



An overview of

Healing the Addicted Heart: The Five Stages of Transformation

by Sue Beer, EFT Master

Is there a song that touches the hole in your soul? A song that stirs in your memory a particular loss? Most of us at some time have experienced the pain of an unwanted end to a relationship - the anguish of taking a risk with our hearts and losing. *If I can only have that again, it will all be ok, I will feel whole again - I can go on.*

This powerful sense of loss is repeated in many lesser and more subtle forms throughout our lives and, perhaps, goes deeper still to the first loss; the one fundamental loss of our connection to Source which represents all other losses and gets played out again and again in our emotional dramas, our relationships, and our attachments or addictions to people, things, behaviours and substances.

We can spend all of our lives longing for something (to fix us); think of a child's obsession with the next PlayStation, a pet, particular clothes – that unbridled longing until they may learn through disappointment to close down all desire. And this is the twin side of the same coin – anxious wanting and shut down are both limiting states of mind that keep us experiencing continual unfulfillment.

Many elderly people long for and relive the past, rewriting it or keeping alive resentments, anything but **now**. And it is everywhere, this sense of lack - George Bush spoke of the United States of America being 'addicted to oil', and maybe he spoke truer than he knew: addicted to maintaining the dream, the illusory trappings of success and achievement, and material insulation - a certain sense of self fuelled by oil – and without that sense of self, *something is missing, there is not enough - I am not enough.*

Going to the Next Level with EFT

This chapter represents a mini taster of 'Healing the Addicted Heart: the 5 stages of Transformation', a larger work whose purpose is to take us on a personal journey through which we find the practical means to throw off the shackles of addiction in all its forms, release our minds and set our hearts free. **EFT is vital to this process; in fact, it makes it possible.** This work, however, is different and challenging. It requires examining what we think we already know about ourselves and about addictions. It draws greatly on my own personal experience and journey, and dedicated study of A Course in Miracles; influences from 12 Steps, hypnosis and NLP, as well as the latest scientific research which is showing us the truth of many of the radical ideas in A Course in Miracles and other paths - if only our minds are open enough to realise the implications and responsibilities this gives us.

Chronic and Acute Addictions

So what do we mean when we are talking about addictions (and attachments, and holes in the soul, and addicted hearts?) – everyone searching in different ways to fill the hole inside, the heart emptiness. And we can fix on any thing, any substance, behaviour, person, emotion: *alcohol, anger, approval, caffeine, chocolate, cleaning, control, diets, drugs, food, gambling, helping, indebtedness, internet, power, relationship, religion, romance, self-harming, sex, shopping, smoking, sugar, tanning, television, therapy, etc etc*

Something you cannot stop is a simple yet meaningful definition. It certainly includes our emotional states and as Joe Dispenza in the film 'What the Bleep' points out, if you cannot control your emotional state – getting angry over and over again for example - you must be addicted to it, not just psychologically but physiologically as well (and therefore will experience withdrawal when you try to change).

It is useful here to make a distinction between chronic and acute states. Chronic addiction or attachment is what we might call this universal longing, or vague sense that something is missing, I am not ok as I am. Or sometimes it manifests as hanging on to OKness like grim death – *I'm fine...just don't be nice to me*. It's what Jung referred to as 'a low level search for God'. And perhaps it really is no accident that the words alcohol and spirit have a shared meaning? Language often reflects the truth outside our conscious awareness, we speak 'truer than we know' – maybe there are never really any accidents in language!

Acute addiction, on the other hand, is the state on the spectrum that has become obvious, visible and can no longer be managed or hidden from either oneself or others. It may be the point at which someone seeks external help, or at least is trying repeatedly to stop or control what is happening. This is the state that most people would agree on as 'addiction' - usually seeing it out there in others, safely labelled as heroin or crack addicts, alcoholics, gamblers - and avoiding connecting what is seen out there with their own less obvious although possibly equally insidious forms of self medication.

If you have ever experienced an acute state of addiction, whatever the substance or behaviour, you will know that it is all-consuming, dominating every aspect of your life and of anyone around you. But there is no clear and easy to spot line between chronic and acute states. There can also be acute phases of chronic addiction, as in binge drinking. However, rather than being a hopeless condition the fact is that acute addictions are often temporary states – meaning that they are often a response to a particular context or set of circumstances, and fade away when the situation changes. The experience of US soldiers in the Vietnam war illustrates this point well. Heroin was supplied to the soldiers involved in this war (presumably to help them 'get by') and so many of them became addicted that the US authorities were seriously concerned about what would happen when they returned after the war ended in 1975, and made plans for their care. What transpired was a surprise. The majority of men stopped taking heroin as soon as they returned to their normal lives and families. After 12 months the figures for heroin addiction amongst this group were no higher than would be expected in the normal population and those that remained addicted either were diagnosed as suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) or had no family they could return to.

Acute addiction registers massive energetic imbalances on many levels and stopping the actual behaviour is the first thing that has to happen at Stage 1. However, there are four more stages, (and it is important to note that we work through the same stages of transformation whether we are dealing with chronic or acute states because these are essentially the same problem appearing in different forms or degree). If we only focus on stopping or controlling a particular behaviour or thing the potential always remains for it to be retriggered or switched to something else, or perhaps to move from chronic to acute addiction (given certain circumstances) – **until** we change the way we think. How do we do that? How do we really change our minds and move from lives of just getting by to lives of fearless self-acceptance? And what role does our own heart's wisdom play in this?

The Meaning of the 'Addicted Heart'

Firstly, let us look at what we mean by 'the addicted heart'. Through out time the heart as a word and as a metaphor or an idea has held a fascination - especially in literature. Shakespeare came back to the idea that the heart is the seat of truth, the core of you, repeatedly in his plays. 'Hamlet', his longest play, explores the theme of truth meaning inwardness - self-awareness, connected to the heart. When we are not true to ourselves our hearts contract and we experience limitation, conflict, a sense that we are not at Home, living from lack, frustration and anxious wanting.

The idea of the 'addicted heart' links the metaphorical, intuitive understanding of the heart's wisdom with the latest learnings coming from science. And so the 'addicted heart' symbolises the condition of living fearfully, from our mask rather than from our true selves, **and** there is a very surprising literal correlation. Evidence is coming from the very latest branch of science, neurocardiology, that the heart is the major centre of intelligence in the human body. The heart influences every system and organ in the body. There is literally a pathway between it and the emotional brain with constant unconscious dialogue - the idea that we can think and feel with our hearts is no longer metaphor but a very real phenomenon.

"The heart is also a very powerful electromagnetic generator. It creates an electromagnetic field that encompasses the body and extends out anywhere from eight to twelve feet away from it. It is so powerful that you can take an electrocardiogram reading from as far as three feet away from the body. The intriguing thing is how profoundly this electromagnetic field affects the brain. All indications are that it furnishes the whole radio wave spectrum from which the brain draws its material to create our internal experience of the world.

Perhaps most importantly, we now know that the radio spectrum of the heart is profoundly affected by our emotional response to our world. Our emotional response changes the heart's electromagnetic spectrum, which is what the brain feeds on. Ultimately, everything in our lives hinges on our emotional response to specific events." - Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of 'The Biology of Transcendence'

We can think of the five stages of transformation as the movement from Fear (based survival) or ego mind, which is the emotional and physiological state of the addicted heart; to Love based living, which is a state of personal power, expansion, flow and connectedness. So how do we get from Fear to Love? Is it as simple as just stopping whatever substance or thing we are using to make ourselves feel better? And if we do, will our hearts immediately expand?

And as you think about that, you might also like to consider Plato's Allegory of the Cave, a metaphysical version of Gary Craig's Writing on the Walls metaphor:

There are people shackled together in a cave with their heads and legs tied so that they cannot move and can only look directly ahead onto the cave wall. Way off at the entrance to the cave there is some light coming in and outside there are people passing by on the road, going about their business. The light coming in reflects shadows from the people outside on the wall opposite the prisoners. And this is all they can see. Because it is all they can see they think it is all there is, and take it to be reality.

Then one day one of the men breaks free and although dazzled begins to move towards the light. It takes quite a while to adjust but eventually the prisoner finds himself at the entrance to the cave looking out at the people going by in the sun

light. At first he is shocked and can hardly make out any detail but then his eyes begin to adjust and eventually he moves out and is amazed to realise that what he had thought was real was not real at all.

He resolves to return to the prisoners in the cave and let them know that what they are seeing is not true, so that they too can be free. When he goes back in to the cave now he finds it difficult to see in the gloom. The prisoners perceive him stumbling and talking nonsense and they do not want to hear what he is saying. In fact, they think he is mad and plan to kill him.

The Real Problem is the Starting Again

This story has much to teach us on many levels. Plato saw most of the people in the world living like the prisoners in the cave, seeing only the shadows and not able to see the light coming from what he termed the "Good" (God or Source). And this is the condition of the addicted heart. The heart knows the Truth - the Good, yet it is in conflict, shackled, closed like the prisoners; and what stands in the way of knowledge and freedom is the belief that what we see as the world is reality, and the fear of seeing beyond that. For Plato the solution to suffering, or what would enable us to evolve to the awareness of the 'Good', was education.

He realised we need a way or a path that works on removing the blocks to our experience of the light to guide us. Otherwise, we stay in the cave we think is reality. Otherwise, without expanding our minds, either we stay addicted or we swap one addiction for another. The fact is that most people can stop, at least for a while. Alcoholics can stop for 24 hours, a month, or a year. The real problem is the starting again. Billions of pounds are spent every year on conventional treatments with very low success rates. Recent figures show that 97% of drug addicts become re-addicted within five years of treatment and 82% of alcoholics treated for alcoholism remain abstinent for less than six months. However, using EFT through The Five Stages of Transformation holds out the hope and way towards real, lasting emotional freedom. Healing the Addicted Heart is about changing our minds so that we remember our truth and come to see beyond the shadows to the real world here - the Happy Dream, the reflection of Oneness.

'Our lives have a purpose, and we are engaged in an unconscious search for our own truth'

The process of healing the addicted heart through the five stages is founded on a basic premise: 'our lives have a purpose and we are engaged in an unconscious search for our own truth'. But before we look at this in more detail (with diagram A), it will be useful to consider the role that Freud's work has played in ideas about the mind and healing.

Freud more than any one else in the last century introduced new ways of understanding the mind which have profoundly altered the way we think about our lives and ourselves. (In the future EFT and energy psychology will very probably come to be seen as the greatest breakthrough since Freud).

Nowadays we are comfortable with the notion of an unconscious mind, but at the time this idea and Freud's development of the theory of the unconscious was radical and shocking. His papers, published in 1915, were fiercely contested – but what is important here is that the idea of the unconscious for Freud was not a philosophical one at all. It was practical. He found that without presupposing the existence of the unconscious he was unable to explain or describe many of the phenomena and symptoms of hysteria and depression and so on he came across in his patients; and making it opened up the way to fresh ideas.

No one could dispute the value of Freud's contribution now. But maybe he was only partially there with his thinking and it is time now for us to expand our minds even further. For Freud the unconscious held only a seething mass of negativity and destructive impulses - which it does; but he also thought that any idea of a Higher Self or of something beyond our physical selves was neurosis, or evidence of an unbalanced emotional state. In complete contrast, the basic premise of healing the Addicted Heart is that buried at the deepest level of the unconscious, out of our awareness, is the memory of the truth of ourselves as Spirit, one with Source. We are Spirit trapped in a physical experience, making our way Home. And without this premise of a split mind and an unconscious search for completeness - as Freud found in his work, our symptoms of longing and addiction and rootlessness do not make sense. However if we allow ourselves to be open to the possibility of it we may find new freedoms and ways to heal.

**5 STAGE
DIAGRAM**

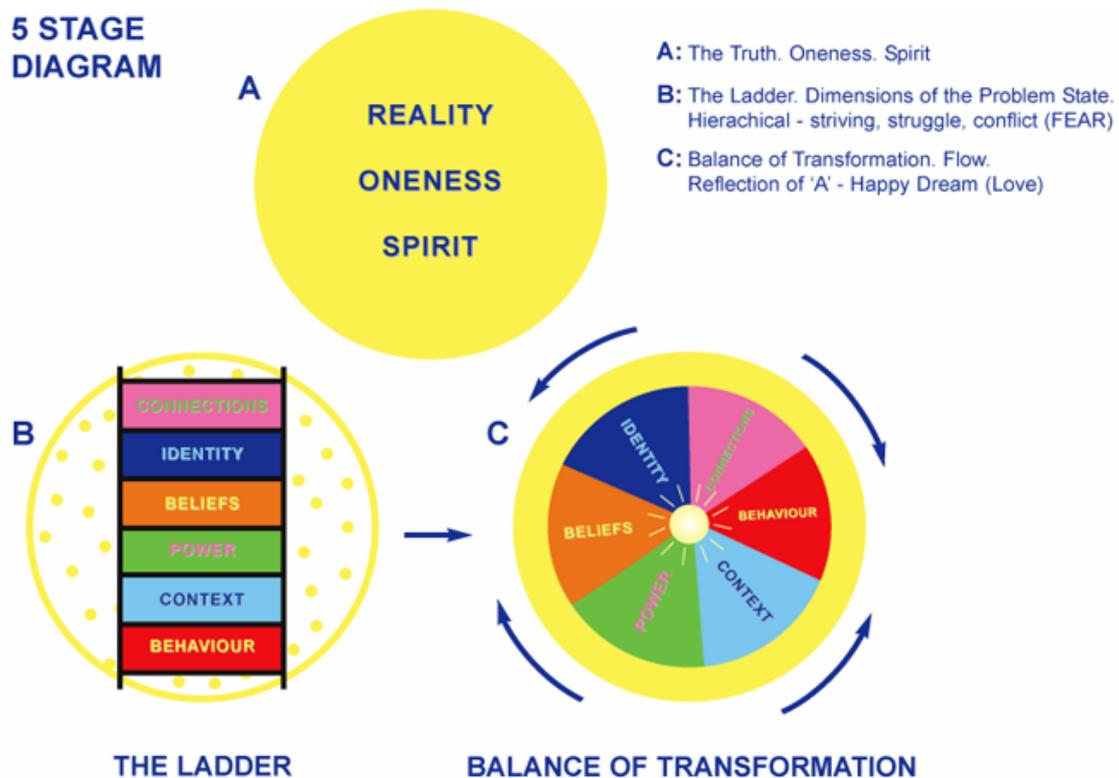


DIAGRAM A

Diagram A represents Source, absolute non-duality that means that nothing exists that is not Love - completely whole, infinite, eternal, and unchanging. It is the state of completeness that we try to find in other ways. It is the opposite, in fact, of our experience in the physical world where everything changes and eventually dies, and nothing lasts forever.

However vaguely, from within our experience of the dream of duality where each of us has a separate experience as a physical body, we long to know this condition of Oneness again. And while we retain the memory of our reality, we are more or less unconscious of it - but it will begin to emerge in consciousness at some point, often when we are at a very low point or close to death, and sometimes it dawns gradually through a growing feeling of not being 'at Home'.

To be one with Source is our only reality and deep down we know this and we also know that our experience in physicality is an illusory or 'made up' one and

what keeps us apart from Truth – indeed that is the purpose of the illusion, to maintain the state of separation from Source, each one of us fenced off from another and living the fragmented, individual experience we have made to substitute for our reality. Ultimately, though, that part of us that remains connected to the truth will always emerge to lead us Home. However strong our illusory defences are the longing to return to wholeness remains and awaits the time and place when the mind that thinks itself separate begins to question itself.

The Five Stages

Obviously, what we experience on a day to day level is any thing but the condition of Oneness. Living from the addicted heart, we experience varying degrees of struggle and fear in various forms and spend a lot of time and energy trying to solve our problems and make ourselves feel better in some way. So how do we change our addicted hearts and minds? How do we get from Plato's prisoners to the light, which is the purpose of the five stages?

Here is a very brief overview of the Stages. Each stage represents a level of development, or state of mind and attitude, growth and healing. At each of these stages, we will have different challenges, learnings and obstacles to overcome. Consistent with our changing mindset we will attract different issues and opportunities for healing to ourselves.

Stage 1. Emergency measures: stopping/denial

The stopping point. With an acute addiction, this may be a matter of life or death. In the chronic state, it is the point where we realise that there has to be a better way. Whether chronic or acute there may be a great deal of pain and fear accompanying the realisation that we cannot go on as we are. We are at an impasse, emotionally physiologically and spiritually. It takes great courage and honesty to come to this stage. It is truly a new beginning.

Stage 2. Down shit alley (with EFT!):

Clearing up the mess of now – until this point we may have denied the realisation of what has been happening to us. We may have become a parody of what we were looking for, perhaps the opposite of the desired state that the drug of choice seemed to promise. Time for hope and possibility – the mapping out of what is really possible.

Stage 3. Obstacles to peace/Sensing our power:

Healing the past. Releasing the effects of trauma, in whatever form. Opening to the metaphysics - you are not who you thought you are (you are much more than that), the ego's thought system and self sabotage – Love versus Fear.

Stage 4. Taking action:

Conflict resolution – unearthing secondary addictions and attachments. The challenge of acting in the world in true alignment with our power - expressing who we really are, the truth in our hearts.

Stage 5. Fearless self-acceptance as a way of life:

Vigilance to Choose Love – real forgiveness – giving is receiving. Letting go and freedom from attachment. Really living the Happy Dream.

Can you really imagine living a life without fear?

In one sense, our journey through the five stages is a life long journey - the hero's journey, but it is not lifelong struggle. Actual change can and does happen immediately, there is the possibility for it as soon as you stop the substance, behaviour, or whatever. You only need a little willingness to begin and then EFT will continue to support you as you clear the past and unfold on a transformational path through the Stages towards the truth in your heart. As you change your mindset and attitude, you are no longer on the frequency of attachment. Furthermore, profound changes continue because this way of working (using the Ladder – diagram B, as a guide) is holographic rather than linear and the Stages will cycle round again at different levels of growth, experience and understanding.



B: The Ladder. Dimensions of the Problem State.
Hierarchical - striving, struggle, conflict (FEAR)

THE LADDER

Getting Practical

DIAGRAM B – The Ladder

In order to change and heal we need to get practical. When arranged as a hierarchy all of the 'rungs' on the Ladder are 'problem' components of our every day experience (and each contains within it the potential for transformation). While the **experience** of **B**, at the beginning point, is the effect of the split mind which has forgotten its reality - the fearful, conflicted state of living from the addicted heart, disconnected from Source - that is always against the backdrop of Truth, represented by **A** (which is held in the unconscious, whether we are aware of it or not). It is still there behind diagram B, barely discernible, represented by yellow spots rather than full yellow.

The Ladder is a metaphor through which we can examine the complexity of our human experience, while holding the possibility in our minds that our Truth is something that transcends problems and conflict. It is a development of the Logical Levels work of Robert Dilts, an NLP pioneer who noted that:

"The brain, and in fact any biological or social system, is organized into levels. Your brain has different levels of processing. As a result you can have different

levels of thinking and being. When we are working to understand the brain, or to change behavior, we need to address these different levels."

A key development with the Ladder is the concept that everything we experience within it is the effect or consequence of the split mind, which has forgotten our true reality is Love. What we are experiencing is the equivalent of Plato's prisoners believing the shadows on the wall are the reality, while at a deeper level the truth about ourselves remains unchanged. *Even though I have this problem, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.* We are seeing through the illusion piece by piece. As we work through the blocks which show up in different ways in our everyday lives (the rungs), we come closer to the experience of love and alignment with Source.

To move through the Stages we need to get a clear look at where problems and stuckness are showing up in our lives. The Ladder allows us to get a complete, holographic look at the complexity of our experience – holographic because each rung (or component/level) impacts those above and below. For example if you are addicted to your anger, and consistently behave in an angry fashion, you will believe the world is dangerous and needs to be defended against, and this will affect your sense of self, and your relationships.

Connections

Identity

Beliefs

Power

Context

Behaviour

Arranging the components of the problem state in this way is like taking an engine apart the better to see it and work out what is wrong. We may need to attend to one part more than another but when we put it together again the engine needs to work as a whole.

Therefore, the Ladder is useful as a starting place, initiating a process of differentiation in order to put together again in a different, more complete, holographic form – a circuit in constant balance and exchange of energy. The Balance of Transformation.

To get an idea of how this works, let us focus on three main areas, the axis Power, Beliefs and Identity, giving examples of questions to use which will uncover those blocks, which we can then release with EFT.

Power (= intention plus ability)

Power is the coming together of our intention with our skills and abilities, to make things happen in the world. When we are out of alignment with Source our intention is unconsciously coming from the fear part of the split mind (which shows in our beliefs about the self and the world) and the consequences may show up as acute addiction, or perhaps chronically as self-sabotage, or swinging between low self-esteem and grandiosity – the true artist distorted into the piss artist.

We may also lack the necessary skills to function healthily and take the next steps, or never have learnt certain skills, which are needed to successfully navigate life. To put it simply if you have been drunk since the age of twelve you may not know how to put together a CV.

Power is very important – the use, abuse and misuse of power in the problem state. It may often be that a dysfunctional relationship with our own power is the very crux of the matter, the point on which all else turns. The skills and abilities, which are lacking in a practical sense, can reflect a deeper misalignment with true purpose.

Questions

What potential in you is unfulfilled?

What abilities are you not using and not demonstrating when you are in the problem state?

What would you be doing if you were not 'x'ing

What kind of life would you be leading if it were not for...?

What happened to you?

Beliefs (heart)

Beliefs and values are the glue that holds the problem state together:

'I don't know what life is like without x'

'People who don't x are boring'

'I wouldn't have any friends if I didn't x'

Beliefs fuel emotion. Beliefs are felt in the heart - symbolically and physically in the organ itself. We talk about 'heart-felt' beliefs. The heart does not lie. The conflict of the spilt mind shows up in the heart - what we believe (think) to be true about ourselves and the world at any point in time may conflict with what registers in the heart and which shows up in the heart's rhythm and ultimately health. There is an energetic and a physiological connection between the emotional brain and the heart, a pathway running from the base of the skull (or throat area) to the heart.

There can be a great deal of fear about speaking the (heart's) truth, or lack of awareness about what needs to be said - fear of taking a risk, being exposed, laid bare.

This can be both a major block in the problem state, and the point of change. What we believe about ourselves and what we value affects how we choose to use our power. False beliefs about ourselves lead to conditioned automatic responses, which wound the heart and when the heart is not living the truth it literally constricts. The heart that responds to ego mind is closed, afraid; beliefs and attitudes set like concrete around it - the heart "hardens", or "turns to stone".

Question

What do you feel in your heart about this?

Identity (= defining ourselves, limiting ourselves)

The ego mind identifies who we are with the body, emotions, internal dialogue. Since our real purpose is to identify with Spirit, this creates unconscious conflict. We are far more than we think). But who we have decided to be in the world, and the masks we wear as a result, may conflict with movement towards who we really are. Our addictive behaviours and attachments perpetuate our false selves.

Who would I be without this?

Our addictions temporarily make us feel good: they give us something, particularly at an identity level. For a while we might feel like somebody - however briefly - and then it does not work any more. But there is always the hope or illusion it will - the 'just once more' thought – once more will give me what I need, and **then** I can change.

What kind of person are you when you X?

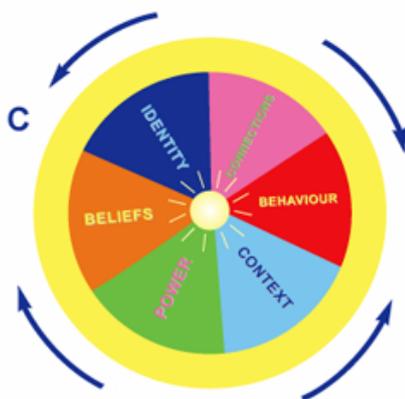
Who are you when you X?

Who would you be without this?

How do you feel about yourself when you X/stop Xing?

Balance of Transformation

As we move through the five Stages with EFT using the Ladder as a guide our lives increasingly have the qualities of The Balance of Transformation:



C: Balance of Transformation. Flow.
Reflection of 'A' - Happy Dream (Love)

BALANCE OF TRANSFORMATION

DIAGRAM C

C = Balance of Transformation

C represents the Happy Dream, the 'solution' state where we are still within the illusion of time and space but we are in the process of changing our minds to align ourselves with and think from Source. Love radiates out from our heart centre and the components of our everyday experience are balanced and harmonious, flowing, reflecting the qualities of A, our reality. Our lives are working. We perceive the world as a loving, safe place. We are healthy – in fact, our bodies express the physiology of Love.

Hope for the Future

The Five Stages of Transformation map out a way to move from the problem state to the solution state. Both problem state and solution state are multi-faceted and we need a way to breakdown and understand this complexity of human experience.

All addictions, whether they be the obvious such as to narcotics, or more subtly to particular ways of thinking and feeling are processes driven by complex interactions internally and externally. The interesting thing is that the problem state will always contain within itself the potential for transformation. And so working in this way, to heal our addicted hearts, has universal application not just for addictions – but also for any state of disease or manifestation of dysfunction.

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