

# Using Energy Psychology to break the smoking habit

By Tom Porpiglia

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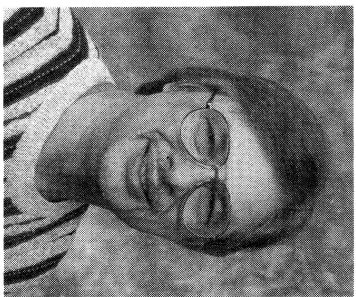
Researchers tell us that nicotine is the most addictive substance known to us. Recovering addicts will tell you that nicotine addiction is the hardest to get over, more difficult than heroin or cocaine. It is believed that quitting is even more difficult for women because of their chemical make-up and body fat ratio.

People often use addictive substances to medicate themselves from feeling emotional discomfort. Our society perpetuates the idea that some feelings are negative, and, particularly, that men should not express feeling, as it's a sign of weakness. This is a contributing factor to why, in the U.S., we have four times more male addicts than female addicts. Because of early conditioning, men are prone to having a lot of emotional baggage to medicate.

With all the over-the-counter products available today, one would think quitting smoking should be easy. Yet, many people come to my office having tried all of them, including Zyban, with little or no success. Most over-the-counter products continue to feed the nicotine addiction, missing two very important factors: negative thought patterns and associations (people, places and things). These are primary factors in recovery from any addiction, and unless they change, any gains are undermined, and the person relapses. I believe that hypnosis and acupuncture also miss these issues.

In my experience, behavior modification techniques are temporary at best and often fail long term. That is because thoughts and beliefs drive behaviors. Changing the way we think is very challenging with traditional methods and if a person's thinking does not change, the potential for permanent behavior change is minimal. People are full of negative thoughts, beliefs, and habits that they have formed about themselves over the years. If we had an eraser that would work as easily on humans as on paper, behavioral modification would be a snap. Energy Psychology is the eraser that excels in this arena.

Energy Psychology (EP), pioneered by Dr. Roger Callahan, evolved from his understanding of Acupuncture and Kinesiology. EP employs the body's energy system to create changes more easily than other therapeutic processes by stimulating energy meridians while focused on the issue being



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addressed. Here is the prevailing theory on how EP works: When we think about something, there is an energy flow in the body that determines our emotional response. The intensity of this response could cause a disruption or blockage in the energy system, causing us to experience discomfort or an irrational, exaggerated response. Irrational emotional content around specific thoughts and issues keeps us stuck there. Traditional methods of counseling want us to change our thinking to change the response. Anyone who has attempted to do this will tell you how difficult it is. With EP, we discharge the response to the issue, which allows thinking to change, spontaneously.

There are many forms of Energy Psychology. My favorite is Emotional Freedom Technique™ (EFT). EFT involves tapping on energy meridians with your fingers while you are repeating a specific, issue-related, phrase. I teach EFT to all of my clients, and they are free to use it anytime, anywhere, on anything. I encourage them to use it frequently on anything that is an issue for them.

When someone comes to me for smoking cessation, I have them fill out a "Smoking Self Inventory." The inventory gathers information about their smoking habits, beliefs about self, and how they use smoking. I also screen them for depression, anxiety and trauma, because these issues need treatment as well. Many times smoking is covering up these issues and the issues are part of the reason they are smoking. I also employ a simple process to check the client for allergies to tobacco, smoking and nicotine, and apply a correction if necessary. Often times, clients are allergic to the substances to which they are addicted.

Once the information is gathered, we start applying EFT to each issue. We use EFT to disconnect their mental associations between smoking and things like coffee, driving and meals. We also use EFT to change their negative thoughts (I can't, don't, won't or don't want to quit) into positive, reinforcing thoughts (I choose to quit). In addition, we use EFT to facilitate healing for other issues that are connected.

I use another EP process, Tapas Acupressure Technique™ (TAT), to help a client change his/her mental self-image. We work together to change it from the smoker to the non-smoker, also to make desired changes in what they look like, feel like, smell like, ideal weight, and any other pertinent details. This picture has to change; otherwise, the brain will go back to the old picture and the person is likely to start smoking again.

Typically, after our first session, clients have reduced their smoking by 20-50%, effortlessly, and without withdrawal symptoms. As with other addictions, the length of time it takes to quit varies from person to person.