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SPORTS

'The 2% Way': Book reveals former 'Nole Myron Rolle's roadmap for a life of meaning, purpose



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Myron Rolle – elite athlete, Rhodes Scholar, neurosurgery resident and humanitarian –has faced insecurities, issues of self-worth and prejudice in his life. Yet, the former Florida State and NFL player never dwelled on those moments because he was, and is, always pursuing a better self.

"I said, 'Look, I have to keep moving forward, 2 percent at a time, keep pressing,' " Rolle said.

"Then when you actually sit back and write about it and you start to think about your feelings, emotions and thoughts through that and how other people may face the same challenges. It really puts everything back into perspective."

Rolle, 35, has chronicled his unique journey of self-improvement in an upcoming book, "The 2% Way: How a Philosophy of Small Improvements Took Me to Oxford, the NFL, and Neurosurgery."

Ahead of the book release next month and days after the birth of a second set of twins, he sat down with the Tallahassee Democrat for an interview. He is excited to share experiences that have defined his life, and how living a life of faith and service drives him to reach his goals.

FSU COVERAGE

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Projecting Florida State football's two-deep depth chart on defense this fall

Rolle's athletic accomplishments and travels around the country and world to help and improve the lives of others have been well-documented. He inspires and motivates on social media. Writing the 240-page book, scheduled to be released on May 17, provided an opportunity for self-reflection, too.

"Actually, it was a very sobering moment to put myself into that space and to be vulnerable and personal and open up like that. I typically don't," said Rolle, a fifth-year neurosurgery resident at Massachusetts General and Harvard Medical School.

"I try to put myself into a role where everyone really is and talk through the story of how we went forward, and how we made progress from it."

'If things had gone a different way ...': Wife Latoya encourages Rolle to write book

Rolle has long kept a record of events and experiences.

But he credits wife Latoya, a pediatric dentist, for encouraging him to share the stories that have enabled him to overcome adversity, defy expectations and, as he detailed, create a life of meaning and purpose. The pair met in 2017, married, and last week Latoya gave birth to the couple's second set of twins for a quartet of siblings - Zora, Zayed, Zanzi and Zafar.

"I really love this because I think people look at him and have this preconceived notion of what they might think he is or see him as," Latoya told the Democrat. "I think once they read this book they can really see what made him who he is and to know his story is similar to a lot of people who might feel differently."

Latoya added the book includes stories that she didn't know about Rolle, including one that she said could have changed her husband's life path.

Keep in mind that Rolle attended a prestigious private high school in Princeton, New Jersey; signed with FSU (2006-08); earned the Rhodes Scholarship for study at Oxford; played three years in the NFL; graduated from FSU Medical School in 2017; and is a neurosurgery resident.

"When he was in grade school, a level of disrespect (happened) between him and another student, which led to an altercation, which led to repercussions and consequences," Latoya said. "It could have changed the trajectory of where he's at now. If things had gone a different way, you wouldn't know Myron Rolle, who he is right now."

Myron Rolle in action:

FSU football educating players about COVID vaccine, 'getting closer' to 85%
Ex-Titan Myron Rolle now on front lines of fighting the coronavirus pandemic
Former FSU star Myron Rolle: 'We are making an impact' in relief efforts in the Bahamas
Former FSU star Myron Rolle, now a doctor, part of global disaster response team in Bahamas

'To never forget ordinary behaviors'

FSU Professor and close friend Sally Karioth mentored Rolle through the Rhodes Scholar process and helped him start an anti-obesity program for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

She believes in Rolle's ability to impact, help and change lives.

When Category 5 Hurricane Dorian slammed into the northern Bahamas with winds of excess of 185 mph in 2019, Rolle, whose parents and three of his four brothers were born and raised in the Bahamas, traveled there to offer medical aid.

When Massachusetts General Hospital was forced to deal with the rapid influx of coronavirus patients in 2020, Rolle did not back down from the highly infectious disease.

"It's not just that he's smart or athletic or handsome or a hard worker – the world is filled with thousands of people who are all of those things," Karioth said. "But what sets him apart is his never forgetting from whence he came. To never forget ordinary behaviors. To have impeccable manners, to be a good listener, to look out for the vulnerable, the underserved, and the voiceless. He never ever believed his own PR.

"But as an aside, it's all been true."

Rolle is hopeful his book's message connects with readers. He's hopeful it provides encouragement and tools that help them make improvements that lead to long-lasting results. And he's hopeful it serves as a daily reminder they – himself included – are moving in the right direction.

"I think we wanted to make this book one where you can find yourself in my story, in my journey and then take from it the 2 percent way process of improving yourself, edifying yourself daily and mitigating some of those challenges we all face," Rolle said.

"The self-doubt, the insecurity, the family issues, the spiritual dilemma, the workplace challenges. That's why I think the value of the 2 percent way is so important. They (readers) really get a deep dive into some of my mental inner workings during a time when the hardest moments hit."

LOCAL EVENT

Rolle will be in Tallahassee on Wednesday, June 1, for a book signing and speech.

The event is hosted by the FSU Alumni Association and Midtown Book Reader at 7 p.m. at the FSUAA Ballroom, 1030 W. Tennessee Street.

Rolle's book will be available for sale at the event and before had at Midtown Reader, 1123 Thomasville Road.

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