

Reiki and Addictions

An Updated Perspective Based
on Current Brain Research

BY DIANE RUTH SHEWMAKER

Many people today are facing one or more addictions, which over the course of time can adversely affect their health, leading to serious illness and even death. Addictions also take their toll on our spirit and the ways we think, feel, and behave in everyday circumstances, such as family life, career, relationships, and finances. In short, addictions can play themselves out just about everywhere in our lives.

The energy patterns that create and fuel addictions are found in and affect all facets of our energy anatomy, including the physical body as well as the etheric, emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies that emanate from and surround it. In my article “Reiki and the Human Energy System,” in the Winter 2002 issue of this magazine, there is a detailed description and illustration of each of these subtle bodies. You may wish to review this earlier article and others in the same issue to provide background for this inquiry into the nature of addictions and how to approach healing and transforming them with Reiki.

To further this exploration, I will begin with a basic definition of addiction. Then I will describe in depth a method of working with addictions using Reiki, including an account of how I stopped my own smoking habit using this technique. I will then present information drawn from current knowledge and recent brain re-

search that supports and helps us more fully appreciate the physical, etheric, emotional, mental, and spiritual implications of why this method works.

A Working Definition of Addiction

A simple non-clinical definition of addiction is “too much of just about anything,” whether it is a substance, such as alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, and food; behaviors, including sex, a relationship, and gambling; or various states of mind and emotions, such as low self-esteem, obsessive thoughts, guilt, shame, and anger.

Where does consumption, involvement, or experience cross the magic line from simple habit into the realm of addiction? The general rule of thumb is that addiction is present when a person becomes so dependent on a particular substance, behavior, relationship, state of mind, and/or emotion that he or she cannot easily let go of it, even when it is obviously detrimental.

For example, most people are aware of the health hazards of substance abuse, and may even already be suffering health consequences, yet continue on, sometimes quite intentionally and, at other times, feeling powerless to change. Another example of likely addiction is the battered spouse who does not leave the abusive relationship despite the risks inherent in staying. Denial

and minimization of the dangers involved are common characteristics of addictive patterning.

Addiction can therefore be thought of as a habit or behavior that may be difficult to recognize and also hard to change or break. The withdrawal problems, cravings, and other symptoms that accompany every addictive pattern are often referred to as dependency in addiction recovery circles. The addict comes to depend upon his or her addictive habit or behavior to escape not only the withdrawal process, but also to avoid dealing with what ever caused the addiction to take hold in the first place. And this is where the root of the problem lies.

Let us now turn to the fundamentals of healing and transforming addictive patterning with Reiki.

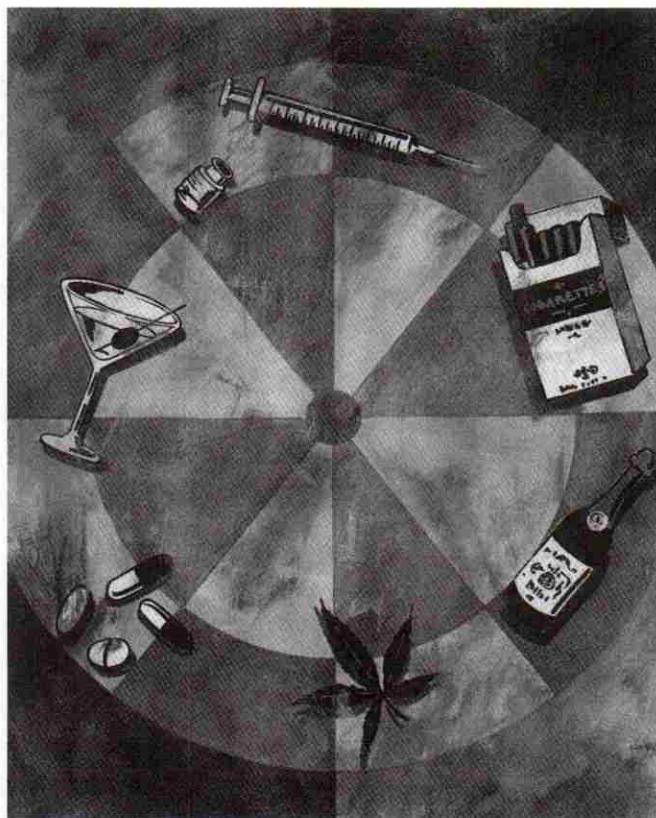
Clearing Addictive Patterning

One of the primary ways of using Reiki to work with addictions is through the mental/emotional symbol SHK. The Japanese term for this symbol means “habit” or “disposition/tendency toward” (see page 128 of the book *The Spirit of Reiki*).

During the course of a normal Reiki session, the practitioner invokes the SHK symbol together with the power symbol CKR, using a technique that is most commonly known as a mental treatment. Often this type of treatment is accompanied by the use of affirmations.

Over the years, I have come across several variations of this method. The first one I learned was in 1983 from my first Reiki teacher, John Harvey Gray, who is one of the original twenty-two Reiki Masters taught by Mrs. Takata. It is my favorite, not only because I have found it very effective with clients in my healing practice, but also because of my own success using this technique to stop smoking. I will share more about my personal story in the next section as an example of how to apply the technique when working to heal addictions.

Please refer to the box entitled “Addiction Treatment Procedure using SHK,” found on page 35 for the steps involved in



using this method. The technique may be performed either in person or from a distance. If from a distance, use the distance symbol as you normally would at the beginning of the session, and adjust the other steps accordingly. It is also important to note that you are not to diagnose or treat addictions by yourself, and should approach the use of this addiction treatment technique with your client as an adjunct to conventional medical and psychological care.

Healing My Addiction to Cigarettes

Now that you have had an opportunity to study the recom-

mended technique, let's take a look at how it helped me stop a long-standing three-pack-a-day smoking habit, after all other attempts and methods over the years had failed.

During mid-summer of 1983, I found myself near Charlottesville, Virginia, repeating Reiki II with my first teacher, John Harvey Gray. As we went over the symbols, we got to talking about my desire to stop smoking and how I felt entirely out of control of this aspect of my life. Without hesitation, John volunteered to help me stop smoking using the technique he had just taught us, which is detailed in this article. Because in-person treatments were not possible, we agreed that the healing work would be completed from a distance.

I jumped at the opportunity, and we began that night at dinner. John asked me to spend time over the next few days thinking about my goals in terms of a definite quit date and the actual method of quitting. He also asked me to write some positive affirmations that expressed how I wanted to feel about myself. He emphasized that I needed to be 100 percent committed to the goals and the process during the coming weeks or he would discontinue the treatments.

I decided my goal would be to stop smoking on October 1, 1983. My method was chewing the nicotine gum that had recently become available by prescription. I also included some goals relating to my desire to maintain my weight. The affirmations

I selected related to building my self-worth and confidence, loving myself, and integrating spiritual values about my true self.

On September 1, 1983, John started sending daily Reiki treatments during my morning meditation, including the SHK technique. Examples of some of the goal statements and affirmations that he used to prepare me for my quit date are:

I will stop smoking completely on October 1, 1983.

I will chew the nicotine gum.

I am easily maintaining my current weight.

I am eating healthful foods.

I am a worthy and confident woman.

The essence of my being is Love.

I am a beautiful child of the universe.

I listen to my inner voice for answers.

And so on...

During that first month, I worked with these goal statements and affirmations, and I spoke to John on the phone at least once a week. We would talk about what I was experiencing and any concerns that were coming up so that we could fine-tune the process. John was very firm with me and did not allow me to waiver from my goals even on days when I felt unsure.

On October 1, 1983, I did stop smoking, which for me was a miracle! I began chewing the gum, and John kept sending the Reiki treatments every day for another thirty days, using the SHK technique with the same goal statements and affirmations, except for switching the first two statements to the present tense:

I am a non-smoker.

I am chewing the nicotine gum.

And so on...

During the second thirty-day period, I kept up my work with the goals and affirmations, and I spoke with John on the telephone regularly. John listened to what was happening to me, and counseled me where this was needed. Once the thirty days were up, and it was clear that I had truly stopped smoking, John stopped sending the daily treatments.

The main stumbling block that I ran into came after this. John and I had forgotten to be specific in the goal statements about when I would stop chewing the nicotine gum. As a result, I had some difficulty giving the gum up, yet within five or six months I

was at last able to do so. I mention this to remind you to be thorough when you create goal statements.

Over the next few years, John and I had occasion to see each other about once a year when he was in town for a Reiki class. To this day, whenever we see each other, with a twinkle in his eye he asks, “Got a smoke?” This sets off gales of laughter between us and always serves as a wonderful reminder of how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to be on the receiving end of such an incredible, unconditional gift of healing through Reiki.

One more thing is very important to note. Though I stopped smoking for good and never had another desire to start up again, I do not mean to imply that what I went through was entirely a walk in the park. It required John’s dedication and time, as well as my ongoing commitment not only to the sixty days when John and I worked together, but also to the rather intense healing journey that then unfolded.

Once I had stopped numbing myself with cigarettes and was no longer putting up the formidable smokescreen I had been defending myself with, all of the feelings, thoughts, and emotions from my shadow self that had been out of my conscious awareness began to surface. All of this had to be dealt with, and I went through several years of very deep physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual cleansing and release to let go of the old patterning that had held the addiction in place within my energy anatomy.

Ongoing Reiki treatments, as well as other available healing modalities, helped me access the true causes of my addiction and to stop it for good. I was transformed in such a way that today I am mostly free of these concerns and know without question that the essence of my being is Love. Thus, the new “programming” that was instilled—awakened and reinforced within my cellular memory and energy anatomy through the affirmations—came to the forefront of my experience, and more of my true self could now come forward and grow.

Other Applications of the Technique

It is not always necessary to apply daily treatments over an extended period of time, unless you are dealing with very deeply embedded patterning such as was the case with my smoking habit. You can decrease the frequency and duration of treatments according to the person’s situation and needs.

You might also be inspired to use this method spontaneously during a session to infuse affirmations, angelic guidance, sacred chants, tones, and prayers into a person’s entire energy system.

This will encourage the release of undesirable patterning and reprogram the cellular memory with the higher light frequencies of whatever you have infused.

The Biology and Spirituality Behind the Technique - Why It Works!

I have known for a long time how powerful and effective this addiction healing procedure is, yet until recently, I have not been able to satisfactorily explain why it worked. However, as I expanded

my understanding of psychology, addictions, spirituality, our physical anatomy, the human energy system, and other related areas of inquiry, and also brought in a liberal dose of intuition, I began to develop a working hypothesis that shows promise of being validated through scientific research into our biology.

Let's start with the hand position detailed in steps 4 and 5, where you place your left hand under the head with your fingertips at the base of the skull, and your right hand across the forehead. To greatly simplify a highly complex process, note that the

Addiction Treatment Procedure using SHK

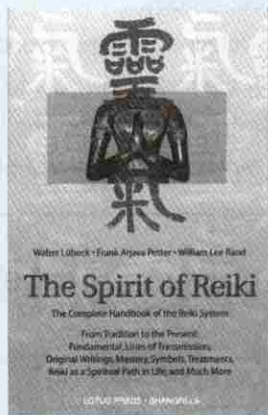
(See the section entitled "Healing My Addiction to Cigarettes" for a detailed example of how to apply this technique)

1. Before beginning, be sure you understand what addiction the person wishes to heal and the specific ways in which he or she desires to approach the healing. With the individual, formulate one or more short, positive goal statements and affirmations that are meaningful to him or her to accomplish this purpose. The goals must be concrete and include dates of completion. The affirmations must be acceptable to the conscious mind but also worded positively for the subconscious mind. Be sure to have the goal statements and affirmations you will be using memorized or written on paper where you can easily read them.
2. Ask the person to lie down, preferably on a massage table, and proceed with the Reiki session as you usually do.
3. When the time feels right, invoke the power symbol CKR over the person's head and silently repeat its name three times to bring in full power.
4. Place your left hand under the recipient's head with your fingertips at the base of the skull. Then draw SHK over the crown chakra and third eye areas and silently say the name of the symbol three times.
5. Place your right hand across the forehead of the person, with the tips of your fingers pointed toward his or her left ear and the base of your palm toward the right ear. With clear intention, call the individual's name in your mind three times, then repeat the goal statements and affirmations three times either silently or aloud. Doing this aloud allows the client to hear the words during the treatment, which further reinforces the potential for healing. Sometimes silence will feel more appropriate, however. At other times, you may wish to involve the client even further by asking him or her to repeat the affirmations or prayers aloud with you.
6. After finishing step 5, hold the position silently until the process feels complete. This can be for as short as two to three minutes or for as long as fifteen or more minutes. Then say "amen" or some other word or phrase to conclude the treatment.
7. Continue with your regular Reiki session until it is done.
8. At the end of the session, give the person a copy of the goal statements and affirmations and suggest between sessions that he or she repeat them several times a day to help reinforce and activate the healing process.
9. Repeat the technique at regular intervals according to need, fine-tuning the process as you move forward.



The Spirit of Reiki

by Walter Lübeck, Frank Arjava Petter, and William Lee Rand



Pages: 304
Size: 5 3/8" x 8 7/16"
120 photos 40 illustrations

The Spirit of Reiki was written by three world-renowned Reiki masters which makes this book a first. Never before have three Reiki masters from different lineages and with such extensive backgrounds come together to write a book and share their experiences.

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- An in-depth analysis of the Reiki symbols
- A discussion of the teacher/student relationship
- Reiki as a spiritual path
- An additional 20 Usui treatment positions which have not been previously published
- The Hayashi Healing Guide
- The Future of Reiki

"We decided to write this book together to share our love and knowledge of Reiki with each other and with the Reiki community. It is our hope that with this book, the love that we have for each other and for Reiki will spread throughout the Reiki community around the world." Walter, Arjava & William

This book contains a wealth of information on Reiki never before brought together in one place. The broad spectrum of topics range from the search for a scientific explanation of Reiki energy to Reiki as a spiritual path. It includes the latest understanding of Dr. Usui's original healing methods, how Reiki is currently practiced in Japan, an analysis of the Western evolution of Reiki, and a discussion about the direction Reiki is likely to take in the future. The fact that harmony is developing between Reiki groups is discussed and the authors' own collaboration in writing this book is offered as an example. Never before has a Reiki book of this depth and comprehensiveness been available.

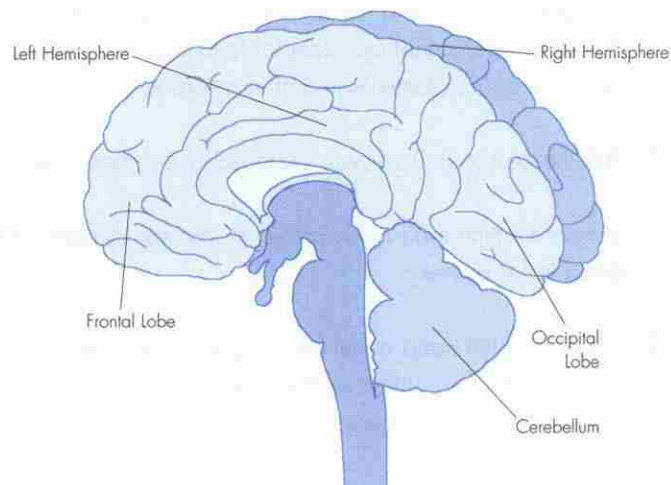
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moment both hands are in place, you are in direct contact with the left brain (analytical, logical), the right brain (intuitive, spatial, artistic), and the cerebellum. These three areas are considered to be associated with, respectively, the conscious, subconscious, and super conscious levels of awareness. Stated another way, the left brain symbolizes our physicality, the right brain the individual soul level, and they are integrated into a cohesive whole through the cerebellum, which interconnects several areas of the brain, including the right and left hemispheres, and relates to the higher spiritual self.

In addition, your right hand is covering the frontal lobe, and the left-hand fingertips are touching the occipital region of the brain. The frontal lobe is associated with the higher intellect, while the occipital region is in close proximity to the limbic or emotional portions of the brain, including what is termed the reptilian brain (see more below).



The sixth chakra or "third eye" is found within the frontal lobe, and some spiritual traditions say that when it is awakened, we are opened to our inner vision, as well as to higher worlds. The occipital region is also known as the "mouth of God" which speaks to how this area, found on the lower rear area of the head, is thought to be interconnected with the universal source.

All of this can be expanded upon even further by looking more closely at the writings of Joseph Chilton Pearce in his new book, *The Biology of Transcendence: A Blueprint of the Human Spirit*. In this material, Pearce discusses at great length the structure and functions of the various brain systems that we have within us. Based on cutting edge scientific research, he states that, in fact, we have five brain systems that work together interdependently, as well as independently, in various ways.


Briefly, four of these brain systems are inside the head: the reptilian brain (sensory-motor, including our survival instincts and quick reflexes), the old mammalian or limbic brain (emotion, cognition, feeling), the new mammalian brain (language, thinking), and the prefrontal lobes (advanced intellectual skills, higher human virtues).

Interestingly enough, the fifth brain system is found in the heart, and through the new field of neurocardiology, we are learning how the heart and the other four brain systems are intricately connected and are in constant communication and interaction with one another. Pearce states, "(o)ur brain...is, figuratively speaking, an instrument of the heart...[and] (o)ur heart, in turn, is an instrument or representative of the universal function of life itself." (p.66)

From the above, it can be seen that during the addiction treatment procedure, quite remarkably, you have the whole world in your hands, and this "brain" world inside the head is, in turn, in direct relationship with the heart! The heart is connected to the same source as the Reiki energy that you are working with, and when all elements are brought together, it is no wonder that healing miracles can result! In effect, use of the procedure instills the healing frequencies of SHK more deeply into the four brain systems found within the head, and through the interconnections with the brain system of the heart, it also brings in love to the person's entire energy anatomy, so that over time the addictive patterning is cleared, released, and transformed.

I often describe the process using a computer analogy. Think of it as wiping the hard drive and memory completely clean, including the bios memory (comparable to cellular memory), and putting in entirely new software and memory—the software of the universal life force brought through Reiki, and the remembering (re-memory-ing) of our true nature of All Love.

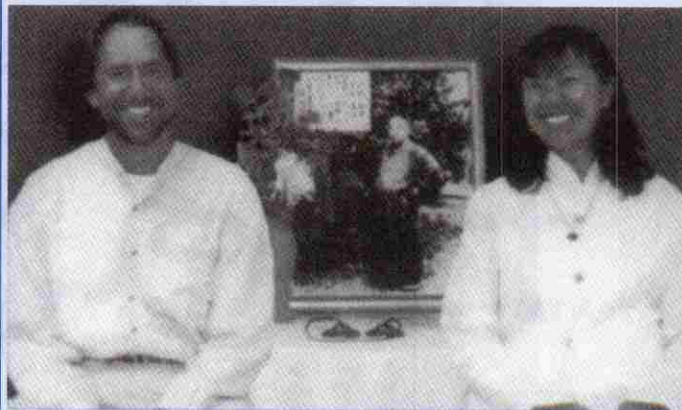
In Conclusion

I hope that this article has provided you with new insight into this valuable healing procedure and why it works, as well as inspiration to create more opportunities to offer it in your Reiki practice as an adjunctive therapy in treating addictions. I also believe that as more scientific research is completed, there will come a point where we will be able to shift from hypothesis to knowledge, the kind of knowledge that unites the discipline of scientific inquiry with the wisdom of our spiritual nature as expressed through the universal heart. 

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Sacred Sites of Japan Video

with Arjava Petter and Chetna Kobayashi



This one-hour video tape takes you to the Saihoji temple in Tokyo to view Dr. Usui's grave. Here you will see the Usui memorial erected in 1927, where a description of Dr. Usui's life including his discovery and work with Reiki is inscribed in stone. You will also be taken to Kurama-yama, the sacred mountain north of Kyoto where Dr. Usui had his mystical experience and rediscovered Reiki. The many temples and sacred sites on the mountain are presented, including: the San-Mon shrine containing symbols that are the likely origin of the Usui Reiki symbols, the waterfall where Dr.Usui is said to have meditated, the main temple and the Okunoin Mao-den shrine at the top of the mountain. At the end is a beautiful video collage featuring temple and nature scenes from Kurama-yama and the Usui memorial accompanied by meditative flute music. This last section really captures the spiritual feelings of the mountain! A visual guide instructing you how to travel to the Usui memorial and Kurama-yama is also included.

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