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Season 06. Episode 07

## Podcast Title: A dialogue with Adam and Tony on vital matters - Part 2

This is episode 6 (Part 2 of 2) of season 6.

This article now takes us to part two of the dialogue between two young recovering men, Adam, 32, clean and sober two years and Tony, 30, with over four years of sobriety under his belt.

Tony: " Adam, you were going to share those moments when the light came on and you gained yet another insight that inspired you to continue your journey. perhaps even accelerated your ride upwards".

Adam: " It seemed to come as a flash that I did not have to try to stay sober forever. I only had to stay sober today. Because it is always today. Then I realized that in AA we talk about One Day at a Time for a reason. If we live one day at a time, we do not have to carry the

worry about staying sober tomorrow. Nor do we wreck our day by living in tomorrow.

Then, as I explored this thought further, I came to understand that the essence of meditation - also taught as an important component of recovery - is all about present moment awareness, and that being fully present in sober life is a huge gift. Present moment awareness has been taught by many gurus throughout the centuries, from the Buddha, to Jesus, and by spiritual teachers of today such as Eckhart Tolle.

Therefore, living in the here and now is a desirable and healthy state of being".

Tony: "But there's a catch".

Adam: "There's a line between planning for the future - which I have to do- and living there. I plan today for the future, but I do not play the video with me in it. It's hard to imagine at first but if you learn the art of it, it's cool to gain a sense of detachment between here and there".

Tony: " Talk about the antidote to instant gratification."

Adam: " So even though I try to live in the Now, I am sometimes tripped up by the desire to have it Now. Living in the Here and Now does not mean I have to indulge my desire to have it right now. I try to think ahead, yes, just enough ahead to think about the consequences of my actions.

Oddly enough, many of my instant needs centre around my anger. I now think of the saying that one moment of expressed anger toward another can lead to a thousand days of regret. Taking another person's feelings into account helps me grow as an empathetic human being. It's part of the selflessness we are taught in our recovery program.

I never, ever, considered the effect that my instant and unprovoked explosion of hostility could cause another person profound pain. Especially if that person loves me. The closer you are, the more likely you are to know which nasty buttons to push. And I now realize that I have absolutely no right to inflict pain onto an innocent person. Even if that person is irritating me.

I also come to believe that it is OK to be irritated every now and then, so long as I do not cross the line over to hostility or resentment which I might carry for more than a moment; it could last for days if I do not pray to have my Higher Power lift it off my shoulders".

Tony: " Which brings us to another flash moment".

Adam: " I love the line 'I was blind but now I can see'. I do not know where exactly that comes from, but it sounds biblical. Until I found my own definition of a Higher Power, and that took a while, I thought I had to do it on my own, maybe not entirely because I had the fellowship of AA, but the point is that I was talking to myself a lot. And I would end up trying to figure stuff out in my head. Then my sponsor pointed out a passage from a wise man who said that I should seek faith so that I would gain understanding, to not seek understanding so that I would attain faith. That approach had me stuck in my head, and I had to make the journey from my head to my heart. Then when I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity, everything changed for the better. The burden of having to do it myself was totally lifted and now I can see, I am free.

This is the most important of the Vital Matters because without that insight, I'd still be insane, and out there, a menace to society".

Tony: " Another insight you shared with me earlier is the paradox of surrender equals victory and discipline equals liberation".

Adam: " My thinking has changed 180 degrees. I never thought that if surrendered my old ways of thinking that I would gain victory over alcohol, at least one day at a time. I also surrender to a Higher Power who guides my thinking.

Then I want to say something about self- love. Love of self is not what it sounds like. It is not selfishness which is defined as doing whatever the heck I want regardless of whom I hurt. Self-love is about self-respect. Taking care of my body and soul, and it means practicing the disciplines that ultimately liberate me, unshackle me from the chains of slavery to alcohol, and from the sick thinking that comes with it".

What we learned from the dialogue on Vital Matters between Adam and Tony is that:

1. Living one day at a time eases the fear of having to stay sober forever, as it focuses one on the here and now.
2. Connected to that idea is the peace that comes with attaining present-moment awareness, a concept that has been taught over the centuries and applicable to today, right now.
3. Perhaps the most Vital of matters is the journey from the head to the heart, born of seeking faith to gain understanding, and not the other way around.
4. The paradox of achieving victory in surrender and realizing liberation in discipline is a puzzle at first until we understand that surrender means giving up our old ways of thinking and that self-discipline will liberate us from the shackles imposed by the slavery of addiction.