Healing
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Smoking: Sources of Addiction

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In the November, 1994 column we briefly discussed the scourge of the smoking habit and graphically illustrated the devastating effects it has on the body. We noted that it is very difficult to stop this baneful habit because of its addictive nature. This month we continue by exploring the sources of addiction.

Smoking is addictive primarily because of chemical dependency due to the nicotine content of the tobacco. Indeed, the industry has recently been accused of manipulating this content in order to make a particular brand even more addictive and thus increase sales.

Another area that causes dependency is the oral satisfaction gained from the habit of smoking. This throwback to a primitive oral need is a very strong and fairly well hidden satisfaction that adds to the addiction. There are many substances added to the tobacco to make it more palatable and to exaggerate this basic oral pleasure.

The subconscious layer of mind enjoys and gets security from ritual. Smoking satisfies this need easily with the ritual attached to reaching for the cigarette, tapping it to pack the tobacco, reaching for the matches or lighter, and finally lighting the tip of the cigarette so that it bursts into a smoldering flame that transforms the noxious weed into smoke. The smoker watches the smoke curl upward and is able to fantasize unknown dreams. He may even form smoke-rings and watch them fade into the now. After a very short time the muscles get used to

this ritual and the lower consciousness is pleased with its fantasy, which may be romantic and adventurous. At least it satisfies a certain mechanical need. It seems that the subconscious mind rapidly turns this habit into a reward situation, whenever there is a feeling of anxiety, uneasiness or unsettled behavior, the play-out of this ritual gives a reward to the lower consciousness, that is, keeps it busy so that it can forget the disrupting influences.

We can better understand how this works if we consider that the subconscious is the animal-like part of ourselves that behaves as if it had a mental age of three to four years. It wants what it wants, when it wants it, and it will act up unless desires are satisfied now. Consider a three-year-old child and his behavior and liken your own lower-self to this. The lower-self can make no judgments. It acts only as programmed even though it does have the ability to make monumental changes in the physical and psychic forms of our being. It will always do the bidding of our middle-self (conscious self) if it knows what that is. In other words, it will act according to the program we give it, providing that it is clear what that program actually is. Anything unclear about the program will probably be ignored and result in no action and a reversion to previously set patterns. These are some of the facts that make giving up the habit of smoking so very difficult.

So we see that the first thing we need in order to give up this disgusting and life-threatening habit is to firmly make a middle-self resolution and conclusion to give up the habit. We must consciously make the logical decision to change our behavior. This must be an unequivocal decision. Then begins the second procedure to transform this desired change to the lower consciousness in order to reprogram him/her. This we will explore next month.

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