

## **Addiction or Habit by Wally Muller Published November 2006 in the Hawkwood Journal**

### **This article is intended to provoke thought, and may be contrary to your beliefs.**

I am neither a doctor nor a scientific expert on the subject of smoking. I started smoking cigarettes when I was about eleven years old and quit when I was about forty nine. Well then maybe after doing the same thing repeatedly for thirty eight years makes me an expert smoker.

### **Here is the first thought put out by the medical experts.**

The medical community has an abundant amount of research data that backs up other research data, identifying the hazards of nicotine and the general use of tobacco. Nicotine is drop for drop, a deadlier poison than strychnine and three times more lethal than arsenic. Yet this same chemical is very similar to naturally occurring neurotransmitters in our brain. Once the brain receives a boost of nicotine it can control over 200 neurochemicals. It triggers a dopamine rush that makes us feel good. Nicotine is a psychoactive drug with stimulant effects on the electrical activity of the brain. It can have a calming effect especially at times of stress as well as effects on hormonal and other systems throughout the body. Whatever gives us a pleasurable feeling or a feeling of serenity may explain the theory of the addictiveness of nicotine.

Many studies have shown that nicotine use usually begins in early adolescence and those who begin smoking at an early age are more likely to develop severe nicotine addiction. Thus nicotine induces structural as well as functional changes in the brain of smokers. When nicotine is suddenly withdrawn, physiological functions in the brain and other parts of the body are disturbed. This is known as withdrawal syndrome. It takes time for the body to readjust to functioning normally without nicotine.

The body's nicotine reserves decline by about half every two hours. It's not only the basic chemical half-life clock which determines mandatory nicotine feeding times when quitting, it's also the clock that determines how long it takes before the brain begins bathing in nicotine free blood-serum. At that moment the real healing begins. It can take up to 72 hours for the blood-serum to become nicotine-free and 90% of nicotine's metabolites to exit the body via your urine. It's then that the anxieties associated with readjustment normally peak in intensity and gradually decline. But just one powerful "hit" of nicotine and you'll again face another 72 hours of detox anxieties. It's why the one puff survival rate is almost zero.

### **Here is the second thought.**

If nicotine is so addictive, then why are the people that are on the nicotine patch not affected in the same way? If it is so addictive than why is it that people using the patch don't just continue to use it? They could use it in all the places where smoking is prohibited. At work, on airplanes or all those other restricted places.

### **And the third thought.**

The human being needs one thing above all else. No it's not love. All human beings need security. How they define security varies with every culture on this earth. We are given security from the first day we are conceived. When a baby is in the womb it is completely secure. It has warmth, food and comfort. Then, it's put through the trauma of birth. All those secure feelings are ripped away from that baby. Now it's cold, uncomfortable and soon it starts to get hungry. Then someone wraps the baby to keep it warm and someone puts something into the baby's mouth to teach it how to suck and get nourishment. The baby now has its security back. That secure feeling is permanently imprinted into the baby's unconscious mind. As the baby grows it's still given that security from the parents. Again it gets, clothing to keep it warm along with food and shelter. Then it reaches adolescents. As anyone knows who has had children they

start to look for other security and at the teen years a lot of that security will come from peers. Most teens want to fit in with one group or another. This security can come in the form of looking for what those peers perceive as cool. Those that act older and can do the cool things. If they fall into a group that smokes they will probably be drawn into the “go ahead, try it syndrome”. That first smoke will make them gag and cough and feel sick but all their peers will be congratulating them because they remember their first time. It is the welcome to the group. For some of them they now have that feeling of security again even though they felt physically sick when they did it. So as time passes they continue with that need for security and they get it from being in the group and smoking with the group.

That teen smoker grows up to be an adult and now if the average smoker who has 20 cigarettes a day with each cigarette they take approximately 20 puffs. That works out to about 70,000 puffs per year. If you do anything else that often and deep inside your unconscious mind it is anchored to a feeling of that security you felt as a baby and grew stronger as a teen, has it become a habit? You bet it has. How do people quit cold turkey with no side affects? They are able to change their habit. Why do some people who quit by whatever means they can start to gain weight? They substitute one habit for another. They go to one of the other things that gave them security, food.

To change a habit that is rooted in a feeling or emotion the unconscious mind has to be reprogrammed. For some people that can be done very simply on their own. If that need for security is very strong they can get help to re-program their unconscious mind. Those people that really want to quit smoking may need help. Through hypnosis they can be helped to re-program the part of them that needs security. There have been many studies conducted as to the effects of hypnosis for smoking cessation. Here are just two reports done by the Mayo Clinic. [www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=SA00084](http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=SA00084) or [www.mayoclinicproceedings.com/inside.asp?AID=888&UID](http://www.mayoclinicproceedings.com/inside.asp?AID=888&UID).

Many other studies have been done and they have all come to the same basic conclusion, hypnosis can help smokers quit. For some people just listening to a smoking cessation recording over and over has given them the help they needed. Also many people go to large group sessions to quit. Unfortunately in both cases many pay their money and get nothing. The very best sessions for smoking cessation are the one on one hypnosis sessions. The hypnotist can help the client understand why they started smoking. They can help the client re-program the unconscious mind to realize that yes, they have all the security they need. They can help the client understand that there is no need to substitute a new habit such as food to maintain the security feeling.

So if you are a smoker and really, really want to quit but need some help, go to the internet or phone book and find a good hypnotist. They will be able to discuss with you what you need to do and how they can help you to become a non-smoker for life.

I guess you have to make up your own mind now, addiction or habit?