during treatment and is now clear on his latest scans. He describes the moment he realized something was seriously wrong while watching his own ultrasound.

[00:09:00] Peter reflects on going into “planning mode” after his diagnosis — getting his affairs in order, ensuring his husband Justin was taken care of. He acknowledges

missing camping (12 trips the year prior, zero during treatment) and his signature barbecues and hosting.

[00:11:00] Julie recalls how she and Peter recorded episodes intensively before his treatment began, sometimes five days a week. She connects Peter's experience to that of Doyle Smith (Episode 56), who recorded his episode just before going on FMLA to fight a similar cancer.

[00:12:00] Julie shares her own parallel story from a year ago: laid off, on her second job interview, with unemployment and severance both running out. She was in training for her current role at the same time Peter began treatment.

[00:13:00] Julie describes a pivotal moment during her new job's training period: she prayed for a sign she was in the right place, and Izzy Alvarado from GTD – Go the Distance (a podcast sponsor) appeared at her company. She calls it a full-circle moment and gets emotional recounting it.

[00:16:00] Despite the hardship of year two, the podcast flourished in terms of reach and listener impact. Julie shares that someone told her the podcast saved their life.

[00:19:00] Peter describes discovering the unexpected depth of their audience — including his childhood friend Felicia, who binged 70+ episodes. Julie calls out listener David in Australia, noting the podcast reached #32 in Australia and has listeners in Portugal, Italy, and around the world.

[00:21:00] Julie reflects on the cumulative meaning of 108 guest stories: "I've had 108 miracles in my life." She notes the show's commitment to real, known stories and its deliberate avoidance of pay-to-play solicitations.

[00:26:00] The hosts discuss the financial realities of running the podcast entirely on volunteer time. They cover costs including newsletter fees, publishing costs, and T-shirt purchases for guests. Izzy Alvarado/GTD is named as the podcast's first-ever sponsor, covering the most recent shirt order.

[00:28:00] Julie shares the story of meeting Justin — a future podcast guest — in a parking lot because he was wearing a Skyler Ray "We Do Recover" shirt. She talks about the pride both hosts now feel wearing recovery shirts publicly.

[00:30:00] Julie and Peter discuss overcoming shame around addiction and recovery. Julie shares that she once hid her addiction from others; Peter describes once thinking people in recovery were "bums under the Burnside Bridge." Both reflect on how far their perspectives have shifted.

[00:32:00] Julie opens up about being molested and not speaking about it until age 55–56. She credits two male guests — Jared and Judd — for sharing similar experiences on the podcast, which she says helped her heal. She also celebrates listener and

former guest Ebony, who just received a full tuition scholarship to Portland State University.

[00:35:00] Peter reflects on the physical transformation recovery brings, including his own post-cancer recovery. Julie credits sobriety for her skin clearing and shares a moment when her doctor commented on how great she looked after she got sober.

[00:37:00] Julie shares that her spiritual and emotional recovery has never been stronger. She is currently working through The Ripple (the follow-up to The Rock) and Step 10.

[00:40:00] Both hosts affirm that recovery is for everyone regardless of background, substance, or community. Peter describes how hearing his guest stories has given him tools from AA, NA, SMART Recovery, and Wellbriety, among others.

[00:41:00] The hosts preview year three plans: round-table episodes on topics like peer services, upcoming guests including Cassandra, Jeremiah, Dina Fields, and Mordecai from True Colors Recovery; and a planned cancer recovery episode featuring Doyle Smith.

[00:43:00] Peter describes his own experience finding the right meeting — his first group was too conservative. Julie echoes this and shares how her home group became the first place in her life she truly learned to trust. She recounts her sponsor telling her she is his favorite person — a moment of unconditional love she had never experienced from her own parents.

[00:47:00] Julie articulates the podcast's expanded mission: to be “one voice for all recovery” — amplifying events, organizations, and resources across the recovery community, not just sharing personal stories.

[00:49:00] The hosts discuss the Oregon Humanities Grant (previously lost due to federal funding cuts) now back and funded by Fred Meyer. Peter has submitted the application and expects to hear back in June. They preview returning to the Oregon Recovers Walk and GTD 5K in September — their third year at both events.

[00:51:00] Peter and Julie wrap up with gratitude to their home groups, guests, sponsors, volunteers, Lunch Bunch and Extended Family AA, and their number one fan Leanne (wishing her a speedy recovery after a dog bite). Peter asks listeners to leave feedback on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and social media.

Featured Quote

"I don't know how many people can say they know a miracle or have had a miracle in their life. I know 108 of them. I've had 108 miracles in my life. These people probably shouldn't have made it, didn't know they could have — and they did."

— Julie P. Lewis

Websites Discussed

- [GTD – Go the Distance](#)
 - [Skyler Ray](#)
 - [4D Recovery](#)
 - [True Colors Recovery](#)
 - [Another Chance Recovery](#)
 - [Oregon Recovers](#)
 - [Painted Horse Recovery](#)
 - [Lunch Bunch / Extended Family AA Online](#)
 - [Portland State University](#)
 - [Real Recovery Podcast](#)
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Hashtags & Mentions

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