

The Primary Element of Recovery

Recovery 2.0 Interviews Guru Prem

Tommy Rosen: Welcome to the Recovery 2.0 Beyond Addiction Conference Fall 2013. I'm your host, Tommy Rosen, and I'm thrilled to be speaking with Guru Prem Singh Khalsa. Guru Prem is a master of Kundalini Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga practitioner who has been practicing and teaching for over 30 years and he's also a lifelong gymnast. Guru Prem has authored many books including Divine Alignment, The Heart Rules, and Everyday Devotion. He works directly with people of every age, helping to lift them up in to what he would refer to as The Ease of Life. This is particularly meaningful interview for me because Guru Prem is my personal teacher and mentor. He has worked with me now for over 10 years, originally to help me get over severe back pain and then to develop myself in every aspect of my life. Guru Prem, thank you once again for being a part of the Recover 2.0 conference. Welcome.

Guru Prem: Thank you, Tommy. It's a pleasure to be back and talking with you.

Tommy: Hmm, let's jump right in. Guru Prem, as I mentioned in your introduction, you work one on one with many individuals. In fact, it's kind of weird that I'll go in my normal travels through life, I am constantly running in to people randomly who are telling me about you, that they've had some personal experience with you and it's been very powerful for them. I want to talk about the work you do with individuals and we can also key in a little bit on the work that you and I have done together this past decade. First of all, let's start with a little bit of an introduction about you for the people that still don't know who you are and where you're coming from. Can you give a brief introduction about how you came to be you?

Guru Prem: Well, the first thing that seems obvious is that I don't look quite like most people's neighbors, so I'm a Sikh. A Sikh is a religious lifestyle that originated in northern India and I adapted the Sikh way of life about 33 or 34 years ago. So that's my outer representation and I just tell people I dress this way so I'm recognized for my availability. That's the idea behind it. on a more professional level, I have been working in a medical office with a great medical doctor named Dr. Soram Khalsa for about 32 years, I believe. And we have this program where I often see the patients there who have needs one that can be physical and related to problems with pain on their spines or their neck or their back or their hips because I have found that most people's muscular or structure pain difficulties often have emotional origins. It's actually rare some of them has just specific injuries. Most of the time they come from some chronic pattern. And so I'm a bit of a puzzle solver for people's chronic patterns. And I use a various degree of manipulations of sorts and different types of massage techniques, a fair amount of speaking therapeutic use of Kundalini and other types of yoga in order to facilitate a person's recovery to the ease. I do have to take a bit of issue when you said

I'm a lifelong gymnast. I laugh and think, well, I like to play, I guess in the bigger sense possibly. I've certainly maintained my ability to teach others what I know about that but to think about what I used to do compared to now, I would have to say a bit of a past gymnast but I still have for what it is.

Tommy: Well, thank you, Guru Prem. You know when I first came to your office where you work with Soram Khalsa, I remarked that you know well, for one thing I had no idea what you look like and I remember thinking my first thought was I know his name is Guru Prem, but I'm really hoping he doesn't look like a guru, you know. Like I was coming from sort of a New York City cynical background. And when you opened the door and you look like you, I was like I knew it. I knew it. I knew exactly it was going to be this, you know. What is a Sikh man doing in the middle of Beverly Hills of all places in an office treating clients and how did these clients find their way to your door for one thing?

Guru Prem: Well, how I ended up in Beverly Hills, in 1981, I started working with Dr. Soram Khalsa. It began by actually my assisting him and he said, "Why don't you come up to my office then and do stuff part time?" This is in 1981. And thus began this relationship. Often times, just to give you an example, someone may have a medical problem such as acid reflux, just to give you an example. We have found that people who have acid reflux often have difficulty with their breathing because the problem of acid reflux really isn't so much acid in the stomach but the esophageal valve is malfunctioning and allowing acid to back up in to the esophagus. And we have found that in addition to other therapies, assisting somebody's transformation in breathing is very helpful towards either reducing and in some instances eliminating the need for plutonic types of drugs and prevacid, nexium and etc. So that's just one example. Often times, very often when people are visiting their doctor complaining "Oh my neck hurts, my this," they say, "Go see Guru Prem." And that's just for him. If you do this long enough and you stay with anything for your 10,000 hours which I'm sure I've done by now, stuff just comes, people come to me from all sorts of places. Some people come specifically for yogic therapy. Some people come for physical therapy. Some come for emotional therapy. They're coming for recovery therapy and since I believe we're all in recovery of the ease. And I like to give my high school gymnastic coach some credit for it cluing me in to what the path of the ease actually is. He used to tell us as a gymnastics coach, you can do things two ways, the easy way and the wrong way. And that was very wise although he may have managed us to do what I tell you, that's the easy way over the years.

When you're moving towards the ease, you're going the right way. The path there is not necessarily easy but as you get to that place where you can do things by heart. I mean I'll use the musical analogy. If you study piano and you get to the point where you say don't need the music and you really know the piece well enough for you don't have to think about technique, the expression we use is I can play it by heart. And when you can play it by heart, you're experiencing a state of ease. That could be true in basket ball, you're in the zone, or you've transcended thinking and just every shot is a three pointer. Now to get there, you don't just

start off like that. You've got to go through your rehab and reclamation of skills. Rehab, if you're even an athlete, you got to rehabilitate naturalness. And now I have a rather blasphemous idea about that with regard to athletics. I actually believe you can teach somebody to be a natural athlete within reason of what their genetic capabilities are but teaching people naturalness is possible. And if they apply to athletics or if they apply it to other things, that's their choice. And they have a common denominator. They all are about getting to that let's call it the zone of the ease. And to me, the whole recovery program is about that. I would say 30% of it is stopping the actual substance. Okay. So you can begin this journey but you've got to put the brakes on and stop. But 70% is about what you're living for instead of what you're trying to stop living against. I mean this is I think general pattern of all people. I had some pretty sage advices that you can never win a war by being against the enemy. You can win a war by what you're fighting for so you can't make your argument against and I'll just key one more quote that relates to that. Mother Theresa in the late '60s was asked to join the anti-war movement which she flatly refused but she said I would gladly join the pro-peace movement.

Tommy: Hmm, I love that.

Guru Prem: And so those words have always stuck with me. Yes, you have to recognize things that you're against but you can't make that your identity and yet they have to be recognized. So we are all in this recovery of the ease movement.

Tommy: Thank you. We have to—you're hitting on so many important points. Number one, teaching naturalness. Let's relate that to addiction and recovery, also what you just said about being for something rather than against something and remind me because I may forget this after we start speaking for a few minutes. But the idea that in addiction and recovery, often we're against the addiction or we're against relapsing or we're against the way we used to be before. I think a massive shift happens for people when we start to fight for our recovery and for the values that we hold so dear that maybe have been masked or hidden away from us for some period of time. So I'd love to talk about that. First, this idea of teaching naturalness framed within this perspective around addiction and recovery. I think there's something very special there because addiction is in so many respects it's so unnatural. So maybe part of the recovery process is about teaching naturalness, once again recovering that. What do you think?

Guru Prem: I think you've just pretty much stated everything. It is and it's a daily you talk about, one day at a time. It's one day at a time on the positive. I mean I refer to it. I have to check in with the home office, that's my own heart center and reestablish my relationship with the ease so I can have an enjoyable day which means to be with joy. That doesn't mean I won't have challenges because I do. They come in all forms and flavors, some of them are physical, some are mental, emotional, spiritual. They're all there. But I'd always feel I have a companion guiding me on the path toward that ease which tells me that I'm going the right way. I'd bring

the point up you know one of the great failures of the Reagan administration was Nancy Reagan's pet project was Just Say No. And this is about just say no to drugs and I always wondered what are we saying yes to? The whole emphasis was don't, don't, don't, don't, don't, and so did it work? It didn't at all. In fact, it may have made things possibly worse because the don'ts start to build within us guilt and shame syndromes. If we're not given a path towards what are you saying yes to and how do you go about doing that, where does this begin. I mean in my opinion it begins with the science of calmness. I'm always amused how a few people know what it is because they have this idea that "Oh calm is lying on a hammock in Hawaii." Well, it could be but that's not actually what it really is. This brings us if you aren't learning at least the basics of breathing, you have no basic skills to calmness and without calmness you really don't have in my opinion enough skills to successfully recover. We're talking right now a form of physical education, PE. But we might even want to upgrade it to physical enlightenment, enlightening of your physicality which calmness in all of its technical and mechanical components allows you to experience.

Tommy: Thank you for that. The point that I wanted to connect with and you've already just addressed it was I wanted to expand more upon this idea of fighting for something or going for something rather than against something.

Guru Prem: Right.

Tommy: Of course, when you battle acute addiction, that could be drugs, alcohol, food, sex and relationships, gambling, overspending money issues, when you're in that acute status of a relationship, a painful relationship with some kind of addiction, often you come out of that and you're a little bit like an embattled soldier. You've really literally been through a war and so it's often an early recovery. I think it must be very tough for people to look at it in peaceful terms. They've been in the war for so long that they're just happy that the war is over and that they don't want to go back to the war so it's kind of like yeah, we stay sober, we're in recovery because we don't want to go back. But we don't yet know what we're moving forward toward and I think that is a critical and important juncture that people will come to in their recovery, in their progression as a human being. You will shift from worrying about things that you're going—you'll shift from worrying about consequences of behaviors to wanting behaviors that will bring you towards something rather than if you're going back. Does that make some sense?

Guru Prem: It does. It almost sounds like you're talking about the difference between forgiveness and forgetfulness. I think it's really important when you stop an addiction not to forget what you've stopped, but there's this part of a self forgiveness for yourself and others that allows you to then move forward, again I'll use the term the ease. Because the word disease literally means, if you split the word in two, you have dis and ease, best definition I've heard is distance from the ease. We want to begin the journey of narrowing that distance. And there's all kinds of metaphors and expressions to describe the one day, one step at a time

toward that. But it is helpful in the state of recognition, okay, you recognize, where are you? And this is the thing I do on a daily basis. Where am I and where do I want to be? A little quick assessment. That part of where am I is part of the keeping me from forgetting what I've come to. I'm not going to negate that from me. And that's I guess my own way of saying yes, I have a past and in the 12-step meeting, people announce very briefly their past, "Hello, I'm so and so," and whatever the addiction is they will state that. And I think that part of the recognition is important. How it's done, that's open for discussion. The second part of it is where are you going today? That's the positive. That's the steps and I just—we've been using the term the ease. We're trying to get to the ease of life. But that doesn't mean again without struggle, without challenge but the ease is what's inside us and we're teaching our mind and our bodies to be employees of the ease and of course the first big challenge is recognizing your mind and body are not your masters but they're to be disciplined in the service of your truer self.

Tommy: And the truer self that you're speaking of, can you expand on that? I know that for some people this language will be hard to grasp and I want them to really get the deeper part of this...

Guru Prem: I like the deeper part but I always begin that discussion of the idea of a miracle. Okay. And then I ask whomever I'm talking to that they consider the fact that the greatest miracle of all time is that you exist. So I'm saying to you, "Tommy, the greatest miracle of all time is that, Tommy, you exist," and I exist and if you can just acknowledge that you exist then you have a beginning because at the core of your existence is what you're looking for. That is the hero's journey. That is this journey of discovery. That is what Socrates and every great sage has said, "Know thy self." And in the path of knowing, you come closer to your essential self, and in the process of doing that you learn to relax. And relax, yes, because relaxation is the wisdom of shedding what you don't need. At the beginning it's physical. You learn to release the unnecessary tension. If you release it all, you'd be dead and fall over. If you maintain too much tension, it will probably kill you. So it's the wisdom and it's a very deep wisdom and that's easiest to teach with our physical body because like it's opaque and obvious but it's the same principal as you go deeper within yourself, letting go of what you don't need so you can participate with what you do need. And as you go deeper, you'll find that what you do need is already there and all the other stuff is just been there filtering it. It's been your lesson plan and as you gain wisdom over your lessons, another layer is removed, a little more light is revealed, a little more ease is experienced and that keeps me going and I've looked at other happy lives and I found people are doing things in their own way but they are actually doing very similar type patterns.

Tommy: What are the patterns that you're seeing that lead to happiness?

Guru Prem: Well, I've been trying to make a study for the last 30 years and happy people, and this is just my opinion and my conclusion. I have found that all happy people and I do think that is another way of stating the goal of recovery, become happy, all happy people do these

four things in their own way: one, they serve. Now, how they serve is up to them. They can, something I enjoy doing, be part of free kitchen where you're serving meals to the needy. That's a sure fire way to serve and it's something I personally enjoy. But there are countless other ways you can put your heart in to your hands and be of service. And the reason you need these concentrated practices is so you can take that energy of service into holding the elevator door for somebody. It's one thing to go serve a hot mean on skid row but can you bring that same kind of energy just to hold the door? And that's another example of your heart in your hands. I mean the skid row is really just practice for everything else. Two, you got to find some way to get out of your thinking and to listening. In other words, to get out of your head and in to your heart. And there's kind of two categories of which you can do that. One is what we see a lot in the West people do, often risky things that bring them to such one pointedness that they're unable to think and they have this exalted experiences. A great example of that if you watch the documentary Cena, he was a Formula One racer. He experienced God traveling 220 miles an hour because he became so one pointed. He experienced this oneness. And I wouldn't recommend that because the risk to me aren't worth what it will do to your relationship, to the ease. There are countless other ways we can do things to stop thinking. But on the subtle side, I realized that at some point you got to find a way to get that thrill from subtle things. So at the other extreme, you can learn to meditate and the most potent way is find something you think is holy and call it by name. And what that means is when we talk about holy something that brings you to wholeness and in classic religions, one of God's thousands of names that resonates with you, preach your mantra. Your favorite, say, "God, God, God." If god is a cat, say, "Cat, cat, cat" if you have enough devotion to that. It's a way to get you from your head to your heart because if you're constantly thinking you're still under the grips of your addiction.

Now we do get to think it's good to be level headed. But it's even better to be wise hearted. So the idea is you're thinking it needs to be trained to be an employee of your wise heart and for that, you need the disciplines of some type of meditative practice and there are countless to choose from. So that's two. Three, here's something that the 12-step programs are real fond of. Let's expound it a bit. Act as if. Well, act like the person you want to become. Take it to the point of improve your posture. Improve your grammar. Change your clothes if you need to. Study someone who's happy and imitate them. It's an act but this act is going to be supported by those other two, being serviceful, having a meditative taking from your head practice. So act as if. And I take it to the extreme. I not only act as if, I want to be recognized as a first responder. I want to be—someone will come to me because I've acted as if enough and I will be recognized by the clothes. If they ask for assistance, I want to be recognized. And then four and finally, you've got to find some wisdom that you can bow your head to because your thinking needs to be retrained. So whether that type of wisdom is the big book from the 12-step program or possibly the Bible, or possibly Buddhist Sutras, then it doesn't matter to me. This is what the wisdom your head bows to and what it will do it will change your thinking. You see the wisdom that you may think I have isn't original. It was copied. I just imitated somebody else. It just keeps getting passed on this light of wisdom just gets passed from one

soul to the next which is why it's so important, I've said this to you before, in 12-step meetings or any other type of recovery group, it's essential that they will be at least one individual there who holds the space in the light so that the others who are newer can catch it. This consciousness of recovery is not actually taught, it's caught. The preparation is taught, sure, but the actual transformation is caught. We are social creatures. We need to be around others who have it. So it's really important that somebody has the wisdom, somebody has the service, somebody has a little meditative mind, and someone has been practicing acting as if long enough so that another person can catch what they need.

Tommy: You know, Guru Prem, as I listen to you speak, I realize how grateful I am and how blessed I've been to have met you in my life and I cannot thank you enough for just showing up the way you have and I realize that the books that I write and the blogs that I write and the life that I'm living is so very much influenced by you and by your teaching or the teachings that you say you've been given from someone else. Well, you've been a good vessel for the continuation of those energies and I work and I hope to be a good vessel as well for passing them along. It brings to mind a question. I think for people one of the great gifts that they can be given in this life is a great teacher and that without that, there may be people out watching this who think I don't have a mentor or a teacher in my life. I don't have a person that I work with one on one. What would you suggest for somebody if we can agree that to have a mentor is a wonderful thing that can uplift you and inspire you? What if you find yourself in a situation where you're not sure who that is?

Guru Prem: Well, like all this other information that we've been discussing, step one, recognize that you want one, recognize that you possibly need one. Once you've established the recognition and then it's a matter of making it your aspiration. Now the word *aspira* is Latin for what it is your heart long for. If your heart longs for a teacher, you've got to stop just thinking about it because thought isn't as powerful as the feeling of it. Okay. So if you can take that thought, place it here and say, "Okay, heart, I need a teacher. Send me a teacher that I can recognize as someone trustworthy enough to guide me along this near future past." It doesn't mean the first teacher you find is going to be your long term. It's certainly isn't. Many teachers can appear but it's really up to the student. It's their responsibility to choose the teacher. The teacher does appear when the student is ready but the student goes to the teacher. So that will begin what will happen, the *aspira*. And this is where people can learn from you on any of these online things, how to develop and make your aspirations effective whether it's from material things or something really significant about finding a teacher because I pretty much can guarantee anyone if they can do that, and this is not right form for conducting a class on how to make your aspirations prosperous but I'm just suggesting it starts with an aspiration and what will appear is another spirit and as a teacher. It always happens that way. How it will happen, they can manifest in so many different areas in how a teacher will appear to you.

Tommy: Well, I had to go to Beverly Hills.

Guru Prem: Yeah. That's how it played out.

Tommy: That is how it played out.

Guru Prem: Somebody else, they're watching this here and then they may discover, "Oh my God, that Aikido teacher that's been in our neighborhood but I just never gave it a thought. Maybe there's something, there's some wisdom in what he is doing." So that's how it can begin.

Tommy: I want to talk a little bit about what you're seeing come in to your office. What are the ailments? What are the patterns? What are the real sort of spiritually based, emotionally based ailments which are obviously having their physical manifestations? What you seeing in this day and age walk in to your office?

Guru Prem: Goodness, well, I will tell you about a woman who's going to come in later today. This woman is probably about 50 years old. Let's see, she was sexually abused by her father who was the attorney for a giant religious organization in its time. She became severely bulimic, anorexic. This was her path. She didn't have problems with drugs or alcohol but she definitely had problems of shame and guilt and lately, she started to see me. She had the beginnings of Parkinson's. So part of it is the conversation, learning how to recognize how much of this shame syndrome is in her. And she can't reconcile this with her father because he's not alive but she can reconcile it within herself in part and yet the part is she can begin to reclaim some of the real state of her spine that has been lost to this very heavy sense of shame and guilt. And for that as long as she's got the capacity to think clearly and she does, as long as she has the capacity to move enough which she does, there is hope. You don't have to be a contortionist to completely clear the let's call the karmas of your misfortunes. You have enough of what you've given. I always tell everybody everyone is given exactly what they need to live truthfully. Although sometimes what we'd have to do to live truthfully is very, very painful. It's better you can use that and move towards the ease and that's possible in anyone's circumstance.

Tommy: And what else, what other kinds of things, so there's an example...

Guru Prem: That was... right.

Tommy: And that's an example of obviously a trauma.

Guru Prem: Right.

Tommy: ... that has befallen a person and that they've carried through their life. You're seeing a lot of trauma this kind of either subtle forms of it or major forms of it.

Guru Prem: I see trauma of all forms. I mean I'm always surprised in my 30 some years of doing this type of practice, I think I've run into true people who knew how to—who actually could breathe calmly who were not taught. We're talking about a calm breath that some people know. If you have ability to inhale and exhale at the same speed, that's a state of relative calm. You're imposing a respiratory calm over your inner self so it's not completely calm but it's a nice start. But most individuals have so little control and support of their thoracic diaphragm that they're ability to breathe calmly is so compromised by the forms that their emotions have taken shape in their bodies. I'm just going to come and it seems like every few weeks there's an article in one of the major papers on the problems of postures related to our devices. I mean it's affectionately now referred to as the iPhone neck when your head falls, your chest falls, you've just lost about 25% of your lung capacity. So that right there and most individuals do not realize that. If you're nervous, a part of your nervousness is you're breathing nervously. If you're angry, a big part of it is you're breathing angrily. And of course, if you're calm, a big part is, essential part is you're breathing calmly. The goal of the ease is not to be calm all the time, let's just say more of the time. I want to be anxious at times. My son had a foot injury. There was a lot of concern. I was anxious but I was not far from calm. We had to deal with that. Okay. Other things come along. If I win a giant lottery, I go and buy lottery tickets, but for some reason someone gave me one, I promise you I'm not going to sit here and breathe calmly. I'm going to have a little bit of fun being excited. But I know if I ever want to enjoy that new fortune, I've had to calm down and I'm blessed with the tools to calm down. This calmness is your portal to the ease. It's not the ease itself. It's just a big part of the delivery system. Okay. So the centralization is mathematical. If you centralize yourself just by breathing calmly, you have the capacity to experience your deeper self because it's easier to listen when you're calm, when you're lost in your head and thinking. With anxiety, you're neither calm nor you're deeply listening.

Tommy: Thank you, Guru Prem. Can you speak a little bit more—I know you've shared with me specifically about I guess it's really a syndrome that sort of befalls men not exclusively but where there's big attachment to wealth, money, power that comes from that, a person maybe ends up not developing themselves on the inside and they're making up for the lack of development inside by having a lot of things to prove their worth on the outside. Obviously, we're in Los Angeles, California. You're particularly in Beverly Hills, California. There is an unbalanced emphasis on outer appearance and wealth. That has to have an effect on the spirit. What are you saying about that?

Guru Prem: Well, first of all, just back up a little bit. Poverty is a curse, unless you live a life as a monk and choose to live by a vow of poverty. If you're going to live as a household, poverty is in my opinion a curse. But wealth does not equate happiness. I mean there's countless studies that show just a moderate amount of income once you have your basics, your happiness quotient doesn't increase but your distraction quotient does. If you're very insecure, you need lots and lots of things to constantly be validated by people to tell you you're important. And so this need I mean—I had this discussion a few minutes ago with a young man

who is off to an Ivy League school and he actually had come to see me because his immune system had become so weak. Why? Because he went to one of our so called finest prep schools in Los Angeles, worked so hard to get in to Princeton, okay, and he did get in. But it compromised his physicality so much that he actually had to drop out for a semester to come see the doctor I work with in order to get healthy. And then I asked him, I said, "Why were you working so hard?" "Well, I want to do this, this, this, and this." I said, "Okay." "And then?" "So I can eventually go to Princeton." So I said, "Okay. Now you're going to graduate Princeton with your degree in finance," or whatever I think it was, "so you can do what?" "So I can get a good job." "Great. Now what are you going to do?" "I'm going to earn money." "Okay. So that's what it was about. What would you do with this money?" "I'll have stuff." "Why?" And then it really come down to "Well, I need stuff so I can attract attention." "From what?" "From women." "Okay. So this whole adventure got you sick just so you'd be attractive to women." Now, I'm not against education but we realize what we're doing, the strive for that. If we have enough stuff, we'll be worthy of somebody beautiful. That's what we're being sold. Work hard, work hard and you can get the hottest chick. This is just from a male perspective. And then there's this other side of this problem. I'm going to quote the late John Paul Getty on this one, and he said, he was the richest man in the world at the time and he said, "Show me a rich and powerful man who claims monogamy and I'll show you a liar." So you've achieved wealth and power and you lose your ability to just be. Why? Because your fear of scarcity is greater. You've got money but you don't have time to spend it. And what are you thinking of? One of the greatest liabilities to our progress is remembering what things you used to be like. I want that feeling of 25 and I've got all these stuff and I can attract 25. And they're almost irresistible. Everyone has made themselves available. The feeling I want to feel that feeling again. So infidelity is easy to justify because life is short. What if I never get to feel like 25 again? The classic midlife crisis. So we build up this wealth just so we can end up in the midlife crisis like that. If it wasn't so true, you know, I mean it's funny to laugh but it's unfortunately so common that it's actually almost rare for it not to be. And it ultimately makes us feel that life is going to end and I won't have any more fun.

Tommy: And relating that to, of course, addiction and recovery whether wealth is the thing you're after or ultimately approval or to be attractive to a young lady or whatever it is, these are all emotional and psychological drivers that drive us forward in to behaviors that bring destruction and pain in to our life.

Guru Prem: It's all, you know, I've come to conclusion people do what they do to feel better but I mean on one level people can do subtle things that can connect them to their heart and soul that reward them with some feeling better. Other people who are very disconnected from it can pick your poison, you could be heroine alcohol or in the neighborhood I work with, Beverly Hills, people just go shopping for stuff they don't need just so they can feel better. How many pairs of shoes do you need to be validated just for that feeling that I have some value? But how long does a pair of shoes last in terms of feeling valued? Not long enough. So they're really the same problem. They're just a different extremes and the manageability. I've jokingly

said this a number of times, there have been countless times I've gone to the refrigerator when I wasn't hungry. I was functionally bored. So I was in the same disease although I could afford it because I can recover from an extra piece of cheese very easily. But somebody else who's feeling bored and who's been in recovery cannot go have a beer. They cannot afford that at any cost. So yes, I can afford those times of eating bored and I don't do it that often but I can actually afford it. So it's really important in your recovery to know because no one is here to be perfect. But to know what the limits of your actions and behaviors will allow.

Tommy: So you made a statement a moment ago quoting John Paul Getty, "Show me a rich and powerful man who's monogamous and I'll show you a liar." Who claims monogamy.

Guru Prem: Who claims monogamy.

Tommy: Right and I'll show you a liar. Do we have—know examples?

Guru Prem: Yes, there are. I mean this is—I didn't want to leave it like that. That's always the case. But it's unfortunately not as common as you would think. And I'm not saying that people who are not rich and powerful are always infidelity either. But it requires in order to remain if you're in a monogamous relationship it requires a three-way relationship and that's two people relating to the same ease or the same soul. So these are covenants. You're not really committed to the other person as much as you are to the covenant. If you have that, if that's, if growth towards the ease and your expansion is what defines your life, you will bring that in to your relationships. And this is a whole other side of addiction. People's addictive relationships they get in to very destructive relationships because they just want the feeling but everything about it is destructive. And then they can plan they can't find meaningful relationships but we've had this discussion. If you want to find a soul mate, you need to begin by learning to be a soul mate to yourself which is a huge part of the Recovery 2.0. I mean after you've stopped the heroine, if you've stopped the cocaine, okay and that's where it has to begin but it's unsustainable just being a stopper. You have to start this journey towards, we're using the word ease for now but you can give many, many other names. Otherwise, you're just constantly under the state of I'm not, I'm not, I'm not, and that's very risky. I mean you see this all the time when people relapse especially after seven years. How long can they keep the brakes up?

Tommy: Now Guru Prem, when you work with people, and you, I mean I have to imagine as hard as it is for me to believe because your teachings have been so compelling for me, I have to imagine there are some people that are not just ready.

Guru Prem: Well, I figure if they come to see me, they're ready but you have to make yourself understood. And I'm a person that can take a very long view with people rather than I've got to make him completely healthy, well and fully functioning in a few weeks. I don't even look at that. There is different ways to reach people's underlying layers. There was a

gentleman who used to come to me every week and his passion was restoring cars, claimed to not be religious, but he loved the art of restoring cars. And so our conversations revolved around cars and I could use lots of analogies. His lack of flexibility was the equivalent of not having a very well developed transmission in a car. He wasn't able to use his gears as the engine might have been strong enough but he couldn't put the energy in the right place. So this is just an example. He would like to have moved better but he was not in the beginning willing to recognize that this car, his body, needed to be improved. And so it's just about finding the language and it took, gosh, it took probably a couple of years of me before enough layers were there he began to recognize what was truly closer to his nature. I have been given the gift of patience and I actually find myself very patient with people because I do take a very long view. I mean it's my belief that people can have additional lifetimes although you should live this one because you're never going to get another one but I do feel that some lives are preparatory for things possible in the future. And they don't have to be gold medal winners in this life. They just need to be moving in the right direction. That's all that matters to me is that they're heading the right way. I do not care how fast they go.

Tommy: Well, the gift of patience is obviously a virtue that is hard to come by in this day and age, perhaps less and less so. I know it's something that I still struggle with and I'm constantly working to develop more of it in my life. In all seriousness, I recognize it as an incredible asset. I can see if you really truly have patience, it really is one of the greatest virtues out there and people in recovery are people who struggle with addiction particularly people who still smoke cigarettes seemed to have lost or it just really patience is so incredibly elusive to somebody that's constantly trying to leave the present moment.

Guru Prem: It is. By the way, it seems like all addictive behaviors, we are addicted to taking pleasures. Now the gift of being human is we're here to have pleasures but we have to sort of reframe them in to receiving pleasures. And there's a difference. I think it's from the Kabbalistic tradition that states something like this, "No pleasure should be taken," which is why they have blessings over just about everything. The idea is if you really enjoy, give thanks for it. As you learn to listen to your heart, you get permission to enjoy it and the way you tune in for permission, give it a blessing. Everything from dessert to sex, there should be some recognition that it's been offered to you to enjoy. If you just take it, your body starts to record these acts as a form of greed and it can become guilt and then it can become shame and then you're trapped in to the only way out of shame is more medicine. It becomes the numbing cycle. And so the art of patience, you can learn from nature. If you took a seed, let's for example take an acorn which you look at it, it doesn't look anything like an oak tree, not to most people. But assuming the soil is fertile, if you could plant that acorn in to the soil, what does the acorn do first? Does it rise to the skies in the heavens? Or does it move in to the darkness?

Tommy: It goes down at first.

Guru Prem: It goes down and it begin its rooting process and then the roots spread out and because the soil is fertile, the soil actually at the molecular level is actually moving. It's not static, I mean it look static to your eyes but it's definitely not. And here's the miracle of nature that we humans can really learn from. The roots do not seek nutrients. They just spread out. The soil, that mother, will bring to that acorn what it needs. You can have a ponderosa pine growing next door, different genetic structure, same soil, it's going to bring to it what it needs. The identity of the acorn is such that it will become an oak tree. It receives from the soil what it needs to eventually break through the surface and over time become a magnificent oak tree but the beginning is the same. That's the kind of patience you need to develop. Root, have faith that your amigo, that which guides your heart will be there as you allow yourself to receive the nourishment. I mean I jokingly say when I teach yoga fundamentally, it's a remothering process. People say, "Remothering?" I said the first thing we all need to learn is how to reconnect to our mom. You think it's something very esoteric. No, I mean the earth. We don't know how to sit. We don't know how to stand. God, a teacher complained to me about a year ago, "My students just can't sit still." And I said, "I think the problem is they don't know how to sit and you want them to be still and pay attention?" This inability to sit, there's this physical connectedness. There's an art of sitting. There's an art of standing but we are so compromised by our head forward lifestyles that we're losing more and more ability just to feel the earth. And so we're always moving about. That in itself is damaging to patience.

Tommy: Thank you, Guru Prem. We're coming to the end. Unfortunately, I could, well, maybe we'll do another 100 of these sometime. I could talk to you for a long time as I have and I never tire of our time together. Thank you. I'd like to wrap it up for folks in to a sort of final question. If someone out there is struggling, they can be struggling in acute ways which would make it probably unlikely that they're watching this but maybe there's a few people who's struggling not badly and they're watching this and really are desperate for help or they could just be people who are looking to improve their life to become more connected, maybe let go of some habits that are just a little bit challenging or that they've been wanting to let go for a long time, what could you suggest to these people? What is the pathway from darkness to life?

Guru Prem: Well, as I said it's really just three real steps in this and the first one is the recognition or you can use the acknowledgment, where am I? If you're already satisfied in the ease, well, you're probably not watching this necessarily or you might be just because you want to help others, but you have to reckon are you at your plateau or possibly your bottom? I mean there are thousands of people I see daily who would need, could benefit for my assistance but I can't cross the street and say, "You need to make an appointment with me." I mean I could stop, I could pick and blindfold it and I'm sure I can be a value but they have to come to the point of recognition. Then they're going to with that they will hear that calling that either gets them to a 12-step meeting or some type of rehab or under some circumstances where there is some risk with this, there's an absolute intervention, but for the most part, people have to come to it on their own and make that small but giant step, physically small step but spiritually huge. Then they can begin their reclamation process, reclaiming the relationship to their truer

self, the ease, and they need to do it in a congregation of others who are supportive and when there's little light of the ease shining so that people know that it's possible. There's no point in going to a place where no one has any success at happiness because being in that consciousness is so contagious. Why would you want to be in a meeting of people that are all a hundred percent depressed? You have to have at least one person, one person with the light. The rest can be in the great struggle. From there you get to the realization and with each realization you get to reassess, okay, what's next? Because there's always something next. And if you're fully enlightened being, you get to hang around and help as many others get through that what's next.

Tommy: Well, Guru Prem, thank you so much. Without gushing on film just from my heart, thank you for all the gifts and for everything and for your presence today at Recovery 2.0 Fall Conference 2013. Guru Prem, how can people find your books and connect with you outside of this forum?

Guru Prem: Well, they can find the books, if you go to DivineAlignment.com, you can find them there. They're certainly distributed places like SpiritVoyage.com. I'm kind of easy to find. Just type my name. Probably google my name, Guru Prem Khalsa, I'm sure I'd come up pretty fast. Somebody is meant to find—I try to make myself available.

Tommy: Well, thank you, Guru Prem. Wishing you a wonderful day and obviously we'll be connecting shortly here but down the road, I'm sure you'll be hearing from lots of people and this interview is just amazing. Full gratitude to you. Have a wonderful day.

Guru Prem: Thank you, Tommy.

Tommy: Satnam.

Guru Prem: Satnam.