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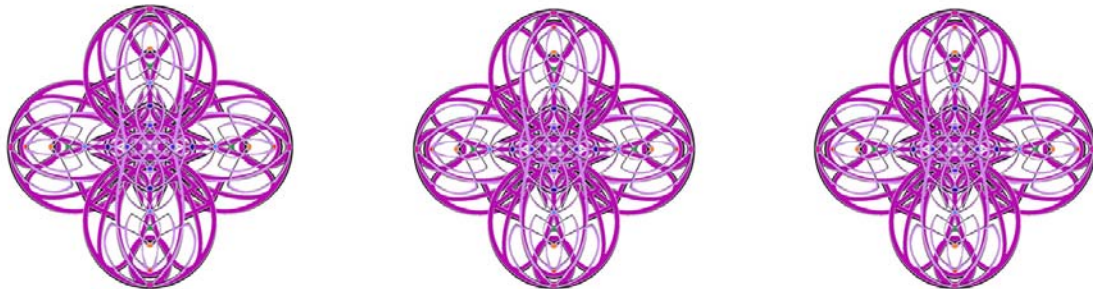


## THE BIO-PSYCH DANCE OF ADDICTION

Granny Earth, N.D.  
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*‘ In the end, I find that I cannot separate brain from body. Consciousness isn’t just in the head. Nor is it a question of mind over body. If one takes into account the DNA directing the dance of the peptides, the body is the outward manifestation of the mind’*

~ **Dr. Candance Pert**  
(Northrup, 1998, p.25)



There is no disease, which isn’t mental, and emotional as well as physical. Research is confirming what the ancient healing traditions have always known: that the body, and the mind are a single, united entity. They are intimately linked via the immune, endocrine, and central nervous systems. Accepting the above as true, we can take a quantum leap by exploring the dynamic fields of energy as they relate to the human body.

Humans are made out of energy, and sustained by energy. Our bodies are ever-changing fields of energy, and not static physical structures. They are a hologram in which every part contains information about the whole. Quantum physics tells us that at the subatomic level, matter and energy, which can also be called spirit, are interchangeable. Matter is the densest form of spirit, and spirit is the lightest form of matter. Therefore, we can view our bodies as manifestations of spiritual energy. Our mind, and our thoughts are the energy that has a synergistic effect on the matter that is our body, the accompanying physical field where the manifestation of disease occurs. Emotions, and thoughts are always accompanied by biochemical reactions in the body, because they are the life force that makes up the energy of the body-mind system,

which acts to sustain us in our quest for survival. These energy fields interact within the individual person, and they also interact between other individuals and the world in general.

Our bodies are influenced, and structured by our belief system, which was put in place since birth by the surrounding circumstances of our environment. This vital energy, which makes up our belief system, serves to protect us by ensuring that we remain locked into our tribal doctrine, for the sake of the survival of the tribe. It does this via the Central Nervous System's filtering out the millions of stimuli that we encounter each day. Only those stimuli that reinforce what we already believe are chosen to be processed (Northrup, 1998. p. 28).

The science of Psychoneuroimmunology (study of the mind/body connection) tells us that hormonal, and neurological events within the body, and the subtle electromagnetic fields around and within the body, form a crucial link between what we think of as a psychological, and/or emotional wounding, and physical illness, i.e., disease. Up until several years ago scientists believed that information was passed along linearly in the nervous system from nerve to nerve just like electrical "hard wiring".

But, now we know that our body organs communicate directly with the brain, and vice versa through chemical messengers known as neuropeptides, which are triggered to be released by emotions and thoughts. Receptor sites for these neuro-peptides are located on endocrine, immune, and nerve cells throughout the body, as well as body organs such as kidneys, liver, and bowel. Beyond that, our physical organs, and our immune system also have the capability of actually manufacturing these same neurotransmitting chemicals. These chemicals are part of the way in which thoughts, and emotions effect our bodies in a direct way. Our entire body feels, and expresses emotion. All of our parts think and feel. We must accept that the mind is located throughout the body (Northrup, 1998. p. 28-30).

Northrup goes on to tell us in her book, Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom that inescapable stress, and emotional shock/trauma cause the release of endogenous opiates, and corticosteroids, which prevent our white blood cells from protecting the body from infection. People living with hopelessness/despair have high levels of corticosteroids, immune suppression, and enkephalins, which actually numb the cells in their bodies rendering them incapable of destroying disease causing viruses (1998. p. 35, 36).

In his article, Central Representations of Pain and Analgesia, Dennis D. Kelly tells us more about these endogenous opiates, and corticosteroids. He states that the first endogenous opiates, called met-enkephalin and leu-enkephalin were discovered in 1975. It was found that these chemicals were actually pain relieving pentapeptides, which were produced in the spinal cord, the thalamus, and the amygdala of the limbic system in the cerebrum segment of the brain. Since that time there have been found 18 more distinct peptides with opioid activity in our brains, which have come to be called 'endorphins' (Kandal, 1985. p. 338, 339). It is believed that these neuropeptides

depress neurons throughout the central nervous system. Enkephalins inhibit neurotransmitters for pain perception, and reduce the emotional/physical impact of pain (Mosby, 1990, p. 428).

Studies show that physical stress increases plasma levels of b-endorphins called: adrenocorticotropin hormone (ACTH) and corticosterone, which have an analgesic (pain relieving) effect on the brain, and the body. These analgesic stress agents produce profound hormonal responses, and a wide range of behavioral deficits (Kandel and Schwartz, 1985. p. 342).

- B-endorphins: Neuropeptides elaborated by the pituitary gland, and acting upon the central/peripheral nervous system to reduce pain.
- ACTH: Distributed from the pituitary gland. It stimulates growth of adrenal gland (cortex), and secretion of corticosteroids.
- Corticosterone: A corticosteroid. Hormone which influence, or control key processes of the body such as carbohydrate and protein metabolism, electrolyte/water balance, and functions of cardiovascular, skeletal, muscle, kidney, and other organ systems. (Mosby, 1990. p.31)

(If corticosteroids control carbohydrate metabolism, could this be a contributing factor as to why the majority of alcoholics are hypoglycemic, as Joan Larson states in her book, Seven Weeks to Sobriety? (1997. P. 8 – 10))

Eric R. Kandel, in his article, Cellular Mechanisms of Learning and the Biological Basis of Individuality, elaborates more on the bio-connection of the personality. He states that, “Everyday events, sensory stimulation, deprivation, and learning have biological consequences, which cause an effective disruption of synaptic connections under some circumstances, and a reactivation of connections under others. All mental processes are biological, and any alteration in these processes is organic. Even in the most socially determined mental disturbances, the end result is biological, since it is the activity of the brain that is modified. Everything that occurs in the brain represents a biological process of nerve cells, and their interconnections. We are what we are, because of what we have learned about our world”(Kandel and Schwartz, 1985. P. 831).

In essence, Kandel says that we are what we believe. But our beliefs go much deeper than only our current thoughts. They are stored at an unconscious level, so that we are not even aware of them. They are lodged, and buried deep within the cellular tissue of our bodies. Therefore, a person’s childhood experiences of trauma, abuse, and stress, and their perception of these happenings influence, and form the basic personality, because they are stored not only in the brain as memories, but they are encoded in every cell throughout the body. They dictate what a person thinks, feels, and acts out upon.

In her book, A Woman's Book of Life, Joan Borysenko explains the neurobiology aspects of emotion by stating that some neurons, and some glial cells get hard-wired according to a survival circuit. The remainder of the wiring determines our individual personality, and is dependent upon our early experiences. When we are born, we have 100 billion neurons, which sprout axons to carry electrochemical messages to other nerve cells, and dendrites that pick up signals from other neurons, or sensory organs. The gap between the dendrite, and the axon is called a synapse. An electrical charge flows across this synapse when neurotransmitters are released. By adulthood the brain has 100 trillion synaptic connections. Glial cells outnumber the neurons by 10 to 1. They wrap around the axon to create the myelin sheath, which insulates, and improves electrical conductivity along the neural pathway. The more a pathway is used in early childhood, the more it becomes myelinated, and the harder it is to change, which explains why our basic patterns of perceiving, and responding to the world (our personality) are in place by the time we are seven years old. If a child is repeatedly abused by a drunken father, for example, the resulting helplessness, rage, and fear are likely to be deeply embedded 'neurologically'. Change is possible in later years by myelinating new pathways, but that change requires tremendous effort, since the initial circuitry will always remain (Borysenko, 1996. P. 20, 21).

Borysenko goes on to say that when children feel shame, that they show physiological signs of helplessness, and submission like blushing, shallow breathing, and averting the eyes. This behavior is wired into the limbic system of the brain (where emotions are stored) as part of the tribal peace keeping behavior. Psychologists have referred to shame as the 'master emotion', because it is so uncomfortable, and so isolating that one wishes to avoid experiencing it at any cost. Therefore, anatomical pathways are laid down that will remember the shameful experience, and be well equipped to avoid it. Shame is an isolating emotion since it accompanies incidents in which we have displeased the tribe, who might then abandon us. This potential for abandonment is equivalent to death, and mobilizes a potent fear response. The adrenaline surge that accompanies fear activates the vagus nerve, which regulates heart rate, and sends messages to the amygdala within the limbic system (of the brain) of impending danger. This imprint of shame is an emotionally intense memory that is stored in the body, and creates feelings of helplessness, guilt, and pessimism (Borysenko, 1996. P. 29-30).

What does all of this have to do with the disease of addiction? I hypothesize that if a child endures physical, and/or mental/emotional abuse, and is forced to live with hopelessness, and despair then the brain chemistry works to protect that child from feeling the total brunt of abuse by producing pain relieving peptides, such as endorphins, and ACTH. That same child now grows up having as part of its brain/body chemistry, pain-relieving substances, which have helped it to cope in an abusive world. The pathways are set in place for recognition of pain relieving substances, and when that person consumes his/her first taste of drugs and/or alcohol, the body immediately recognizes that substance as another friendly, pain relieving chemical, and responds in an addictive manner. It would be like a person who has grown up in a war zone, and has become used to running for cover into a cave at the first sound of a bomb goes off.

They instinctively run for cover, not into a cave, but into a burned-out basement. The basement feels safe, because it re-minds them of the cave, which served to protect them in their childhood. The body remembers, and the neuropath ways have been set in place at a chemical/physical level, and maybe at a deeper energy level to protect the body for survival. Could this be part of the missing link to the answer of addiction? Let's look further into a yet deeper level.

Northrup tells us about a theory, which states that the mind is actually located in the spaces between the subatomic particles of our cells (1998. P. 30). Could this be the elusive body energy, the spirit of the human species that connects us to all other living organisms, and to the universe itself? Could this space between the proton, and the electron, at a subatomic level, hold the secret to the morphogenic action of the very mind itself? And if this is so, then could this mind communicate, and work with the chemistry of the body for what it perceives to be for the good of the species? Could this be why the disease of addiction is so hard to cure? If the mind, which we will for the time being assume is located in the subatomic spaces of each cell, is working to give the body what it says it wants (through chemical messages) in order to survive, then by trying to cure the addiction, are we not going against what the addict's mind, and body perceive that it needs to survive". Could this be part of the reason why the addict has been so heartbreaking when it comes to the professionals working in the addictions field? The reason why so many addicts return to their addiction? Could it be that we have been looking in all the wrong places? Should we be looking instead at the subatomic energy level?

This 'body energy' forms the basis for healing in 49 different cultures around the world. In China it is called Chi, and in India, Prana. It is believed that this energy force runs through the body in specific channels known as meridians. Blocks in these energy fields can cause illness, and disease, which can be healed by relieving these blockages with massage, acupuncture, herbs, and/or meditation (Borysenko, 1996. P. 48).

Energy psychology is the branch of psychology that studies the effects of energy systems on emotions and behavior, and specifically addresses the bio-energy systems in the diagnosing, and treatment of psychological problems, which are considered to be manifestations of energy disruptions, and can be alleviated quickly, and without pain. Fred Gallo, a clinical psychologist has been exploring the effects that energy systems have on emotions, and behaviors. These systems include acupuncture meridians, and morphic resonance (morphic pertaining to form, and resonance, the condition of a system of subatomic particles in which the probability of a particular reaction is maximum: for example nuclear capture of a neutron, i.e., the event corresponding to such a maximum, and having only a few possible modes of decay, and characterized by a lifetime considerably longer than neighboring states). Gallo says that psychological problems can be best understood as manifestations of energy disruptions, or SUD (subjective units of disturbance), which can be diagnosed, and treated very quickly (1999. P. IX).

In order to get a better understanding of this energy phenomenon, we can look at Einstein's theory of relativity:  $E = mc^2$ : Energy is equal to matter times the speed of light squared, or made more simple; matter and energy are interchangeable aspects of the same reality. Everything is matter waiting to happen, or material potentiality. We need to realize that there are degrees, and types of energy that are so subtle that they cannot be measured by today's instruments. But, we do know that neurotransmitters at the nerve synapses are actually eliciting chemical/electrical responses. We might ask the question: since neurotransmitters are energy, might an energy-based procedure regulate the production of these neurotransmitters within the brain, and at other places in the body? If this is true, then this 'energy' is actually controlling the release of specific neuro- transmitters, and hormones in the physical rain itself. Let's delve a little deeper.

L-fields (fields of life) control the biosynthesis of the food we eat into new cells, which arrange themselves into the same patterns as the old cells. This electro-dynamic field of the body serves as a matrix, which preserves the arrangement of any new material poured into it (burr, 1972. P. 78). Thus, biologic electric fields govern morphogenesis, and are present in all life forms (Gallo, 1999. P. 12, 13). In 1986, Bohm discovered that electrons (circulating around the proton of an atom) appeared to have a level of consciousness, and that they could be both a wave, and a particle. And Bell's theorem states that when two subatomic particles interact, and then disperse in opposite directions, interference with one particle will effect the other particle regardless of the distance between them (Gallo, 1999. P. 14).

So, we can see that there exists a certain intelligence in the organism, even at this subatomic level. The Einstein, Podolsky, Rosen 'Thought Experiment' postulates that information can travel faster than the speed of light, and that related subatomic particles are connected non-locally (Gallo, 1000. P. 14). Does this theory account for a mysterious, related connection of intelligent communication between these subatomic particles, and perhaps for 'unexplained' energy connections to the God force? Remember what Northrup had to say on page 2: Quantum physics tells us that at the subatomic level, matter and energy, which can also be called SPIRIT, are interchangeable. Could this intelligence, which lives in the spaces of our cells, at a subatomic level, be our spiritual connection to the Creative Universal Intelligence? Both the Bell and Boehm theorems account for the notion of a holographic universe in the field of neuroscience: If psycho-logical problems are a function of energy structures, or fields, it follows that there exists a structured energy component that provides instructions, which catalyzes the enter psychological process (Gallo, 1000. P. 14). Gallo goes on to say that thought exists in fields (in the body), and that negative emotion causes energy configurations. Therefore, he says, psychological phenomena are quantum mechanical processes, i.e., if thought, and psychological problems exist in energy form, they can be treated by altering that energy field (Gallo, 1999. P. 14, 15).

The science of Thought Field Therapy (TFT) states that: specific thoughts, perturbations (disturbances of the energy), and related information are stored in the energy system of the body (the field) of an individual. The clinician directs the client to think about a disturbing, traumatic memory, then to determine a SUD (subjective unit of

disturbance), and then to do 'tapping' on specific meridian points. Psychological problems are manifestations of active information, energetically coded within the thought fields. In order to diagnose and treat a condition effectively, the appropriate thought field must be attuned, or balanced.

Examples of thought fields are traumatic memories. A perturbation is the fundamental, and easily modifiable trigger containing specific information, with sets of psychological, neurological, hormonal, chemical, and cognitive events that result in negative emotions (Callahan, 1995. P. 2). By removing the perturbation from the thought field, distress associated with the traumatic memory is alleviated. It is the stress emanating from the thought field, which Gallo attributes to the cause of addiction, and he says that the cravings that an addict experiences are akin to having a mild panic attack, and are merely manifestations of perturbations in the energy field.

These perturbations are codes, which cause the energy system to activate negative effects. They could be engrams of memories, that is, actual physical imprints of the memory, or they could be holographs, or energy interference patterns. These energy interference patterns could be coded within the energy meridian systems of the body. Meridians are the energy systems in the body that follow specific pathways. There are twelve bilateral meridians, each passing through a specific organ. There are also collector meridians, which intersect the front, and back of the body, and enter the brain. There are also a number of collaterals that connect with the primary meridians. The flow of energy (Qi, or Chi, pronounced 'chee') travels from one meridian to another, circulating throughout the body. In a healthy body the energy flow is uninterrupted, but where there is dis-ease, there is always a blockage of this vital force energy, or perturbations (Gallo, 1999. P. 33 – 39).

Thought Field Therapy treatment consists of tapping on the meridian points of the body, such as, at the beginning of the eyebrow, above the bridge of the nose, under an eye orbit, under the armpit, or under the collarbone. The client rates the SUD, and is directed through a 9 Gamut treatment, i.e., taping between the little finger, and ring finger on the back of the hand. Another exercise is to do eye rolling exercises, humming, counting, and humming again. Some of the tapping is to be accompanied with an affirmation, such as, "I accept myself completely & unconditionally, even though I still have this problem." The tapping, and the affirmations are geared to removing the perturbation from the thought field, thereby alleviating the distress associated with the traumatic memory (Gallo, 1999. P. 24, 25).

Thought Field Therapy definitely has its roots in the ancient practice of acupuncture, which has been used by eastern practitioners for thousands of years, because it has a positive effect on the circulatory system. It releases the blockages that are in the energy meridian pathways, thereby allowing the body to heal itself. An acupuncture treatment usually occurs one to two times a week. There are acupuncture 'points', which are used for different pathological conditions. Acupuncture needles are inserted all over the body, including the legs, hands, feet, lower abdomen, back, and ears at these points to release blocked energy (Berkley, 1000. P. 2).

Chinese healers have also used medicinal herbs to balance the vital energy force in the body. The theory is that all living things give off a morphic resonance, including plants. Certain plants have a morphic resonance that matches to the morphic resonance of the human body, and when taken internally they act to heal the body by clearing out the stagnation within the meridians, which run in certain pathways, and through the organ systems. The herbs that work in this manner are called 'adaptogenic' and 'alternative' herbs. Adaptogenic means that they help the system adapt to stress by supporting the nervous system, and by working directly with the body's own physiologic processes to maintain health. Alternative means that they are blood purifiers, which assist the body in assimilating nutrients, and eliminating toxins from the system. Both the adaptogens, and the alternatives work with the body's vital energy to clear blockages in the meridian energy flow. Some common herbs that are used for this purpose are Ginseng, Echinacea, and Licorice (Chevallier, 1996. P. 12, 13).

Having just taken a look at the ancient healing practices of acupuncture, and herbal medicine let's now see how balancing one's energy system can assist the healing of addiction. In his book, The Anxiety-Addiction Connection: Eliminate Your Addictive Urges with TFT, Roger Callahan, Ph.D. tells us that any activity that masks anxiety is a potential addictive activity. The anxiety masking quality of a behavior, or a substance is the key to understanding the addiction problem. Any substance, or activity, which masks anxiety, leads to the strong possibility of addiction in a vulnerable person. It has always been believed that addiction is a physiological dependency, and tolerance issue. But, according to the evidence, the suffering in withdrawal is due to the removal of the anxiety masking effect, which leads to a crisis of anxiety. In other words, the intense anxiety is the most difficult aspect of withdrawal. When an effective treatment for anxiety is given, withdrawal problems vanish for most addicts (Callahan, 1995. P. 65).

One final explanation from Callahan on addiction: "The basic premise of TFT is that the perturbations in the thought field precedes, and generates the neuro-chemicals, and cognitive facts. The perturbation in the thought field, which is subsumed, and rendered inoperative with TFT, is the fundamental, and basic cause of all disturbed, or negative emotions. The therapeutic treatment of the perturbation eliminates the chemical, and cognitive consequences. We consider the perturbation to be basic, and fundamental. Chemistry, and cognition are considered secondary, and tertiary" (Callahan, 1995. P. 3).

So it seems that it is a question similar to which came first the chicken, or the egg. My theory is that the body has in it an affinity for the addictive substance as a stored memory of survival in the system as a direct result of childhood trauma, or abuse when neuro-chemicals were released to cope with pain and stress. Callahan's theory of perturbation, and anxiety as follows: "it is the perturbation in the thought field , which generates the neuro-chemicals, and the addictive thinking. While we both recognize the perturbation in the thought field (the body), and are in agreement as to possible treatments, we differ as to basic cause of the perturbation, and its origin." I would like to

ask Callahan, according to his theory, how did the perturbation get in the thought field, i.e., the body. I find Callahan's and Gallo's theories, and treatments very exciting. They both take into consideration the ancient teaching of energy meridians, and balancing the energy systems of the body.

However, I see a definite connection between the neuro-chemicals that were released early in life, and the blockage of the energy meridians. In either case, by restoring the balance of these energy systems in the body, and alleviating the anxiety that proceeds the addictive craving, could we heal the addictive personality? And if our 'spirit' is actually the energy, which is found in the spaces between the subatomic particles, could it be that when the addict takes steps one, two, and three of the 12 step program, he/she is actually communicating with that part of himself/herself, which is the God-self, that energy connection to the universal whole? By making a firm, verbal commitment to turn one's life over to the care of a power greater than ourselves, could we not be tapping into the God-self with our own energy system, i.e., the miracle of healing for some addicts? But, even with this transformation, most addicts need the continued support of the 12 step programs to enable them to maintain their sanity. We need to ask ourselves this question: Is the addict then addicted to the 12 step program? Let's take the healing process a step further.

If 12 step support groups don't work for all addictive people, wouldn't it be worth implementing the above modalities into a healing recovery program. The program choosing to create a paradigm shift within the addiction treatment field would then be truly addressing the total person: body, mind, and spirit.

Are we at last becoming ready, and willing to face the Bio-Psych Dance of Addiction? Is anyone out there now brave enough to go against the traditional, government funded, pharmaceutical frenzied, currently accepted, present day drug and alcohol treatment?

**And if not now, WHEN?**

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