

Recovery 2.0 Interviews Durga Leela

The 6 Tenets of Recovery

Tommy: Welcome to the recovery 2.0 online conference. I am your host, Tommy Rosen and today, I'm just delighted to be speaking with Durga Leela. Durga has been a yoga practitioner for over 25 years, a grateful member of 12 step fellowship for over 16 years and has studied and practiced yoga and Ayurveda for 15 years. She's a practical down-to-earth teacher, very to the point who has worked on her own path of recovery.

She has a great sense of humor and a real warmth for understanding the trials and tribulations of the human condition. Durga has participated in all 5 previous recovery 2.0 conferences and there is a reason for that. Durga, welcome back. Thank you for joining us once again.

Durga: Thank you for having me here, Tommy. It's a pleasure.

Tommy: Absolutely. Durga, the ancient science of living known as Ayurveda is a specialty of yours and it's something that you have mined the gifts of to bring to people in a path of recovery from addiction. Can you begin by letting people know the basics of this ancient way of living, this ancient design, this ancient blue print for living known as Ayurveda?

Durga: Yes. Good topic. It's almost like Ayurveda saved my life after the 12 steps saved my life. There's a couple of ways I approached Ayurveda for this recovery conversation that we're having. One of the ways I say it in a sentence is Ayurveda is what's there for us between the mat and the meeting so some people have a meeting maybe with the therapist or sponsor or the 12 step meeting and that's an hour of a day and then also some people have a hatha yoga practice where they'll show up on like the mat, on the cushion, for the physical practice of hatha yoga or even just sitting down for meditation which is the 11th step.

Then when I was nearly sober, what I needed was the medicine for all the time in between was like the time between my morning meeting and my afternoon yoga class and then the time after my yoga class, that would get me through the night and I think the night is the difficult time for a lot of us. We've talked before about this thing that I had. It's almost like the tiredness, that sleep wouldn't take away and the hunger that fruit

wouldn't take away which was really towards the really imbalance of my energy system, the imbalance of my metabolic system from the hypoglycemia type of effects, the drugs and alcohol bring onto the metabolism.

For that, I was not finding very easy answers within the allopathic medicine system. Certainly, I was being taken towards an aspect of nutrition and I think a lot of us are and exercise and a lot of us are taken there but that's almost like a mind field too. For me, an early recovery what I was really trying to understand was myself with a newly sober being as having to navigate these 24 hours of a day and my own reactions to things that happened and as you know, people in recovery sometimes have the ability and capacity to deal with the crisis but not deal with the regular everyday events like dropping a fork on the floor and suddenly, you're in a black [crosstalk 00:03:59] ...

Tommy: You're freaking out.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: That's a very important point to stay out for just a quick moment that to a great extent, people in active addiction and for a long time into recovery are still in a sense in crisis mode.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: Always. There's always a crisis and then when things calm down it gets back to how do we create balance, how do we create structure in our life that seems to be something impossible mainly because we have no practice with it.

Durga: Yes. We have no practice but I mean we're going from the highs and the lows usually, we're going from the high and to the extreme excitement place or crisis while we're going into the low of avoidance, withdrawal and isolation, so when you're asking us to show up on a daily basis as a regular person doing the hours that everybody else does, we're like [inaudible 00:04:55] of water in some sense. I certainly was and I had a hatha yoga practice and I'm saying at this point in my life that was probably a year and a half sober through the 12 step program in which I had received pretty much a transformative experience of the [inaudible 00:05:13] of recovery.

Having been relieved of the obsession, in my case to drink. I think I also need to see then I was working with the other obsessions, which was for me smoking cigarettes and drinking too much coffee. Again, still navigating that system that was used to these stimulants to get me up and going, to manage my moods. Having been discovered

Ayurveda, that the other thing that I think really describes Ayurveda is within the 12 steps we have this saying that says principles not personalities and here we are like can I emotionally [inaudible 00:05:54] in a room with people who are, some people are being wise, some people are being like annoying, I'm going to say, because that's my reaction of people telling me what to do.

It might be wanting me to move me a different peace than I am but helping me fix me even within the room people are like that and so what Ayurveda is, is that a system of medicine that one that's based in consciousness. It's the sister science of yoga so really understand us as spirit embodied so if you really want to embody your recovery this would be a good medicine system to turn to and it's a system that based primarily on the application of daily lifestyle skills and suggestion, so what do you do when you get up in the morning, what do you when you eat, how did you eat?

Those things even more important than what do you eat and then who are you so who are you is the fundamental yoga question who am I? The answer to that, not my body, not my mind. We say that Ayurveda precedes yoga in the sense that when we asked who am I, we begin to understand that we are this miserable organism and the organism has certain metabolic tendencies and as you stay up with those tendencies, [inaudible 00:07:28] major function of the emotional physical system.

Therefore, we can identify and pretty much show tendencies within an organism that is our own self or the self of another through the way they look, the way they speak and their skin, their hair so there's what we call the constitution. If I again say the constitution is based around the 5 elements, 3 main elements bring up the 3 doshas which air, fire, water. When I say principles not personalities, what I begun to understand through the study of Ayurveda was these people who I feel personally in my life whether it was people in my life that I'm having relationships family, friends, significant other or just people that I'm meeting through work and in meetings, they have a certain feeling to them and that feeling I can know understand as the principles of these elements so I see I really as the divine coming through the 5 elements.

The spirit, the divine nature manifesting through these different elements which gives it a different feel.

Tommy: It's like a tendency in terms of a way one would behave in any given situation?

Durga: Yes. Sometimes we can go as in a recovery conversation we can almost call it as a stress signature. That once this orgasm has is under stress because we know the nature of the organism we can foretell which way we'll go and to me it's just fascinating

that the scientist talk about this stress response and they go into this flight, fight, free type of nature. We have 3 doshas, air, fire, water and it almost corresponds 100% to those 3 doshas.

The air type that's flight. They tend to be light in nature. They tend to be full of movement and they like to go from place to place. We call them like a butterfly. Then the fire type, again, they have a fiery nature when they are getting imbalanced they tend toward this heated and flamed type of feeling within them which means that they manifest this more aggressive nature and that you would feel this off of them, sharp with their language, yet anger.

That if you're trying to feel safe and that when they don't feel safe and that's [inaudible 00:10:15] they'll try ... they'll usually try to get a little bit controlling, judgmental. They're really trying to help, that's one thing that I think Ayurveda helps us understand because it doesn't just describe that pathology of the organism. It describes the potential. I think we need to keep our eye on that potential because that's it. What we're here to bring forth is love. That's moving towards the higher nature and the intuitive self is what we're trying to bring forward.

Then it gets corrupted in this aspect of survival and this patterns that we've learned [inaudible 00:10:58] and that we hold onto it our survival skills. To always finish with the water type sometimes we don't get there. The water type has this tendency of its got qualities of being heavy and stable. When you stress they're based reaction is to just play dead. They're the ones that tend and befriend the situation so they don't tend to fight, they don't tend to run away. They're the ones that tend to stay there trying to make the best of things.

Then when we talk about that, so that's one way to talk about the doshas is that we can then remedy that emotional response through many different remedies which we call the 5 sense therapies. We are in therapeutic response to our environment all the [inaudible 00:11:49]. It's not one session of therapy where we're talking out. We're really beginning to embody the recovery from a physical perspective like what do I have in my custody, what kind of tea am I drinking? What's on my plate? What exercise am I doing? When am I going to sleep? How am I sleeping?

All of those things become part of the general live one day at a time recovery program that ...

Tommy: It sounds like everybody has a metabolic type. Everybody has tendencies and then as you look through the lens of Ayurveda, you begin to understand the relationship

between yourself and the environment around you and then you begin to make choices which would hopefully be good choices based upon your type and the circumstances of your life.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: It's all ...

Durga: Right. It's kind of like that sales recognition which is so helpful. The one thing that I love the moment where you, when you're teaching Tommy and you're teaching us that subject and then people start to nudge each other and look at each other and point and laugh then that's where people get to when they hear about these doshas and Ayurveda especially the emotional responses of them.

It's so grounding to be recognized for who you are and not just who you are, we're not talking pathology there, we're just talking about the organism that you are and that metabolic tendency but that metabolic tendency sets the tone for the emotional response and it's how you're living your life.

Tommy: You use the word medicine earlier, from what I understand the medicine from the Ayurveda perspective is if you're talking about something that you would take for example, it's a 100% plant based medicine so there's nothing manufactured. It's all fruit or plant based.

Durga: Yes, generally. Even pharmaceuticals were in some time plant based medicine. They research comes from the traditional medicine systems like acupuncture and Ayurveda. They've gone and they isolate it. They take extracts of things. We tend to go for the whole medicine which means that we associate the medicine with the furthest part of a meal. The meal is part of a farming community. The farming community is a part of an economy. That's what we call holistic medicine so you as a whole being, whether I mind, emotion, body that has to be considered when we give you anything because really what Ayurveda says that it's a planetary medicine and it's the medicine for the people on this planet but it's the medicine for the planet itself because there's no difference between those 2 things.

Tommy: Go on, sorry.

Durga: These are the whole medicine systems as you and I in this state embodied, we're representing the 5 elements and that is what we see all around us. The 5 elements so from aether space into air, fire, water and then all of it contained in the

dense form of earth. The most gross representation of spirit in them. The most tangible growth aspect. Therefore, there's no separation between us and the planet so therefore everything is medicine to someone at some point and this is something that we have to pay attention to even in the recovery field as people [inaudible 00:15:34] on certain plants as medicine but there is subtle medicine and there is growth medicine as well so even sound healing is medicine so I know currently still have a great affinity to sound healing..

We do it in yoga, we do it through chanting and we do [inaudible 00:16:16]. We do it through the internal repetition of mantra and even when we were both out there, you were the [inaudible 00:16:25] I used to run a nightclub, Club Malaria and so I was always in to music. I used to manage a couple of bands. That was the night. I would say music kept me alive. That also a form of the medicine.

We go from sound healing to touch therapy, to color therapy, to herbal and nutrition therapy and then also aromatherapy. I just love that it's not like you're on the diet or you're off the diet. I think we got into these like commandments, the puritanical medicines which I don't do well with maybe because I have an addictive nature but I do better with a kind of a range and spectrum of things to play with rather than on it or off it.

Tommy: You use the term holistic medicine or holistic medicine and you made it appear, at least, the way you said it that in the practice of holistic medicine we take the earth into consideration, the planet. That gives a reference for the planet and the individual and the whole system is won.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: I love that Durga.

Durga: I love it. I think it's what keeps me alive now. My recovery is not based around this, like sometimes what I call this fear-based recovery which is me looking at back at how bad things got for me. I was the suicidal alcoholic, up on a life support machine at one point. When the nurse asked me, "What do you need?" I said, "A cigarette."

That's what I need at that moment of waking up realizing that I was still here and yet from this chance transformative experience that has been my recovery which I have been granted, blessed with and it's now my responsibility to show up as a [inaudible 00:18:32] being and have reverence for everything around me and this reverence is my spirituality. This connection to all there is, is my guard.

Tommy: Durga, in your work you talk about the 6 tenets of yoga of recovery.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: The 6 tenets and I'm wondering, if you wouldn't mind going into depth on each one because they to me are brilliant. It's a wonderful way of looking at recovery and yoga and so can we begin tenet number 1, life is longing?

Durga: Life is longing?

Tommy: Life is longing.

Durga: Life is longing is the way we are free in this aspect of addiction as a spiritual malady in essence yoga and Ayurveda see the all illness is spiritual in it, at its roots. All illness comes when we forget our through nature which is this whole connected oneness of being so as soon as we move into separation we become this ease and this is what you talk about, this ease rather than the disease of the western medical model.

When we say life is longing this is the one with I would bring through this aspect of spirituality is close your eyes, take a breath, and let your mind drop into your heart, and sit there in that warmth, that softer chamber of the heart, feel around in there for a moment, and allow my voice to be your internal voice, and ask your heart this deep question that your heart reaches your soul level. What do I long for? See what spontaneously arises maybe as a word, maybe as gesture.

When I go deep into that, for me the word that comes for me is home. I'm always a foreigner wherever I go it seems so it's not the home of bricks and mortar that is the location on the planet. I think it is the dwelling of the heart and soul and those people that recognize that become my family.

Then my other one that really comes up for me is truth. I long for truth and that brings me to a certain type of yoga. The yoga of inquiry. The yoga of health knowledge. That to me also keeps me alive and curious and waking up from another day where more will be revealed. [crosstalk 00:21:44]

Tommy: Where did I get to? Two things. Three things. First, the first word that came to me was love. More than a word a feeling. Second was peace, and then the third was this. I long for this. When you said drop your mind down into your heart and in that moment I felt, "Oh well, everything is just dandy."

Durga: Yes. There is the now.

Tommy: Yeah. There is. This. Beautiful. What you just said, I forgot, it went in one ear and not the other. Home, you talked about being home. I can't remember what the thought was but this idea of addiction being related to a sense of longing, basically involves the entire human race so we come to understand that addiction really is a human trait almost or for something that every human being have to deal with it on some level from this perspective. Does it make sense?

Durga: Yeah. Again, I'm looking for ways that I can encapsulate the way we do in yoga through the sutras. One of our sutras the [inaudible 00:23:22] life is longing is that if you do not honor the longing with time and space, it will corrupt into craving and what we mean by that is that you will be from your separate self you will tend to go for that extrinsic satisfaction of that longing. If you long for love, you seek that through relationship with the other and that it moves into core dependencies, sex, love, romance addiction.

Where it's really the love is the practice of you bringing forth your true nature. The love is you seeking to practice love. The corrupting and to craving if you look at any words that you see like peace for instance, then you become someone who thinks peace exists outside of yourself. There's where the addictive troubles starts. These are trying to fix your families so that they don't argue and they don't debate in a certain way like start to try and rescue people from their own emotional feelings which may not look peaceful but they're coming from the basis of peace, believe it or not, that's the essence of our nature.

There's a couple of things in the life is longing is the question always solicit the same answers. No matter where we are, so whether they are dealing with people who call themselves addicts or people who are in like skid row type of addiction, that label or long term recovery, the answers are the same so therefore, for me that's a unifying principle that we can at least see that similarity, note the differences because the ego is looking from that aspect of differences that [inaudible 00:25:09] separate sales so you've got more money than me, you live in a bigger house than me. You can't have the same problem as me.

This one labels the playing field somewhat and we do understand it so that idea of we do it own at the longing and what time and space, everyone has time and space. Meaning that the space that you exist in like the very fact that you're here embodied and the fact that you would give a time. A lot of the time we say, okay, so just create one small corner of house and have that space where you would go and spend time to be in remembrance that you are something than your bank account, than your looks, than your current state of health.

That's the connection point that we can come to every day or we can come to it at any point of the day. Round us back into something that's the cure. Flow of it is this secure attachment so our secure attachment is to self, in our failed experience and then other people also choose to see that as divine embodied self so they call it [inaudible 00:26:19].

Tommy: You're speaking about the creation of the space in your home perhaps.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: Like an altar?

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: Somebody could carry a little stone with them from that altar so even if they weren't in front of the altar there could be an energetic connection in that moment?

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: I love that.

Durga: It's one thing that I do, when I'm speaking in front of a larger crowd I have that feeling of nervousness so I hold a stone that someone gave me and the feel of the stone just having it in my hand [inaudible 00:26:55] tangible connection to all that I imagined to be true of my life from that stone. There's lots of different tools that we can use there.

Tommy: Beautiful. The second tenet, life is prana. Life is prana.

Durga: Merely by going this one right there, because this one to me leads you into the deep reality of, you reducing was people are addicted to something so when we say life is prana, it's like, okay, so now that you are embodied, your spirit itself is not addicted to anything but you're embodied nature actually requires things or you die, you expired, pass away. That always makes me think of that [inaudible 00:27:42] parrot sketch. You are no more.

[Inaudible 00:27:46] of air, water, fruit and then on more subtle labels like towns and touch and the season of like love connection.

Tommy: What is prana?

Durga: Prana. The light to life force.

Tommy: Life force?

Durga: Yes. This is this aspect where we actually do need to be in receipt of the life force to be alive our self. In the [inaudible 00:28:15] one of the maxims that the main saying of the [inaudible 00:28:19] is life seeks life and so therefore you can look for people's addictive behaviors in the way that they seek life because life is vitality and so then we go into a little description of how you can feel tired or wired or stressed or in pain and you'll start to work the way that you engaged with the life force through substances and behaviors.

Again, to feel the high or just to date so we use 4 words there. If you're tired to looking for simulation, if you're wired, you're looking for sedation. If you're in pain, you're going to self-medicate and then if you're stressed out, you tend to go towards the instant gratification and there is a whole range of substances and behaviors that we're all involved in to a certain extent on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Then again, we begin to level the playing field because people who then hear us talk about that have never thought of themselves as addicted but have definitely woke up with that minds where they can't meet their own best intentions whether it's on a day or a week and this is, where in this early months of 2016, people have already beginning to realize I made New Year's resolutions and I can't even remember what they wear. They're certainly not part of my daily life.

Even though as people begin to recognize that they are acting out with certain substances around just the feeling of being alive [inaudible 00:29:57] and this guy on the Ted Talk and I don't know his name but he was talking about depression and he talks about the opposite of depression is not happiness, its vitality. That's what we're talking with life is prana.

Must be able to access vitality through air, water and fruit and when you think of what's going on from the powers that be, where there are air, the pollution levels even the light pollution from the sky are water. California being in a drought and no one paying attention to that is shocking and then our fruit, the seeds, the soil, the actual life force in the fruit, how it's being genetically modified. This is really ... For me, if you're an addict you really take care of your supply.

This is your supply and you deactivating against anyone who's messing with your supply. Majorly so and so I would ask anyone, anyone anywhere in the world to look

into your supply of air, water and fruit and see who's messing with it. That will keep you busy.

Tommy: It certainly does and it will. My goodness.

Durga: You can learn to breath from the [inaudible 00:31:26] perspective like take a deep belly breath, start to move the rib cage, be greedy for air. Fill all the way up to the top of the lungs and that is an effort for most of us, even if we're pranayama meaning that we're a practitioner of yoga breathing practices. Just to come to that, just that moment of deepening the breast if enough to reduce that always on stress response and then drink some water. The next time you're feeling squarely, go to what we call the blue gold that's running from your top. Fill a glass of water and drink it.

In Ayurveda, we would have you drink hot water all day long and that's one of our detoxification and tools is just set on hot water and then eat something, eat something fresh, something that was recently in touch with its own natural environment, organic, non-pesticide, non-packaged, non-processed so oftentimes that's the piece of fruit or a vegetable. Get to know your farmers at the farmer's market. Eat something and those 3 things, again, that's really good medicine for the planet, for the people.

Tommy: Yes, full recovery.

Durga: Full recovery.

Tommy: Third tenet. Life is relationship.

Durga: There we are. In life speaks life. The human condition has the longest dependency on the other. Meaning that you need caregivers around you to be able to fund your survival and so therefore, life is a constant relationship so relationship with other primarily initially mother and so therefore, we tend to have this aspect of us seeking our sense of connection and belonging and bliss and oneness even through the other so we often that then this takes us squarely to the idea that we have to have a secure attachment and a lot of people have been raising families where that has not been available to them but it is available to all of us because at this point, we choose our form of the divine or higher power.

Whatever we want to call that, we form a relationship with it as the primary first relationship and my favorite little sutra here is there's a big difference between illness and wellness so the big difference is illness starts with I, the I of me as a separate self, the ego self, the isolated self and then we, me as part of, and I'm going to say here's my

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answer the 12 step fellowship, why, because the first words of the 12 steps is we. We come together and fellowship under the understanding that we are all connected in consciousness at the level of that secure attachment that we have a higher power that is richer than us and so this aspect of relationship in some sense what it really does is it takes us back to that longing question, Tommy.

If you mix this one up, then you do the life is longing to the life is belonging and people will corrupt themselves in terrible ways to belong people around them so whether it's your family of origin, your dysfunctional family or your maybe even a violent relationship that you have or gangs or just a crowd that you run with, we are so needy to belong, the time will corrupt our behavior to fit in with a group of people that aren't bringing our best foot forward. If you want to know who you are, look at the company you keep.

Tommy: I noticed in recovery and in life in general, it seems that nothing worthwhile happens in isolation.

Durga: Yeah.

Tommy: Even with meditation, typically, we meditate to bring something back to the community and to share.

Durga: There's a law in here, Tommy, but that life is relationship just the facts that once you've experienced something like recovery, there's a natural impetus within us to share it so there's this altruistic nature that when it gets closer to the true self, it's this the aspect of wonder mystery, beauty and awe that we become part of that you can't contain that at the separate self. You recognize that it is everything and that therefore, you are not well pleased until you're experienced in it as not the separate self but more as the transcendent self, that understanding that what affects you affects others.

This natural tendency we have to share but again, each of these which is our inherent natural human capacity does have the capacity also to corrupt. At this point, what I would say from my own experience is when this one isn't recognized, this life is relationship then corrupt into I either defy the other or I demonize them. This is the other who I'm meeting in my life whether it's a romantic relationship or a teacher whoever is I have this I'm going to put them as better than a lesson. We say defy or demonize because we're mixing up our belonging with our longing. That's something that we really have to work with and this really brings us into the true value of having the sponsor, the fellowship, the guru, the teacher, the lineage, even they are big part of our therapy and yoga recovery ancestor rituals. We look for us belonging to generations of people and what they've gone through and also honoring that aspect, law of the seed and the tree.

Tommy: Thank you so much. This 4th tenet, life is sweet.

Durga: Yeah.

Tommy: It's good news.

Durga: It's good news. I get this ... One of the reasons I would say this to you is that I went to holistic recovery conference where the scientists talk a little about the brain and so then they talked a lot about the effect of sugar has on the brain and some people got up and say, "We can never have sugar again." I hear that and I feel little sad by that because I'm like, "Oh sugar is how we celebrate. Isn't that when we make cakes, we share this?" Then thankfully, one of the reasons I studied Ayurveda really was that I thought it was just genius, the Ayurveda has a nutrition policy based in taste. My students often see this, Tommy. It's one of their favorite phrases I use is what does the protein taste like.

When you're working with nutrition, and people are telling you to eat proteins, how do you know what a protein is on your own? On our own as we people of the planet, how do we know what a protein is? We don't really. That's given ... That's about scientific nutrition model. Ayurveda comes from this experience of fruit for these elements, I'm also 5 elements. The 5 elements of fruit are represented through not the 3 [inaudible 00:39:49] that such but the 6 tastes.

Tommy: The 6 tastes.

Durga: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Tommy: Let's go over them.

Durga: First taste is sweet. Sweet is your first taste of life. The mother's milk is sweet and so therefore, we just say having gone through the trauma of birth, you as the little separate individual now, your first [inaudible 00:40:12] a physical label that you're okay, you're safe, loved, nurtured, nourished, protected, hailed, comforted, came through physically as a sweet taste. Anytime in your life when you're not feeling safe, loved, nurtured, nourished, comforted, you're probably going to have a tendency to fix that with reaching out for the sweet taste.

The sweet taste is not what we ... It's not refined sugar. Its sweet so like milk is sweets. Rice is sweets. A law of fruits and vegetables have the sweet tastes. I actually saw a figure and I'm not sure how true this is as statistically but 80% of the food on the planet

has the sweet tastes within it. The sweet is the most nourishing, most building taste of all the tastes. Food's purpose is to keep us embodied and so most of the food that we eat will have some aspect of the sweet taste. Therefore, life is sweet.

Then the other tastes are salty, sour, pungent which is spicy, astringent is tart and bitter. For instance when they do studies with rats and if you feed a rat something bitter, most organisms will not seek out the bitter taste because it most represents poison. The best person to learn nutrition from really is a child so when you look at a child and you feed them certain foods, then they won't eat them and that's because the bitter taste doesn't build the body.

It takes things away from the body and their inherent wisdom is that they're building the body and so I think it's fascinating because really in early recovery, I thought I was going to become a nutritionist and then more and more, I'm clear what nutritionists are seeing and I think if we went back to our innate ability to relate to the planet, the element being that we are, we'd be able to have a better connection with the language of food, what is food transmitting to us, also in the physical and emotional level.

Tommy: Just a quick question, personal question. I grow master greens in my garden. I love them. I guess you would call as bitter.

Durga: Yes.

Tommy: As you said, that's something that's taking something away from the body. That's a detoxifying plant. My inherent wisdom in my body is I need to detox something. Otherwise, I wouldn't like that.

Durga: Exactly. The 6 tastes are there as like the symphony of food so if you were to see that like the food is a song that that would be adding all the different layers of the symphony to your diet and you now have a mature taste buds, a palate that is matured because you know that you have to bring these things together but generally, what we're looking at is you wouldn't tend to meet the bulk of your meal for every single day. It will play a part in your diet but it won't play I guess part.

Tommy: Thank you.

Durga: For us to balance, we say a little but of all the tastes is useful. That balance is both the physiological and psychological systems.

Tommy: Thank you. Life is sweet. That brings us to number 5, another good news tenet. Life is love. Life is love.

Durga: Here's where this one comes in. Each taste has a physical effect on the body meaning at the cellular level, things are going on. Then they also signal things a psychological and emotional level so therefore, this is fun too. The sweet taste represents love and how do we know that in our life? It's why I feel a little depressed when you see I can't have sweet again and they say sugar and I get that but then we hear sweet so when we talk about sweetness, it really is on a psychological level. Sweet physically is the most building and nourishing to the physical tissue. On a psychological level, it represents love and attachment.

This idea of this life is love is that every time we're involving ourselves with 5 elements in relationship to foods we're getting the signal that we are loved. Mother Nature loves us that's why she give this food to eat. Then we know this because every time we sing pop song, the love songs, we always sing about the sweet so you got sweetheart, sugar, can be baby love. It's that idea that love is sweet. Those 2 are linked and the tenet really goes to the fact that for life is sweet, we mature by being able to digest the sweetness that's all around through all 5 senses, not the constant hands to mouth putting something on the tongue so we can smell sweetness. We can see sweetness. We can touch it, doing massage. Pet and animals brings up the oxytocin that's the inner contentment and connection.

At the love level, it's really about this idea, it's impossible to go out and get loved because love is your true nature. If the receptor sites are there, as soon as you put sweet taste on the tongue that that signals that you're loved as such. Then the love is within you. Love then is a practice. It's not something that go out and get it in our [inaudible 00:46:36]. The love here really have to become not this emotional messy affair of romance and attachment but really the essence of love that the love that lives deep within your heart and soul as a connected being of oneness and so it's a practice of love as a devotion.

What are you devoted too in your life? Devotion is such a sweet and beautiful thing to witness. When people are devoted to their children and not in a mesh co-dependent way but devoted. Teachers are devoted to their students. That idea that witnessing of that is shown you that connected oneness.

Tommy: Thank you. Durga, I can imagine that some people who struggle with food addiction to be confused around this issue of sweetness. We know that you very eloquently said a few moments ago that when we don't feel loved, when we don't feel

nourished, when we don't feel supported, protected or like we have a place that we may reach out to the sweet to feel better. Where is the balance to be had there because obviously, people who struggle with any addiction are seeking the sweet outside of themselves? Where's the balance to be had? I realized we're not talking about sugar and that's a very important delineation. There's sweetness and then there's refined white sugar which is clearly not good for the human body.

Durga: [Inaudible 00:48:24].

Tommy: Right. Exactly. What might you say to a person who's confused around these topics, who's struggling with food addiction at some form?

Durga: I think really what we are using as our go-to tool here is to look at those 5 senses and to really train and encourage people to engage in sweet practices every day of their life which means using sweet music and using the mantra. It means putting oil on the body, doing oil massage, maybe using some aromatherapy so that you've got the smell of rose and lavender. It means having flowers in your house, spending time outdoors, picking up the colors of the sky and nature and you are consciously digesting all that sweetness that is around you and so that's the kind of ongoing response even the sweetness of the breath, the deep breath.

Then also being able to go to [inaudible 00:49:30] of the foods that we would see are like medicinal and therapeutic and sweet like most of what we have as adaptogens, people ... the herbs that help the body be resilient against the stress of life, pick out the sweet taste. They tonifying to the body. We're using that as part of the daily routine of being in recovery so that when we are hit with that stress response that we have more go-to space in our imagination, then putting something in the mouth, that full fixation of, "Oh here comes the pacifier like a lollipop or chocolate, whatever that is."

We have a broader repertoire of sweetness in our life. I think the reason that's really crucial and I think the reason that I personally find it kind of disturbing how most people don't pick up on this is that the very fact that the organism is under stress, means generally that the digestive capacity is reduced because that's what stress does. It puts all the energy into the lens for the flight or the fight. It doesn't really have the energy there to be digesting and some of the things that we reach for in our eating disorder type of stuff that heavy refine sweets and fats that you can't digest them.

It's best to train on a daily basis to be able to digest the sweetness around it. One that makes us more resilient so when we are more resilient because we're doing proper self-care and recognizing ourselves for the metabolic organism that we are, we're not so

[inaudible 00:51:19] at stress that comes along. I don't have a fix that says in this moment of crisis, you'll be able to do this and it's going to rescue you in that moment. Recovery is about building a life where you're using this medicine not just to prevent disease but to really flourish and live well joyfully.

Then I think really your attention moves. You're able to see the good and the bad together. You're not fixated on the bad. One thing we say where your attention goes, your prana goes. If you're always looking at things that are disturbing, then you're always going to be disturbed. We train you more to live in the natural medicine and the manageability of their 24-hour period [inaudible 00:52:13] stabilized. You become more robust, more resilient and you're less fazed buy all the things that used to knock you off center. [crosstalk 00:52:24]?

Tommy: Yeah. A lot of sense. Beautiful. Thank you.

Durga: It's why it's a one-day a trying thing is that I think sometimes, we get this as the diagnosis there. You have an addiction as to now, you need the cure and the cure is this silver bullet that's going to knock everything out. There isn't that type of cure. There is the [inaudible 00:52:48] daily practice of life and connection. That's the cure.

Tommy: You're speaking my language, Durga. I appreciate it. This brings us to the 6th tenet. Life is a progress. Life is progress.

Durga: That really comes back to just what we were saying there like if we start this conversation with the problem of addiction and it's a disease, as we look into the roots of this addictive behavior, we'll begin to see that this is the roots of life itself. It's the roots of the spiritual path itself so that really, what we're seeing in life is progresses. There is no cure. There is only care. I love the care work because that's what it says in step 3. We turn [inaudible 00:53:39] lives over to the care of a higher power. Now, I'm really happy to be participating in that care and I think that's what Ayurveda teaches us. It teaches us how to live our life in a loving caring way.

Here, we're talking about this aspect of this is practice. This is something that we get up every day and we remember. We remember ourselves as whole beings connected to others, connected to planetary, cosmic consciousness and we take responsibility for bringing more of that forth that we connection that idea of things are going to happen in life. Karma is there but what we have enacted in previous times. We're going to experience the results of that. Therefore, we need to be stable and more robust in our ability to recognize opportunity as aspects of our growth. Not everything as a depletion of our superficial happiness. That's the life is progress is that we just keep coming back

to this. It's practice. It's remembrance. Keep coming back to the mat, to the meditation, to the meeting, to the moment, to the breath.

Tommy: I'm thinking now of the virtue known as patience and what a rare quality it is and especially in early recovery, there's a tendency for people to feel like they're behind. They've lost so many days, weeks, months, years to addiction and their senses have come back. Literally, they have 5 sense. Literally, they can smell the trees around them. They can taste their food and they're starting to really enjoy life. There's a sense of like, "Oh my God. I'm behind. I've lost so much." The tendency is to want to excel very quickly. You might say I want a bigger life and I want it now. I want a bigger life right now. Sometimes, people will try to take on a bigger life by doing more in early recovery and filling up every minute of their day and getting out of balance.

They're doing a lot. Maybe they think on a big job or they're taken a huge relationship that's really beyond their current capacity to manage it. They don't realize that yet. They will find that out naturally and there will be some kind of reckoning. It will have to be. It seems like the one day at a time concept and the life is progress concept is you will be made into a stronger person who will be able to handle a bigger life over time. Does it make sense?

Durga: Yeah. That's a beautiful way to [inaudible 00:56:56] it. I always think of it's like a video game that we're in that you're playing today at the level that you're capable of which means that if you're presented with a crisis, you're capable of meeting that. In my 12 steps that they told me God is never going to throw at you something that you can't handle which most of us really can't recognize the capacity that we have. I think what we don't recognize is the solid power of now because we're always projecting to that better future and so that's the power of mind. That power of the mind, again, it's described in yoga by the gunas. You and I should have a gunas talk some day in depth.

Tommy: Let's do it.

Durga: That power of the mind is you're activating your own biochemistry just by thinking of the things that you're going to get. You're staying in that biochemical addictive response by projecting anxiety so that you're having that cascade of stress hormones or projecting your own fame and fortune because then you're also producing that biochemical response again. What is meditation really teaching us? It's stabilizing the life force energy which is the only power that's available to you and it's almost like you're basing it instead of like rushing through it. It's like people, I think there's the monks' scene that what's the point of rushing through the rain [crosstalk 00:58:39] ...

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It's like if you decide to do the life of yoga and one day a time, it's like you're willing more to sit and up there of actually what's happening. That moment of pause that we're so reluctant to fit in is where the gift is. The gift is in the presence and the presence for busy people maybe it seems to take patience.

I've experienced some of the things that are the most joyful things and the most tragic things in my recovery. Again I come up with this little scenes that one of them was sugar is not a solution but sweetness is. Have these ways sweeten my life. Before we talked, I used some lavender oil. That just smell immediately puts it, it makes me step back. Life goes on and life takes time. That's my little catch phrases of the moment among the 6 tenets but life does go on. I lost my knees recently in the last couple of years to addiction.

Within a day or two, life was just back to normal. Life goes on. This aspect of who we All right is being carried by us as embody being in this moment and that moment does not last forever that we are in this realm of transient constant change and so what this scale in action is to somewhat attach to what is eternal and true and lasting and real, while we traverse this road of happy destiny which is constantly changing. That's a real skill. It's a cosmic video game kind of humor or paradoxical joke. [Inaudible 01:00:39].

Tommy: Durga, it's incredible to be playing the cosmic video game with you. I'm so grateful. Thank you so much. How can people connect with you and participate in one of your workshops and some of the other great offerings you're making?

Durga: We are talking here in February. You'll find me sitting in India at this point with the group of the recovery 2.0 [inaudible 01:01:04] welcome. Contact me because if you have patients, we will sit and do a 3 to 4 week very calm detoxification retreat in India with me again in 2017 probably. Again, serious contenders only because I'm just a single operator so I can't answer too many emails.

Then, I will be in the Bahamas, in Florida, in San Diego and Virginia and Grass Valley so best to look at yogaofrecovery.com and email me at durga@yogaofrecovery.com and there's one thing about your work and interviews with our friend who did the rough part stuff, it's find your philosophy, find your people, find your park, let's meet up at the tribe and keep layering in and growing and share together. All honor to you, Tommy, for this recovery 2.0. It's made my work so much more well received. You brought us above the radar into being accepted as the grassroots responds to this significant social plate that is [crosstalk 01:02:22] ...

Tommy: Thank you, Durga.

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Durga: To the people!

Tommy: Yes. Power to the people. Durga, we're going to do something together.

Durga: Absolutely. Whoever that they are finding the best venue for Tommy and I to get together to have recovery 2.0, 6 tenet kundalini experience combined. It's going to have to be big because this is where the tribe will really gather. Let's make an annual event.

Tommy: We'll do it, Durga. We're going to do it.

Durga: We're doing it.

Tommy: We're doing it. Much love. Thank you so much.

Durga: Thank you, Tommy. I love you. [foreign language 01:02:57]

Tommy: [foreign language 01:02:58].