

Interview with J.R. Maxon, author of *ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity*

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to interview J. R. Maxon, who is here to talk about his new novel “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity.”

J. R. Maxon holds both Bachelor and Masters of Science Degrees in geology that culminated in a career in the oil and gas industry as a Certified Petroleum Geologist and as a national and international Exploration Manager. During this time he also emphasized the need for the U.S. to free itself from its dependency on foreign petroleum and grew into an expert on global warming, which he plans to include in his writings where appropriate.

Today, he lives and writes in his old childhood home on an island on the Suncoast of Florida. “Living on an island gives you a different perspective. You tend to see life more from the outside looking in, and you are more easily moved to see things as a whole rather than in pieces.” His novel ReBecoming is the result of years of inquiry, study—both solitary and with insightful teachers—and life experiences. “I’ve found I want to teach what I know because knowledge is always to be passed along and truths are always to be shared. Why let someone else suffer from the same affliction?” In addition to the present volume, three additional ReBecoming series novels are planned. Plus there will be two experiential guides and two seminars in support of the ideas in the ReBecoming books.

It is the author’s greatest wish that as you read and engage the principles in this book that more loving-kindness comes to you and allows you to create the happier life you have always imagined.

Tyler: Welcome, Rolfe. I’m glad you could join me today to talk about this unique new novel. To begin, will you tell us what is the basic premise of “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity” and then we’ll talk a little bit more about your background.

Rolfe: Thank you, Tyler. First, I’d like to say that “ReBecoming” may initially appear to be a simple story, but it contains many life-changing lessons on mental, spiritual, and physical levels. To select one teaching as the basic premise would be: all the small choices we each make everyday really do add up, and even avoiding making a choice about something is in itself a choice too. This works both on an individual and on a global level and I don’t think we need to look very far to see how this progresses through time—just check the state of our country and of world globalization. It took a lot of small daily choices to get to where we are today. “ReBecoming” can give us the tools we need to make more skillful choices in the future leading us to happier, healthier, and much less stressful lives.

Tyler: What was the intention behind choosing the title for this book? What does “ReBecoming” and what does “The Way of Opportunity” mean?

Rolfe: My intention was to choose a title that felt right and that would apply at both a small and large scale. I was really drawn to the word, ReBecoming. It’s a word you sometimes see in spiritual texts. Of course I have used it in a

slightly different sense here, having retooled it for use in the world we live in now. My concept of ReBecoming is a conscious reawakening. It's like a moment-by-moment do-over. We get to re-aim, reenergize, realign, reevaluate where we're headed, and adjust our course. And it just so happens that a lot of people are doing that right now—some for the very first time, and some with a lot of suffering.

As a concept, it is practically geologic in proportion. It says that change is a continuous process—the only true measure of time, as we observe it—and we all have to make friends with change because it can be very upsetting if we don't. Everyone can ReBecome each precious moment.

Where the Way of Opportunity comes in is as the skillful, continual practice of the process of ReBecoming. I have to emphasize the word “skillful” because we will all ReBecome over and over again in our lifetime and it can be a good thing, an energizing thing. It can improve our health, it can stabilize our financial problems, it can take us back to where we were years ago, or we can be better than we've ever been. Opportunity is what Americans desperately need right now. And ReBecoming addresses making opportunity a way of life.

Tyler: Rolfe, will you share with us more about the experience you had at nineteen that made you realize you do not have to live in fear and pain?

Rolfe: I believe that spiritual and powerful emotional experiences can be of a very primal nature and extremely personal and that some care needs to be taken in choosing to share them. They can be very intense to explain or maybe even to discuss for most people. So let's just say that several events coincided earlier in my young adult life than maybe in others' lives and that I gained insight into the spiritual workings of the world early and that became where I wanted to aim my intentions. Life's purpose just suddenly became very clear to me.

Tyler: When you refer to “Life's purpose” what do you mean? Is life's purpose for you different than for others?

Rolfe: The core of life is happiness, and I believe this blazes inside each person like a blue-white sun. But because the influence of negative thoughts seems to dominate our minds most of the time, this causes many to feel that happiness doesn't exist, at least not for them, and the joy that can be everyday and everywhere remains hidden. So for me, life's purpose is to rid ourselves of the self-defeating thoughts that lead to unskillful actions and their poor results that create the dissatisfaction and suffering which makes our lives so miserable and seemingly unfulfilled. The good news is that many of those thoughts are fear-based and “ReBecoming” gives us specific tools to reduce or eliminate those fears. We can take control of our destiny and change our lives for the better, not just let life change us.

Others may have different ideas about what life's purpose is, but when you get right to the bottom of everything, I know that everyone wants to be happy—period. Yet most of us feel separated from happiness and strive for a lifetime, trying almost anything, to regain our connection, if only for a moment.

Tyler: What would you say have been some of the learning highlights in your own personal journey through life?

Rolfe: I think that learning experiences come in many flavors and many unexpected places. I'd say I grew the most spiritually by realizing I didn't have to live in pain and fear. Then I had some difficult financial learning experiences after college and I vowed I'd never get into debt like that again. That was a tough one. And on a physical level, I learned that the body and soul are tightly linked and that you have to take care of them both simultaneously all the time. That lesson came to me via my first yoga instructor in New Orleans, just after I had the epiphany about debt. Finally, my relationships with friends and family have taught me that life is precious and to remember to stop and make a memory. As Diana says in the book, “If happy memories made with each other aren't the most important things in life, then what is?”

Tyler: When you say you realized you didn't have to live in pain and fear, what advice would you give to those who currently do live in that state? How do they stop living that way?

Rolfe: I believe that everyone's situation is different, yet the same, and let me explain why. Think of how it feels to be trapped in circumstances you can't change; you don't feel safe, you're always living on the edge, and exhausted. I've been in these situations and the feelings I had then are identical to the feelings that anyone in these conditions feels now. Unhappiness feels the same for each of us. The circumstances and the seeming severity may be different, but the feelings are always identical. This is the only true equality.

My advice would be to look at every choice you make—all the small choices we make every day really do add up. And if we begin to change our choices, picking kindness over rightness, or acting to help others rather than thinking selfishly, for example, or, and this is a hard one, making decisions that we know are best for us, when others with their own agendas tell us differently, then we don't create additional situations that could lead to further unhappiness. And as the choking dissatisfactions, the sufferings, go away, we become less and less inclined to have thoughts and actions that don't return joy and bliss to us, and to the others around us. Fears will dissipate allowing our core of happiness to shine through even in the darkness.

Plus there are always others suffering more than we are, so go out and help someone who's worse off. During a painful transition in my own life, I became a caregiver to someone who was dying of cancer. My work with them, while difficult at the time, gave me a much larger perspective on life. I saw that I had the choice to choose the things that brought me long term happiness, or I could remain in my Mundane Mind and pick things, and people, that brought only temporary relief at best, and maybe much worse.

Tyler: Rolfe, while “ReBecoming” is a novel, would you also define it as a self-help book because of the messages in it?

Rolfe: Yes. I would call it a Multi-Genre book for lack of a better term. Some might call it Visionary Fiction, but I think its audience would definitely look for it closer to the self-help aisle of the bookstore.

Tyler: What made you decide to write a novel rather than a self-help book?

Rolfe: I like the novel idea because “ReBecoming” has both a sense of adventure and storytelling combined with wisdom, which by itself in nonfiction form might come off as a little dry. So it's meant to be an easy read, but one that leaves you scratching your head occasionally, or maybe a little tearful, or laughing out loud—or changing your life.

Tyler: Will you tell us more about Diana Archer? What made you decide to write the novel with a female main character?

Rolfe: Diana is a character that most of us know, remember being, or will become. She's over-worked, stressed-out, getting nowhere, and her dreams are fading. If you add children into the mix, she sounds a lot like all of us.

But Diana is lucky because she still has her natural curiosity, an internal spark, and a willing mind. She's down, but she's not out because she is still seeking. And as she finds her answers and the tools that go along with them, she manages to teach us all.

As to the question about a female main character, well, it just seemed like the natural thing to do. “ReBecoming” is part of a four book series and this particular book focuses on Diana's life as opposed to the other characters. I do have to admit it was harder to write than I first thought. I grew up in a house full of women and my life has been filled with them ever since. And although I do consider myself a good and empathetic listener, one-pointed as Diana says in the book, when in doubt I did ask female friends for their opinions on various aspects covered in “ReBecoming.”

Tyler: Our reviewer at Reader Views, Paige Lovitt, mentioned that most spiritual quest books don't emphasize the body, yet one of the main characters is a personal trainer at a gym. Why did you choose for the “teacher” figure in the book to have this job position rather than a more traditional mentor figure like a college professor or church pastor?

Rolfe: Because, as in life, teachers are found in the most unusual places. And I like the old saying that, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." And sometimes they appear very quickly and unexpectedly. You have to recognize the opportunity and just go with it. But I also think that it emphasizes the mind-body connection. And I would have to agree with Ms. Lovitt, the body is oft times left out of the equation. Yet without it, how would we practice our spirituality here on Earth? I believe in the middle way, and I like a balance in all things—body, mind, and spirit—so this whole idea really appeals to me.

Tyler: Rolfe, what would you say is the most difficult part of Diana’s journey in the novel? What does she find holds her back the most from what she is trying to achieve?

Rolfe: When Diana accepts the call to adventure, the challenge, she's not quite clear on her goal at first. But one thing is certain, that by accepting, she will not want to slide back into mediocrity. So although she has setbacks and the evil ones and their henchmen are lurking about in her life, the one person that ultimately has the total power to destroy her is her own voice whispering in her ear. So for Diana and for all of us, the most difficult part of the journey is being able to get out of our Mundane Minds, to fly free in our Open Sky Minds and see the big picture, and to understand what the purpose of life really is.

Tyler: Rolfe, I understand that “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity” is the first in a series of books and seminars from Dassana Press, LLC. Will you tell us more about this series and its goals?

Rolfe: Yes. The next book will be a prequel. “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity” has a bit of a romantic romp in it. The next novel has some romance of a very different nature as well as murder, mystery, a splash of terror, and a lot of local island color. You'll like it. The third book will be a sequel to “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity” and takes place where no one, or story, has gone before—ever. It will be quite different than the previous two. Actually, they are all different and each will be a surprise and both a reading and learning pleasure for the reader.

Dassana Press was formed to publish titles that will change world consciousness for the better. Other nonfiction books and seminars in the same vein will also be forthcoming.

Tyler: You mentioned that Diana is the main character in this book. Are other characters in “Rebecoming: The Way of Opportunity” to be main characters in the other books?

Rolfe: In the second novel, Jon, the trainer/teacher in “ReBecoming” will be the main character and the book will be a prequel to the current “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity.” In the third book, Diana will appear again and together with Jon they will have an adventure beyond anyone’s imagination. The fourth novel is still in the planning stages, but will contain characters recognizable from the first three books plus some shocking additions.

Tyler: When can we expect the next book in the series to be published, and do you know what the names of the rest of the books will be?

Rolfe: Right now, Tyler, I’m planning on the second book being published in the latter part of 2009. It will probably be the prequel novel to “ReBecoming,” but an experiential guidebook is also being developed to explore further the ideas of “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity” and I would like to publish it as soon as I can. And yes, I’ve already named all the books, and two even have their chapters titled, but it might lessen the surprise for the readers to know their names this soon.

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, Rolfe. Before we go, would you tell us about your website and what additional information may be found there about “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity”?

Rolfe: Thank you, Tyler. And please do visit my website. It’s currently being updated and will upon completion, as if any website is ever final or complete, offer more insight into the concepts explored in “ReBecoming: The Way of Opportunity.” I envision it as a place where a visitor can find a moment’s comfort and renewal at the end of a long and difficult day. I hope ReBecomingBook.com will be a place you will wish to visit over and over again.

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