

Advanced Recovery Tools: The Compass and the Map

Recovery 2.0 Interviews Rolf Gates

Tommy: Welcome to the Recovery 2.0 Beyond Addiction Conference. I'm your host Tommy Rosen, and I'm so pleased to be speaking once again with Rolf Gates. Rolf is a beloved and acclaimed yoga teacher who conducts 200 and 500 hour yoga intensives and teacher trainings throughout the United States and abroad. He's a former US airborne ranger with over two decades of experience with meditation and recovery. Rolf authored the wildly popular book on yoga philosophy called *Meditations From The Mat, Daily Reflections on The Path of Yoga*, and he's been featured in *Yoga Journal, Natural Health, People Magazine, and Travel and Leisure* to name but a few. Rolf has just written a new book for Random House which will be out in the fall of 2015 called *Meditations On Intention and Being*, so we will look forward to that. Rolf, thank you so much for taking the time to share your wisdom, strength, hope, experience, with the Recovery 2.0 audience; welcome.

Rolf: Oh, thank you Tommy, it's always a real pleasure to be here.

Tommy: So Rolf, I want to focus today . . . on really . . . the sweet spot of . . . well, what's been your career . . . really, since the explosion of yoga in the United States, which has been sharing the teachings of yoga . . . to people . . . in a variety of different formats, and we can start today . . . with sort of your reflections on . . . what has happened in the yoga scene in the United States, since you began because I'd like to give people that context of what's really gone on here.

Rolf: Okay, well, I think you know when I started practicing yoga it was '93, '94 . . . and it was still a very small . . . kind of college town, kind of thing you where you'd have a small room somewhere . . . in a college town where four or five people would show up for a class. You know and that was pretty much state of the art. What happened was I was living in Cambridge Massachusetts, and would pretty much wait till the yoga was at the Adult Education Center and you'd had to sign up for the Tuesday night class, eight nights across you know the spectrum. I think in LA it was probably different, in New York, they already had it, some studios . . ., but in the rest of the country, it was a very small esoteric thing.

I just happened to you know the 11 Step of . . . the 12 Step was that you sought through prayer and meditation; you know conscious contact with god as you understood god.

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So when I was about a year and a half sober, I'd . . . bought like a random meditation book, it was as a Zen book, *Zen Mind Beginners Mind*, I felt it was appropriate because I was a beginner. So I started . . . I started reading it and it came in these little bite size pieces, and I'd read a little bit, and I'd sit for 20 minutes, and it made a huge difference. So . . . I became . . . and you know I really this was like, "Okay, this is the 11 Step, I'm going to develop the meditation practice." And I kind of took to it pretty quickly, and . . . I remember a friend of mine . . . got into a car with me that I you know, I was picking him up to go to a meeting, and he was like, "Rolf, what happened to your car?" Because my car used to be a mess, and . . . I said, "Meditation," in just a very short amount of time . . . meditation had you know . . . I say that people will tend to be cruising about life with a mind that's says 60 miles an hour. And what you're shooting for is like under 20 . . . and meditation took me from say 60 to 45 very quickly, and that's why my car was suddenly clean; all of a sudden I had the bandwidth to stop and pay attention to my car and like pick up a little bit. You know at 60 miles an hour, who has the time? You know, but at 45 I started to have a little more time to invest in kind of long-term solutions for things you know, and to then invest in the quality of life.

Tommy: That's really an amazing idea that you're bringing up that . . . if you spend time meditating you'll actually have more time seemingly available to you in your life. There's a great quote actually . . . I think somebody comes to the Buddha and says . . . "You know I don't have the time, I don't have 20 minutes to . . . to meditate today." And the Buddha says, "Well, if you don't have 20 minutes to meditate today, then definitely meditate for an hour." You know.

Rolf: (Laughing) Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Tommy: Like an idea.

Rolf: Absolutely, and that's what I discovered and I keep discovering. So meditation was immediately accessible to me, not that it was easy . . . you know, or that I succeeded every time I sat, but in terms of feeling a quality of life enhancement, that was available to me immediately. It made a lot of sense, it made a lot of sense that as an addict, I'd want to like calm down, and I'd want to spend time calming down without that this would be an activity that an addict enjoy you know it would be – just take a little time like let them chill out you know. So the idea of yoga poses . . . made perfect sense to me, this idea of sacred movement, it was like "Wow! This is going to be really cool you know." So I entered the scene you know two three years sober when yoga was very small, and I kind of learned yoga, and . . . when it was a fringe activity at least in the Boston area, you know it was very few people who were doing it. You know my wife and I would drive to New York City, take a class, and then drive home.

Tommy: (Laughing) Wow!

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Rolf: Yeah. I mean it was like you know, and it was the only place (inaudible) where we'd go and they were on Lafayette Street, and it was the only place that we could . . . buy books about yoga. So is that in the (inaudible) bookstore in the back shear, so we drive to New York, take class, buy some books, buy some videos, and go home. You know and that was like you know yoga in America. I got training in '97 and then . . . '99, I started directing the first drop in Vinyasa Studio in Boston, and it took off immediately. And what I think happened is . . . the classes I was taking in like '93, '94 in Boston, were more meditative and kind of relaxing, and Vinyasa was an athletic workout. And when yoga started to provide people with a meaningful impactful exercise system as well as the relaxing, so you combine the kind of the . . . training of the mind that you got from meditation was some basically kicked butt exercise, boom! And yoga went from . . . one million people to 25 million people in about 10 years, and I really believe that . . . you know there's a lot more in yoga than a vigorous Vinyasa class I mean there's main more dimensions to it.

But the vehicle for a widespread adaption of yoga was the invention of . . . you know and I describe this shocking matte . . . from the yoga works people who trained the next level, the next generation, they trained the Band Baptiste, they trained the Brian Cast, all those folks could train by them in highly deliver of Vinyasa class. And they as far as I know they were the ones who designed what we call Vinyasa in America. And I just watched – people loved it, you're getting a workout. You're also getting a meditation in the sense that you're collecting and unifying the mind, you're brining your attention into the present moment, into the body, into the breath which is the first foundation of mindfulness. And you're getting the relief that comes when you withdraw your attention from the story of me and you put it in the present moment. You do that for a while. So people could just come and . . . and then on top of that the science of asana is very impactful in terms of your health and wellness.

So the moment people walk out of class they feel better. When you go to class and you feel better, people are getting you know incredible . . . you know . . . the back issues are . . . thyroid issues . . . PMS, migraines, all kinds of anecdotal stuff going on for people, and then the other thing is that you get this reset button. So you come in with the class with these intractable issues like, "I cannot imagine how this will ever be better . . ." walk out of class you know like, "Wait, I think I get a sense of how this could be better." You know kind of actions are being made that you couldn't make any other way, you are hitting a profound reset buttons. People just love it and they still you know, it's still gain busters. I feel like the market in the yoga it just keeps getting bigger. And it's a wonderful opportunity for us . . . to take that what's happening in the yoga classroom and direct it to a more – you know and I think this is what Recovery 2.0 is doing, is it's taking that incredible dynamic that's happening in America called Yoga in America, and it's saying, "Well, where could this? How can we take this and direct it?" You know where I'm trying to go in my work is prisons and working with veterans you know, and before that, that how we met was working with addicts.

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Tommy: Right. Now, on that topic, however you – you know in your early days of practice actually, the physical practice of yoga, how would you say that Yoga Asana was a part of, or you know a key element in your recovery from addiction?

Rolf: Well, I think that . . . addiction are beliefs that you're . . . thinking over and over again. You know, ways of interpreting situations, ways of seeing the world, a way – you're affirming something over and over again, like, "I am this person who needs this solution, over and over again, I am this person who needs this solution." And you can buy it actually, you know I think most of us – I ended up – did the correlation between addiction and trauma is high. So you have all these traumatic images, potentially for me I had intrusive what they call intrusive thoughts, I had intrusive traumatic images that would flash back you know. So I had – I had classic PTSD . . . symptoms on . . . and then I had the whole layer of addictive obsession and compulsion, so all of this mental activity is going to have an emotional component, an energetic component, and a physical component.

So by the time I got sober, my physical body and my emotion and energetic bodies were a mess, and they were full of pain, and suffering, and confusion, and disconnection, and you know and broken heartedness. So all of this is like – you know I'm 28 years old too. Well, I got sober when I was 26 but it got close to 28 when I started doing yoga. So I'm very young, I'm a young 20, I'm an arrested developed, it's one of my 14 year old and 20 year's old body, dealing with like a lifetime of grief and suffering. So all that's kind of jumbled up in there and I'm trying to calm down (laughing). So you can see that like I'm going to need a vehicle for processing a lifetime of suffering . . . and these poses are where I – the yoga poses where I found that vehicle is that you are able to kind of both kind of . . . purify and release tensions, but also integrate . . . experiences and understandings the same time. You know so it's both the release of things, you know letting go of things you need to let go of, but there's also an integration and understanding and a compassion for yourself and for your experience that just happens so is the process of the poses. It's unbelievable – it's an unbelievable experience of coming home.

Tommy: Thank you so much wow, Rolf. It's often said that . . . people who struggle with addition . . . also struggle with . . . impatience in the sense of . . . a skewed relationship with time. And recently I had a sponsee who said to me . . . "Tommy I'm . . . I'm 38 years old, and I can't wait for the future to come. Like I'm actually craving the future, but at the same time I have a feeling where I feel like I'm behind . . . like I've missed a lot and I somehow I have to catch up." What a conundrum that is, like you really . . . you know if that's your feeling like I'm behind but I can't wait for the future to get here, well, there's an issue there . . . in your relationship with time. Can you speak a little bit about time and your perception of it as it changes through a yoga practice, and obviously I know that you have a very strong meditation, dedicated meditation practice. So that's got to do something to your perception of time.

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Rolf: Yeah. I mean I would say that I actually describe at the last two stages of awakening in the yoga, the second the last is timeless awareness, and the final one is selfless awareness. So you literally are in the present moment not relative to times and no longer relevant to self you know, you're just present for what's happening. The world – life is no longer a commentary on you, you know you're just having the experience. So I think that you begin by becoming you know the poses and the meditation is going to allow you to ease back into the present moment. I think that sound – you know that sounds actually quite familiar, that 38 year old is not out of the ordinary you know . . . you know in terms of like early recovery or you know first 10 years of recovery.

And what I would say is that that's someone who has . . . no sense of what the present moment has to offer. So it's almost like you're asking someone to experience something they did not – that a) they forgotten they ever experienced, b) they don't understand the value of, and that's one of the reasons why yoga poses have been so valuable for people is they're kind of trick you in the present moment awareness. They're kind of like, "I'm going to do yoga, right?" And what happens doing yoga is being present in the felt experience of the body and the breathe, and you can't be present and the felt experience of body and breath without being present for the felt experience of life itself of the moment. And you're being introduced to something which is essentially what we're all looking for, which is you know the felt experience of life itself, also to be in choicless awareness of it, meaning you're in the present moment without a gaining idea, you don't want anything from it, you're just in your being in the present moment which is – which is our primal relationship you know.

So how we're being with the present moment is how we're being with everything else. So as we ease back into that relationship, we're easing back into our ability to be with each other, you know. And time I think stops being . . . it's not so relevant in the sense that you know, yeah, you've got to make plans, and there are Tuesdays and Thursdays and according to me and my son (inaudible) effort, my eight year old is still like, "Is it Friday, when is Friday?" (Laughing) At least he's like you know . . . so there's some relevance to time in a sense of like planning, but in terms of our actual experience of life, it's just a construct you know, and what we're aiming at in you know with yoga isn't you know, is direct experience to the present moment, and what you find is there's no time there. The moment is an internal . . . is eternity itself, the moment is just the moment, it's not you know, it's not Monday, it's not Tuesday, it's not 2014, it's just the present moment. Eckhart Tolle says, "Ask an hour what time it is."

So you move out of that kind of bondage, out about the bondage itself, that guy is the bondage of time. And imagine how nice it would be to be like, "Yeah," his future is bright, you can tell that 38 year old I think his future is bright, and in the way he's going to know how bright his future is, is to feel how bright his present is. But his present is bright.

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Tommy: Now, Rolf, thank you. Rolf, do you find that . . . there are characteristics about people who struggle with severe addiction that are different . . . and that separate them from other human beings, or is it just that . . . everybody is struggling sort of with the human condition . . . and one subset of that struggle are people who struggle with sort of addictive tendencies. Can you spread some light on that?

Rolf: I think it's both, I mean I think that . . . by and large the simplest way to understand addiction is it's just a strategy, it's like one more strategy for – you know, the moment you get sober you realize, you know, okay, this person was used to drugs and alcohol, this person is using the intensity of work, and this person is using you know the intensity or the . . . you know the numbing of . . . serial relationships you know, or drama, you know it's this person uses drama. This person uses a victim story you know, and just a drama of being a victim, so we're all . . . the one way of looking at addictions is its just another . . . strategy . . . for getting by, for getting through with a life that's not working. I would also add to that that it seems as though . . . addicts in general have experienced some sort of you know deeper trauma in their life, some deeper . . . violation of their basic trust in life.

Like I was talking to someone recently and you know about they experienced their parents are breaking up, and there is abuse taking place, so between those two experiences, there's – you lose faith in life itself. Where do you go from there? Now life is something to be endured, it's not something to be trusted or valued; it's something to be gotten through. So this is the 38 year old who's not and hasn't thought of life being something you want to rest in and feel into for decades, you know because life isn't something you're – you can, it's not available, for many children, certainly for growing up, it wasn't available for me to rest in life, life was hard. You know I think childhood is . . . you know for many acts, childhood is not a great place to be. And getting out of that place, I could not – I can remember my first time getting high, and like the level of joy I had I'm like, "Wow! This is a reliable escape from life. You know this is a good thing."

Tommy: Yeah, we share that.

Rolf: You know (laughing) that's like – there's some joy there, and it's like, "I found the answer." And I also remember . . . you know getting high on LSD and be like, "Oh, this what they were talking about."

Tommy: (Laughing) Right.

Rolf: You see up the empty you know (laughing) and its like, "Oh, this is the good stuff, right?"

Tommy: Right.

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Rolf: This is an enormous escape from life. So I think the addict is someone who – who’s basic relationship to life has been violated and this is why a felt experience is so powerful for the recovering addict, to have a not just an intellectual understanding that life is good you know, or . . . that we should invest from a place of faith, but like, “Well, why should I invest in you know a place of faith in life?” It’s like, “Well, you know why don’t you try feeling life instead of thinking about life?” And yoga is really about moving from thinking to feeling.

Tommy: Yes. Thank you so much Rolf. You gave a wonderful teaching this past year that I was present for and I’d like to invoke it now. And it was the teaching of the compass and the map, and I wonder if you could . . . share that with the Recovery 2.0 community.

Rolf: Certainly. You know as I like . . . as I . . . keep working with people, there’s two basic . . . ways that I support people. You know the first is in establishing it for themselves what I’m using the word compass because I was a military guy and we had a map and a compass, and you – and each had it’s own particular purpose for getting you from where you want to interpreting getting where you wanted to be. So you know . . . one of the principles that my life has kind of become (inaudible), is a strong faith in the individual’s ability to kind of sort herself out, or himself out that really what I’m from – what we see in the 12 Step program, what you see on the yoga mat is at the end of the day you need some supports, but the real vehicle for change in your life, the real agent of change, the real healer in your life is your own will. I mean where the purity of your heart’s intention, the wisdom of your own mind, your ability to actually make good choices based – if you’re given some support, you’re going to start making some really good choices. I mean I was very sick and very dying when I went to AA, and they gave me . . . just a little support and I started making a lot better choices you know.

So that’s the premises that you’ve got is that each of us has this an unbelievable ability to make like sound choices for the highest good of all not just for ourselves, but for those the people in our life. And the compass is a set of practices that yoga provides us, they are ancient . . . you know these are straight from the teachings of the Buddha, from Patanjali . . . it the compass has three primary facets that I – that yoga offers people that I kind of teaches . . . we want to cultivate an ethical life. This idea of . . . we maintain our freedoms through healthy self boundaries. We maintain our freedoms through healthy self boundaries and this is what – so when people are saying, “Well, what are ethics? What are the healthy self boundaries, right?” And I like that phrase because it means it’s not – no one is going to prescribe for you your healthy self boundaries, you’ve got to arrive at them yourself, but there’s a specific role in this compass of having boundaries that you have claimed and committed to prior to entering into a situation.

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So when you think about a compass, a compass is there for us to navigate life, I'm going to make good choices using this compass. So one of the ways to make good choices is we have commitments we make prior to showing up. Like for me the basic boundaries in my life are nonviolence, kindness, honesty, and generosity, and these are commitments that I've made before I show up anywhere. So doesn't really matter like what's the situation there? Who am I speaking to? I'm committed to unconditional with any person I meet to those that make you know, so . . . I'm on that playing field before anything else goes down, and I have made a hearts commitment you know to choosing this – these are my choices you know, it's going to you know, if it doesn't fall under those four categories, then it's not a choice that's available to me. And by making that commitment ahead of time, I'm already on you know heading in the right direction.

Tommy: So those are your ethics?

Rolf: Those are my ethics.

Tommy: Okay.

Rolf: Yeah, so those are the healthy self boundaries, and it's this idea of you commit to them before you need them, you don't like seek them out afterwards. It's like you commit to them and you practice living into them, you can get better at it. Another thing is if you – you don't have to get perfect, it's progress and not perfection. If you commit to these, you commit to these ethical . . . you make these ethical commitments then you practice them one day at a time, you get better at them, you start to see the value of them.

Tommy: Just quickly on that point, a lot of people . . . will set . . . you know set down some ethics that they choose to live by, and fall short and then drop into sort of the guilt shame . . . thing. And again, it is progress not perfection, but that's such an issue I think for people who are actually trying to walk a spiritual path like . . . the fear has been you know I've never really set down ethics for myself, and if I do that now, boy, I'm going to have to live up to those ethics, and what happens if I don't? So what happens when people don't live up to the ethics that they've set down for themselves?

Rolf: That's a really good question . . . Tommy. I think it's . . . you know the response to that is that first of all why do you . . . you know adhere to ethical boundaries? It's primarily it's from self compassion. It's like you reflect on well, you know whenever I've done real harm to myself you know, what causes real to myself? And out of that to me reflection means sort of to have your boundaries you know. An example would be . . . it doesn't seem like a lot, but if I'm rude to people, if I'm kind of . . . impatient with them, it hurts me a lot. You know, two seconds of like testing this you know with the person sitting me at a restaurant is it creates a half hour of like guilt and remorse you know.

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So that would be a good place to begin looking at some like a commitment to nonviolence and kindness, you know. So to me the point and the role of ethics in your life is they are actually an expression of compassion for yourself like these are the stones I just don't want to touch in my life, I've touched these stones in the past, they really – it hurts me, they are not – what I've discovered about myself is there is a great harm than me . . . it expresses itself through kindness as opposed to you know ill will. And if I act in ill will I cause harm to myself, so you're choosing these – this is not a moralistic thing. And this is why ethics is such a difficult . . . topic in our culture because ethics has kind of – have flown from these I think we're oppressive and repressive religious paradigms you know, and they've been the providence of religion as opposed to say self care.

Tommy: Yes.

Rolf: But I would say that we can – so I'm taking ethics out of that context and putting it into the kind of wellness context and saying, you know wellness is, is not looking over your shoulder. Like when you go to like you know have a moment, you're not worrying about what you did yesterday, you get to like you have peace of heart and peace of mind, that's wellness. And ethics kind of creates that clean slate in your rearview mirror like you just – you may not have won at the game of life on a given day, you know things go – that you sometimes you win sometimes you lose, but you can know you did right by yourself and the people in your life, you did what you could, you know. It also creates sustainability in relationships, so the whole point of ethics is self compassion, it's not about living up to an external ideal, it's about learning how to take care of yourself.

Tommy: And of course if ever you do fall short, you're going to have another opportunity to practice.

Rolf: Right. And it's like – I think it's a . . . all this stuff is grown up stuff. If you're doing grown up stuff, first of all you're not going get a big head because the reason you're practicing ethics is because you didn't before, right? (Laughing) Right, it's like . . . you wouldn't be prioritizing this stuff if you hadn't already like found out what happens when you don't prioritize this stuff, so there's no need to get a big head about it right? The second piece is you know you're soberly assessing the fact that all of our research in the neural plasticity is it's going to take a while to develop a new habit and new ways of being, so as much as you make this commitment, there's also – that's why the self compassion is so important.

Tommy: Thank you.

Rolf: Give you two other pieces to the compass, the next is . . . the practices of awakening. So you've got that you're cultivating . . . this nonviolent – when we're

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talking about ethics, we're really talking about cultivating nonviolent life principles you know. And I would say nonviolence loving life principles, abundant, generous. The next piece in your compass is learning how to be here and not in the story of being here, and this is where meditation Prony Oman and Osna come in, is you got your ethical balls you know, you get that ball in the air and then you start to really develop as – the phrase of the image that comes to mind is when the Buddha sat down to awaken, the first he did was touch the earth. So you're coming out of the clouds of manmade living, and you're touching the present moment, you're touching the earth.

So the second part of your compass is this is cultivating present moment awareness with basically with as much constancy and steadiness as you can. You know just with great faithfulness and care, called touching the earth. The phrase that I use when I center people is touch the earth and open your heart, and as your heart opens your mind gets to listen. So you're touching the earth with an open heart and a mind that's listening, and you're doing that to the best of your ability one day at a time, and you're going to matter how that's going to balance out the application of ethics, right? How the self compassion and the compassion not just for yourself, but think of the dark side of ethics, you start judging everybody, you know. You're being all ethical but everyone else is like, heh, has their head up their butts, and it's like you know actually if you're in that – if you're touching the earth with a heart that's open and a mind that's listening, you're in that kind of grownup compassion for yourself and others, and your ethics are in a measure, you're not measuring people with your ethics to your – the ethics are a way just to help you make good choices, and that's the only – it's the only point they have, is that they're there help to make the choices. Help you make choices that really actually honor the relationships that you're in.

The final piece is the cultivation of insight it's called Prajna P-R-A-J-N-A it's a poly word, and it's got two – I define it as having two aspects. The first aspect is just the acknowledgement that everyone has the ability to gain insight into you know how life – what the truth of the way things are. And . . . to me insight is the human capacity for evolution in this lifetime that we can make this evolutionary leaps of understanding and maybe bears are doing it, and raccoons are doing it, but I think it's a unique capacity for human beings to take whatever you know, think of how many generations line up to this, and then our parents educate us and our civilization – so we get kind of like the consciousness package of our time and place. Now, I was born in February '64 you get that – and then and this is the way things are. And then in the laboratory of your own life you're able to realize you know gain new perspective, gain true insight.

So the first aspect of this part of the compass is . . . to . . . force rightly acknowledge a firm and cultivate your own capacity to see things. I kind of say it's like you've been living in the first floor and you're on a capacity to go to the third floor look down and see things differently. And with this ability, inside allows us in a way out of the box is that we painted ourselves into you know. So this is a natural evolutionary ability that human

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beings have. So with the application of ethics and the application of . . . the practices of awakening, you're kind of setting the stage for true insight into the way things are like how do I love well? How do I have wise speech? How do I . . . have a dream and make it real? You know, when do I go left, and when do I go right? And like have insight into how do I help someone in pain? You know, and what does this person need – you know, how can I support this person now? And insight is that kind intuitive ability you know what they say in the big book . . . we will before we are half way through, right? What's that one that is . . . ?

Tommy: We will be amazed before we are halfway through.

Rolf: We may be amazed before we're halfway through.

Tommy: If we are painstaking about this phase of our development.

Rolf: Right. And then there's that moment where it says . . . we will under – there's an honor that says inside component to that. So there is a . . .

Tommy: We will never regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it . . . we will understand serenity and no peace?

Rolf: Yes. Something used to baffle us.

Tommy: No matter . . . oh, we will intuitively know how to . . . handle situations which used to baffle us.

Rolf: This is Prajna.

Tommy: Yes.

Rolf: You know we set the stage for that. So they are halfway through before they intuitively know; there's work that we do to cultivate this intuitive knowing, and that's Prajna. So we do the work of ethics and awakening and we have you know we set the stage for intuitive knowing. The second piece of Prajna is . . . that you know there are two – is the inside of others. So the in 12 Step program, you're sitting there and you share your experience, strength, and hope. You experience how you intuitively knowing what used to baffle you. But then you spend the rest of the meeting listening to other people talk about how they intuitively know how to solve problems that used to baffle them, and if nothing else, how they cannot drink one day at a time which was a pretty baffling thing when you were active, right?

So the cultivation of insight is a cultivation of your own, but it's also a passion for listening to the inside of others, so really cultivating like whether you're reading a book,

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whether you're going to a lecture, or whether you're going to a meeting and hearing story the other points of you, it's like you develop a passion for this human evolutionary capacity. And between those three practices . . . what you discover is the ability to make a good choice. Okay, so that's your compass, and you put it into the life and these are practices that you cultivate everyday. The map is you are . . . to me . . . it's the cultivation of your imagination, your visionary capacity. So you know someone newly sober is they're just working on their compass, you know.

Like when I came its like how do you have a good attitude? How do you have a good day? How do you show up for work and not be a jerk? Like for me that was like a five year process you know. How will I not alienate my boss with my attitude you know? I had – I was baffled, I was baffled by that. I mean so I had to – there was a lot of preparing my intuitive knowing of how not to alienate my boss you know. How to be right sized in a situation you know, these were things that baffled me you know the sobriety. And still to this day you know I . . . don't take for granted you know. But you're just kind of working on your compass and what you think about your first five years of sobriety is you're only starting to get a sense of where you want all these to go. But at some point you know . . . if we're not enlisting our visionary ability, our ability to imagine, you know our ability to . . . touch in with our hearts desires, and to turn our hearts desires into a vision.

So if you can think about the last chapter in *Vision For You*, that kind of go through all the chapters in the life of *Vision for You*, it speaks to the visionary and necessity for vision. I think in human happiness we – it's not enough for us to kind of live out the dreams of our parents, or the expectations of our community and stuff, we have to have our own vision and feel that we are meaningfully moving towards it. So for me the map is the work I do with people, to have them basically write down their stuff. I mean Deepak Chopra taught me this in the *Seven Spiritual Laws to Success*, it's like you write down your hearts desires, and you keep that list with you. And however you do it, there's a great Mark Allan who wrote the work – the book *Visionary Business* . . . he talks about the ideal scene you know which is a big tree, this is a three to five page paper where you put yourself up five or 10 years from now, what – who do you want to be? What kind of experience do you want to have?

But you know . . . as much as I think you know people need to develop a present moment awareness, you know they need to eat right and get plenty of sleep, right? I think they need to be able – they need to imagine, they need to dream, you know and they need to believe that imagining and dreaming directs to a life and sends to a life in a direction. So when I work with people, you know I don't care if I have – if I'm working with them for a weekend, if I'm working with them for a week, if I'm working with them for a year, there's going to be a visionary aspect to what we do, where we put thought on paper and we give our word to our vision. You know and what that offers you is a map, so you know . . . to wrap that up, what I teach people is you got this vision for

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yourself and I don't have the time you know to give it enough credit that you know I was encouraged to do this 20 years ago.

And whenever I look at old notebooks where I was doing my vision work, I mean we all know this right, I haven't seen that yet, seeing the acknowledgments happening, you go to your old notebooks from five years ago and it's stunning how what you wrote you wanted your life to be is the way your life is, you know. I'm sitting in the house that I wrote about in 2007, you know I have the view that I wanted, I have the garden that I wanted, you know it's like . . . So this is a powerful thing to write down who you want to be, what kind of experience you want to have, but then how do you get there? And then here is the last thing Tommy, I think it's really important is that . . . is that you write down your vision. And Tony Robin said, "The point of a goal is the person you've become on the way to achieving it," so now you write down your vision. So you kind of have this goal you know, and I'd – life is going to start moving in that direction, you write your stuff down, life is going to start moving.

But what's the true value in this? It's that what's happened is by writing down your stuff and your life is moving in that direction, now you're literally on the train of your dreams like you're literally in the train of your dreams, it couldn't be like you know it could be like first year of your college and your dream is to be a doctor, but you still have a train of your dreams, right? What's the true value of this? It's like well, now you have your curriculum . . . because your life is going to move in that direction, but the real quality of life isn't what you're doing, it's how you're being. And this is a what – these circles back to your compass, so as you're moving through, your trotting a road at a happy destiny, you're just – you're feeling with each day as it comes, as you move in the direction of your dreams. It's like, how do you meet each moment? How do you treat people in your life? How do you make your choices, you know? How do you show up for the challenges? How do you show up for the victories? That's all the compass work, that's all the validation of the principles you're living your life by, you know. So there's this beautiful relationship between the kind of the day-to-day work of your compass and a larger vision of your map. So I love that interaction.

Tommy: Something tells me that you didn't necessarily think this clearly when you were back using?

Rolf: No, I wasn't thinking much at all, like whenever I look back on that time I . . . I was reacting a lot . . . I had a phenomena of craving, not just around addiction, but I had a craving to get out of the pain I was in and kind of get out of the life that I was in. So you know that was pretty much my experience.

Tommy: Yes. I'm so grateful to talk to you Rolf, and the message that you carry today . . . and in general in your life and in your work is really powerful for me and countless others.

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Rolf: Thank you.

Tommy: I can tell you that beyond certainty. And . . . the vision that you put forth today of . . . the compass and the map, the map and the compass is just an incredible vision that I personally could be returning to a lot. So thank you so much.

Rolf: Oh, you're welcome, welcome.

Tommy: I'm . . . really grateful and . . . I know that people . . . in the Recovery 2.0 community . . . most of them know you by this point, but for those who don't, how can they connect with you and your work and maybe . . . even join us on a future conference somewhere?

Rolf: Well, you know we have the Yoga Recovery Conferences that we do at Aslan and Capallo. We have the . . . Recovery Conference at Capallo this year . . . May 2015. Aslan's got some work they're doing, so I don't think we'll be able to do our fall – we've done the last five falls, and we have every intention of continuing to do the fall retreat, our conference at Aslan's, so we'll pick back up again in 2016. But that's something that you know you and I both love doing, and it's . . . I got to tell you it's a remarkable experience for people in recovery to spend time you know a five day period with other people in a beautiful setting kind of practicing yoga, and talking recovery . . . and living recovery. You know if you go to my website . . . at this point you know it's very so much your life, and there are so much things – I'm doing work with veterans. We've got a program called – where it's basically it's called Vets Helping Vets, and . . . I'm using a 200 hour training to help . . . I train vets and active duty personnel to do . . . to become yoga teachers. So they (inaudible)–

Tommy: Wow!

Rolf: So they can in turn help other people, and that's a donation only program. We also . . . you know on my website I mean . . . this year I'll be in Chicago, and I'll be in New Haven, with Heidi . . . I know I'm going to be in those two places doing trainings . . .

Tommy: With Heidi Sormaz?

Rolf: Yes. And . . . I also have . . . we also are going to be doing – I'll be at the Yoga Journal Conference in the spring in San Diego. Then the big news is my wife and I both have books coming out. Mariam's book . . . *Good Night Yoga*, is already on preorder on the amazon.com, so it's *Good Night Yoga* from Mariam Gates. Her book will come out . . . April 1st . . . and my book . . . *Intention – The Meditations on Intention Being* will come out in the fall of 2015, and that's another daily reflections book like *Meditations From The Mat*. And it's been a lot of work, we put a lot of – I'm working my – I'm doing

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my rewrites right now . . . but it's just some exciting . . . time in our life for both of us to be working on a book at the same time.

Tommy: Yes, beautiful. Well, people are going to come looking for that book I know as they've come for the first one they'll come for the next one too.

Rolf: Thank you.

Tommy: Thank you Rolf, so much love to you and I look forward personally–

Rolf: Well, absolutely.

Tommy: Connecting really soon.

Rolf: Okay. Namaste.

Tommy: Namaste.