Addicted To *Not* Smoking

A Hypnotic Trip into Cigarettelessness

[This is a writing sample for the portfolio.]

Changing Your Mind
with
Hypnosis Consciousness

Born into this strange human condition, a life with no explanation, we grab hold of cigarettes the way a shipwrecked sailor grabs hold of a wooden plank to keep afloat. A pack of cigarettes in your pocket is something that you can be sure of, and it helps you to cope with all the uncertainty of being a person. Unfortunately, the sense of security that you find in cigarettes is a false one. They're killing you, actually.

Spacious Mind: A workspace for changing your mind.

This is where you free your person of the burdensome compulsion to judge and analyze every little thing, constantly missing the present moment and its vivid truth because of the distracting rant of the mind. Listen to the sound of your breathing as you read. There is a moment when the inhalation stops and the exhalation has yet to begin, like the moment of stillness when a ball thrown up in the air has stopped ascending but has not yet started to fall. Within and between all movements of breath and body, there is the entirety of life—and life can be pleasure. The volume of life's pleasure can be turned up until it overwhelms the comparatively minor discomfort of nicotine withdrawal. It is as simple as changing your mind.

Smoke-Strike: Like a hunger-strike, this is a practice of renunciation.

Resolve to be free of the habit for a few hours tomorrow. The habit began when an occasional cigarette provided a temporary escape from your tired old routine. No nicotine dependence had developed yet, so you smoked for other reasons. When you first tried cigarettes you were trying something new, something exciting. But cigarettes are not new anymore, are they? Your relationship to cigarettes has changed completely. Now they have become part of the tired old routine, and they offer enjoyment only in the form of relief from the physical discomfort associated with nicotine craving. Your relationship to cigarettes has changed in such a way that, now, not to smoke would be an escape from the tired old routine. Imagine that.

Reading Hypnosis: Rest in your practice.

Breathe easy. Relax your face and shoulders. Loosen away any tension that you might be holding in the chest area. A subtle trance occurs naturally while you read, and you can deepen the trance by deliberately sharpening your focus until you achieve slender, pinpoint precision. Cooperate with the trance, and go deeper into the stillness of the moment. To stay with the reading and the sound of your breathing is so much easier than letting your mind wander. These words are good for you, so do not read them with your ordinary, wide-awake discernment—let your guard down. Let your attention float slowly across the page with each breath.

Creative Action: You can choose to be active or passive in any moment.

The extent to which you inhabit your own mind is the extent to which you can be an active creator of life. Act according to your will rather than serving the impulsive, monkey-mind of the person, and you can create life as you go, shaping your life situation by gently manipulating the unfolding of events in the present moment. If you act on every little passing impulse, you'll be busy like an overworked servant. A slave. Don't be a slave to the monkey-mind's thousands of stupid little thoughts (they have nothing to do with you), because you'll be too busy to create anything; you will not be an active participant. You'll end up like the lonely kid sitting with no one to dance with, benched on the sidelines of life.

Hypnosis Consciousness: Where subject and object meet.

You are awareness looking out at the world through the eyes of a person. Humanity changes according to ideas that have been entertained, and your own life also changes according to ideas. Hypnosis is the technique for accessing a deep place in consciousness, the place where subject and object meet, and introducing ideas. The quality of your attention is what determines your ability to influence the changes that will happen in the world and in the person. Strength of concentration is the necessary trait, the one that lets you co-create instead of suffering through life with no control.

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Chapter One

Changing Your Mind

This moment, you can go the right way. You can take the path of a slightly different you, very much like the existing you, except without the cigarettes. Changing your mind is delicate work. It's like brain surgery without the surgery. It's like cleaning an oven, only it's a self-cleaning oven, so it cleans itself, but that is really hard for an oven to do. Well, you know what I mean.

Tic, toc, tic, toc, you spill into reality, moment after moment. Tic, toc, tic, toc, your person mixes in with everything else. The world is constantly changing. The person is constantly changing. Subtle manipulations can be made if you are sneaky enough. Are you sneaky enough? Guide the person. Tell her what she wants to hear. Be nice to her, so that she feels very comfortable. The way to make change happen for the person you call "me" is to direct that person, gently and sneakily, according to your will. Repeat instructions over and over while the person is calm, while "monkey-mind" is sleeping.

Monkey-mind is the know-it-all kind, a control-freak that tries to run the whole show, and she has her own ideas about what the person should do. If you challenge her, she just crosses her arms and tells you no. Monkey-mind tells you that she has

been running this person for a long time, and she is not about to let you start making all kinds of changes. Not now, not ever. She has worked too hard to establish this self-image, and the person is just barely keeping her shit together as it is. *Don't change anything,* monkey-mind says. If you want to enact any changes, you're going to have to trick monkey-mind. Lull her to sleep. Get her to go to bed before the person does, or distract her skillfully. You need to steal some opportunities to speak with the person in private, without the interference of that busybody, monkey-mind.

Monkey-mind is the talkative type, a flamboyant and conceited little prick. If you want to know what monkey-mind is, close your eyes and try not to think about anything for 60 seconds. That little voice in your head, the one that doesn't know how to shut up, is the voice called monkey-mind. It can be a useful tool, just like your hands, or ears, or a shovel, or a pocket-dictionary. When you 'think about' something, you suggest the topic to monkey-mind and allow it to start making a lot of associations. Offer a topic, emphysema for example, and the voice will mumble: "…cigarettes, oxygen tank, permanent damage, hyperventilation, sadness, suffering…" The talkative monkey-mind works just like a search engine on the Internet.

There is a problem with monkey-mind, though, and its usefulness is often compromised. Tools are never as useful when used incorrectly. Sometimes they actually become dangerous, and this is the case with monkey-mind. What makes your mind dangerous is that it is like a computer from which you can't log off. Thinking is always going on, and when something is always present it seems to become a part of you. Your home town, your family, your body, your monkey-mind, even your car—you are like that ugly little duck in the story, all confused about what you are, so you identify more with the things that are always around. And because monkey-mind provides solutions to your problems and the words with which to express yourself, the tendency is to identify with it even more than with other things.

What do we mean when we say 'identification' with one thing and another? You live from there, perceiving those things to be the constituents of your 'self,' as if they are

what *make you up*. You relinquish part of your ability to be, settling for a comfortable illusion because you're scared of the unknown. But if Lewis and Clark had been scared of venturing into the unknown, they would never have discovered Sacajewia, and we wouldn't have those Sacajewia dollar-coins. At a loss for what to make of themselves in this human condition, people identify with mind and body, because mind and body are always present. When that ugly duck thought he was a duck, he might as well have been a duck for all practical purposes. He couldn't fly until he found out that he was a misplaced eagle. Or maybe he was a swan, or a seagull or something. Nevermind the stupid duck. The point is, when you let things in your environment affect the way you think of your 'self,' your actions are affected as well. It's not okay. Even if you have a nice car that could make you feel better about yourself, don't. Pretending that you are your car is not the answer, and neither is it the answer to pretend that you are that voice in your head.

You are Not the Thinking Mind

The monkey-mind's ongoing stream of thought could be compared to the process of Rorscharch Ink Blot Test: The present moment of your life shows you a particular scene from your life-situation, which is like an ink blot, and monkey-mind spouts a stream of associations between your preexisting knowledge/ideas and the content of the present-moment scene. You are not your accumulation of memories and mental associations—you are not the thinking, monkey-mind.

It is difficult to regard your *self* as separate from your thoughts, because your thoughts are the constituents of your "identity," and it is scary not to know what you are. That scariness was the reason for identifying with external things, like cigarettes, in the first place. The unknown is so scary that members of religious groups have been willing to commit mass suicide under the leadership of some fanatic who convinced them that he had it all figured out. We cling to our beliefs. Just as your imagination

fills in the blind spots in your vision so well that you don't know you have them, identification with external things enables you to feel as though you know what you are when you really don't. Monkey-mind is one of those external things, like a wardrobe or a fancy house, but to see monkey-mind as external requires more self-study.

Very simple people might identify with their sports cars, and when they hit spiritual puberty they might have a realization that the cars have little to do with the *self*, but they might still identify with their bodies. After more self-study and further realization, they might discover that they are not their bodies either, but they might still identify with the thoughts of monkey-mind. Only the most resolute seekers of spiritual truth can actually experience themselves beyond the level of thought.

You can too, but until you do, you're an ugly little duck.

A Word about Your Ninja Costume…

The one who makes the changes is not the one being changed. Here, a distinction needs to be made.

Changing your mind is like changing out of your ninja costume. Undressing in your apartment after a night of ninja-ing around in other people's yards just for the thrill, the naughty rush it gives you, you have achieved such a level of sneakiness that you can hardly even find yourself inside your costume. Except for the face-mask and fanny-pack, your sleek, tight ninja costume is all one piece, and it provocatively contours every bulge and crevice of your equally sleek, tight ninja body. You almost cannot tell where the hand-sewn, jet-black, cotton-polyester blend of fabric ends and you begin.

You hate to take off your ninja costume, because so many of your best memories are of times when you were wearing it, peering through people's windows while hiding in clouds of smoke, and you feel as though the costume is a part of who you are. So, you sit alone at home sometimes, dressed as a ninja, trying to make a living as a writer so as to avoid ever having to leave the house. You only go out on ninja missions. And,

you wear your mask. That way, if anyone ever sees you, you can just ninja off to someone else's yard and hide – until it's safe to sneak home.

You hate to change. Your costume is what helps you to sneak around and be anonymous, so that, even if people see you, they won't know you. They'll know they saw a ninja, sure, a ninja who disappeared behind a cloud of smoke, but they won't know the real you. You especially hate to take off your ninja face mask, because someone might see your true face. Someone might catch you sneaking around, because you have a habit of sneaking around in public places during the day, and they would figure out that you are a ninja and tell everybody and they would all think you are really cool, but then someone would recognize you in your costume one night when they switch the flood light on and say, hey, Kevin, why don't you put some normal pants on, and get away from my cat, before I call the police. Get out. Get out of here.

So, it's like that. Changing your mind is tricky business, because there is a part of your mind that sounds like a voice in your head, and you tend to think of it as your own voice, not like the others. One voice doesn't sound as hoarse and angry as the others. The voice that is left over after medicine makes the others go away, the main character on the radio program in your head, is what meditation practitioners call "monkey mind."

It isn't someone else's voice, but it isn't yours either. It is more like the echo of your phenomenal experience. A phenomena-commentary. Your present moment experience pours into a puddle of memories, stirring up your stillness and making a sound like a voice in your head. The voice is so familiar that you do not know where it ends and you begin. To change your mind requires that you differentiate between what is you and what is not, discern what part of mind is changeable from the changeless one who manifests the change. After all, this voice in your head is the culprit, giving you the notion that you would like to smoke a cigarette, even though you know you want to quit. We name it *monkey-mind* in order to understand it as part of your experience rather than as a part of who you are. You are the one who chooses the change; you are

not that little voice, bitching about needing a cigarette.

Ninja Mind Control

Although it can be useful like a computer or a ninja costume, the thinking mind can also be like a giant, wild monkey that you ride. Nicotine addiction is the monkey on *your* back, but there is another monkey called "monkey-mind," and you are riding on *its* back. It's not like riding a horse, because a well-trained horse stays still when you want it to. The incessantly thinking mind is more like a drug-crazed monkey. Hence, the name "monkey mind" is given to it by practitioners of meditation.

If you do not direct the thinking mind according to your will, it does whatever it wants. This is very important to understand. A person rides the monkey around, and, because the monkey is always there, the person thinks that the monkey is part of him or her. The person identifies with the monkey! But when you close your eyes and try to stop thinking for sixty seconds, you notice that the monkey mind does not stop. It does what it wants. Why? Because it does not care what you want. It is not you. It is not even particular to you. It's a monkey.

You are not the thoughts of the mind. You are not your body. You are not the shit you own. You are not your monkey. To find out what you actually are, you can join a meditation group and discover intuitively, gradually, just what the hell you are. Meditation is the only way to silence monkey-mind long enough to hear your intuition. If you tried to stop thinking for sixty seconds and could not, that shows that your monkey mind is not your own. A difficult truth to accept? Darth Vader *is* Luke Skywalker's father. Nobody wanted to believe it, but it's true. If you tried to quit smoking and could not, that shows that your monkey-mind is not your own.

You'd better be suspicious of monkey-mind. Give it free reign, and identify with its thoughts, and any clarity you possess will get muddled. Monkey-mind likes to muddle things so that it has more to think about. For example, I went to the same

convenience store twice last month, and the clerk at the register the second time so closely resembled the clerk at the register the first time that I actually had the thought, "They must be identical twins." I asked her about this and learned that, in fact, she had no twin. It was just her, both times.

Such is the nature of monkey-mind. The action of thinking is to complicate, to weave a weird web out of something simple. It cannot be trusted. Thought is more random than we like to believe, so the thoughts you have are often inconsistent with the kind of person you would like to be. When you have the thought, "Maybe I'll shave off all my body hair, dress up like one of those Japanese geisha-girls, and start writing a self-help book about quitting cigarettes," you probably dismiss that thought immediately because you know that you don't really mean it. But everybody's different. Your thoughts are not particularly your own. Monkey-mind comes up with all kinds of thoughts, and they are all random, but we take them personally. Thought is thought; they are not *your thoughts*. If you think they are *your thoughts* when they are just associations made by the person's brain in reaction to things in the environment, you become a slave to your environment indirectly.

Even personality is very random, because it consists of attitudes and opinions that come from thinking, and thinking is influenced by random environmental factors. Present and previous sensory perceptions accumulate to form your conclusions, your beliefs and opinions. Beliefs and opinions are thoughts that suit you, thoughts to which your existing self-image can relate, and you assimilate them into the kaleidoscope of your personality. How do you determine which thoughts to assimilate? The only way is to use more thinking. Isn't it a bit circular to validate a thought, the product of thinking, with more thinking?

It's a mess, really, this endless sploodge of thoughts fired at you by monkey-mind. You must not take them all seriously. To validate or disqualify a thought is slippery introspection. Usually, we guess. Wait, is that what I really meant to type just now? Yes, I guess so. You could use deductive reasoning to rule out everything you

definitely *don't* think, and then see what is left when the dust settles. You could use inductive reasoning and try to find a pattern in your thinking. Or, you could use intuition—that quiet little voice of truth—but you'll need to shut up the monkey-mind in order to hear it.

A Ninja with an Identity Crisis

As long as you think that you are your thought, you tend to keep up a perpetual *stream* of thought, as if an interruption of your inner monologue might cause you to blip out of being. Whenever that stream of thought with which you identify is interrupted by some silence, you try to fill in the gap with something—eat something, tap your pen on the desk, smoke a cigarette, turn on television, or otherwise distract yourself from the silence until the stream of thought resumes. If you are unable to find a distraction during silence, there is restlessness—until you learn to transcend thinking.

This restlessness is the reason smokers often light their cigarettes when they begin or end some sort of routine. Monkey-mind has nothing to say for a moment when you get in the car and head for work, so you smoke a cigarette. Likewise, monkey-mind has nothing to say when you finish an activity—finish eating, finish having sex, finish a work day, and so forth. Because monkey-mind was engaged in the activity when the activity ended, there is a gap that suddenly needs to be filled. If idle mind is "the devil's workshop," it is because of this restlessness that comes from identification with monkey-mind.

Identification with thinking will prevent you from discovering your true nature, unless you change your mind. You can only be proactive about your decisions and actions when you come to experience thought as something separate from you, like some kind of weird AM radio station that plays in your head. The way to live powerfully is to be the presence that is beyond thought. The real you is somewhere in that silence that you usually try to fill in with a cigarette. A dramatic change happens

when you begin to observe thoughts in an objective way instead of taking them personally, because you can find bliss instead of restlessness during periods of silence. When you deny yourself a cigarette with the feeling of *diving into the stillness of not smoking*, you really can enjoy not smoking more than you would enjoy having a cigarette. Your strength as the silent presence beyond thought will make something like quitting cigarettes effortless, if only you can disconnect from that AM radio station in your head.

If you are to free the person of this cigarette habit, it's not enough to decide, intellectually, that you are not the same as the person's thoughts. You need to reach toward something positive. When you know what you're not, you can open up to the experience of what you actually are. You are the one who chooses from among the thoughts, and there is great freedom in that. You cannot always control what thoughts arise in monkey-mind, but you do get to choose which ones to take seriously. Obviously, we do not act on every thought; if we did, I would be shaping my own crap into little animal figurines and trying to sell them on Ebay. The thoughts you choose become your actions and opinions as you doodle through life in the world, and your *experience* of it all will be made clear and pure and blissful when you find the "you" that is independent of and superior to thinking.

If a delusional person was watching a suspenseful movie in a dark room and believed that the movie was real life, it would be quite a relief to discover that she is actually safe and separate from it all. Similarly, if you were having a dream and suddenly realized you were dreaming, it would be quite liberating. Dis-identification from monkey-mind dispels illusion. Please do not dismiss this as a lot of wishy-washy, esoteric horseshit. People often fail to achieve their goals in life because of this identity crisis—this identification with thought despite the fact that their thoughts oppose their will. To see monkey-mind for what it is, and to use it properly, can determine whether one goes through life as a powerful, creative being—or a hopeless ass-hole.

But don't worry. The following chapters are entirely dedicated to helping you to

become the master of your own mind, particularly with regard to cigarette-smoking. Overcoming your smoking habit can be a great spiritual practice and an exercise in self-directed living. You might even become able to decide what you want to do and do it, like starting a business, saving money, or losing weight. Changing your mind is possible when you stop identifying with incessant thinking and act according to your will instead. You are the one who chooses.

Subtle Hypnosis While Reading

A subtle trance occurs naturally while you read. Rhythmic Breathing and Reading Hypnosis, used together deliberately, can be strong medicine while you are in that refined state of awareness. Allow a subtle trance to heighten the receptivity of this person through whose eyes you see. Enjoy the trance. Cooperate with it, and go deeper into the stillness of the moment. Enjoy the lightness that comes from freeing the mind of the burdensome compulsion to think and judge, constantly missing the present moment and its vivid truth because of the distracting rant of the mind.

You can access deeper levels by listening to suggestions spoken by a hypno-therapist, or you can access them by listening to suggestions recorded on tape. You can also access deeper levels by using the pro-active technique called "self-hypnosis," which is covered in chapters four, five, and six. You will listen to the suggestions for change as they are spoken by the voice of "wisdom-mind." Unlike monkey-mind, the "wisdom-mind" purposefully directs the person's attention; in Chinese philosophy, the wisdom mind is likened to a "general," or a well-trained "horse" in Chinese medicine and philosophy.[1] To turn the mind into a voice that takes you deeper into the moment (instead of distracting you, as it usually does) is a powerful practice. The voice of wisdom mind becomes the voice of your hypno-therapist when you practice self-

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[1] See Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's *Qigong Meditation: Embryonic Breathing*, 1997, YMAA Publications.

hypnosis.

Aside from the practice of self-hypnosis, there is also another way to use horse-mind: By *reading* the suggestions and *hearing* them spoken by wisdom-mind, while *feeling* the movement of the breath and the movement of the eyes across the page, you engage the person's senses so that he or she can go very deep into the moment. At a very deep level, the person hears horse-mind reading the suggestions for change in the Transformation Pages.

To spend several minutes reading this (or any other) book puts a person in a unique, receptive state of consciousness. The process of reading reinforces that receptivity, and then the Transformation Pages—with rhythm and peculiar ideas that capture the person's attention and carry it along—drum beneficial suggestions in the mind with subtle rhythm. The time that you spend reading this book will send the person, with her blackened lungs and polluted body, doodling down the road to recovery.

Reading Hypnosis

Let your mindful reading of each section prepare the person for change, and read to her the suggestions for change. Go as deep as you can into the chapter, while sitting upright or reclining comfortably.

Two Functions of Hypnotic Suggestion

The hypnotic state is not as mysterious as it people think. Suggestions are used to take the person into a state of heightened receptivity and precise focus, and suggestions are used again in order to bring about the desired changes. So, hypnotic suggestion actually has two different functions: there are suggestions for trance-induction, and suggestions for change.

Suggestions for Trance Induction:

The first suggestions are intended to induce a subtle, hypnotic trance. They are rhythmic, succinct, powerful. You will notice that the person's body readily responds to suggestions with almost comical obedience.[2] The first suggestions catch the attention and carry it inward to a point of very precise, gentle focus. You rest in the one moment, eyes being led across the page, breathing slowly in or out with each line.

Suggestions for Change:

The second type of suggestion is used after a subtle trance has been induced by the meditative process of reading. Let the suggestions each chapter help you to help the person change his mind about cigarettes.

Performed correctly, and in conjunction with direct suggestions, almost any kind of stimulus can be used to lull a person into deeper states of consciousness. The self-hypnosis technique taught in Chapter Four, for example, has the sound and sensation of the person's breathing as its "focal point" for induction into hypnosis. In Yoga and Tai Chi Chuan, one of the hands involved in your exercise is often a focal point—the eyes are fixed on it. In most meditation practices, the breath is also used as a focal point. Without a focal point, attention wanders, but if you anchor the attention to something you can go very deep. Written lines serve as the focal point for reading-hypnosis, because they provide both focal point and suggestions for change.

Changing the Person

The person is not all that you are. Your person and your world are the same, in the sense that they are the *things that you experience*. There are things about the world that are subject to your influence, and there are also things that go on in the world with or without your approval. Similarly, there are things about the person that are under

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[2] See how this suggestion affects your person: ***The muscles of the face relax and soften now with a cool inhalation… lungs stretching gently as the ribcage rises.***

your control, and there are also processes that go on with or without your approval. For example, you can control the person's breathing, but the person keeps on breathing after you fall asleep. Also, even though you are not paying attention, the cells of the body's various organs continue to carry out their complicated tasks like tiny factory-workers. The person is not particularly you, and this realization is a prerequisite for hypnosis consciousness: You must experience person and world without being limited to them. Realizing this freedom, it is possible to experience the person as part of the world in which you live, while finding yourself to be something else, entirely.

You can influence the environment by using the person, or you can influence the person by using the environment. The person is incorrigible, but you can narrow your focus until the person is under control. Begin to influence your person the way you would begin trying to influence any other person—by attending first to the person's receptivity. Think of your person as a child for whom you must care. You can influence your child a little or a lot, depending on his or her level of receptivity—and it is the same with your own person. First, heighten the person's receptivity with *mindful* reading. Then, receive the suggestions on the pages that follow. This attention that you are giving to the change at hand is the attention that creates the future. You are the silent one who sees through the person's eyes. You are the one who chooses.

Shifting from vague awareness to direct awareness in this moment, you can see to it that the person's prayers are answered. At night, a person might pray for the kind of individual attention that helps her stay healthy, happy and safe; you can likewise enable this person to receive the individual attention that he or she needs to quit smoking. All that is necessary is for you to narrow your focus so that, instead of applying in a broad way, your focus applies directly and immediately to the life of this person. Refined, individual attention.

This immediate, "individual attention" to particular needs is exactly what the spiritual person petitions for during prayer. Flip-flop, reality dancing, you get to have your cake and eat it too; you get to be the person, and you get to be you. You can come

into the life of this person and manifest change, if only you are able to affect the person's receptivity by narrowing your focus. There is nothing blasphemous about recognizing your connection to the divine—the presence of the holy spirit within you.

Deepak Chopra entitles one of his chapters, "You Are Only Truly Free When You Are Not a Person."[3] This sounds strange only until you remember that all spirituality involves the transcendence of the ordinary reality of the person—until you remember that "salvation" of the soul is none other than the realization of a part of you that is more than just this slowly dying person. It is not eccentric, then, to see the person as part of your experience—rather than who and what you are.

The person through whose eyes you see is just another portal to the present moment, just another angle on reality. The person's body is your brush for painting reality onto the canvas of the present moment. The person's mind is the current perspective of the universal mind. The person's life is one of many selections of experience that are yours over the course of eternity. Over-identification with this individual person—body, mind, and life-situation—interferes with your experience. Over-identification with the person also interferes with your ability to change the person, because the one who makes the changes is not the same as the person who is being changed.

Knowledge of hypnosis is knowledge of the mind and how to use it, how to re-construct or remove habitual patterns, and how to wield the person skillfully when life becomes a fight. This fight against addiction is an opportunity to learn hypnosis consciousness, the procedure for *dis*-identifying from the person in order to work on him or her. Anyone who has ever tried to reason with a teenager knows that there are many degrees of receptivity to instructions. On one hand, there is the compromised receptivity that interferes with affecting desired changes; on the other hand, there is the heightened receptivity of one who is skilled in the art of wielding a person's attention,

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[3] *The Book of Secrets,* 2005.

changing a person's mind.

The technique called "hypnosis" — including both self-hypnosis and hypnosis facilitated by another person — is not as mysterious as it sounds. By staying attentive to the breath and receptive to the suggestions for change, you can take a proactive approach toward life. Great transformation is possible when you participate in this way. To commune with God is to unite with God; that means that spirituality is a practice of participating in creation. It means that you are not just this person. You are also something more.

Hypnosis consists of suggestions by the one who makes the changes, and receptivity on the part of the one being changed. You can play both roles during self-hypnosis. You can also play both roles if you practice reading hypnosis after inducing a state of heightened receptivity. This book is filled with powerful suggestions for changing your person's mind about smoking, along with many sudden occasions of weirdness and stupid humor that serve to renew your person's attention. In Reading Hypnosis, words serve as the "focal point" for inducing a subtle trance for your person, and they also provide the suggestions for change. Direct your attention to the sight and sound of the words as you read, listen to the sound of the breath, and surrender to the receptive state of consciousness that comes with reading.

The instructions and exercises in this book prepare the reader to perform a technique, and they also bring her beyond technique, to the understanding that makes Hypnosis Consciousness her own. We side-step common misconceptions that people have about the hypnotic trance by re-introducing it as "spacious-mind," a word that is appropriate to name the place where she can go to change her mind. Rhythmic breathing, autosuggestion, meditation and Creative Action all reveal hypnosis consciousness from different angles so that the reader can acquire an entirely new way to relate to her person.

Breathing Out the Bad Air: "Ha!"

Use the advice of the ancient Chinese masters to rid the person's lungs of some of the accumulated "bad air." Seldom do we exhale entirely; some of each breath remains in the lungs and becomes stagnant. Stale. Funky, like nasty, old coffee. Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming writes that the word, "Ha!" is good to use for circulating bad air out of the lungs.[4] "Ha!" is yelled by practitioners of Tai Chi Chuan, according to Dr. Yang, in order to expel the stagnant air from the lungs. Good circulation requires the expulsion of what has become stagnant. *Circulation* is a principle activity common to various aspects of life. The person's ability to nourish, maintain and protect the various systems of the body depends on circulation. Just as circulation is the vital action of the various systems of the body (circulatory, lymphatic, respiratory, the meridians, and so forth), it is also the vital action of the economy, agriculture, business, and even of your process of changing the person.

Maybe you feel silly, trying to "Ha!" the stagnant air out from your lungs, but you have to do it anyway. You have to do it, because you have breathed in a lot of toxic shit on purpose. Genius. It isn't your fault, though—these people whom we are being… they are incorrigible. Just like your own person, my person smoked cigarettes in spite of the mind-boggling absurdity of the act for quite a long time. So, my person had to "Ha!" out some stagnant air during the healing process of quitting.

During the healing process that takes place when you quit, you can actually feel yourself recovering. There is healing when you settle into the moment and take control for the person. It is a blessing to the person. The person needs you to take control. At the risk of being misconstrued, one might argue that this is the epitome of divine providence. This is the truth about your dynamic relationship to the Creator, as you may already have intuited. It was your person who got attached to the ritual of smoking and craved the stimulation of nicotine—like a puppy dog who got attached to

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[4] Yang, J. (1982) *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan.* Unique Publications.

its master and craved the master's rubbing of its pathetic, puppy belly—but you are not the same as the person. The person and the puppy want their bellies to be rubbed for some comforting stimulation. You are the master of both person and puppy. You are the one who chooses, and you choose to "Ha!" the stagnant air out of the lungs and commence change.

So don't feel silly about breathing out and saying, "Ha." You actually do not even have to say it aloud; just form the words with the person's mouth as you incline the upper body slightly forward and expel all air. Form the word with both mouth and throat for five to ten slow exhalations. This "Ha!" is subtle, quiet.

Preparing for change, exhale gently with a sound like "Ha!" Incline the upper body slightly forward as you do this, because a forward incline enables the abdominal muscles to help the diaphragm to expel the stagnant air. Do not be violent about it; be gentle with your person. Then, let the lungs fill up naturally, and return the body to its original, upright position. The lungs continue to inspire as the upper body sways back from the forward-inclined position, and it feels nice. Allow the shoulders and ribcage to rise as the diaphragm works to gently fill the lungs to near-capacity. Continuing to be gentle yet thorough with the person, give the body five to ten breathes of air.

Chapter Trance

The Chapter Trance is achieved by coordinating the person's respiration with each successive line in a series of iambic verse. Iambic rhythm is like a pulse. The lines consist of suggestions for relaxation, suggestions for trance-induction, and suggestions for change. Inhale on the first line, exhale on the second, inhale on the third, and so on, and proceed until rhythmic breathing and suggestions take the person very deep into

the moment. If the breath falls out of alignment with the reading, or if your person gets distracted, just let the rhythmic lines carry you back into the trance. At the end of each line, breath reverses direction as the eyes sway back to the left side of the page.

Some of the lines that are used to induce the Chapter Trance are written with iambic rhythm, so your rhythmic reading will facilitate your rhythmic breathing. After reading for several minutes, the quality of the person's attention becomes refined. Take advantage of that trance and deepen it, allowing the person to become receptive. Enjoy the trance. Cooperate with it, and go deep into the moment. At the end of each line, breath reverses direction as the person's eyes sway back to the left side of the page. Enjoy the lightness that comes from freeing the mind of the burdensome compulsion to think and judge, constantly missing the moment (and its vivid truth) because of the distracting rant of the mind. Line after line, the Chapter Trance takes you to a deeper state of consciousness, a state of reduced brain activity, deep relaxation, and heightened receptivity to the suggestions on the pages that follow. Thinking stops—receptivity remains, and you enjoy the trance provided on the page.

Before your person begins the rhythmic breathing that will narrow his or her focus, take a few deep breathes to give the body plenty of oxygen. Plenty of oxygen enhances wakeful awareness and prevents shortness-of-breath during rhythmic breathing. Respiration will slow as you go into your subtle trance, but do not actively strive for slower respiration. As a resolute former-smoker, you are taking back control of your lungs, but your lungs need time to heal. Before you begin, take five or ten slow, deep breaths, oxygenating the body and brain.

Read each line as slowly as is comfortable for you, controlling breath so that it renews with each new line. Finish breathing *in* at the end of the first line, and breathe *out* slowly as you read the second line. After every in-breath is a gentle pause as your eyes return to the left side of the page; breath reverses its direction, and you breathe out again as you read. After every out-breath is another gentle pause as your eyes return to the left side of the page. Breath reverses direction, and you breathe in again as you read

the following line. Continuing this way, you read the lines in coordination with your breathing, and the trance becomes deep.

Can you coordinate your breathing with the length of the lines? Read the lines so slowly that two lines last one whole cycle of respiration—inhaling on the fist line, and exhaling on the second. Take a breath of air and let it out again, breathing through the nose, and empty the lungs so that you can breathe in again with the start of the first line. Exhale, and begin the Chapter Trance:

(Inhale) Rhythmic breathing starts with inhalation on the first line

(Exhale) Eyes move left, and you reverse direction with the breath.

(Inhale) The person's lungs expand as cool air gently rushes in…

(Exhale) Expel air on this line with a (Ha!) forward incline of the body.

(Inhale) Breathe in; let your lungs fill to capacity, slowly…

(Exhale) Breathe out; let go restlessness, anxiety, doubt.

(Inhale) And the person is relaxing, lost in stillness.

(Exhale) Stillness overwhelms the person, body is limp.

Let the breath deepen to accommodate longer lines, and continue…

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and fill the lungs to near capacity.

Exhale warm air now, from the tip of the nose, gentle hesitation slowing down the action of the breath.

Inhale coolness once again, controlled, cool air slowly stimulating skin at the nose.

Exhale now, forgetting all the stuff of the mind and rest attention only on these lines that carry you.

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and feel the change occur, sharp precision.

Exhale, resting blissfully; simplicity is breathing, doing nothing but the one thing that sustains you.

Inhale, essence rushes past the nose, into the lungs, and all the way down to the heels.

Exhale, reading slowly so that breath slows down, until you narrow your attention to a point on the page.

Inhale, let a subtle trance consume the thinking mind; attention resting on the page.

Exhale, floating on the moment, you prepare to change your mind.

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and fill the lungs to near capacity.

Exhale warm air now, from the tip of the nose, gentle hesitation slowing down the action of the breath.

Inhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Exhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Inhale, let a subtle trance consume the monkey-mind; attention resting on the page.

Exhale, floating on the moment, you prepare to change your mind.

Inhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Exhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Transformation Pages: Renunciation Practice Builds Power

Your smoking habit is the kind of adversity that, when you rise above it, can launch you into higher consciousness. A higher experience of being a being. The Chinese ideogram for 'crisis' involves the character used for 'opportunity' because the relationship between those two shows one of the universal truths that you see again and again in various aspects of life. This addiction presents a problem, a challenge, and an opportunity. To smoke despite your decision to quit exposes weakness that needs to be overcome, but rising above this habit will propel you toward enlightenment. Your decision makes the difference between progress and stagnation.

There is a reason for your lack of success with previous attempts to quit smoking. It was because you couldn't. Your will was not yet strong enough, so to drop the cigarette habit seemed impossible. It was. This is where people usually stop, convinced that they will always smoke, but they are missing an important opportunity: Like the body's muscles, the will can be strengthened by exercise.

For you, *not to smoke* is like spiritual exercise, and there is some pain. But you are like a little duck breaking out of its egg; there are already some cracks in the shell, and you shall either hatch or not hatch. Your struggle against cigarettes will strengthen

your will until you leave the stupid habit far behind, but only if you choose struggle over submission to the addiction. The great opportunity is not your chance to quit smoking, but your chance to use this adversity in the way that a bodybuilder uses a barbell, developing your own spiritual power. Exercise your will, crank up the volume of your presence, and become more alive than ever. You will get addicted to *not* smoking cigarettes when you discover this new level of spiritual power. Your crisis will prove to have been an opportunity.

Living beings have experience and will. To strengthen the *will* with which you influence your experience makes you a more capable being, and it also expands your capacity to see reality exactly as it is—until you experience your own true, eternal nature.

Above all else, to quit smoking is an act of courage.

All the self-discipline in the world won't help you if your heart is not in the struggle, but dare to explore the numinous aspects of your existence, and self-discipline will no longer be necessary. Synergy of mind nullifies the need for self-discipline. Self-discipline is what you use when you are still at odds with yourself. With clarity comes synergy. Courage is the attribute that you need if you are to (1.) take a serious, honest look at this human experience that you are having, and (2.) master the synergy that leads to real personal power.

Not to smoke is effortless if you can achieve certain clarity of mind, and courage is necessary for the achievement of this clarity because it is scary to think about your own mortality. It is scary to think of what eternity might be like, if in fact you do not disappear when the body dies. People rarely talk about these things, rarely think directly about them. Whenever people do muster the courage to really believe in and accept what is happening, there is a shift of perspective, a change of mind. This new perspective brings the clarity that changes everything. The secret knowledge comes

into focus, and it is as if you remember something long forgotten, something that comes as no surprise to you. You've always known. Once you remember, you cannot tell anyone, not in any words they'll understand.

Quit smoking as a practice of spiritual renunciation.

Now you start to make some changes in your person's consciousness by smoking fewer cigarettes, and also by holding sessions of deliberate, mindful abstinence from smoking. You find out what you have been missing by submitting to cravings instead of going to deeper levels of mind in spite of the discomfort. The act of denying your person a cigarette can be a valid spiritual practice, like holding a fast or making a vow of silence. The practice of renunciation, in any form, takes awareness away from the superficial wanting of the person and reserves it for the experience of your highest self. Your creative self, the one that goes round and round, remains unnoticed only as long as your awareness is occupied by the wanting of the temporary person. Renunciation practice gradually brings your other self to light. Rather, renunciation practice redirects *your* light—the light of your awareness—to shine on that part of your being that is beyond the person.

The person wants a cigarette, but you want to awaken as the timeless being.

The temporary person wants a cigarette, wants a snack, wants a compliment, wants to be entertained. Even after the person gets something he or she wants, the wanting goes on and on. This temporary person, all caught up in a dream, wants one thing after another until, finally, death. But you are something more. You are the great observer, that mysterious witness. You are the creative being who dances in reality, now here, now there, always changing forms yet always arising from the same place of stillness. You dive into one dream after another, and in between dreams you awaken as the higher being, gradually and full of wonder.

At first, you identified with the person. You became absorbed in the person's story while you ran around as him or her. Now you are going through a process of *dis-*

identification from the person. You have begun to make a distinction between the *higher being* and the *temporary person*. Just as the master transcends by means of an art or craft, just as the mystic transcends by the practice of meditation, just as the faithful believer transcends by offering the self to God, you, too, are starting to transcend the temporary reality of the person and awaken as the higher being. You are discovering the power that comes from putting aside the wants of the person in favor of Creative Action, and you are enabling the higher being to emerge.

An invisible process is going on. The secret knowledge, the knowledge you receive only after faithful practice, is this:

Renunciation practice enables you to *remember* your timeless self.

The master renounces the person's wanting by becoming one with skillful action. The mystic renounces the person's wanting by keeping still. The faithful believer renounces the person's wanting by performing selfless action. Renunciation of wanting enables them to remember. When you establish your own firm practice of renunciation, you will begin to intuit the truth about your existence: that you have access to a source of unlimited creative power because, at the same time as you are being the person, you are also a timeless, creative being. In any moment, you can shift your attention to the place of stillness and be the being that is beyond the person, the being that has no beginning or end in time, but instead plays forever in the boundless world of creation.

A spiritual practice is one that cultivates your awareness of your existence independent of the person. Spiritual seekers from every religious discipline have been using renunciation to achieve communion with the higher being. Careful attention given to the spiritual act of renouncing the object of the person's wanting—cigarettes, in your case—changes your experience to that of the higher being: timeless, and not limited to the person. This knowledge of yourself as the higher being, cultivated by any practice of renunciation, is the source of your new power.

This practice leads to fearlessness.

You awaken to a new kind of freedom when you sense your timeless self, because you are no longer limited to the fearful existence of the temporary person. Fearlessness is power to act instead of being acted upon, to create, to be impeccable, to make decisions based on love instead of fear. You know goddamn well that other people than you will benefit by your quitting cigarettes. You'll be around longer to loan the kids money. You'll be showing people that it is possible to quit. You'll no longer be causing other smokers-trying-to-quit to have to smell your cigarette and suffer through cravings. Quitting cigarettes is a noble suffering.

This practice leads to heightened energy and mental focus.

The heightened energy and mental focus that you experience when you practice renunciation come from a more efficient way of relating to reality. Fear and desire are heavy burdens, and you are learning to be free of them by changing your mind and relating to reality from your place of stillness. When less energy is exhausted in service to the wanting of the person, more power is available to you for Creative Action.

You develop a taste for this new power, and intensify your practice. What began as a process of suffering when you cut back on smoking will become a process of spiritual transformation. You have stumbled upon the secret, and you now know that it is possible to awaken to the truth of your existence by redirecting your focus. You take your focus off the wants of the temporary person, and gradually dispel the illusion. Nicotine cravings are ineffective against your enthusiasm for continuing this spiritual awakening.

Quit smoking as a practice of mindfulness.

The quality of your experience is determined by the quality of your attention. This is a common understanding among artists, musicians, athletes, and students of the many styles of inner work, such as mediation, Tai Chi Chuan, Chi Kung, self-hypnosis, biofeedback, psycho-analysis, Yoga, and so on. In a way that cannot be told in words,

practitioners of "inner work" experience gradual change in how they perceive and relate to reality. The reason they began to practice was that monkey-mind took an interest in one of the arts, but they continued for an entirely different reason: inner work builds inner strength. There is a Japanese word, *Shugendo*, which means "The way to enlightenment by achieving mastery." The inner strength that comes from physical practices that lead to spiritual enlightenment is not only strength for dealing with worldly problems, but also strength for discerning truth from illusion as you face the challenge of your own existence.

Think of your attention as lot of candles in a dark house. They are your only source of light. Your first idea was to place a few candles in each room so that there will be light everywhere in the house, but you notice that this provides only dim light and a gloomy atmosphere. Of what use are the candles in the next room when you are working in this room? You bring all the candles into the room in which you are working right now, and the light is so bright! When your mind wanders away from your current experience and tries to deal with many things all at once, your attention is spread too thin. To gather your attention into the scene of your experience is like bringing all your candles into the room with you. This synergy facilitates everything you do, and it feels good. A kind of euphoria is caused by carefully focused attention. When your concentrated attention lights up subtle details of your current experience, you feel the fullness and freedom of life.

Now, think of your attention as a lot of candles in a long, dark corridor. They are your only source of light. Your first idea was to form a long line of candles along the length of the corridor, but you realize that there are not enough candles to accommodate the entire length of the corridor. There will still be darkness in many places. You pick up a candle and carry it with you so that, no matter where you go, there will be light. If you use your attention to dwell on the past or worry about the future, you miss the present moment. To keep your attention in the present moment,

right now, is like carrying a candle with you. You can experience the entirety of life in this one moment, because it is the only moment there ever is. The entirety of life is squished into this moment, and the fullness of your experience is limited only by the quality of attention you can apply to what is actually happening now.

The precision with which you concentrate your awareness into the present place and time is unlimited. That means your practice will bring you toward clear perception of reality. If life sometimes seems mundane, it is because you are not even experiencing it, but instead experiencing familiar, boring ideas about what you think you know is happening. Your ideas are nothing compared to the wonder of life as a person, but you habitually respond to life situations on the level of familiar ideas because that makes things easier. It's practical. To drive, today, down the street on which you live is familiar and, at the same time, an experience you have never had before and will never have again. Your ability to enjoy any experience depends on the quality of your attention.

The quality of your attention can be improved if you know a way to refine it. There are many methods of mindfulness practice for the refinement of your attention, and learning to function without smoking cigarettes is one method of mindfulness practice that you can use from morning until night, every day. You'll gain skill in concentrating awareness into your precise moment in time and your precise location in space. This sharpening of your attention will help you to take things in stride, and to remain very steady and clear.

Mind Changing Practice:

Spacious-Mind in the Morning

Now that you have set about regaining control over your lungs, it is appropriate that you exercise your ability to breathe powerfully. When you smoke less often and

notice that your lungs feel clearer and more powerful, it really is like getting a little younger. It's exciting. You'll have new enthusiasm for the task of quitting, because your lungs will start to feel stronger as you continue to cut back on the cigarettes.

These breathing exercises induce a calm, meditative state of mind. There are three of them, and they each take about three minutes. So that's nine. They flow right into one another. You should invest your nine minutes sometime during the morning. If you typically spend some time coughing up mucous when you first wake up, wait until after that.

Use a sturdy chair, nothing squishy that you will sink into, and nothing too low to the ground. Place your feet flat on the floor. Instead of slouching, sit forward with a straight back. Imagine that you are hanging by a cord attached to a point at the top of your head in line with the tips of your ears. Thinking of being suspended by this cord will cause your spinal column to be straight without any unnecessary muscle tension. Your chin will be tucked in, the muscles of the face will be very relaxed, and you will feel a gentle stretch from your neck all the way down to your tailbone.

1.) Lung Yoga

Place your hands on your thighs with the elbows are slightly raised; arms are away from the body to allow full expansion of the ribcage.

Spend about three minutes practicing deep breathing. Gradually, make each breath a little deeper than the previous one, attending to both the inhalation and the exhalation, until breathing becomes deep and natural. If deep breathing causes you to hack up gobs of nastiness from your blackened lungs, spit out each gob and continue.

1. Breathe out through your mouth, and incline your upper body forward slightly to help you expel the last, little bit of air.
2. Then, rock your upper body back to the starting position, breathe in through the nose, and allow the abdomen to expand.

Remember to let the body hang by an imaginary cord attached to the top of your person's head. Be gentle about this stretching exercise for the lungs, because all

stretching exercises produce better results faster if you apply a subtle effort instead of straining. Expanding and contracting, rocking slightly forward on the exhalation and rocking back as you inhale, you'll be getting plenty of oxygen, so you might find yourself breathing very, very slowly. Really enjoy this exercise.

2.) Rhythmic Breathing

When you feel that three minutes have elapsed, allow your elbows to drop down by your sides, and turn your hands so that the fingertips point forward on your thighs. Feel the shoulders and arms relax. The weight of the arms applies a gentle stretch to the muscles around the shoulders and neck.

Discontinue the exaggerated inhalations and exhalations. Instead, do the following:

1. Count slowly from one to four in your mind as you breathe in through your nose.
2. Breath reverses direction.
3. Count to four again as you breathe out through your nose.
4. Breath reverses direction again, and you continue.

**Note that in Lung Yoga you exhale through the mouth, but now you exhale through the nose, and that in both cases the nose is used for inhalation.

Continue for approximately three minutes. Three minutes might equal about fifteen cycles of breath (one inhalation and one exhalation). Rhythmic breathing does something excellent to your mental clarity.

3.) Spacious-Mind

Stop counting, now, and completely let go. Allow breathing to be shallow or deep, whatever feels natural. Hang from the imaginary cord attached to the top of the head, stretching the back of the neck and the entire spine. Experience your deeply relaxed, energized body and mind. Now, after just a few minutes of breathing practice this morning, you suddenly find yourself in spacious-mind. Cool, spacious clarity. You no longer need to consciously regulate your breathing, but instead pay attention to the way it feels to breathe naturally and let spaciousness permeate your being.

Feel cool air at the tip of your nose as you breathe in. Feel warm air at the tip of your nose as you breathe out. Focus on the nothingness that you see behind closed eyelids and on the sensation of air rushing into the body. Allow three more minutes for spacious-mind to heal you and prepare you for the rest of the day. There is no difference between the narrowed focus during meditation and the narrowed focus associated with a hypnotic trance. For the purpose of mind-changing, this heightened state of consciousness will be called "spacious-mind."

Chapter Two

Death

Sure, cigarettes might bring about your early death, but is that really a reason to quit smoking?

If you are a spiritual person, your most intimate concerns are with eternity rather than with this brief tour of duty as a person, so why quit smoking now? Most religions agree that the soul survives the body. Even if you are not a spiritual person, the postponement of death is probably not the best incentive to offer yourself as you try to quit. If you believe in the continuity of experience, you are concerned not just with this life time but with eternity, and death does not scare you so much. Even if you are not concerned with eternity and believe that you will be gone when you die, you still might as well keep smoking because your life is like a meaningless dream, soon forgotten.

The brevity of life, contrasted against the unfathomable expanse of eternity, is fleeting, like one blink of the eyes. Only it doesn't take as long. So, why should you

abstain from smoking cigarettes when the early death it causes will make such an infinitesimal difference in the grand scheme of things? Quitting requires some suffering; why suffer unnecessarily? You wouldn't nag a condemned criminal to give up cigarettes, because his days are numbered anyway, and you wouldn't snatch a cigarette from the lips of a terminally ill patient at the hospital, either. They are dying already. The thing you prefer not to think about, though, is that your days are numbered too. We are all dying. Cigarettes or no cigarettes, death happens, and you don't know when it will happen to you. For all you know, giving up the smoking habit might inadvertently cause your untimely death by some nasty, ironic turn of events. You could keep smoking and have a short, happy life, or you could quit smoking and possibly have a slightly longer life of constantly resisting the urge to break your own fingers for want of a cigarette. Everybody dies anyway.

Everybody dies anyway. No need to belabor that point here, though. It's the same tired load of crap you hear every time someone suggests to a smoker that he should quit. "We're all going to die somehow," the smoker says with poignant simplicity. Who can argue with that? It's true. On the surface, the most striking motive to quit is the fact that smoking causes death, but death's inevitability quickly extinguishes that motivation. Death's inevitability makes an entirely new perspective necessary.

If you regard birth as your very beginning and death as some sort of an end, then time seems to be 'going by.' If, instead, you see clearly that you are eternal, then you've never begun and you won't end. Time stays right where it is. Ride the present moment like a surfer on a wave and you can experience one, unending moment. Whether you are moving around or sitting very still, eternity happens now. You don't wait for Heaven; Heaven happens now, or not at all. Eternity is timeless by definition. We are not on a time line drawn in the direction of something called future—we are floating in the one, ongoing moment.

Fearful Quitting

Trying to quit smoking cigarettes often results in thoughts about death, a touchy subject that causes many delusions. The nature of *denial* as a psychological defense mechanism is such that you do not know when you are doing it. You cannot know the extent to which you secretly, subconsciously refuse to believe that death will ever happen to you. If an aversion to death is your reason for quitting, you might be reminded of death on some level of mind every time you resist the impulse to smoke. The desire to deny the inescapable reality of death will work against you as you try to quit. Death is a conundrum for everybody, but for a smoker there is a special connection between that problem of death and the pack in her pocket.

At a hard-to-reach level of mind, the subject of death and the smoker's habit are weirdly tangled together. As casual as smoking a cigarette may seem on the surface, some better perspective exposes it as the senseless, self-destructive act of a person who has cracked and gone giddy under the pressure of knowing that they, too, are certainly going to die. Fear of death is not something you should use to motivate yourself as you try to quit; it is an obstacle that you will need to get around if you are to quit successfully.

The act of smoking in spite of the danger is sometimes like a weak affirmation that one is not afraid to die or that death is not so bad. Trying to quit, then, is like saying, "Okay, alright! I really am scared! I don't want to die." Failure to quit, at this point, adds anguish to addiction and leaves you in worse shape than before you tried to quit. It makes you want to just stop thinking and keep smoking.

Try to quit smoking with distaste for death as your motive and you will have a miserable, complicated time. Introspective chaos. You are likely to fail if you use death as your motivation because you need to keep your spirit strong when you quit, and no subject is as disheartening to think about as death.

Fearless Quitting

To abruptly become a former-smoker is a dramatic change, and dramatic changes are usually preceded by times of sober reflection. All bad habits involve spots of inattention during your day, so overcoming a habit involves the cultivation of mindfulness. You are serious about quitting, so prepare for a kind of turning point now in the way you relate to life. There is some sort of psychological inertia that makes people tend to avoid change, so prepare for the inertia as well. Say goodbye to the person of the past, and get excited about a better way of being in the future.

Re-establish your vantage point for looking at the big picture. Smokers who would drop the habit must reassess their thoughts about the realities of life and death—how much do we know? Obviously, you are something. I mean, right now, this minute, you are something. You aren't sure about the divine nature of the universe just yet, but you do know that you are having an experience right now. You interact with the world by using a body.

Your body is always there, but you cannot just assume that it is all that you are. Life is tricky. Nothing is as it seems. The world looks flat but it is round, the sun appears to rise and set when in fact we are flying around it, the things around us seem solid but they are ninety-nine percent empty space, and time acts as though it is "going by" when in fact it just stays right where it is: now. Consistent with God's apparent sub-theme of trickiness is the fact that we are led to believe that we *are* our bodies, or that the "soul" is in there somewhere. As it happens, the cells that make up your body are constantly dying and being replaced by new ones. All the cells that make up your body at this moment will be gone in less than a decade. See that body you are wearing? Imagine the whole thing gone. All those cells will be dead, but not you. You survive the death and disintegration of the body many times over the course of a life, so if you think you are your body, think again. You don't know exactly what you are, but one

thing is for sure: whatever you are, it's not your body. You're not in there.

You don't remember what happened before you were born, which *seems* to suggest that you did not yet exist. Then again, you do not remember what happened when you were five and you stumbled into an old-people orgy, but that's only because you are not ready to remember such crazy weird shit. Eternity is crazy weird shit too, and the human condition is quite traumatic, so it is reasonable to believe that you might not yet remember your existence prior to birth if you had one. An afterlife might seem improbable to some people, but it is no more improbable than the life you are having now. Life with this body is all that you know and recollect, so it can be difficult to imagine existing after the body dies—but no more difficult than to imagine some abrupt cessation of your experience. Believing in the continuity of life is no more far-fetched than believing that all this came from nothing somehow.

As we contemplate these questions about mortality and our hopes of an "afterlife," it is very comforting to consider this clue about eternity, the symbolic significance of dreams. Go to sleep, and you might have a dream during which you have no recollection of your 'real' life, but when the dream is over you do not stop existing. You keep waking up to an ongoing reality where everything is more stable and sure, and you say, "Ah, that was only a dream." Then again, sometimes you dream about loved ones from your wakeful reality and they are wonderful dreams. You wake up and remember them happily. Every time a dream ends you snap out of it and say, *Ah, it was only a dream.*

Really love someone a lot, and death takes on new scariness, because you fear loss of your life and, now, you also fear loss of your beloved. Our desperate hope is that we might experience an afterlife where we can still be with our loved ones, but the truth suggested by the nature of our dreams while asleep is even better than that: our loved ones from *this* dream are already there in the ongoing reality, and so are we. Life is one of those dreams during which you forget your real reality for a while, until morning when you wake up and see the real people whom you've perhaps been dreaming

about. I'll bet you a dollar that, when you die, you'll wake up in a timeless place and turn to see the one you love resting right there next to you. Blissful. She'll feel good when you tell her that you dreamed of her again.

In Taoist philosophy, it is said, "As is the microcosm, so is the macrocosm." Clusters of molecules seen through a microscope resemble clusters of solar systems seen through a telescope, veins on a leaf look like a miniature tree, and dreams during life, with their fuzzy disorientation and temporary amnesia, might very well be microcosms that model our eternal existence. So row your boat.

Consider the possibility that you always have been and always will be, but that your *awareness* of eternity is still beyond the capacity of your consciousness. Perhaps you are like a sleeping person who temporarily forgets their real life-situation while experiencing a dream. Perhaps you are like a delusional mental patient who must overcome her illness before she can perceive reality correctly. Your confusion over the nature and significance of life, your unanswered questions about death, and the division within your mind that makes something like quitting cigarettes so difficult—all this suggests that your perception is distorted in some way. Delusional people don't know about their delusions.

A friend of mine who lives at a special kind of group home believes that he is a space alien, and that he participated in the harvesting of human life on Earth. The truth is, he probably is not a space alien, not really. Probably, he is experiencing a convoluted version of reality right now, because he is not able to open his mind to what is really happening. The hilarious thing is that the rest of us are probably doing that too.

Intuit the truth, and you can be without fear. Your deepest fears, the quiet ones you've kept locked in the basement of your mind, are released when you glimpse the truth of your existence outside the person. Deep peace fills your days as long as you keep your focus. There is a tendency to get all caught up in the life of the person, but you can keep your balance by practicing mindfulness. Since smoking permeated your

every day as a cigarette smoker, the practice of not smoking will fill every day with mindfulness until this new level of mindfulness becomes your ordinary mind.

This shift of focus benefits both you and the person whom you are being. You benefit when much of the pain is removed from your subjective experience and you are left with bliss, the un-caused happiness that accompanies the experience of timelessness as the higher being. The person benefits when fearlessness shapes him or her into a playful hero, a source of clarity and peace for everyone around.

Death happens; there's no question about that. If you want to get to the bottom of it and maybe even do something about it, you need to face the life and death dream directly. Try to find some find some truth in the illusion. To overcome the illusion about beginnings and ends is like overcoming the illusion that you are a smoker who needs to smoke, in that preoccupation with death only interferes with your progress. You need to override fear so that it does not cloud your thinking, and persevere because of heartfelt inspiration and enthusiasm for life, not fear of death.

So let's leave death out of it as much as possible. Quitting cigarettes is difficult enough without complicating your effort by dwelling on the fact of death, or any other existential crisis for that matter. You are already dying.

Quitting When You're Dying

We need to overcome this habit for the right reason; that's the trick. Otherwise determination will falter, weakened because we don't really believe in our own cause. Since we've looked directly at the situation and discovered a problem with trying to quit smoking for reasons related to death, we need to re-think our approach. We need to find motivation and strength in a reason related to life. There is one, you know.

We worry about what will happen when we die, if we'll continue to exist in some way, but an ocean of self-deception contaminates both our action and our experience so completely that we don't even know whose existence we are talking about. All we

know is this: Each of us is having an experience right now, and we can influence our experience a little or a lot depending on the strength of our will.

Those are the two sides of being a being: phenomenal experience, and will to act upon it. When big problems come into your experience, you can overcome them with the strength of your will. Very strong people can protect their families and troubleshoot life's problems. They do not let their emotions carry them into unconsciousness and cause them to misrepresent themselves. They answer the questions, "what are we?" and "What is the meaning of life?" by transcending the questions and becoming co-creators of life—to intensify focus and take control enables them to be exactly who they want to be, and there is no longer any question about who they truly are. Their light helps to light the way for others.

Strength of will, the single-minded clarity necessary to achieve your purpose, is not about effort or exertion but about spacious clarity. Correct thought and correct action are possible when you adopt a zero-tolerance policy regarding self-deception. To take an honest look at life is necessary, and that requires courage. Some people decide to quit smoking and succeed, while others fail and justify their failure with a whole lot more self-deception. It would be different if you failed carry out a plan that you were unsure of, some complicated issue with no simple solution, but your plan to drop this habit *is* simple. You know what you have to do.

The right reason for quitting is about life, not death. You will refrain from smoking because smoking represents mediocrity in life. In fact, it could be argued that smoking in spite of the gruesome damage it does to your body is like a subconscious rejection of life. Your cigarette is like a pacifier for grownups, and your cigarette pack is like a teddy bear or a security blanket (you disturbed little thumbsucker!). To continue smoking when you want to quit shows weakness, lack of resolve—and that is the plain truth. The monkey-mind could say that smoking does not prevent you from being a good parent, friend, example, employee, businessperson, spiritual person, or whatever,

and it would be right. But then you override monkey-mind and acknowledge that you would be even better in all those roles if you raised your expectations for yourself.

It doesn't make sense to smoke, and no explanation can justify maintaining the habit, but the good news is that you have an opportunity to begin a very real process of growth and discovery. The vitality that brings quality to your life is the same vitality with which carry out your will. How about getting a little bit fired up about your convictions? Inner work is not easy. Be strong and go deeper. When people overcome addiction, it forces them to grow. The quality of their consciousness is raised to a new level.

Renunciation Ninja

Here is a story to explain how smoking can get in the way of achieving your full potential. The purpose of the story is to introduce to your person a new disposition toward the smoking habit. Prepare to embrace change as it is applied to the very deepest beliefs held by the person! Permit your person to act according to the true nature of things, letting go of all illusions about smoking cigarettes.

This story gives your person an alternative to his or her current ideas about smoking. A funny metaphor sticks in the person's memory for a long time, creating change. In this analogy, smoking is compared to masturbation and you are compared to a ninja.

Renunciation Ninja

Once upon a time there was a masturbating ninja. He was a skillful ninja who could flip, and roll, and jump high, and kill you with a poisonous dart while hidden up in a nearby tree. His ninja-ing was top-notch, very impressive. Still, the other ninjas never took him seriously because of one compulsive habit that he couldn't seem to get over. Something he did more consistently than anything else.

Consistently? Constantly. Before and after every ninja mission, sometimes even during

the missions, he had to pull out his little ninja sword and polish it like hell. Thrashing around on the grass outside his ninja hut, it looked like he was wrestling with himself and losing. Have you ever seen a ninja masturbate? They really get into it. Don't stand too close if you know what's good for you.

The other ninjas called him names and often kicked his ass. They never let him join in any of their ninja games. One day, the masturbating ninja couldn't take it anymore. He made a sacred ninja vow not to take it out or even touch it under the cloth of his ninja costume from four o'clock Thursday afternoon until ten o'clock the following morning. None of the other ninjas even applauded his effort. They were very unsupportive.

When ten o'clock came around, the masturbating ninja had fulfilled his vow. He was about to celebrate by yanking out his shit and having a real climactic battle with special effects and subtitles and everything when, all of a sudden, his ninja village was attacked by hundreds of enemy ninjas from an opposing ninja clan. The masturbating ninja quickly removed his ninja nipple clamps and sprang to his feet with a spectacular ninja jump. He left the video playing in his VCR and ran outside to help protect the village.

They were outnumbered and unprepared, and it seemed as if the enemy ninjas would surely defeat them. One thing our hero had going for him, however, was that he was experiencing a tremendous surplus of energy and mental focus. As he fought his way through the crowd, he realized that his skill and strength had doubled over night because he had not depleted it all over his ninja hut because of that compulsion, that habit. His energy had built up so much that he felt invincible. Soon, he was fighting the attackers all by himself while his exhausted ninja friends watched in amazement. He punched right through armor, caught bullets in his teeth, and beat off the enemies with quick, frantic movements.

The masturbating ninja saved the day. He had held back from indulgence and become the most powerful ninja of them all. His heightened focus was far more rewarding than the immediate gratification he had sought in the past, so he started to make a practice of it. His strongest urges to indulge and seek immediate gratification yielded the sharpest, most focused attention when he abstained.

See? So, begin this process the way you would begin a rigorous workout, and know that you are building up your personal power. You'll be exercising that inner sense of clarity and purpose called "will power," building up energy, weaning your body off nicotine, and cleaning out your lungs, all at the same time.

The most important thing is to have a feeling of *taking action* instead of trying to hold back from the act of smoking a cigarette. Even though quitting will improve your life and delay your death, your previous attempts to quit smoking have been unsuccessful. This is because your state of mind changes every day, every minute. You approach death gradually over a period of time, but your cigarette cravings occur in this moment. What you need is a positive activity that you can apply to the moment—every time you think you want a cigarette.

The next section introduces a practice called smoke-strike, with which you can begin to conquer this habit in the correct frame of mind. Rather than fighting with yourself and using self-discipline, you will strengthen your spirit and gradually affect change in your mind until, one day very soon, you discover that you've risen above the whole shit. Too often, people try to quit smoking in some frantic attempt to escape death—your right reason for quitting is revealed when you experience the way deliberate action, resolute action that is true to your determined will, actually makes you become more alive!

You might want to raise your consciousness in order to stop smoking cigarettes, but you will find that it actually works in the opposite way: to abstain from smoking can be a powerful practice that raises your consciousness to crazy new heights. Rather than becoming stronger in order to quit smoking cigarettes, you will continue to abstain *because* this is making you stronger than you've ever been.

Might get your sense of smell back, too.

Chapter Trance #2

The Chapter Two trance involves a suggestion of paralysis. Other than the ability to hold the book or turn the page, you tell your person that he or she is locked into relaxed, heavy stillness. By 1.) making this suggestion and, 2.) cooperating with this suggestion, you convince the mind of the power of your suggestions. This simple trick played on the mind is a crucial key to the practice of self-hypnosis: Make simple suggestions (such as paralysis or heaviness), allow them to be true, and your person's mind will begin to respond more readily and powerfully to each suggestion. The hypnotic suggestions of paralysis used in this exercise are intended to introduce you to this trick. Catch the trick of building "suggestion credibility" during self-hypnosis, and you will be building rapport with the person's monkey mind.

Breathe easy. Relax your face and shoulders. Loosen away any tension that you might be holding in the chest area. Sit up straight, but be a little bit drowsy. Heavy. Just rest your attention on the page. Let the words carry you along. These words are good for you, so do not read them with your ordinary, wide-awake discernment—you can let your guard down. Let your attention float slowly across the page with each breath. You can breathe easy. Feel your attention being drawn across the page as you read. With the whole body deeply relaxed and the lower body paralyzed, experience the clarity that occurs when all of your attention is available in stillness.

Coordinate your breathing with the lines. Read the lines so slowly that each set of two lines last one whole cycle of respiration. Reading slowly, keeping an upright posture, let go of restlessness long enough to return to the present moment. Take a breath of air and let it out again, breathing through the nose, and empty the lungs so that you can breathe in again with the start of the first line. Exhale, and begin the Chapter Trance:

(Inhale) Muscles of the face and head grow softer.

(Exhale) Tension is released from lungs as warm air.

(Inhale) You decide to hypnotize the person.

(Exhale) Heal the person; change the person's thinking.

(Inhale) Face and head and neck are warm and heavy.

(Exhale) Eyes move with each breath across the page.

(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are warm and heavy.

(Exhale) Breath is deep and effortless while reading.

(Inhale) Softness of the face and head is blissful.

(Exhale) Softness spreads down into neck and shoulders.

(Inhale) Softness of the face and head spread downward.

(Exhale) Shoulders, neck, and head are soft and steady.

(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are warm and heavy.

(Exhale) Now you cannot lift the heavy, warm legs.

(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are paralyzed now.

(Exhale) Stillness of the body sends you deeper.

(Inhale) Paralyzed, you notice deeper stillness.

(Exhale) Stillness fills the person up with power.

(Inhale) Every breath brings power to the person.

(Exhale) Locked in stillness, you receive your power.

(Inhale) Deeper into stillness, easy breathing.

(Exhale) Heavy relaxation calms the body.

(Inhale) Words across the page increase your stillness.

(Exhale) Locked in stillness, change the person's thinking.

(Inhale) Muscles of the face and head are softer

(Exhale) Tension is released from lungs as warm air

(Inhale) You decide to hypnotize the person.

(Exhale) Heal the person; change the person's thinking.

(Inhale) Face and head and neck are warm and heavy.

(Exhale) Eyes move with each breath across the page.

(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are warm and heavy.

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(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are warm and heavy.

(Exhale) Now you cannot lift the heavy, warm legs.

(Inhale) Body, legs and feet are paralyzed now.

(Exhale) Stillness of the body sends you deeper.

(Inhale) Paralyzed, you notice deeper stillness.

(Exhale) Stillness fills the person up with power.

(Inhale) Every breath brings power to the person.

(Exhale)	Locked in stillness, you receive your power.
(Inhale)	Deeper into stillness, easy breathing.
(Exhale)	Heavy relaxation calms the body.
(Inhale)	Words across the page increase your stillness.
(Exhale)	Locked in stillness, change the person's thinking.

Transformation Pages: Smoke-Strike

Born into a mysterious world that is too much to fathom, a life with no explanation, we grab hold of cigarettes the way a shipwrecked sailor grabs hold of a wooden plank to help him keep afloat. A pack of cigarettes in your pocket is something you can be sure of, and it helps you to cope with all the uncertainty of being a person. Unfortunately, the sense of security you find in cigarettes is a false one. They're killing you, actually.

The habit began when an occasional cigarette provided a temporary escape from your tired old routine. No nicotine dependence had developed yet, so you smoked for other reasons. When you first tried cigarettes you were trying something new, something exciting. But cigarettes are not new anymore, are they? Your relationship to cigarettes has changed completely. Now they have become part of the tired old routine, and they offer enjoyment only in the form of relief from the physical discomfort associated with nicotine craving. Your relationship to cigarettes has changed in such a way that, now, *not* to smoke would be an escape from the tired old routine. Imagine that.

A smoke-strike is something that only smokers can do. Nonsmokers can't perform a smoke-strike, because they don't crave cigarettes. For them not to smoke would not produce the same effects as it will produce for you. Smoke-strike practice is

the way to sharpen your focus by using the tension that occurs when you deny yourself a cigarette. Tension is a form of energy, and smoke-strike practice is a simple, effective way to store up some of that energy instead of keeping yourself depleted by dragging along on a cigarette. You won't know what you've been missing until you change your attitude toward the physical discomfort associated with nicotine withdrawal.

All the things we enjoy have something in common: tension builds, and then it is released. It feels good. Suspenseful movies, roller coasters, sex, competitive games, approaching a boy or girl at your junior high school dance—these are sources of tension for our enjoyment. Even the game called "peek-a-boo" that you might play with a baby shows how the build up of tension and its subsequent release is fundamental to the way humans have fun. A massage feels best when there is much tension to release, food tastes better when you are hungry, and you enjoy a cigarette more when you haven't had one for a while. If you can think of an example of an enjoyable activity that does not seem to involve the build up of tension followed by its release, it is probably an activity that pertains only to the 'release' part, like drinking. The tension must build before it can be released. The tension/release rule applies every time you see people indulging in pleasure, but pleasure isn't everything.

Certainly, there is something to be said for allowing energy to build up, challenging your capacity for it, relaxing into it. When you jump immediately to the resolution without letting tension build, the experience is not nearly as satisfying. More importantly, to build up energy makes you stronger.

A smoke-strike is something positive.

What is the problem here? If you know that smoking causes ill health and death, why can't you just stop buying cigarettes and stop smoking? A wolf caught in a hunter's trap will gnaw its own leg off in order to escape death, and it limps away on its three remaining legs. All *you* have to do to escape is forget about cigarettes. Do anything else you want. You can eat from any other tree in the garden.

But quitting cigarettes is not as simple as gnawing off your leg, is it? When you

try hard to do something, your struggle might be great, but at least your endeavor is clear and you know what you are up against. When you try very hard *not to do* something that you can't seem to stop doing, there is a peculiar and slippery quality to your struggle. Your opponent is not someone or something in your environment; your opponent is you! "Not to smoke" is abstract and negative, an elusive concept compared with the positive act of chewing off your leg. If circumstances required it, you might very well be capable of chewing one of your legs off in order to save your life or the life of a loved one, yet you haven't been able to overcome this smoking habit. You know that smoking cigarettes causes early death in many forms, death that is often preceded by long term suffering and horror, yet you continue to smoke. You need a concrete, positive practice if you are to change your mind.

How about the soldier who smokes a pack a day, unable to give up the habit until one day he gives up everything by throwing himself on a hand grenade to contain its explosion and save everybody else? With only seconds to decide, he chose to make a noble sacrifice. How could such a resolute person have been unable to sacrifice cigarette-smoking? To abstain is difficult, but positive action is easy when there is a strong sense of purpose. A clear, positive activity is what you need. For example, it is more effective to tell a young child, "Play in the yard," than it is to say, "Do not go on the street." The first phrase brings his attention to the yard; the second phrase brings his attention to the street. Very clear instructions about taking positive action are easier to follow than abstract, negative instructions, such as, "do not smoke."

To perform a smoke-strike is not always easy, but it is good, positive action to which you can apply your determined will. Negative and abstract concepts like 'trying to quit' promote a *re*-active state of mind in which you endure your pain in more passive way. Nicotine withdrawal causes pain, pain inflicted on you by circumstance, so you suffer. Practice smoke-strike, and it becomes a 'good hurt.' Even though the change happens only in your head, the positive idea of practicing smoke-strike enables you to assume a *pro*-active state of mind. You get fired up, like an athlete sprinting

toward victory. Marathon runners feel quite a lot of pain during the race, but the application of their determined will to a positive activity makes for a very different experience of that pain. For example, if the same amount of pain had been caused by illness, instead of a footrace, and endured in a *re*-active state of mind, it may have caused more suffering than self-inflicted pain with a purpose.

A smoke-strike is not even about trying to quit smoking cigarettes.

It is about using the pang of withdrawal to wake you up and bring you back to the present moment. Pain that clouds your thinking and makes you tighten up is very different from clear, precise pain that you embrace as part of reality in this moment. There is precision that comes with pain. Runners understand this. So do people with tattoos, people who practice yoga, people who have given birth, and people who enjoy sado-masochistic acts of sexual union with a partner who's not afraid to really let them have it. When you meet pain with an accepting attitude it becomes part of the sensational intricacy of your present experience. This is what life feels like! Pain will always be pain, but you can become vast and spacious so that great pain is small relative to you.

Here is some good news: You can quit smoking right now, this moment, experiencing the personal power that comes from rising above addiction, but then you can also have a cigarette later on today if you want to. This is because there is only one moment; time doesn't actually 'go by'. Movement and change are happening, creating the illusion of time 'passing', but your experience is occurring in one, ongoing moment. Pierce the moment with your sharpened focus, and see the truth hidden beneath the surface of things. Your friends will watch you intensify gradually over several weeks, and you will reach a new level of presence. You will be more alert. You will think more clearly. Everything seems to slow down for you when you practice focused attention; it's like staying one step ahead of reality.

Smoke-strike practice is your weapon against compulsion and addiction, but quitting cigarettes is only of secondary importance. Every time you practice smoke-

strike you intensify your presence, building real personal power that you can feel. Instead of lighting a cigarette and poisoning yourself, you can light your own inner fire and let it burn with crazy abandon.

A smoke-strike is "Creative Action."

You can choose to be active or passive in any moment. The extent to which you inhabit your own mind is the extent to which you can be an active creator of life. Act according to your will rather than serving the impulsive, monkey-mind of the person, and you can create life as you go, shaping your life situation by gently manipulating the unfolding of events in the present moment. If you act on every little passing impulse, like the impulse to have a cigarette, you'll be busy like an overworked servant. A slave. Don't be a slave to the monkey-mind's thousands of stupid little thoughts (they have nothing to do with you), because you'll be too busy to create anything; *you* will not be an active participant. You'll end up like the lonely kid sitting with no one to dance with, benched on the sidelines of life.

Most of our actions are done either out of necessity or in service to some compulsion of monkey-mind, but there is also Creative Action. Creative Action is only possible when you rise above the superficial impulses for a while, when you take a break from desperate obedience to all those thoughts and urges so that you can act for yourself. We're not talking about creativity like, finger painting or something; we're using the word "Creative" to mean that you act on the moment as it happens, doing what you choose to do instead of what your skittish monkey-mind tells you to do. You get to participate. You get to be a creator.

Mind Changing Practice:

A Temporary Smoke-Strike

Your smoke-strike can be as brief as the moment. If you resist the urge to

smoke—even for a moment—it is Creative Action, because it is true to your determined will. It is the action of the person you envision yourself as. During the week before your permanent smoke-strike, you can smoke-strike for a weekend, for a day, only while you're at work, or only for an hour. Skip even one cigarette and you will have changed your mind to represent Creative Action in that moment. Creative Action happens all at once and always, outside the illusory jurisdiction of time.

Remember that smoke-strike involves positive action, something you do over and over again, every time you think you want a cigarette. It is the act of denying yourself a cigarette in a moment when you would ordinarily smoke. Whether you smoke-strike for an hour or all day long, you must be ready to deny yourself a cigarette every instant. The urge to smoke comes in an instant, then lingers. It comes in an instant because everything that ever happens has to do so in an instant, and it lingers because your fretful monkey-mind dwells on it. You must be ready every instant to let go of thinking, to let it all be washed away by your breath, any time you think you want a cigarette. Breath is the reset button that clears it all away. In a moment when monkey-mind contaminates your experience with thoughts of needy, wanting, dissatisfaction, you have the prerogative to use that "Clear" button and dump the whole load. Even let go of the important thoughts; this is a flushing of your mind's toilet.

Smoke-strike for a smoking habit can be like chemotherapy for cancer. It can take a lot out of you, and leave you feeling all beaten up at the end of the day. Your attention might be compromised all day long, concentration broken by some stray preoccupation with the urge. Your personality might even suffer. All of this is okay; it's a small price to pay for success. But smoke-strike can also be like deep meditation. Thoughts come and go as they will, and you do not need to react or interfere. If you can detach from thought, neither suppressing it nor giving it attention, monkey-mind quiets down naturally. There is enlightenment in the moment when thought stops long enough for you to really perceive what is happening and accept it.

Smoke-strike is like meditation if you can let go the thoughts about smoking instead of fighting them. Those cigarette thoughts will come and go. Soon, you will think of something else. You might have to endure some pain; the pang of a craving, the restless anxiety, the discomfort that you feel if you allow your body to become tense when you deny yourself a cigarette. Still, it is possible to meet your craving with acceptance rather than resistance. Transform your negative idea of *abstaining* into positive action, *smoke-strike*. Make it something you can do, instead of something you need to suffer through. After all, what is this feeling of anguish that you experience when you cannot have a cigarette? Where do you feel it? Put your attention on the physical sensation associated with the urge to smoke, the feeling in your chest or throat or wherever it arises, and you will notice that the feeling is not so bad when you gently direct your attention to it instead of resisting. The feeling of wanting has subtle tension, and tension is energy. Go into your smoke-strike and experience a completely different kind of day. Savor the tension. It is a surplus of energy for you to use in any way you like.

Maybe tomorrow is the day. If you think that performing a smoke-strike tomorrow only to resume smoking again the following morning would be pointless masochism, like beating your head against the wall, then you need to change your mind. Not smoking is a great thing to do tomorrow. How many years have you been a smoker, huffing tar that paralyzes the cilia in your lungs so that it cannot swoosh the mucous out? Your person's lungs have accumulated a whole lot of nasty badness. How many years have you been poisoning the person? Probably your person's lungs need a break.

If you really intend to quit smoking cigarettes, you should practice smoke-strike tomorrow. When the day is over, if you haven't quit your job or killed anyone, you will feel certain clarity. This clarity might be veiled beneath the desire to gouge out your own eyes for want of a cigarette, but clarity will be there nonetheless. You will have acted deliberately, taken control of your life for the day.

At least you'll really enjoy having a cigarette when the smoke-strike is over. More than you usually do, probably. Even though you encourage yourself through the smoke-strike with the promise of a cigarette at the end, you should keep an open mind about lengthening the smoke-strike if you wake up the next morning and feel like you could continue to abstain. Your body knows what is good and what is not, so if you think you'd almost rather not have a cigarette after the smoke-strike is over, don't force yourself. Maybe this little smoke-strike will open up into something greater, like a significant decrease in the amount of cigarettes you smoke. You might even spontaneously overcome the habit altogether with certainty, never to worry about cigarette smoking again.

Changing your mind takes practice. Smoke-strike really does become easier as your skill improves, your will is strengthened, and the body's nicotine dependence is reduced. You'll get very good at turning your attention within and regulating the sensations that arise in your body. When you breathe, there is a moment when the inhalation stops and the exhalation has yet to begin, like the moment of stillness when a ball thrown up in the air has stopped ascending but has not yet started to fall. Within and between all movements of breath and body, there is the entirety of life, and life can be pleasure. The volume of life's pleasure can be turned up until it drowns out the comparatively minor discomfort of nicotine withdrawal, and the way to turn the volume up is to refine your attention.

Anyone can quit smoking cigarettes for a while; the real challenge is to do it without suffering. When you can enjoy your smoke-strike the way some people enjoy holding a fast from time to time, you will know that the quality of your attention has improved. You will be experiencing the result of your practice, the great reward that smokers receive when they quit deliberately with excellent attention.

Are you ready to try it? One day of smoke-strike practice won't be that bad. It doesn't even have to be a whole day, at least not at first. Next time you find yourself reaching into your

pocket for a cigarette, decidedly skip it. Practice with rigor appropriate to your current state of mind. Enjoy the challenge, and enjoy the fact that, from the perspective of timelessness, your temporary smoke-strike is not different from permanent victory over the habit – this moment is everything. It is exciting to watch yourself cut down on smoking, however slowly, and to gradually lengthen the amount of time you can refrain from smoking.

Chapter Three

Self-Mastery

There is something going on here, and it is much bigger than your cigarette-smoking habit. It appears that we humans are not able to see into the true nature of things, because something about this birth-growth-procreation-aging-death thing just doesn't add up. Why is it happening? What is next, if anything? There has been talk of some random chemical interaction that "big banged" form into the universe, but that doesn't actually explain how matter first appeared in the universe… and who are *you* to be having an existence right now?

Does it seem suspicious that you forget yourself at night, entering dreams with

amnesia—in the very same way you entered life with amnesia? During some dreams, you might suddenly realize that you are dreaming and remember your larger life outside the dream; your dream transforms into something blissful and fascinating when you have no more fear—no more fear, because you have seen into its true nature. Our tendency is often to deny intuition, though, and accept this far-fetched life dream at face value, but somewhere in the center of our being is the knowledge that we are part of something greater. Something ongoing.

The common error is to think that we have to wait for death to come before we can transcend life. This idea seems reasonable, since we don't see any living people walking around who have transcended life. But, then again, when someone does wake up to a higher reality during life, it is invisible to those of us who haven't. They cannot even tell us about it in any words we'll understand. Little kids become big kids, big kids become teens, teens become grown-ups, grown-ups grow wiser, and younger people do not understand higher levels of consciousness until they reach those new levels themselves. Who is to say there is any limit to our potential for realization? Even if you grow to see God in everything and you settle into eternity as a creative being in dynamic repose, your heightened perspective will still be invisible to others. They will see that you are different, but they will not know why.

So, there is the good news: spiritual enlightenment *is* possible. Spiritual enlightenment happens all the time and has been happening to people throughout history. It has gone largely unnoticed. What, then, enables a person to climb higher toward enlightenment? Little enlightenments have come to you when you have suffered, when you have struggled, when you have been forced to increase your capacity to take reality in. Your capacity to look honestly at reality, rejecting illusion, is your capacity to perceive the truth beneath the surface of this. All your life up to now can be described as a process of overcoming illusions and discovering the truth, and your progress toward enlightenment is the same. The way to increase your capacity for perceiving and accepting reality might be simpler than you think, and achieving self-

mastery might be an important step.

A kind of restless anxiety comes with being a person. We seek distraction because, on some level of mind, silence and stillness force us to accept this unexplained experience that we are having. Turn on the television, eat something, call somebody, do anything necessary to avoid facing reality directly. When we realize that our tendency is to keep ourselves distracted (like a person who is in denial over some traumatic personal crisis or loss, and stays very busy all the time in order to avoid the truth), spiritual work becomes easier. Nothing needs to be searched for; we simply need to face reality without always using distractions. Reality is hard to accept, so delusions arise. Enlightenment must be a matter of clarity.

Gradually, gently, you can increase your capacity for truth and grow in wisdom until everything becomes clear. The necessary exercise involves opening up to stillness and silence in spite of the accompanying restlessness. Some people practice meditation. Some people refine their attention by cultivating mastery in their art or trade. Some people wait for God in silent prayer. If you want to do something about the fact that you have to die some day, you can start to rise out of life right now by taking up a similar practice, but you'll need to supplement your practice with the practice of eliminating from your days as much delusion as you can. Especially self-deception. Be on the lookout for wrong thinking on your own part, unreasonable thoughts and actions that result from emotional conflicts and fear. Most importantly, eliminate self-imposed distractions that you have been using to avoid the restlessness that accompanies silence. Don't mindlessly turn on the television, mindlessly eat something, mindlessly fidget in your chair, or mindlessly smoke a cigarette. To refine the quality of your attention will produce change in the way you act and the way you experience life—but it is necessary to apply some effort.

Aren't cigarettes your filler in between activities? Isn't smoking what you do when you momentarily don't know what to do? That pack in your pocket is your most readily available source of self-imposed distraction. It keeps you weak. The strongest

people are usually the ones who have suffered the most, and indulgence is what weakens. Imagine how much stronger your mind will be when you learn to live without that crutch in your pocket, that security blanket. You will be like the ostrich that never hides its head in the sand. Whatever spiritual practices you use to expand your capacity for truth and transcend life, compulsive action like smoking has no place in your daily routine. Cigarettes work against you. Lose the cigarettes, and let a new kind of freedom permeate your day. You'll be the most worldly-wise ostrich ever.

Self-mastery requires a certain kind of strength, strength for keeping it together in your head. Strength to see things as they are instead of being tossed about by illusion. We see illusion fooling other people all the time, when everybody knows someone is delusional except for him. Like the guy who always licks his fingers before he reaches into the bag of potato chips, and then nobody else wants any more potato chips, and everybody understands why except for him. He is missing something. We are all missing something, though, and we won't know what we've been missing until we go to new levels with our attention. Heaven happens now if you can rise out of the illusion. Then, you can have all the best things in life without the fear.

Fear? Death is not the problem; the unknown is the problem. If you knew that death ended nothing and that the people you love are with you already in a timeless place where eternal beings dream, death would no longer be a problem. We mistakenly attribute our fear to death when the unknown is what we really fear. This mistake has serious consequences with regard to out our spiritual progress, and the reason is this: Death is inescapable, but the unknown can be found out.

One More Thing about Death

The moment of your body's death will not fill you with fear. The lonesome, hopeless moment of the coldest kind of fear is when you hear your doctor make the

diagnosis.

Sometimes they are wrong. Sometimes doctors say a person can expect to live another six months, or a year, or two at most, and then the person goes on living even longer than two years. Like, five or something. Five years is a long time, isn't it? Maybe long enough to find one of those miraculous healing services somewhere in South America. Praise Jesus! I believe! I believe! I hope the hell you heal me, God, because I'm playing my last cards right now. This whole imminent-death thing is starting to seem a little too real for my liking, actually, and why can't they come up with some procedure that will cure me if I've got more than a year to live and modern medicine is supposed to be so advanced? This is stupid. I don't care about cigarettes so much that I wouldn't have given them up if there had been some indication that I might suddenly get cancer… well, I guess nobody ever gets a warning before cancer; only some sudden symptoms and a little growth somewhere. My body is starting to destroy itself, and the doctors can't do anything about it. Rough me up with chemo, make me lose my hair. To hell with all this. Everybody dies anyway. Funny, that's the same thing I used to say when people told me that I should give up smoking cigarettes. *Everybody dies anyway*…it doesn't have the same feelings of closure and certainty as it did before the doctor's diagnosis. What the hell is happening here, anyway, am I really going to die from lung cancer?

Now I am walking down this unfamiliar street in a city far away from where I live. I just went to see a specialist but everything is still as bad as yesterday. I am in a strange place where no one knows me, thinking about other places I've gone and things I've done. People I've known. Thinking about what all of that adds up to, if anything. Makes me wonder, if I hadn't kept smoking I might not have gotten cancer and I might have lived a life of eighty or ninety years, but would it all add up to more if life was longer? Maybe it was all a loss from the start. Memories of things I did when I was a person who was not dying seem like movies, made up stories acted out by the 'me' who was pretending life would keep going on forever. What good is it now?

Since I am going to die, it is important that I get in touch with that part of me that survives death, if indeed there is such a part. The religions of the world offer a variety of belief systems for me to choose from, but what makes one group's guess any different from the others? I've been a Christian all my life and I believe in God. I've even had some brushes with what seemed… supernatural; I felt a presence that would hear me as I prayed. Always, I had an attitude of curiosity during prayer, though, wondering if my words were heard, why God kept quiet if they were, wondering if my mind was playing tricks on me when I felt renewed and comforted after prayer or if there really was some Authority Figure in the sky Who could fix some of my problems if I asked nicely.

My spiritual progress was stunted by organized religion. I had always had a religion, so I always knew just what to do. The holidays and services that needed to be observed had been made very clear by the church, so all that was left of my desire for *direct* contact with the Creator was a feeling of aloof curiosity during prayer. That questioning feeling made me feel guilty at the time, like my blind faith was not yet strong enough if I still entertained doubts about the religion that had been taught to me. I know now that those doubts represented the part of me that longed for real contact with God. Direct contact, like, "Hey buddy, watch where you're—God, is that you? Oh, it really is you! Would you mind explaining everything please? I'm confused about my existence?"

What if I am gone when I die? It bothers me that I do not remember my own being before this life. It bothers me that my inability to remember suggests that, on my next trip, I might not remember the people who are so important to me now. As long as I feel finite, there is a kind of emergency going on. Finite means, like, doomed or something. I don't want to be doomed. I cannot perceive my own eternal nature until I unify my mind and experience a spiritual awakening. Until I perceive my own eternity, I must consider the possibility that I might blink out of existence when I die. I won't even know it, because I'll be gone. This mind of mine is in such disarray, I sometimes

can't even do the things I want to do. I can't even stop doing something I do not want to do, like smoking. What if I am nothing until I have fulfilled my potential to become something and established my place in reality? I play a different role for everyone I know, and even my personality changes from one day to the next. It seems that I am nothing in particular. Maybe existence after death of the body is only possible if I have achieved some personal synergy.

This is very important to me. This is really happening. I want direct experience of what is beyond this life, not teachings from one religious group or another. I don't mean to crap on anybody's religion or anything, but I am trying to avoid a total freak out right now, and I need an actual spiritual experience if I am to be reassured. Anything less is useless to me. Traditional beliefs are not enough. Without a real experience, I might as well just freak right out.

Perhaps good news is what I'll get when I rise out of the illusion, but as long as I feel finite, I must consider the possibility that a certain amount of presence, a certain amount of personal synergy, might be necessary for my being to continue after death. That means I might have an emergency. Smart people who think that they might have an emergency take every precaution. The passive attitude, "We'll just have to wait and find out the meaning of life when we die," lulls people into complacency. Perhaps it is possible to figure out the mystery during life.

Here is a little shop where medicinal herbs are sold. The man inside smiles out the window at me, and he appears to move his lips and speak to me, although it might be my imagination, because he must know that I can't hear him through the glass. Probably wants to sell me on some root or bug or something. I walk up to the door, uninterested in this place, and go inside to see what it's all about. The thing is that I'm dying now, and everything is equally unimportant. As uninterested as I am in this place, I am just as uninterested in everything else now. The little man probably is some Buddhist evangelist, wanting to convert me to Buddhism because his little Buddha doll

told him to. Let this guy try to sell me something, I don't care. Maybe he has an herb that takes terminal lung cancer away. Let him stick an acupuncture needle right in my lung, and another one right up my nose. Then we can smoke cigarettes and talk about Buddha and Santa and the Dalai Lama and Roger Waters. (to be continued)

Delusion

What a strange thing delusion is! By definition, delusion is something that you will have without knowing about it. You can know about the delusions in other people, but never in yourself, because as soon as you truly recognize delusion in yourself you have gotten rid of it. Delusion is tricky:

- Other people might be able to notice your delusions, but never their own—so delusion can be like food on your face.
- Your delusion is a false idea, but you believe it to be true, and you draw other conclusions based on the false idea and end up with more delusions—so delusion can spread like a forest fire.
- There is no way to know with certainty just how much of what you think you know is delusion.

You see a wide range from delusional people to comparatively clear people in your world, so you are able to take an educated guess about how clear your perception of reality is compared to other people's perceptions, but it's just a guess. Furthermore, it is only a guess about your own clarity relative to the clarity in a world full of other delusional people, so your basis for comparison is no good.

You sometimes notice other people's delusions, like when someone is stricken with paranoia around people who have only good intentions for them, or when someone is in denial about a tragic loss, and everybody else can see that the hope to which they're clinging is a false one. Or when a mother refuses to believe that her son

has a drug problem, even after she finds him all strung out and broke and giving head to a smelly, fat guy in the back seat of the 1971 Ford Fairmont that became my home when I was only seventeen, just so I didn't have to knock down some old lady in the park to get money for a fix. I earn my own shit with resourcefulness and skill, with sun tan lotion and large, crotchless pantyhose. With a blue bunny outfit, and a frightened gerbil. Whatever it takes. I'm a survivor, goddamnit. A warrior, really.

We study the nature of delusion because we want answers to our questions about life and death. We want to be let in on the secret. People who have practiced the introspective arts have experienced a sort of awakening, an experience of truth that, like the experience of drinking apple juice, cannot be adequately explained to others who have not had the experience themselves. The many writings about this spontaneous transformation undergone by spiritual seekers throughout history suggest that the answers to our questions are already available to us at some level of consciousness. The process for learning the ultimate truth is not one of learning at all, but one of remembering. On some level, we already know.

We study the nature of delusion, because enlightenment comes after we clear all delusion away. Delusion is everywhere you look, coming out as insane actions by other people:

- Fools fish for compliments and expound their own good qualities even though such behavior annoys them in other people,
- Violent people strike others when they are made to feel angry,
- Thrill-seekers drive fast cars and risk death for no good reason,
- Abuse-victims remain in relationships with their tormentors,

They are ordinary people, sane by ordinary standards, but they act crazy. Of course they do. Life is crazy. Traumatic. Smokers risk cancer and respiratory illnesses that never go away (like emphysema; emphysema is so terrible to even *think* about!) instead of enduring discomfort for a while in order to escape agony and early death. Delusions

befall even the most levelheaded people, because even they are crazy. Wisdom is not any special new knowledge; it is sanity growing in the minds of maniacs.

Life will become effortless in time if you practice to clear delusion away, and the discoveries that you make will go on and on. Enlightenment is only a matter of time for you. The original cause of delusion is desire, according to the Tao Te Ching: *"Rid yourself of desires in order to observe [the] secrets."*[5] Self-deception happens when perception is distorted by denial of some truth that is inconsistent with the mind's desires. You end up with a delusion. Delusion is the story told to cover up a lie, tricks played by the mind to bridge the gaps between what this is and what you wish this was.

Identity Delusion

The relevant delusion, as you try to change this person's mind, is the delusion that this person is what you are. Changing your mind would be effortless if it were not for this delusion that you *are* the person, but trying to change the person *as the person* is like trying to rebuild a motorcycle while you ride it down the highway. You tend to try to keep the person together as he is, because you think that he is you. You know yourself as this person, a smoker-trying-to-quit. He has been trying to quit for quite a while now. You don't change the person into a nonsmoker by clinging to the self-image of a smoker-trying-to-quit. You will stay stuck in your conflict, trying to change while trying to stay the same.

The person is always fading away. The person, as he is, will always wish that he could stay, and pretend to be staying, even though he knows that he is already fading away. Not only with regard to the change called "death" does the person play pretend instead of facing the truth, but also with regard to the subtler changes that reconstruct him every day. Tonight, the person will fade away to make room for the new person of

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5 *Tao Te Ching.* Chapter One. Translated by D.C. Lau. Penguin, 1963. Pg. 5.

tomorrow. You will not acknowledge this; you'll say that you have changed, and that the person, although different, is still you. You go on pretending to be the person who is this way or that way, and when environmental factors cause him to become some other way, it hurts. Change dispels your illusion until you set it back up again, renewing your self-deception and asserting that this new person is who you are.

For lack of a better identity, you try to be the person, even though the person is always changing. Body and monkey-mind, the constituents of your person, are different every day, yet you continuously accept the current model as your "self." Out of touch with what you are, you cling to emptiness, trying to be each page before it turns. The folly of your make-believe is exposed at times like this, when the person is some way that you'd like to change. The person is a smoker, and you want him to change, but you also want to be somebody real. Somebody who is not fading away to make room for somebody else.

So strange, this lack of unanimity between you and yourself—over issues such as the cigarette habit—is made to seem less spooky than it really is by the fact that so many other people are similarly divided. Possessed. Even though it would be difficult and unpleasant to make the change, it does not stand to reason that you would *want to quit* but also *continue to smoke*. The contradiction is a mystery until you notice that you are not the person. That explains it. Spooky.

The person is a smoker, and will never stop smoking. For him to become a nonsmoker would mean fading away, and the time is never right to fade away. But the person is always changing and fading away, like everything else in the fleeting world. You are the one who knows both the person and world. The person's personality is like a fork stirring scratchily at the coffee cup of this present moment scene, and you—you nameless, deathless, witness watching through the person's eyes- you are the one who holds the cup, and drinks it down.

Just as you might be a mother and, at the same time, a daughter, you are both a creator and a creature at the same time. Spirituality strives toward union. Wholeness.

The person is part of creation, creation that you influence as you go about your day. Attend to the wants of the creature, and you are acting as the creature. Perform self-determined Creative Action, independent of the wants of the person, and you are acting as the higher being. You get to choose what you will do, and do it. As the person, trying to become a nonsmoker is like trying to lift yourself up by the ears. As the higher being, changing the person is a simple matter of gentle manipulation.

Overcoming the Identity Delusion

Some people know this trick. It feels like stepping aside. Emptying out. This is what communion is all about, and it can be improved by practice. When you lose your balance in life, and monkey-mind suggests that balance might be restored by smoking a cigarette, use one cycle of breath to change your mind. Simplify a moment, and become so still that nothing taxes your attention for a while. Rise out of the individual kind of experience for a moment to feel the bliss and freedom of union, the experience of the higher being.

Breathing in, **you stare at the world through the person's eyes**: you see the scene before you, other people, objects, colors. You see the outline of the person's nose, which divides your vision into three sections. You can see the body of your person among the many other forms that fill the scene. The body is part of the picture, just one of the many impermanent forms that will fade away after some time. There is a stuffy sense that you are somehow confined within the person, but you know that the person is actually empty, like everything else.

Breathing out, **you abandon the person, and empty out into the world**. It is a long, slow breath that you follow out into the scene of the present moment, and you stay very still as you watch through the person's eyes. The body of the person blends in with the scene, and you are free to be both subject and object, both creator and creature. Nothing in particular, true union. As the higher being, you are not subject to

beginnings and ends. You are not subject to insecurity, loneliness, fear, doubt, and delusion, as the person is. The person is empty. You are the awareness, the being that is playing the Person-in-the-World Game.

Your person acts crazy less frequently than most other people do, because you know how to empty out when necessary. One full breath enables you to make your getaway. Swift, clever ninja. The breath is important because breathing is what you continually do. If you are walking, you are walking and breathing. If you are sitting, you are sitting and breathing. If you are washing dishes, you are washing dishes and breathing. The delusion that takes away your power, the delusion that you are this mere person, is dispelled when you unite the person with her activity. Clear, strong attention paid to the activity of the moment stacks the individual on top of her activity in order to create space, just as you might stack two boxes on top of one another to create space. What happens when you step aside is wonderful. Nature hates a vacuum—something great and sacred comes to fill your Spacious-mind if you allow it. Get the person out of the way, and there you are.

The Addiction Delusion

The body's physical dependence on nicotine can only account for a small portion of your troublesome habit. Statistics have caused some publications to rank the power of nicotine addiction close to the power of a heroin addiction, but that is silly. There is no comparison between the withdrawal sicknesses of the two; ask any recovering heroin addict. Statistics sometimes show that smokers-trying-to-quit and junkies-trying-to-survive have comparable rates of success, but it is not because their suffering is the same. Smokers just can't get themselves to care.

Physical dependence on nicotine is not the terrible affliction that it is often made out to be. Don't believe the hype. As a smoker who still has not beat the habit, you

might be inclined to accept such silly reports, consoled by the idea that your struggle is equal to the struggle of a heroin addict. It is not, of course. When you finally buckle down and kick the habit, you will be in a position to see this truth. The psychological aspect of a smoker's struggle is what renders him a failure when he tries to quit—not his body's dependence on nicotine.

That's right. It is both controversial and offensive to make such a generalization, but anyone who has abstained from smoking long enough to lose their taste for the rotten things will agree: The psychological side of a smoker's habit is what keeps people smoking in spite of their desire to quit. The power of a physical dependence on nicotine is overrated. How can you tell?

I try to quit by wearing a nicotine patch, and then break down and light a cigarette anyway. I get plenty of nicotine from the patch, but find that I need to perform my signature ritual as a smoker. There is something more to my habit than physical dependence.

I start a diet to lose twenty pounds, because I want to be more attractive. Counting calories and even skipping meals sometimes, I experience headaches, mood swings and fatigue, but I continue to tell myself that the suffering is a small price to pay for a more attractive body. Why can I not endure headaches, mood swings and fatigue during nicotine withdrawal by telling myself that the suffering is a small price to pay for jurisdiction over my own actions? There is something more to my habit than physical dependence.

I find that, in the wintertime, I smoke fewer packs every week. My husband doesn't let me smoke in the house, and I can't smoke in the building where I work. It's just too cold outside to be a smoker. My body receives less nicotine in the winter than it does in the summer, but I do not suffer from withdrawal. There is something more to my habit than physical dependence.

I have high blood pressure, so I should quit adding salt to my food, but I am not yet ready to let it

go. I still use salt, but not as often as before, and not as much. Sometimes I pick up the salt shaker and then reconsider. I put it down for the sake of my health. I want to quit using salt for the sake of my health, so I resist the urge to use it. The interesting thing is that my smoking habit is very much like my salt habit with one strange difference. I know that I should quit smoking, and plan to quit, but I do not resist the urge to smoke. I never stop and put a cigarette back in the pack instead of lighting it. Instead of cutting down for the sake of my health, I smoke as much as ever, telling myself that I ought to enjoy smoking while I can because I plan to quit soon. Obviously, this is not the best attitude for someone who intends to wean the body off nicotine. There is something more to my habit than physical dependence.

If you wanted to make a change, and all that was necessary was to endure the moderate discomfort of nicotine withdrawal, you would focus your attention and make the change. But there is something else. This is not like pulling off a bandage fast. You cannot just pull a lever and send yourself into a few weeks of unavoidable discomfort that end in victory over the habit. Someone who successfully quits smoking does not quit one time, but many times, every time there is an opportunity to smoke. Nicotine cravings come when you are reminded of cigarettes, when you smell them or when you see them behind the counter at the quickie-mart. It is the monkey-mind, not your body, that cries out for you to smoke.

Smokers who have tried to quit and failed would rather think that nicotine is some crazily addictive drug, like the statistics suggest. Right up there with heroin. Informative materials for smokers-trying-to-quit often expound upon the addictive power of nicotine. They do so in order to educate people, but they inadvertently reinforce this delusion, the notion that physical dependence on nicotine is more powerful than it really is. The realization: Withdrawal from nicotine is actually mild compared to withdrawal from other drugs.

The delusion is the notion that the smoker's problem is a bodily affliction when it is actually an affliction of the mind. When physical dependence of the body on nicotine

is made out to be a more serious problem than it is, it reinforces the smoker's secret belief that he or she will always be a smoker.

Overcoming the Addiction Delusion

Exit the person. Overcome the dependence delusion in the same way you overcome the identity delusion. The solution to delusion is to gain some improved perspective, and that perspective is available to you right outside the person. Breathe in, breathe out, and be the being that is not confined within the person. One cycle of breath is sufficient for changing your mind.

Breathing in, you note the sensations that arise in the person's chest, neck, and brain. You note the pang of craving as chest and abdomen expand to accommodate a long inhalation, creating space around the discomfort. Imagine gathering together all the self-inflicted pain that is the body's physical expression of resistance to this present moment without a cigarette.

Breathing out, follow the breath as it exits the person of the past. Follow the breath out into the scene before you. Leave behind the clutter from the person in withdrawal, and relax into this moment as a creative being, far too powerful to be disturbed by something as insignificant as nicotine dependence.

This changes your experience of withdrawal pain, and breaks the cycle of resistance that compounds it. Relax into the emptiness of not having a cigarette. Be cleansed instead of weakened by your pain. The person's problem is not your own problem, and you can be a better resource to her or him by staying neutral.

Realization

("One More Thing About Death," continued)

My cancer has given me perspective; I know now that real, direct experience of what is beyond this life is the way to salvation, and the reason I know is that I've been forced to believe in death and act appropriately. I am concerned with direct experience now, but I wasn't always—I wanted to believe that life would go on forever. Even if I had wanted to pursue direct experience of the Eternal Whatnot, I wouldn't have known where to begin. I still don't know.

Inside the Chinese apothecary, I turn to face the little man. "May I help you?" he asks, and he actually looks happy to see me. Tricky Chinese salesmanship.

"What is your religion?" I ask. "I understand Chinese medicine is based on an ancient philosophy, and I'm afraid your herbs might be nothing but religious superstition. Herbs for silly healing rituals from a primitive time."

He does not seem offended by my accusatory tone, but I noticed that he did not answer my question about his religion either. "Ancient philosophy comes from an ancient book. You know what is true. Book tells what is true and you believe when you know. Medicine is true when you feel better. Medicine is not always needles and pills. Sometimes medicine is when you look to see what is true."

I've just been thinking about how to look to see what is true, so I play along. "How do I find out what is true?"

"Need help from older people who have already looked. Then you see what they see."

"So, if I want to know what is true, I need to believe in your religion?" I ask. "Read your ancient book, and do what it tells me to do?"

"Book is not religion. Book is not truth. Book only tells you how to look and see. Then you know what is true. No more book."

The little man turns out to be a doctor of some kind, and prescribes to me an ancient philosophy book. Despite my skepticism, I find myself reading with desperate interest, trying to study up on eternity the way a person might study up on South Africa when circumstances were about to force him to move there permanently, alone.

Originally written more than twenty-six centuries ago, the Tao Te Ching consists of eighty-one short verses that address the subject of human wisdom. Life knowledge. Scholars tried to carry the author's original meaning with them across barriers of language and time when they translated the book into English.

I feel like there is some supernatural significance to my happening upon this man and his store, as if I was meant to go there during this crisis at the end of my life, but that feeling is just my desperate mind's attempt to cling to some kind of hope. My reasonable side tells me that I am in denial; still hoping to find out everything is going to be okay after all. I overrule my reasonable side and keep reading, because I think I am cracking up anyway, and people who've cracked up don't need any reasonable side, and also because the words in this book are the product of human knowledge, knowledge from having lived. The kind of knowledge that I have from having lived. Whatever significance human life, my life, might or might not have is equal to the significance of the *Tao Te Ching*, because it comes from humanity, it is about humanity, and it is intended for the benefit of humanity.

In that sense, all religion is sacred. Humanity looks in the mirror and describes itself. People get together and support one another during this mysterious trip, trying to know the Shadow Puppeteer who casts them with his hands and dances them along the wall—they try in vain to use language to describe the Creator of the creators of language, and then they fall into worldly distraction again, because worldly distraction is what humanity is all about. All religion is sacred when you switch from passive dreaming to active looking, and dive deep within to find out for yourself. It is not the right religion that you should search for; you should go beyond religion and search for God. Real experience, not ideas. The proof is in the proverbial pudding, and you are the pudding.

For all the differences among the many religions of the world, they all seem to agree that you are the pudding. "The kingdom of Heaven is within you," Jesus says. Buddhism agrees, teaching that everyone already has Buddha-Nature. Hinduism offers

Yoga, the practice for achieving union with the divine. The *Tao Te Ching*, on the very first page, tells how to see the flip side of reality: "Ever desireless, one can see the mystery. Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations." The mystery and the manifestations are two sides of a coin, and I can enjoy the best of both sides when my understanding is correct. The difference is desire. Clinging, wanting, neediness. To suppress desire is not the point, though; the point is to see desire as the product of illusion and deal with it appropriately. Eternal dreamers are not needy, not unless they get all caught up in their dreams. It is because we get caught up in a dream that we are subject to illusion and fear, but it is possible to turn within and put everything back in perspective. It is possible to wake up to a higher reality, because you are the pudding. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.

I put down my ancient philosophy book and try to turn my attention to the mystery of which it teaches. To perceive the mystery, I am supposed to put aside desire. Desire comes from thoughts of the mind, so, in order to be free from desire and experience the mystery, I must interrupt thinking. Passive, compulsive thinking is what causes suffering and misunderstanding. What needs to be cleared away is the kind of thinking that goes on against my will and influence my actions in ways that do not correspond with my will.

I close my eyes and suspend thought, focusing on my breath instead. Thought returns very soon, though, and spreads like a forest fire in my mind. All kinds of thoughts arise as I try to sit in silence without thinking. *What is it, exactly, that I am hoping for? Do I expect to enter some different world, some different state of being?* I shift my attention back to the sound of my breathing, reminding myself to save thinking for later. Thinking soon continues, nonetheless. *Maybe I really can enter a new kind of experience. I have been shifting between different states of being all my life. Sleeping person, waking person, crying baby, hyper child, awkward teen, disgruntled employee, lonely guy, lovesick guy, terrified cancer patient… would it really be so surprising to discover yet another state of being*? *But I won't find what truth lies beyond thought unless I can stop all this*

thinking, I remind myself again. I bring my attention back to the sound and sensation of my breathing. Soon, my body starts to respond to the silence in my mind, and I feel a wave of tranquility pour over me. It is the most at ease I've been since the doctor made his diagnosis. I have not yet seen this "mystery" about which I have been reading in the *Tao Te Ching*, but I am certainly experiencing a positive feeling now as I put aside thought and desire.

Still, thought returns despite my effort. *I realize something now! Desire for worldly pleasures, fear of death, judgment of myself and of others – all these disturbances to my tranquility during life come from thinking! Even if I never enter some different world by interrupting thought, at least it will give me peace and clarity. It seems that thought is the source of many problems. It seems that thought needs to be overcome –*

Apparently thought does need to be overcome, because my attempts to suspend thought during meditation keep getting thwarted by involuntary thinking. Aren't these my own thoughts? Why am I unable to refrain from thinking for a while during this meditation? Not only does thought cause many problems, but it also seems to do whatever it wants despite my attempts to silence it. My thinking mind is like a puppy that keeps peeing on the floor no matter how many times I correct it. It is a funny idea that thought seems to have a mind of its own.

On a rainy afternoon, I go back to the man who gave me the *Tao Te Ching* to ask him how I can get around my own thinking, that troublesome voice in my head that seems to be the cause of so many of my problems. There are no other customers in his store when I arrive, and the little man is standing by the window, watching the rain. He turns to me and smiles, saying nothing, and the door closes slowly behind me, softening the sound of the rain. The scent of this place, like something healthy that tastes bad, is made stronger by the moisture in the air. It makes me feel calm. I open up my copy of the *Tao Te Ching* to the first page, where it is written that the mystery can be perceived when one puts aside desire. I point to it, asking, "How can I stop thinking and be without desire? Thought and desire keep on happening when I try to meditate."

He smiles, and indicates that he understands my question with an exaggerated nod of his head, and then turns back to face the window. He lets my question linger in the air between us for a long time, until I begin to wonder if he intends to answer me at all. Finally, he speaks. "Thinking is part of your world, your world full of troubles. Thinking and trouble do not go away all at once. Try to make them go away and you make more thinking, more trouble. Better to not fight."

"What am I supposed to do, then?"

"Thinking is not the problem, the problem is when you get disturbed. Allow thinking. Do not allow thinking to disturb. Then, thinking is less and less…automatic."

The little man closes his eyes and brings one finger to his lips, giving the impression that he wants me to keep quiet, as if he is listening for some small sound. I hold back from asking another question, and the silence is filled for me by the sound of my own breathing as I inhale through my nose. My recent practice of breath meditation has me in the habit of directing my attention to the sound and sensation of my breathing during times of silence. There is a moment of profound stillness when I have inhaled to capacity and the movement my breathing stops, about to change directions. I keep my attention on the breath as I begin to exhale, maintaining inner stillness even during the movement of my breath. I feel very comfortable in the presence of this profound man, with his closed eyes and open heart. I have never even told him about my cancer, yet I feel like he somehow knows the extent of my distress. He speaks only a limited amount of English, yet he seems to understand me very well.

The finger at his lips moves up and out to my left, and my attention is drawn to it. He holds very still, and his stillness is transmitted to me, locking me into place where I stand. Without opening his eyes, he whispers, "You please watch my demonstration?"

"Yes."

His outstretched arm moves slowly down to rest at his side, and he draws a long breath in through his nose. My attention returns to my own breath. In his presence, I

feel tremendous clarity of mind, and it was probably this feeling of clarity that had initially made me trust him and his philosophy book. I believe that if this man had been diagnosed with cancer, he would be unafraid. I believe that he knows the truth about life and death, and that this knowledge is the source of his stillness. My own mind clears immediately, and I close my eyes. With no extraneous thought to divide my attention, I rest in the experience of this moment.

‡

I cannot say whether a short time or a long time passed, but I know that my respiration slowed down very much, so much that I forgot about it entirely. I no longer felt my body as I stood there by the window of the Chinese herbal clinic. It was as if a movie ended. No credits rolled up the screen, but the picture was gone, and so was all sound, all activity. In the nothingness, I felt a familiar sensation, like slowly waking up after a dream. I felt relief, because my dream had been turned terrible by my doctor's diagnosis, and the terror was removed as I awakened. Finally, thankfully, I was free from fear. I was starting to remember.

A picture formed slowly, and I heard the mellow sound of rain. I found myself with open eyes beside my teacher, watching the rain together through the shop window, as he had been doing when I first arrived. There I was, returned to something after having caught a glimpse of nothing. But nothing hadn't been no thing; it had been no limit. *There had been no thing in particular to limit me, and turned out to be more like everything. I had a familiar feeling of abundance, because this nothing and everything shown to me by the little man had included everyone and everything that is important to me now. I had caught a glimpse of what was beyond this life, and it turned out that life hadn't taken long. It had been an act of creation by a being who knew nothing of time, and the being had been me. Me, and more than me.*

Division

Now we need to discern division in the mind from simple indecision. Perhaps you have considered becoming a vegetarian but you are still undecided about whether

or not it is important enough to you to say goodbye to chicken nuggets forever. That is indecision. If you decide for sure that it is your will to abstain from eating dead animal, then the act of eating chicken nuggets reveals division in the mind. For our purposes, division is the inability to carry out your will. The division is between monkey-mind and the inclination of your will.

Your health is important, so quit smoking for your health. You might live a long time. However, if you cannot always carry out your own will, a long life is still of questionable significance. Quit for the sake of asserting your will. Quit for the sake of living in a powerful way.

It is disturbing to observe the way we fail to see our own decisions through to actualization. Save money, stop overeating, quit smoking, start a business, do exactly what you choose to do, and you know that you are living in a powerful way. When we meet people who are like this, we recognize that they are resolute, and we respect them for it. It is good to quit smoking for the sake of your health but it is better to quit for the sake of enforcing your will over the life of this person. The act of smoking in spite of your desire to quit does more damage to your spirit than to your lungs.

To act in a way that is contrary to your decisions is division in the mind. By giving it a name we make it recognizable. When you make a firm decision to set aside fifty dollars each week for Christmas shopping and soon find yourself tempted to withdraw money from that account unnecessarily, you can say, 'Aha! There is some division in my mind.' Or, when you are preparing for your permanent smoke-strike, and you resolve to practice by abstaining from 11AM until 4PM on a Saturday, you suddenly find yourself thinking about a cigarette right after lunch, so you say, "Hey, cut the crap. There is some division in my mind. This little smoke-strike won't kill me."

It is often said that the first step toward overcoming your problem is to recognize that you have one. Division remains in the mind, uncontested, because people fail to notice that monkey-mind is not who they are—it is just a stereo with a hard-to-find 'off'

button. See the workings of your mind in an objective way, and you can recognize when the random spatterings of monkey-mind oppose your will. When monkey-mind begins to wander away from your purpose, you can shut it right off until you need to use it again.

Union

Have you ever met somebody whose presence can be felt when he or she enters the room? Not because they are in some sort of emotional uproar and on the verge of wigging out, but because the person has refined his or her attention through some kind of practice, some kind of mastery. You don't need to practice an internal martial art to achieve strong presence; you can cultivate mastery over your own activities by turning up the volume of your attention.

What makes some people so luminous and their intent so powerful? It is not something that they have gathered up, but something they have cleared away. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Do not hide your light under a basket!" (Matthew 5:14) People with intense focus are like lanterns out in the open, not obscured by clutter from the environment.

Clutter spewed by monkey-mind is what prevents your action from serving your will. It gets in the way, distracts you from your purpose. You tend to identify with the jabbering of monkey-mind and feel some freedom in letting the mind wander, but that is not freedom. Unless you observe the wandering monkey-mind in an objective way, as the detached observer of the scene, mind will wander away with your purpose—and probably misplace it somewhere. Beware the silly antics of monkey-mind; don't let it fool you. Maintain a zero-tolerance policy regarding self-deception. See through the

illusion that you are confined within this temporary person.

The Dignity of Union

What is it that sets you apart from monkey-mind? Sift through the gooey, mental material put out by monkey-mind, and see if you can find yourself in there. Your deepest self. The self that chooses. People have trouble with the idea that they are not their thoughts, that they are not defined or characterized by their thoughts. You might say, "If I am not my thoughts, then what am I?" *Consciousness* sounds like a fair answer, but it is still inadequate. Words don't work for this sort of thing. You know what words are but words don't know what you are. Words are incapable of capturing the essence of what you are, but, fortunately, they are not even necessary. Somewhere is a little forest-mystic, smiling, sitting naked in a clearing, who could answer your question. The mystic is saying, "Here now, look, this is what you are."

You're not So-and-So. Where's So-and-So? Lost inside a complicated, jumbled blurb of images and sensory perception. Searching through this worldly stuff, if you stare long and hard enough, you'll find that you're not in there—not at all. This picture is all you have ever known, so you hope to find yourself in there somewhere, but nope. Hey! There's So-and-So, drunk and sprawled behind that dumpster—ooh, it looks like he has either spilled his drink or pissed himself. He's unconscious and still clutching his bottle. Sure is a good thing you're not So-and-So. You are the observer, the remote and steady viewer of the scene. Take a few steps back now.

Look. Take a few steps back from the physical world, be still, and look at the picture in front of you. That body of your person is in there; you can see the person's hands and feet and the outline of its nose. The body of the person is part of the blurb, but you're not in there. Keep the person very still now, and take a few more steps back. Back away from the picture that you've been getting all caught up in. You are not the picture; you are formless, and formless things are very, very still. In your stillness you

can play the person-in-the-world game with intense focus. You operate the body by remote control.

Listen. Can you hear the smaller sounds beneath the obvious ones? Listen for the faraway sounds, and when you hear them, go beyond them as well. Listen for sounds so small and distant that you wonder if you might just be imagining them. This is not about your auditory acuity, but rather the refinement of your attention. This kind of listening sometimes makes the eyes open wider. Loud sounds overwhelm you, causing you to cringe and stiffen, whereas the tiny sounds that need to be reached for can cause your awareness to expand. Even in the presence of loud noise, you can remain open and find the small sounds and the silence underneath.

Practice is necessary for maintaining and deepening a perspective of spacious stillness. Within this functional workspace, you can carry out the dictates of your will. Intensify your focus by refining your awareness. You are pure, first class, grade-A, one hundred percent homogenized awareness, so take it to the extreme. Filter judgments of good and bad out of your perception, and experience the scene exactly as it is this one unadulterated moment. Sensory perception changes as you deepen your own inner stillness, and there is no limit to the depth you can achieve. In this and other books, you'll find methods for the refinement of your attention that can gradually change you. Every practice session takes you deeper than the previous one, and every passing week of consistent practice makes you a stronger player in the person-in-the-world game. Don't be discouraged by the thought of time-consuming practice sessions to which you might not be ready to commit; to approach your ordinary activities with profound stillness and intense presence is the most important practice. What good is the cultivation higher consciousness if it remains in some formal practice session instead of being brought into your day-to-day life?

Go about your day as the creative, higher being who is not confined within the individual person. Life itself can be your spiritual practice if you see the person and her environment as one instead of two. The person and the person's unique circumstances

are the modality for your creative expression, but you need strong attention in order to act. Sometimes, when you try to change things that are wrong with the world, you fail. Sometimes, when you try to change things that are wrong with the person, you fail. The person is supposed to quit smoking cigarettes, but there has been division in your mind. The way that the story goes is subject to your influence, but your influence is only as strong as your attention.

Bridge the gap between subject and object, person and environment, self and other. Establish the person as part of the story, and establish yourself as the storyteller. You are invulnerable in the faraway place from which you manifest changes with gentle manipulations and steady focus. Changing your mind about cigarettes is only the beginning. You are capable of more.

Let go the cheap pride of individuality.

Choose instead the dignity of union.

Yoga means "union." Did you know that? Many people probably think that Yoga means stretching or something. The way people stretch in India. But this is wrong. Yoga means union of the person with God, or the higher being. Christianity teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three individual aspects of a Trinity but also, at the same time, one. Buddhism teaches that all people, all plants and animals, and even things like dirt and rocks and water all have "Buddha Nature." Similarly, Hinduism teaches Yoga, the practice for achieving union of the individual with God.

When you notice that *union* with the higher being is what the major religions of the world have in common, that the practice of spirituality always involves the cultivation of love and fellowship throughout humanity and the union of humanity with God, it makes you want to look into the concept of union.

What is required of someone who would pursue union? The tradition of

marriage between lovers who choose to establish union with one another is a model of this omnipresent drive toward wholeness. Doesn't unification necessarily require that each element give up some of its individuality? Spiritual unification sounds nice, but how nice is the idea of giving up one's own individuality? People do not like the sound of that. "Individuality" sounds desirable, and "separation" sounds undesirable, but aren't "separation" and "individuality" somewhat synonymous? Individuality is something learned in the formative years, child stuff, learning "me" and "mine," and what makes me a good boy or a bad boy, and what kind of person I am. Adults who stay too focused on their own individuality will have a harder time accepting death. Union, achieved by spiritual practice, rewards you with all kinds of ecstasy. It is the flipside of individuality, just as nice, but often missed by people who refuse to think about death. Our common destination, decomposing underground, is a reference point for everyone on the highway to enlightenment.

Pride is the opposite of humility. Is pride the same as dignity? Dignity and humility both sound like desirable things, but which should you choose? Spiritual unification of the person with the higher being is a particular activity that must be approached in a particular way. What is the right way? Union produces a different kind of dignity. Pride comes from the dignity of individuality. Humility comes from the dignity of union.

Judging by the way reality looks, it appears that we get to have our cake and eat it too. Apparently, the great way of things is such that we are individuals and, at the same time, we are one. Birth and death, expansion and contraction, breathing in and breathing out, the great way of everything is wonderful! The dignity of union is a quiet kind, full of love for others and for the whole show. It comes from spiritual practice: meditation, renunciation, communion with the rest of everything. The truth is that you do not need to give up anything that was ever real. You know that you are subject to delusion, so you can assume that the process for approaching the highest truth must

involve the elimination of delusive thought. That part of you as an individual that seems real, but is not, is the only part that needs to be let go. To put it another way, you only need to let go the illusion. Reading these words, you are an individual and, at the same time, the higher being. James Broughton writes:

This is It

and I am It

and you are It

and so is That

and He is It

and She is It

And It is It

And That is That.[6]

It is a sing-song way to say the truth, a roundabout poem instead of a plain statement, because the poet knows how hard truth is to hear. What is this truth about which we sing but from which we avert our eyes and shield our ears? Dare I say it plainly? No, I don't. You already know the wonderful truth about your existence when you understand the word "union."

Renunciation practice leads to spiritual union.

So, about this cigarette smoking habit—you need to know what role it plays in your life-trip as a person. You want to establish this renunciation of cigarettes as a permanent change, and to do so requires that you have some potency, some say in the

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6 Broughton, James in *Zen To Go.* John Winokur, ed. Penguin: New York, 1990.

matter. Even just a little. It will be nice if you can exercise some control over the person. Thinking as an individual, your former inability to make such a personal change as quitting cigarettes presents a mystery. Because quitting cigarettes is such a personal endeavor, and because you are supposed to be your own individual, separate from the environment, it seems strange that you were unable to stop smoking for so long. It seems strange until you notice that the actions of the person come from the thoughts of monkey-mind, which are reflections of the person's environments, past and present. The individual person must make due with passive thinking, and has no control over what actually happens.

Thinking as the creative, higher being, the inability of the individual person to quit smoking presents no mystery. The person and her environment are one, not two. The person is just another part of reality, reality over which you, the higher being, can have some influence when you are able to take Creative Action. You take Creative Action as the higher being to create reality, the person and the environment of the person. As the higher being, you create reality as you go, using the person like a paintbrush, and make your changes by taking creative, skillful action. Your challenge is to act with synergy and clarity, upholding what is good. Cigarettes are symbols, like everything else in this life that flashes by, and you can understand their meaning when you experience yourself as the higher being. The way to be the being instead of this temporary person is diligent, spiritual practice.

Renunciation, in some form, is part of every spiritual practice. Probably you can find a form of renunciation practice in your own religious discipline, if you have one. Examine renunciation as an aspect of a discipline you know, and add to it the renunciation of cigarettes. Renunciation is practice, regardless of modality. Chastity is to let go of sexual pleasure. Fasting is to let go of food. Meditation is to let go of thought and action for some time. A vow of silence is to let go of speech. It doesn't matter what you give away from the of the person, as long as attention is taken from

your experience of the individual self and made available for your experience as the higher being. And when you fast, or meditate, or deny the wanting of the person in any other way—when you do it as part of your spiritual practice—you always get a particular kind of feeling. A good feeling of well-being from sacrificial giving, hard to describe, but a feeling that you know is commonly understood. It is power people gather when they give something up, power to create instead of always serving the needy individual. This different kind of personal strength, which is cultivated by renunciation practice, is the dignity of spiritual union.

Mind Changing Practice: Simple Self-Hypnosis

Here is a practice for nighttime after you get in bed. Do it every night, even if you are sleepy. You have already put a significant amount of time into this aspiration to quit smoking, so we can't have you defeating yourself now by being inconsistent with your practice. You practice breathing exercises every morning, and now you will also practice self-hypnosis every night. The technique is simple enough to perform even if you are sleepy, and your sleepiness itself is altered consciousness similar to the hypnotic state.

This nighttime session serves as your introduction to the technique called self-hypnosis. Practice these five steps to acquire a functional understanding of the technique. A thorough explanation of these steps can be found in Chapter Six, along with examples of hypnotic suggestions and post-hypnotic suggestions.

Your session must be kept simple. This is like a ninja mission. The idea is to sneak past monkey-mind and make changes at a deeper level, a level that is not accessible during ordinary consciousness. If you complicate your session by prolonging

it, or by making too many suggestions, monkey-mind will be activated. Your session needs a specific goal, a definite beginning and a definite conclusion. Get in, and make a quick change. Get out, and make a quick getaway. Good ninja.

What to Do: Lie on your back with your head on a pillow and arms down by your sides. If you ever experience tightness or pain in the lower back, it is a good idea to roll up a large blanket and slide it under your knees. Your large blanket roll should elevate your knees enough that you feel relief from tension where the large muscles of the lower back attach to the pelvis. Elevating your legs correctly should gently pull the pelvis forward.

If your body feels restless…

Raise your head by putting some strength in the neck. Listen to the sound of your breathing. Turn your head to the left, and feel the muscles on the right side of your neck working to support the weight of your head. Hold it there for the duration of one, slow breath. Turn your head to the right, and feel those muscles relax as the ones on the left side relieve them of the burden. Hold it there for the duration of another breath. Continue, alternating with each breath, five to ten times. Bring your head back to the center. Hold still for a moment, and then lower your head.

Turn your hands palm up and slowly raise them a few inches off the bed. Feel the weight of your arms. Listen to the sound of your breathing as you open and close your hands repeatedly. There is no need to hurry; this is a restful exercise. Continue for the duration of five to ten breaths, then lower your arms. Notice the feeling of heaviness in the arms and hands. Notice the deep relaxation.

Listen to the sound of your breathing as you flex both feet toward the foot of the bed, then toward the ceiling, alternating slowly. Feel the warmth as more blood circulates through your legs and feet. Your feet should feel very warm after five to ten breaths. Feel the heavy warmth that has been generated throughout the body, and

prepare to begin self-hypnosis.

1.) Specific Purpose

Your session begins when you state your intentions for change.

I am working on the person to eliminate a habitual pattern. I am re-programming the mind of the person tonight in order to make a change that will be noticeable tomorrow.

This sets the stage for your self-hypnosis session, focusing your attention to ensure powerful, goal-oriented change.

2.) Spacious-Mind

Hypnosis is not as complicated and mysterious as people often believe it to be. The hypnotic state of consciousness is characterized by longer brain waves (called alpha waves) and the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. These qualities of consciousness are present when a person is under hypnosis, but they are also present whenever a person is lying in bed, hovering between sleeping and waking states. In this way, hypnosis occurs naturally twice each day for all of us, as we make the transition between waking and sleeping states (this is why some hypno-therapists provide recordings of transformative suggestions for clients to play at night as they are drifting off to sleep). So, the hypnotic state is a natural state of consciousness. A hypnotic "trance" involves a sharpened focus and heightened receptivity to suggestions. As a technique, self-hypnosis seeks to induce these natural qualities of consciousness during a *wakeful* state so that the practitioner can give instructions for change.

In the breathing exercises at the end of chapter two, Rhythmic Breathing

involves inhaling while you count to four, holding the breath gently, and then exhaling while you count to four again. By directing all of your attention to the movement of the breath, rhythmic breathing induces "spacious-mind," (spacious-mind is the word used in this book to name the hypnotic state; the application of a new term helps us to overcome our preconceived ideas about hypnosis.) In Chapter Three, the morning meditations are attached to the breathing exercises to serve as hypnotic suggestions. If you have used the morning meditations together with breathing exercises, you have already been practicing self-hypnosis.

After stating your intentions for change, use rhythmic breathing to induce spacious-mind in the same way you learned in chapter two (by inhaling for a count of four, holding for a count of four, and exhaling for a count of four). Tell yourself,

I breathe in, and relaxation spreads throughout my body. I breathe out, and my relaxation becomes deeper and deeper… one, two, three, four…

Rest in your practice. To stay with the counting and the sound of your breathing is so much easier than to let your mind wander. Allow the slow rhythm of counting and breathing to take over. You will feel changes happening as you lull your self into spacious-mind.

When you are ready, enhance the person's receptivity to your instructions by making another suggestion: *My arms and legs are warm and heavy. One, two, three, four...*

The depth to which you can dive into Spacious-mind depends on your skill with this technique. Body and Mind respond in dramatic ways to your simple suggestions, and you will discover fascinating places in your own consciousness when you practice. Soon, it will be easy for you to find the place within the person's mind where you can manifest change according to your will.

Now I am entering an even deeper state of consciousness.

My arms and legs are so heavy, I cannot move them at all. My inability to move them only takes me deeper into spacious-mind.

I try to use my arms, but they are paralyzed. Trying to use them only takes me deeper into spacious-mind.

I try to use my legs, but they are paralyzed. Trying to use them only makes me go deeper. Now I am entering an even deeper state of consciousness.

You can also suggest that the eyelids have become heavy, and that you are unable to open them. Some experimentation with these techniques for inducing the hypnotic state will show just how powerful your own suggestions can be for creating change in mind and body.

Going deeper, my eyelids are heavy. It feels like they are weighed down by stones.

Going deeper, I do not want to open them. My inability to open them makes me go deeper.

The suggestions above are not magic words that need to be memorized. Use your own words, but understand that (1.) fewer words make each suggestion more powerful, (2.) You should hear these suggestions over a background sound that is the sound of the person's breathing, (3.) Let your own suggestions take you to a very deep level of your own mind. Lull monkey-mind to sleep for a while so you can give some clear instructions.

3.) Hypnotic Suggestions

The quality of your Spacious-mind will vary from one practice session to the next. After digging very deep, you can plant a seed for change.

Tomorrow, my desire to smoke will be overpowered by my decision to be the master of my own mind.

or

T*omorrow, the wanting of the person will be set aside in favor of Creative Action.*

Give clear instructions, and then re-establish Spacious-mind by going back to the previous step.

I am now entering an even deeper state of consciousness. My arms, legs, and head are so heavy and relaxed, I cannot lift them. Trying to lift them only makes me go deeper.

4.) Repeat

For a thorough change of mind, alternate between making suggestions and re-establishing Spacious-mind until you are satisfied with the session. Auto-suggestion is used for both purposes; hypnosis is all about talking to your self. Tell the person again that he or she is entering a deeper state of consciousness, that the body is completely relaxed, and then repeat the suggestions.

5.) Return

Breathing back up to the surface of your mind, *one, two, three, four, I am sealing the change by concluding the session, returning to normal consciousness as I count to four, one, two, three, four, tomorrow there will be a noticeable difference in my desire to smoke and in my enthusiasm for making this change. I return to the surface of my mind now, one, two, three, four.*

The session has a definite beginning and a definite end. It should be kept simple,

and you should limit yourself to the use of only two or three transformative suggestions. Your session will pack a harder punch if you do not water it down by making it complicated. The more complicated your self-hypnosis session is, the more it will engage monkey-mind. It is better to keep it neat. Crisp.

Chapter Four

Resist until You're Ready

When you change your mind, it's got to be all of a sudden. The noticeable changes are gradual—smoking less frequently, allowing your lungs to heal up, growing a little younger—but the invisible change that makes such a transformation possible is not gradual. You can smoke fewer cigarettes every day than you smoked the day before, gradually breaking your body and brain free of physical dependence on nicotine, but only after you have abruptly changed your mindset to that of a nonsmoker. A nonsmoker with a nicotine addiction. You don't need to suddenly decide that you will never smoke another cigarette, but you do need to suddenly decide *something*. All of a sudden, choose to start your process of getting younger and more resolute by constantly resisting the urge to smoke. Make or renew this decision sometime today. Do it suddenly and finally, but without letting it become a big deal.

Acting as the higher being, for you quit smoking cigarettes is hardly a big deal. Anyone can quit smoking cigarettes; the real challenge is to do it without suffering. Can you make a commitment that is so heartfelt and strong that it will pain you more to falter than to press on toward your goal? Direct your attention, let go of doubt, and consider yourself a nonsmoker—starting now. Change your mind with such conviction that to change your actions as well seems only natural. To decide that you want to quit smoking cigarettes without completely changing your mind will only put you at odds with yourself; the active ingredient is passion, inner fire that burns as long as you maintain the clear intensity of your purpose.

A Nonsmoker Fighting

The mistake that causes suffering for smokers-trying-to-quit comes from a wavering, half-hearted change of mind. If you try to quit without completely changing your mind, you will be a "smoker-trying-to-quit," someone who aspires toward a positive change but still has "smoker" as part of his identity. A smoker-trying-to-quit denies his person a cigarette and feels like he is being dishonest with himself and everyone else. *Who am I trying to fool with this silly idea of becoming a non-smoker?* He wishes things were different but supposes that they are not. He has been a smoker for some time now, and he knows himself as a smoker. He does not know himself as a non-smoker. "Smoker" is part of his self-image, so the best that he can do about his desire to make this positive change is to become a "smoker-trying-to-quit."

But what if someone wanted to make a change that involved *protecting* his self-image instead of changing it? What if, for example, someone was told that he was afflicted with a rare allergy to bread, that eating any kind of bread would cause him to emit foul body odor that is undetectable to him but unbearable to everyone else? He would immediately cut bread out of his diet. Being a bread-eater never played an important role for his self-image, but not to stink is certainly important. He would not spend any time as a "bread-eater-trying-to-quit"—he would be a former bread-eater. Even if he had cravings for bread, even if he did falter and eat some bread, the sense of purpose supporting his commitment would cause a stronger change of mind.

The self-image we are talking about has nothing to do with self-esteem or style. No one is accusing you of pretending that cigarettes make you look cool—it's not like that. Here, self-image is like the puddle of thoughts and memories that, when put together with a body, make up the person through whom you are having your experience of life. You are the being that is beyond even thought—the one who

chooses. You have the authority to decide that the person should become a former smoker now, and if that is your will the change is made. Your ability to completely change the person's mind depends on spacious clarity; you need to *dis*-identify from the person you know (because this is the person of the past) and enforce the desired change while becoming new.

The difference between becoming a smoker-trying-to-quit and becoming a resolute former-smoker depends on the way you change your mind. When you adopt a new self-image, that of a former-smoker fighting an addiction rather than that of a smoker-trying-to-quit, the odds turn in your favor. A change of identity is in order. To consider yourself a former-smoker-fighting an addiction puts you on your own team.

A smoker-trying-to-quit finishes eating a big meal, then suffers because she cannot have a cigarette; a nonsmoker fighting a nicotine addiction finishes eating and enjoys the freedom to do whatever she wants.

A smoker-trying-to-quit uses a nicotine patch and still wants to smoke; a nonsmoker fighting a nicotine addiction is reluctant even about using the patch, because she hates dependence and addiction and looks forward to being completely self-sufficient very soon.

A smoker-trying-to-quit performs a smoke-strike and feels out of whack, unhappy and in disarray; a nonsmoker fighting a nicotine addiction feels relief during each smoke-strike in spite of nicotine withdrawal, because she has changed her identity to that of a nonsmoker, and, now, not to smoke is what allows her to be true to her self-image.

A smoker-trying-to-quit encounters friends smoking cigarettes and struggles to resist temptation; a nonsmoker fighting a nicotine addiction smells the air and feels a pang of craving, but that wanting feeling is quickly overshadowed by a stronger feeling – the feeling of her increasing personal power and excitement about her limitless potential.

"Resist until You're Ready" means switching teams instead of struggling. It's what the smoker-trying-to-quit forgets to do. The smoker-trying-to-quit is still siding with the cigarettes. She savors the cigarettes that she has rationed out to herself for the day. She avoids unpleasant feelings of nicotine withdrawal instead of leaping into battle. She suffers, because her heart is not with her in the fight against addiction, and she wants to smoke while she still can. It is as if cigarettes are dear friends and the prospect of quitting is the enemy when, really, it is the other way around. "Resist Until You're Ready" is what you do naturally when you have been truly honest about changing your mind.

It's time to choose a side and make a stand. It's time to start keeping score. If you try to cut back on cigarette-smoking while you still feel like a smoker at heart, you will probably do a piss-poor job, because on some level you believe that there can never be a time when you will not suffer, struggle and crave. You believe that you will never really be a nonsmoker who can enjoy her day without smoking. This belief of yours is obviously a lie, because there are plenty of people who have lost the taste for cigarettes after successfully changing their minds, but the lie convinces your person, and your person keeps on smoking cigarettes.

Do you really want to quit, or do you want to smoke? If you want both, there must be some division in your mind. A powerful being performs Creative Action as a person in the world by making bold, single-minded brushstrokes—using person as paintbrush. Life is too short to be at odds with your self. Strength of concentration is the necessary trait, the one that lets you *co-create* instead of suffering through life with no control. Even when it is bound for failure, decisive action is better than hesitation because it allows you to influence what happens. Resist being controlled by this smoking habit in the same way that you would resist any other enemy that would try to take your freedom. Establish a stance against cigarettes even though they used to play a role in your self-image. When the time comes for your final smoke-strike, one last

"goodbye cigarette" will not be necessary.

Figure Out a Cigarette

Suppose that in the beginning, there was no form, no life. No time or space, no energy — nothing but void. Which is nothing. Now there are all kinds of things. The planets turn around and around again, the moon revolves and shifts and then the tide comes in. Mountains and waters and whatnot. How would all this be possible if nothing was eternal, there was nothing that existed before all else, no mystery behind all these manifestations? As it happens, there was something in the void.

Alone in the universe was a little kid with a great big rubber ball. No one created this kid. This kid is the something that came from nothing. If something could not result from nothing, then nothing would be here. But nothing's not here. Something is. Something is here, because this little kid existed without cause, and set something into motion.

The ball falls slowly, big red rubber toy, even larger than the kid who squeezed it through his bedroom window. Justin looks up just in time to see the great, dark sphere block out the sun, and then it hits him. Blonk.

"Ah, I've got it," he said. "I've figured it out."

You see the giant ball from Heaven bounce off Justin's face, across the sidewalk, toward the street and, spinning, falling, lurching forward, settle down into a roll — inertia is a funny word, it's not trying to be, it just is. You feel edgy and tense, because you haven't smoked any cigarettes today, November's third Thursday, the day of the American Cancer Society's annual Great American Smoke Out. "I don't care," you tell him. "Figure out a cigarette."

Justin smiles. "Figure out a cigarette? That's the most rhythmic sentence I've ever heard."

"Well, seriously, we need to figure out a cigarette before I stab you in the face," you tell him. "I don't care about the Great American Smoke Out. Come on, we don't need to buy a whole pack; we can just bum one off somebody and share it. Quitting for a day just because other people are doing it seems cheesy, anyway. Let's be different, and figure out a cigarette."

"Figure out a cigarette," Justin says again, ignoring your complaints, "It sounds like a drum roll, and it almost rhymes with itself, but not really. Figure out a cigarette."

You aren't concerned about that. "I wasn't kidding about stabbing you," you tell him. "We should buy a pack, split one, and save the rest for midnight, when this stupid holiday is over."

"I think I figured out something more important than a cigarette," Justin says slowly, still pensive. "I was wondering why so many people are able to quit smoking for this one day each year, when so few people are able to quit permanently. Then, that ball hit me hard in the face, and it made me think of interruptions."

"Like, the ball interrupted your wondering?"

"It did, and the interruption captured my attention, but then my attention went back to what I had been thinking about. In the same way, the Great American Smoke Out interrupts our pattern of smoking cigarettes each day, but then people usually go back to the pattern."

"That's what I'd like to do. I'd like to go back to the pattern, before I stab you in the face."

Justin ignores your warning and continues to explain his epiphany. "I find it easy to refrain from smoking today, because I really want to quit, and because I know that this exercise is only for one day. I think I would be struggling more right now if we were trying to quit permanently. One day of not smoking interrupts my habit and gives me a chance to be who I want to be, temporarily, instead of being the smoker I

have been being. If I know it's only for one day, I can succeed at making almost any change I want for my life."

"But what good is change if it's only for a single day?"

"It is good, because life is made up of single days! One day of practicing change, and being the person I choose to be, is better than none. One day of thinking and acting like the person I envision myself as—balanced, resolute, disciplined, wise, conscientious—sways my life in that direction, makes me more likely to practice change again on another day. Even if you can't always be the kind of person you would like to be, at least you can choose to practice being that person for a single day."

"Don't you feel tension, though? I have a headache. I actually feel angry, and I know it's only because I need some nicotine."

Justin says, "Yeah, I do feel something in my chest. No headache, though. I think this is easier for me because I don't feel like a smoker today. I feel like I am a nonsmoker, struggling against a physical dependence on nicotine. You feel like a smoker who can't have a cigarette."

"What's the difference?" you ask, although you do not really care for his smug, motivational hoo-hah.

"The difference is that I really don't want to smoke anymore. You consider yourself a smoker, and I consider myself a nonsmoker with a problem. I feel like a former-smoker fighting an addiction, so I see the *urge to smoke* as a problem. You feel like a smoker-trying-to-quit, so you expect the urge to smoke; my problem is that I have discomfort because of an urge to smoke, but your problem is simply that you do not have a cigarette. My mind is resisting the urge to smoke, and your mind is resisting not having a cigarette."

"Yeah, but pain is pain," you say. "Even if I didn't have this headache, nicotine withdrawal would still be a kind of pain, and it would still be there whether I feel like a

smoker or not."

Justin thinks about that for a moment. "Remember when you were in physical therapy with broken legs, and you said the therapy was more painful than the accident that broke them?"

"That's different," you say. "I had to do those exercises despite the pain. I had been told I might never have full use of my legs again. Basketball was my whole life back then, so I was glad to feel the pain if the exercises would help me to make a full recovery."

Justin says, "Now compare the pain you felt during therapy with the pain you feel today. Nicotine withdrawal is not as bad as broken legs, is it?"

"Of course not, but this is different. I did those exercises, and brought the pain on myself, because I wanted to heal. Nicotine withdrawal causes pain that I have no control over. I just have to endure it."

"If you really want to stop smoking, you can keep on interrupting the habit despite the pain, and you will be bringing the pain on yourself because you want to heal. You want to quit smoking, but can't imagine actually doing it, so you should practice change just for today. Smoke again tomorrow, but act according to your will today. In the grand scheme of things, one day and one lifetime are of comparable significance."

All the preaching blended together in your ears and become a meaningless hum, syllables strung together to piss you off. "I'll quit smoking soon enough," you say. "I know I'm not ready for the change yet, though, so I *should* smoke today, because I'm going to have a bad day if I don't. I'll definitely make the change, though. Soon. When I'm ready. Why should I not smoke today, if I know that I'm not ready to quit?"

"Because changing your mind takes practice," Justin says.

The "Divide & Conquer" Exercises

To regard quitting cigarettes as a process of suffering is the wrong understanding. This is a process of exercise. Complete change is only possible when your attention has become strong enough to preside over entire days, from beginning to end, and renunciation practice is what strengthens concentration. It is the *stamina* of your attention enables you to enforce change. Your ability to concentrate your attention will improve at the same time as your body acclimates to receiving less nicotine. By the time you cut your daily allotment of cigarettes down to zero, you will have realized that successful quitting is only of secondary importance—the real reward is your heightened attention and intensified focus in every moment of life.

Make a clear, dramatic change of mind, and the battle begins. If this strange ritual of breathing toxic smoke were caused by some terrible demon that had gotten in your head, you would fight it. You would confront it and fight for your life. You would turn within to face the demon and see that you are fighting not one enemy, but many enemies. Divide the many elements that make up your addiction, and defeat them, one after another, until you're free.

The "Divide and Conquer" exercises focus on one aspect of your habit at a time, helping you to destroy your habitual patterns and replace compulsive, thoughtless action with awareness. You will resist by changing the way you get your nicotine, because this takes the habit out of smoking. You will also break the associations in your mind that connect smoking to other activities. Resist by skipping cigarettes in situations in which you would ordinarily smoke, like after work, after sex, after lunch, or after getting in the car. Resist by smoking mindfully when you do smoke, dissociating the habit from other aspects of your life. Every *change* you make asserts the seriousness of your decision to quit, and every forgone cigarette scores a few points for you.

It is an interesting twist that successfully quitting cigarettes turns out to be more like the *side-effect* of a larger process that is taking place, a process that has much greater significance than simply quitting cigarettes. But, thinking deeply into it, could it really have been any other way? Life always does that to you. The things that seemed so important begin to seem less important after some time, and later, looking back on them, you see that they were important after all, but for reasons entirely different from what you thought. All struggles make you stronger by forcing you inward, toward the place from which you can manifest change, but the reverse is also true: go inward by means of spiritual exercise, and life itself becomes less of a struggle—your senses sharpen, your intuition comes into the foreground of decision making, and your experience becomes more vivid and real. Not smoking cigarettes will make your life better, but the *process* of quitting will actually raise your consciousness to a new level.

You can rise out of the habit with the Divide & Conquer exercises:

1. Reduce the Body's Intake of Nicotine
2. Association Breaking
3. Creative Action
4. Scramble up Your Day
5. The Blurry Smoke-Strike
6. Monitor Your Progress

1. Reduce the Body's Intake of Nicotine

Awareness is the antidote for habit. It is the cleaning agent that washes it away. Systematically reducing your daily allotment of cigarettes challenges you to keep track

of how many cigarettes you smoke each day, and there is a noticeable change in your experience of smoking before you even start to cut down. You might actually find it difficult to remember to keep track of how many cigarettes you smoke; such is the suspicious, sneaky nature of habit. It keeps you sleeping when it can. Shine the light of your awareness on the act of smoking each day from now until you undertake your permanent smoke-strike, and know that you are washing habit away.

If it suits you, you can begin to "Resist until You're Ready" by making your next pack a pack of ultra-lites, or at least lights if you are used to smoking "full flavor" cigarettes. Many people disagree with that idea, saying that you'll just end up taking more drags, or that it doesn't make sense to buy a weaker kind of cigarette for the same price. But… to hell with those people. The only thing that matters is what result you get, so try ultra-lites if you can't yet quit, and see what happens. Every change you make will cast light on a certain aspect of your habit, loosening the grip of the monkey on your back. Sometimes you smoke even though your body is not craving nicotine. Sometimes you do crave nicotine, but after getting it you probably do not extinguish your cigarette as soon as you could. It is better to err on the side of less nicotine as you prepare to quit.

2. Association Breaking

Habits are nasty little creatures that hide in the shadows cast by everything else you do, spiritual bloodsuckers drinking up your vitality and dropping their gooey excrements across the landscape of your mind. Sometimes they blend in sneakily with your daily routines, and you need to startle them out of their parasitic banquet. Sometimes they bear their claws and latch on to your other activities, so that you cannot get rid of them unless you pry them away.

Isolate the little bastards. Shoo them out of the shadows, out into the light. Peel them off your ordinary activities and bring them out into the light so that you can see what terrible little monsters they really are. When you see the sticky dark side of some

portion of your day, and when you see that portion cleansed of some of its badness, you will want to root out all the other terrible monsters that have been lurking undetected in your life. You'll want to find them and remove them so that your life can be entirely your own.

"Divide and Conquer" means to separate the aspects of your smoking habit, but it also means to separate the act of smoking from other activities. For everyone who succeeds in quitting cigarettes, there must come a time when the act of smoking is made to stand alone, not associated with daily routines, and daily routines must be enjoyable without smoking. Before your cigarette enlightenment, coffee and a cigarette made a great combination. After your cigarette enlightenment, coffee tastes and smells better like everything else does, and cigarettes don't matter anymore. The spell has been broken.

If you usually light a cigarette every time you drink coffee, get in the car, eat lunch, talk on the phone—don't. Smoke before or after the times in which you would usually smoke, and don't do anything else while you are smoking. It will be hard to find time to stop everything and have a cigarette, and you will grow to hate them even more because they take up so much time. You resist the spell of cigarettes; you renounce them because you hate them.

Your body knows what is good and what is not. By breaking the associations that have developed between cigarettes and other activities, you will see the act of smoking as it stands alone. Under the light of your awareness, your experience of each cigarette will change, and you will receive the spacious clarity of renunciation practice.

3. Creative Action

A human life is consciousness and action. Much of human action is nothing but *re*-action to the environment, but there is also Creative Action. Creative Action is when we use the body to influence the objects in our consciousness according to our

inclination of will, and not out of delusion or compulsion. Habits have form only as our thoughtless actions, and only when our attention falters long enough for them to take control. People with weak attention are prone to more thoughtless action than people with strong attention. They are unable to take Creative Action. People with weak attention, though they may live a long time, have not the same amount of opportunity to take action in life, because much of their activities are thoughtless. When attention is weak, a person's day consists mostly of meaningless reactions to the environment according to their habitual patterns, because the wanting of the person has control. Strengthen your attention by exercising your ability to choose. Choose to skip the cigarette that you would ordinarily smoke during your lunch break (the fact that you won't be able to have one until after work only makes it a more powerful act). Choose to get out of bed ten minutes earlier than you usually do; do it for no reason other than to assert the control that you are taking over your life. Thinking Mind will breed the beasts that grow into self-destructive actions by the person, but Creative Action leads to more Creative Action. Choose to start a project, something that will be meaningful to you, the accomplishment of which will commemorate this decision to quit smoking. Choose to eat fresh vegetables instead of greasy meat, and you will notice that the person wants to make other healthy choices as well. Renounce gratification, use discipline improve the person's diet, and you will notice that your person also wants to stretch tight muscles, drink more water, and smoke fewer cigarettes.

Pursue aspirations other than the aspiration to quit smoking. Creative Actions that do not pertain to cigarettes or habit, like turning off the television and learning to play guitar, will give you power that you need to make this change for the person. As you cut back on smoking and prepare to quit, make sure that you are being true to your values and convictions. You choose to stop this habit that takes such a brutal toll on the person's body. You are the one who must take care of this person.

Creative Action is the name for expressions made by you with the person is your instrument. Let go the person's pleasure. Renunciation practice and Creative Action

are the ways to beat Freud's Pleasure Principle. You renounce the pleasure and keep to your principle.

4. Scramble up Your Day

This exercise is easier than a smoke-strike, because you get to feel good about taking action against the habit while the person's body gets to keep having nicotine. It's one of the fun parts, so feel free to get all giddy. Simply choose an alternative to cigarettes as your body's source of nicotine, and take a whack at sticking to the change. In these few days before you quit smoking, enjoy the chance to experience something different. Select something that will be interesting to you: cigars, chewing tobacco, nicotine patches, nicotine gum, pipe tobacco that smells so nice but you haven't been able to enjoy it because you have been busy smoking cigarettes—the evil corporate bastards got you hooked on weird chemicals that they add to the brand you prefer. Probably. I don't know if that happened to you. You know, so you choose. You can choose two or three alternatives for all I care, but use common sense and mindfulness to avoid increasing your intake of nicotine.

Goody-goodies will say, "Oh, bler de bler, you are just exchanging one bad habit for another," and they will say, "Smoking cigars causes mouth cancer! Do you want to have to have your jaw amputated?" Tell them that you are separating the cigarette habit from the body's nicotine dependence and that it is a smart strategy and to go to hell. Make the change in spite of them, and enjoy the funny difference pipe tobacco or nicotine gum will make in your day. If smoking cigars for a few days before your permanent smoke-strike gives you mouth cancer, then sorry, my bad. If you develop a cigar-smoking habit, that's your bad.

Just make the change. Be true to the change and do not smoke any cigarettes. Start to let your lungs heal up by switching to a different source of nicotine. But don't be bumming cigarettes off strangers when you have a box of mini-cigars in your pocket,

and don't spend thirty bucks on some nicotine patches and then smoke while you are wearing one. Put your heart into it, goddamnit, because you need to be on your own side. You can't be siding with the cigarettes. If you aren't even on your own side, you can't expect anybody else to be. If you aren't even on your own side, you don't even really have a side. The thing is, you either want to quit or you want to smoke, and if monkey-mind offers a fat load of reasonable sounding explanations about why you certainly *can* want to smoke at the same time as you want to quit, how the apparent paradox is nothing more than bias phraseology on my part, then you'll know that monkey-mind is just trying to cause you a delusion. If your mind tries to justify smoking, then your mind is obviously not on your side. I am on your side.

If you switch to cigars and find that you hate the taste, good. You are fighting for your freedom, for Christ's sake. The part of you that suffers is the part that is still siding with the cigarettes. It's the part of you that *loves* cigarettes. Discipline that part of you by smoking the nasty tasting cigars, and then, if you really can't stand them anymore, choose another of the many alternatives instead of giving up and smoking a cigarette. People have difficulty mustering up the determination to really quit, because it seems like something they should do when they are good and ready. Quitting cigarettes *seems* like an unpleasant ordeal that can wait until later, but what will *actually happen* in your life is much more specific. When life is over, you will have done precisely what you have done in precisely the ways that you did. So quitting cigarettes *is* urgent. There is only now, there is no such thing as later… and that is not just some happy-ass, motivational, go-team-go sort of crap either, it's the way reality actually works while we are fooled into believing we have all the time in the world. *There is only now, there is no such thing as later.* It's what people often figure out when they get older—and wish they had figured out when they were younger.

And another thing: if you switch to pipe tobacco or cigars, you are not allowed to inhale. Weird, spooky aspects of the spell you are under as a cigarette-addict come to the surface when you scramble up you day, and one of them is that you feel the need to

hurt your lungs a little. Your lungs yearn for it. What kind of sick shit is that? You know what I mean, though, from having experienced cigarette cravings and felt hollow neediness in the chest, an itch in the lungs that's not really an itch but it needs to be scratched by some smoke. Smoking is so common that it is easy to tell yourself it's not so bad, but the process of quitting reveals layer upon layer of sickness in your being, side-effects of smoking that compounded gradually while you were a smoker, and now you need to scrape them all away. Do not inhale. An important part of Scramble up your Day is that you'll give your lungs an overdue and necessary break. Monkey-mind will try to tell you that inhaling is okay and that you are doing well as long as you are not smoking cigarettes, but that is the wrong understanding. The right understanding is that you are killing certain aspects of your addiction during Divide and Conquer, one at a time like guerilla warfare, and that the neediness in your lungs for some pain is one of the things you confront during Scramble up Your Day. That said, you should know that if you are about to snap and have a cigarette, you can save yourself from failure at the very last second by puffing on the cigarette like a cigar- without inhaling. Don't buy a pack with the intention of smoking them like cigars, but do keep the option in mind as a last resort.

Here is a short poem to help you remember:

You don't inhale; you swallow it!
The nicotine gets in your spit.
Cigars help you prepare to quit
By scrambling up your day a bit.

5. The Blurry Smoke-Strike

Now for the funnest exercise ever. This part of "Divide and Conquer" is for drinkers only. If you are a non-drinker, this exercise is an unnecessary, bad influence on you, so don't do it. If you do drink, even if only on rare occasions, you should

perform this smoke-strike in the week before you quit so that no future alcohol buzz will trick you into regression. You need to practice drinking without smoking. And you need to be thorough about it.

The blurry smoke-strike should be planned a few days in advance. That is not to say you shouldn't drink until the day of the exercise—just make sure that this drunken exercise is premeditated a few days in advance, so that it will leave a big imprint on your mind. Take a few days to consider which brand of hard liquor, wine or beer you will favor, something you enjoy very much, and gear up for getting your drink on without smoking.

Goody-goodies will say, "Oh, bler de bler, you are just exchanging one bad habit for another," or, "You are not rising above your habit, you're crawling around on the floor." And you will say, "Ergh, ahmavin- (hic)- agh..a good time…agh…(hic)," and you will tell them that alcohol, at least, intoxicates you, while cigarettes do absolutely nothing for you.

You have already practiced ordinary smoke-strikes, or, if you haven't done it, do it. The drunken smoke-strike is more difficult than ordinary ones, but it is certainly funner. After the first few drinks, expect monkey-mind to start making up lies about why you should save smoke-strike for tomorrow and have a cigarette. Be strong. Have a shot instead; this is a simple exercise. Have fun with friends if you think you can be trusted not to smoke any of their cigarettes. If you cannot be trusted, drink alone. Or with someone who won't be smoking.

The exercise does not end when you pass out, or when you wake up hurting in the morning. To practice drinking without smoking requires that you also practice having a hangover without smoking. Wait until after lunch if you must smoke, and eat lunch later. At least after breakfast. And drink some water, you silly lush.

6. Monitor Your Progress

You don't become a nonsmoker by "quitting." "Quitting" sounds like giving up and stopping. To change your mind requires perseverance, and "quitting" hardly sounds like the kind of word you would associate with your endeavor. Also, "quitting" sounds like something that is done only once, but changing your mind requires persistent effort. You can only become a nonsmoker by *working*.

For a smoker, to refrain from smoking feels like needless suffering. In general, she wants to become a nonsmoker, but right now she wants a cigarette. To work toward change, to abstain deliberately and suffer nicotine withdrawal, is too discouraging if she does not believe that her practice will create change. From her vantage point as a smoker-trying-to-quit, the struggle seems to be getting harder, not easier, as she continues to abstain. It makes the idea of quitting permanently seem ridiculous. When "smoker" is part of her identity, she cannot imagine herself as a nonsmoker, and to keep on struggling seems like a painful, futile effort. In the practice of not smoking, some faith is necessary. It is necessary to have faith that cravings will subside, nicotine withdrawal will end, and the practice of not smoking will become easier until you are completely free. To have faith that the practice will create change is reasonable, because other people have succeeded. The body gradually became dependent on nicotine, and gradually it becomes independent. That means that cravings will become less frequent and less powerful, and that you will be able to feel good without smoking cigarettes. For you to become a nonsmoker again will be more difficult than it was to become a smoker, so you need to keep your spirit strong.

Mind Changing Practice:

Morning Meditations

Armed with the knowledge that you are a different person every day and that thoughts are not what make you special, you can sidestep common circumstantial pitfalls that frustrate smokers as they try to quit. The body is not what you are; it is part of your experience. Thoughts prattled out by monkey-mind are not what you are; they are part of your experience. "Awareness" comes closer to describing what you are, and the forms that enter your experience are constantly changing your mind, shaping personality. If you want the new you to not smoke, you need to govern the activity of the mind.

Morning Meditations are important as you prepare for your final smoke-strike, and also after it as you uphold your resolution to permanently quit. You'll wake up disoriented like a newborn child fresh out of the mother, returning to the world with renewed vitality and a blank page to be filled with new experiences. Like the child, you are impressionable because the first marks made on your empty page are crucial. Breathe back into Spacious-mind, and inducing feelings of dynamic inner peace, confident surrender to life, stillness in movement, safety in spite of uncertainty, and remind yourself to live from this one ongoing moment instead of spilling your attention into past and future. Like watching the clouds, you can watch whatever pictures fill your experience as if they are far away, floating things. Settle into a deep, peaceful feeling of detachment from the weird forms that glide by, the contrasting colors flashing, amusing you from a distance. You can clear away the clutter that has been hoarded up by monkey-mind and experience each new day exactly as it is. Bring some Spacious-mind with you into your day in order to meet each new experience exactly as it is. No more mucking up your moments by dividing your attention—you catch the moment the way a surfer catches a wave.

Your resolve is challenged when external forms tempt you to smoke. Environmental influences work against you sometimes, but you can add to your

personal environment some influential that can work for you instead of against you. Make a spiritual practice out of your process of quitting by working on the person instead of being the person. Humility is power to stop working against the environment as an individual and start working on the individual by using the environment. Set up environmental factors that will help you change the person, and saturate his day with reminders. Start by taking one or two thoughts about the importance of quitting this habit, and connect them to your breathing exercises in the morning (see chapter one).

After your nine minutes of breathing exercises in the morning, you will have re-established Spacious-Mind. Take that opportunity to exercise some control over your state of mind by adding one simple thought. A thought caused you to try smoking many years ago, a thought caused you to start buying packs, and a thought caused you to take a whack at quitting. Now one thought surrounded by a whole lot of empty space can tilt the odds in your favor as you try to keep on becoming a non-smoker every day, over and over again. Start each day with a renewal of your decision to quit, so that you stand a chance of becoming a non-smoker once again today.

Spacious Mind and Morning Meditations. Your routine consists of Lung Yoga, rhythmic breathing, and spacious-mind. Now, introduce a meditation for the day at the end of the routine. Remind yourself of the people or circumstances that inspired you to quit—meditate on the reason for your struggle, the passion that justifies your suffering. For your convenience, sample meditations are listed below to complement your own morning meditations.

After breathing back into spacious-mind, open your eyes. Meditate on what you care about, or choose a meditation from the list below. Take the meditation with you today as a reminder of your reasons for changing your mind. Today, when monkey-mind has nothing to say and there is an awkward moment of silence, your mind will go back to the meditation of the morning instead of immediately wanting a cigarette.

Day One

This is exercise. That is the right understanding. The idea of not having any cigarettes makes smokers think of suffering, but this process of overcoming addiction is not about suffering. To think of breaking your habit as a process of suffering is the wrong understanding. This is a process of exercise.

Day Two

You are greater than habit. Some smokers want to quit and do; other smokers want to quit and do not. Some ex-smokers like to chew a toothpick. You are the master of yourself, and need no toothpick to refrain from smoking. You savor the tension.

Day Three

The spiritual practice of renunciation has been applied to food (fasting), money (a vow of poverty), speech, (a vow of silence), sex (a vow of chastity), compulsive thinking(meditation), and countless other targets. By renouncing the person's wanting for cigarettes, you have been experiencing the indescribable new power and serenity that result from knowing your timeless self.

Day Four

Cigarettes were a heavy burden.

Day Five

The Buddha defined enlightenment as 'the end of suffering.' Suffering is part of life, and part of our process for transcending life. The author of the Tao Te Ching wrote, "The sage is not sick because the sage is sick of sickness." We can hit rock bottom and start to rise again; we keep on rising until we rise right up out of this.

Day Six

Holy people who have lived are the reasons for religions. The difference between religious founders and religious followers is the difference between listening to music and being told about it. It's the difference between the kid who hides under the covers from the monster in his closet and the kid who jumps up, shouting a ferocious battle cry, and attacks his closet with the fearless abandon of a warrior. The founder searched and found something, but as a follower you will remain one step behind. Your spiritual practice is the key to direct experience of the ultimate. So buck up. Find your own spiritual experience through the practice of renunciation.

Day Seven

Everyone will miss you when you die. Live while you can.

Day Eight

Changing your mind is the practice for reclaiming your freedom to be creative. Practice in order to quit smoking, and also quit smoking as part of your practice. Transform your life from this moment, and grow into higher consciousness.

Day Nine

You will never get any place by going the wrong way. Going the wrong way makes for a lot of unnecessary struggle. Your cigarette enlightenment is still only an idea, because you haven't yet found your way to it. When you are going the right way, you will know it, because you will see your destination in the distance, and you will see that you are making steady progress.

Day Ten

In the Tao Te Ching, it is written that the sage is not sick, because the sage is sick of sickness. Your cigarette habit is tricky business. Nicotine shmicotine. Your real problem is that you are sick in the head like the rest of us. Like the sage, you can become sick of sickness.

Day Eleven

A person who can't swim thrashes around in shallow water until he happens to put his feet down, and then realizes that there is no need for struggle. Safe and calm, he learns to understand the water, and soon he can go even deeper. What began as a problem has become an opportunity.

Day Twelve

Pro-active thinking allows you to create. Passive thinking, Lazy Mind, is what takes away your ability to be.

Day Thirteen

You are awareness looking out at the world through the eyes of a person's body. With your attention, you operate the body and interact with the world. The quality of your attention is what determines your ability to influence the changes that will happen in the world and in the person. Strength of concentration is the necessary trait, the one that lets you co-create instead of suffering through life with no control.

Day Fourteen

When the person meditates, the higher being is there. When the higher being meditates, spacious-mind all day.

Add to this list whatever insights come to you as you work to overcome your habit, and you will have an extensive collection of thoughts about becoming a nonsmoker. The collection is a part of your environment now, influencing the way change happens to your personality. Because you understand that change always

happens to personality, you can steer the course taken by change. You can steer it according to your will. Your resolve to quit smoking is like a toy boat floating in the water, and all the little kids are throwing rocks in the water to make waves that move the boat. Some kid throws a big rock to the left of the boat, making waves that toss it to the right. You start tossing rocks to the right of the boat to send it floating back to the left. The kids wade out into the water to get closer to the boat, throwing their rocks very close to it, and it looks as if they are going to get your boat. So you go out even deeper, tossing rocks into the environment of your boat to influence it according to your own will. The deeper you go, the greater your influence over change.

There are only so many hours in each day; if you simply let your mind linger on a purposeful meditation during times when it would otherwise be idle, you cannot help but change your personality in the direction of becoming a nonsmoker. As long as you are consistent, patient, and even-tempered, you can act with synergy, gathering all of your strength into each moment and exacting your desired change with brilliant skill. Sharp, determined focus. All attention must be directed to the fullness of your experience, so that none is left over for habitual mental patterns that bring you back to cigarettes. With your attention poured out into life, you can enjoy your experiences instead of missing them. Morning meditations are like magic words, magic talismans inside your head. They are reminders, focal points for your attention, like a training bra for the budding breasts of your new personality. You will be full of wisdom as a former smoker.

You are tossing these thoughts into your environment to influence the way change happens, because you understand the way environmental influences can change your mind. You meditate in the morning as a reminder to the person, because you understand the essence of self-hypnosis.

Chapter Five

Ninja Mind Control

It is the inclination of my will that I should quit, but passive thinking compels me to smoke. Where do I draw the line that separates passive thinking from what I really think? Monkey-mind offers a whole lot of choices, and "thinking" is how I decide, but in my own mind's unexplainable way I alone know the truth, what I really think. And I, with my vision, my slant on reality, the subtle, elusive stuff that stays undiscovered, untold – I perform Creative Action as a person in the world by wielding the person from a spacious place.

What has Hypnosis got to do with Ninjas?

The "dominant" aspect of mind is like a watchful, castle guard, and your personal "identity" is like the castle. The guard resists any suggestions that disrupt your preconceived ideas and beliefs. It tries to preserve your personal status quo, because that is what it believes to be its *identity*—the self. Because of this tendency to resist change, you get stuck with certain harmful, self-limiting beliefs. In order to change the person from a deep level of mind, you must sneak past the dominant (i.e. conscious) mind. Often, this involves using a distraction. Subterfuge. And if that is not like a ninja, I don't know what is.

One way of understanding the way the way hypnosis works, think of a mother

that wants her son to do his homework and clean his room instead of playing a video game. If she says, "Don't turn on that video game. Please clean your room and do your homework," the subconscious mind might be responding, "No! No, I don't want to!" However, if she says, "After you do your homework and clean your room, you can turn on that video game," the subconscious mind cannot respond in any simple way. The simplest thing to do is simply begin following the instructions.

As you read, you give your full attention to the words you see, the sensations you feel, the movement associated with respiration, the sound of the words as they are spoken by the voice of the mind. With all attention focused on the experience, none is available to resist the beneficial ideas on the pages that follow.

Self-Mastery Requires Renunciation of Compulsive Action

Resolute is the being that has tamed the mind of the person, curbed the wanting of the person for the sake of reaching synergy—Creative Action. Addiction has no place in my existence as this being, and it can only remain as long as I allow passive thinking—that nasty side-effect of interacting with the environment—to continue.

Clumsy walking makes a sound, and so does clumsy thinking. As a ninja, you know how to walk without the feet making sound. As a sage, you know how to walk around in reality without the *mind* making sound. The "sage" is one who has graduated from ordinary reality, one whose mind is not filled with loud turmoil. Most minds are so chaotic that people do not even feel disturbed by the drone of a television buzzing in the periphery of their experience. People who practice meditation in the morning also like to avoid unnecessary, jittery background sounds during the day for the sake of keeping an efficient, quiet mind. A quiet mind is like a spacious workstation. The sage has a quiet mind, so fewer compulsions arise—fewer desires. With fewer desires, the sage can act in a creative way. Creative action is made possible

with the renunciation of compulsive action, and compulsive action becomes easy when compulsive thinking is reduced in the mind.

We say that the reduction of compulsive thinking makes it easier to control desire and abstain from compulsive action, but this idea could create confusion. It is more accurate to say that thinking *is* a type of action, and that it and all compulsive action must be regulated in order for you to live in a creative way. In general, however, the following can be said about the transformations that come from meditation and renunciation practice:

1. Compulsive thinking is reduced by meditation practice.
2. The reduction of compulsive thinking leads to the reduction of compulsive action.
3. Creativity is made possible by the regulation of compulsion.
4. Renunciation practice produces real spiritual power (power that is easy to understand but difficult to talk about).

It becomes clear that meditation practice can directly affect your struggle against addiction.

To Renounce Compulsive Action, Practice Meditation

Disconnected from monkey-mind, we have made the distinction between the one who makes the changes and the person being changed. Looking beyond the person before he or she dies, like a pilot looking to abandon the jet before it crashes, we experience moments of bliss when we glimpse wholeness—union with the higher being. This is the transcendence of ordinary experience, the transcendence of the person. The person who is being changed is passive; the one who makes the changes is creative. Creative Action is possible only when you are able to control the impulses of the person's thinking mind, and act deliberately. Meditation practice makes intense

focus possible.

Meditation Practice Makes Intense Focus Possible

This will give you power.

Intense focus is not something that you need to build up. Intense focus is what is left over after the elimination of all distraction. Like an artist carving sculptures into stone, you chip away everything that is not real until all that remains is you. It is a process of clearing away, creating space. Perceive your true self, and discern your own will from all the contradictory impulses that divide your mind. Decisive action based on your will is possible when you drop that blurry concept called *self-image* and experience yourself for what you really are. Intense focus is possible when you are able to put aside the wanting of the person and enforce your will. It would be simple if not for constant interference by the thinking monkey-mind.

Intense Focus for Creative Action

This is the way to temporarily overcome division in the mind at a time when you are doing something that is important to you, something that requires all of your skill. Quitting cigarettes will bring you to times like this, moments of truth when you will either falter or succeed. When you try to muster up all of your resources in order to perform well, you still need to deal with all the mental clutter that has accumulated and is preventing you from performing optimally. In order to have all of your skill, you need to govern the activity of monkey-mind. Skill with the use of monkey-mind is the most important skill of all, because interference by monkey-mind can render all other skills useless. For example:

You are about to throw the dart or sink the eight ball, but the whole game depends on this shot

and there are some people watching. Just as you make your move, monkey-mind entertains a doubt – and you miss.

Driving in your car, you suddenly see that you are about to be hit by a pedestrian. If you swerve to avoid him you might collide with an oncoming vehicle. You are about to use all of your skill to negotiate the situation when monkey-mind yells, "Damnit! Now I really wish I had car insurance!" and before that thought has even fully emerged, you've crashed into both the pedestrian and the oncoming vehicle.

Excellent reaction time is important during your performance review at work, because as soon as your boss tells you that this pay increase will be only twenty-six cents, you want your brain to send a message via the spinal cord to the mechanoreceptors that supply the muscles of the arm in order to quickly slap him in the mouth. Without proper timing, the effectiveness of the slap will be compromised. Your boss won't learn his lesson. But just as you are about to strike him, monkey-mind offers a reason not to. You end up taking the news of your twenty-six cent raise quietly, and a blur of thought rushes around in monkey-mind. All the mental chaos keeps you paralyzed until the review is over, and then, when your boss motions to shake your hand, you reach up and accidentally slap him hard in the mouth.

Creative Action requires that you **Establish Your Specific Purpose, Induce Spacious-Mind,** and **Seize the Crucial Moment** in order to carry out your will. Whenever a half-hearted effort would be inappropriate, you can practice the following method of unifying the mind for intense focus.

1. Establish Your Specific Purpose

We speak too soon. We act on situations thoughtlessly, in the heat of the moment, even though the outcomes of those situations are important to us. This is not only about lazy, thoughtless action either. Even when they put a great deal of thought into an action, people often forget to clearly define the *purpose* of the action. It is a

strange thing to observe:

Wendy wants to go see her friend, Bob, because he is in town and she hasn't seen him for a long time. Wendy's husband is jealous, and his jealousy comes out in the form of snide comments about her intended visit, comments to which Wendy takes offense, because she has never been unfaithful and feels that she deserves her husband's trust. Her husband is acting on the situation before he has clearly established his purpose in his own mind, so whatever influence he has on the situation will be random at best. Even though he would like to exert some control over the situation, he cannot, because he is letting his emotions drive his actions instead of acting to bring about a clearly defined purpose.

If you take a minute to get specific about what you would like to make happen, in any situation, you can promote your desired outcome with everything that you say and do. The person's mind will be on the lookout for every opportunity to move you closer to your clearly defined goal. If you fail to specify precisely what you want to make happen, you won't always know what to say and do; your emotions will try to sneak in and take over. It is therapeutic to give expression to your emotions, but don't do it while you are trying to influence the unfolding of events. If you do, the story might have a sad ending:

Now Wendy and her husband are having a bad argument. She feels offended by his lack of trust and is still angry when she leaves for her visit. She vents her frustration during the visit with Bob, who consoles her about her unreasonable husband. Wendy becomes less upset, because Bob is really listening to her, really giving her some respect, and then Bob puts his tongue in her mouth.

You've probably seen this story acted out by couples you have known in real life. The names are different, but the scenario is the same. The saddest thing is that it might have been avoided if Wendy's husband had used focused attention instead of allowing himself to be ruled by monkey-mind. Obedience to the impulses of monkey-mind caused Bob to alienate Wendy. This is not to say that Wendy's infidelity was her husband's fault. It's nobody's fault. They are not even real people. They are made-up

people whose only purpose is to support my story, which is also made-up. The important point is this: Wendy's husband wanted to influence the situation, but he failed to act on the situation in an effective way because he had not established his specific purpose in his own mind.

If you are going to act on a situation—any situation—you should get specific about what outcome you want, so that you can act in a clear and powerful way. Wendy's husband should have stopped for a moment to turn his attention within and establish a clear goal. Maybe he would have discovered that what he wanted was not to prevent the visit at all. Maybe he would have discovered that what he wanted, specifically, was for Wendy to continue to love him more than anyone. Having determined his true goal, Wendy's husband could have acted in a goal-oriented way instead of being ruled by emotion.

Try it in business. Try it while grocery shopping. Try it at work. Try it during a game of chess. Precisely define the goal, and many of your actions will change. You'll use proper timing. You'll surprise yourself with your cleverness. The intensity of your focus will allow you to see through self-deception whenever your emotions try to creep in and take over. If you make the mistake of trying to figure out the goal as you go along, the way most people usually speak and act, monkey-mind is given control. To let monkey-mind drive your actions is like letting a little kid drive your car. Establish a specific goal and you might find that you always know just what to do! Or, at least, you won't contaminate the situation with random action based on impulses of monkey-mind.

Any time you want to use intense focus to affect a situation, the first step is to visualize the desired outcome in detail. See it, understand it, and manifest it with confidence. Any action or speech that is not oriented toward your purpose is superfluous and potentially detrimental to your cause. Be realistic and pursue the outcome of your choice without letting the emotions or the ego get involved. After establishing specific purpose, induce spacious-mind.

2. Induce Spacious-Mind

Meditation teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn gives an explanation of the word "meditation" that involves the suspension of judgment. "Meditation means cultivating a non-judging attitude toward what comes up in the mind, come what may."[7] This is a very good explanation. Some experiences are better regarded in a nonjudgmental way, because they are experiences that engage you emotionally, and emotions muddle clarity. A disagreement with a family member, for example. Other experiences do not engage you emotionally, experiences like eating a sandwich or sitting down in a chair, but even those experiences should be regarded in a nonjudgmental way, because clarity is muddled by extraneous thinking.

Monkey-mind, when it is allowed to run loose, is what muddles clarity; clarity is muddled by the endless stream of judgments about what is happening. Judgments are extraneous actions of monkey-mind. To regard your sandwich in a nonjudgmental way is not the same as to regard unacceptable action by a loved one in a nonjudgmental way, but your approach should be similar. Approach your loved ones in the same unassuming, open-minded, emotionally neutral way that you might approach a sandwich, and there will be a whole lot less superfluous activity in monkey-mind to muddle your clarity. This makes you more present for your loved one.

Likewise, being fully present for your sandwich (by approaching it in a quiet-minded, "nonjudgmental" way), you enjoy it more. Ordinarily, monkey-mind would start making associations between the sandwich and lots of other things, because that is what monkey-mind knows how to do, and there would be a silent sort of muttering to yourself while you ate lunch. Applying spacious-mind to your sandwich leaves more of your attention available for the pleasant experience of eating it, making you more alive to the present moment.

In the example about Wendy's husband, emotions crept in and took over his

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7 Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, 1994.

action because he had not established his specific purpose. If he had realized that his true goal was not to *prevent Wendy's visit* so much as it was to *hang on to her affection*, he would have been able to act more effectively. There would still have been the risk that he might have forgotten his purpose and lost clarity, but his chances would have improved if he had assumed a spacious-mind. That is, if he approached the situation with Wendy in the way that a person might approach a sandwich.

After you determine your specific purpose, spacious-mind enables you to remain focused instead of allowing a mess of thinking to muck up the present moment. Spacious-mind is like walking slowly with your arms held out to the sides for balance, taking very small footsteps as you stare fixedly down at the sidewalk, the way I walk whenever I leave the house. Whether a task requires steady focus during one crucial instant (like throwing a basketball) or steady focus over a period of time (like quitting cigarettes) spacious-mind locks you into your intense focus by muffling that distracting voice in your head.

3. Seize the Crucial Moment (Rest Note)

The Japanese word, "kiai" refers to an intense concentration of energy into a single moment. "Kiai" consists of the words "ki" (energy) and "ai" (harmony). In some martial arts schools, "kiai" is associated with the shout that accompanies certain martial arts techniques. Kiai does not need to involve shouting, however. Your kiai can be the quiet kind, subtle penetration of a moment. It is the alignment of your full attention with the infinitesimal, razor-blade incision between past and future called "now." Aligning with the moment involves rhythm.

There are eight musical notes, A through G, and one other note that is not a note. The note that is not a note is called a "rest note," and it is powerful. Seize the crucial moment to carry out your will; interrupt the action of reality. Impose a rest note on the crucial moment. Take control of the moment by pouring your full attention into the silent, spacious now.

The drum is strong; it moves the song. Its rhythm carries you along and combs through the knots, the clumps of jittery vibrations that inhibit your power and pleasure during the day. You get into it. The rhythms of your body entrain with the rhythms of the song, and the strength of the drum becomes your own strength. If asked, you'd say you liked the song, but this euphoria does not come from the song. It comes from within you, in response to the song—a subtle difference that you notice any time the song is interrupted by some silence.

The music stops. The funky sway is punctuated by a measure of silence, and the intensity of your own rhythm grows. The rest note draws a rhythm from within you the way chest compressions jump start the heart during CPR, and in the silence you find a funkiness that is all your own.

But songs are not the only kind of music. Comb through the discord with your breathing, and keep rhythm with your actions as you dance through the day. To dance through the day is to keep your mind free, constantly changing. It is a dance that is invisible to others. There is special cleansing when you drop into the moment and remember your original self. This moment is all there ever is, so you can rest right on it. You will be different after your breathing exercises in the morning, able to appreciate experiences exactly as they are. Life feels blissful as you ride the moment. In tune with the here and now, you keep your cool. You can have spacious-mind as you drive your car, eat a meal, or talk with friends who smoke cigarettes that tempt you. The trick is to withhold some attention during daily activities by attaching it to your breath. Listen to the sound of breath, feel it, follow it, rest some awareness on it, and see how you feel when you have the inner stillness that comes from attending to the breath. Thoughts do not so rampantly accumulate to clutter up your head and upset your balance.

This clarity can peak in a single, crucial moment if you use the concept called "kiai" in martial arts schools, a concept that is somewhat like a mental rest note. You need to seize the crucial moment in order to influence it. You need to be entirely attentive to a small slice of reality. Living in the world can knock you out of the present

moment the way playing an instrument can knock it out of tune, but breathing exercises make it easy for you to return to spacious-mind every morning, and you can also return to spacious-mind during the day by using the breath to align your attention with your current activity. When you get knocked out of tune again, you can go back to the moment.

The present moment—when we speak of it, what do we mean? This minute? This second? Smaller than a second? The present moment is something very precise, not to be measured in minutes or seconds. It is outside of time, and that is the significance of it. Here is the way to seize the crucial moment with a breath:

1.) **I breathe in and align my attention with the present moment, matching its speed and rhythm, accepting where I am and what is taking place now.**

The first step is alignment, like aiming a rifle, or tuning a fiddle or synchronizing watches. It's like when a big fuel tanker matches the speed of the airplane it's about to refuel in mid-air and aligns itself to the plane's, like, trajectory or whatever. This first step—shifting attention to the breath and inhaling into the moment- takes your attention away from its wandering and worrying and lines it up neatly with the reality of the present moment. Where you are, what you are doing, how it feels; these are the things that are real right now.

2.) **I breathe out and settle into my current activity, following my breath out into the world, abandoning the person of the past in order to come alive to the present. Free from the person, I receive all of life's ecstasy in a single moment, and the moment lingers.**

The second step is to settle into this one, ongoing moment, and into the rhythm of what ever you are doing. Your attitude is that you are here to stay, not tentatively present but heavily present. Though your body feels light, your attention feels immovable. Excellent focus. Excellent vitality. Excellent physical and mental composure. Like a surfer on the edge of a giant wave as it rolls

forward, you ride with razor-sharp precision the cutting-edge suchness of this very moment, exactly as it is, and you can keep up with it.

The three steps to achieving intense focus—**Establish Your Specific Purpose, Induce Spacious Mind**, and **Seize the Crucial Moment** (**Rest Note)**, can be applied to almost any situation. Whether your challenge happens immediately or gradually, your actions are always performed in a single moment. The time is always now, so you pour your entire focus into this moment. Resisting the urge to smoke a cigarette is like skillfully avoiding a car accident—you must be ready to seize control of the person's state of mind. You must be ready to seize control of the moment itself, and act decisively to achieve your specific purpose.

"Sooner"

Justin woke up this morning and hit the snooze button. Seven minutes later he woke up and had to do it again. When all the extra sleep time had been used up, Justin hit the snooze button a third time and sat up on his bed, thinking about how much he hated his job, how he might just call in sick instead of going. After some debate, he convinced himself to get out of bed by bribing himself with a cigarette. Justin drifted back to sleep anyway, though, while listening to his own internal dialogue. The next time the alarm went off, he jumped out of bed, already running late and in a hurry.

Every day starts with a hurry, but if Justin had more discipline he could wake up a few minutes earlier and go jogging or play the guitar or meditate. The extra sleep time after hitting the snooze button is not even really sleep time at all. It is not deep, restful sleep; it's just snoozing, and snoozing is not the best way to spend the first

fourteen minutes of every day. Those fourteen minutes would be better spent exercising or reading, or he could simply perform his ordinary morning routine without having to hurry. But he snoozes instead, every day. While snoozing, he argues with himself silently and to no avail, reasoning with himself, insulting himself, telling himself that getting out of bed is unavoidable and that unavoidable things might as well be done immediately. Justin urges himself to get up right away instead of waiting until there is no more time to spare, but his mind keeps on slipping back to sleep, and his body recoils from the colder temperature above the blanket.

His co-workers would all get to the office at eight o'clock, and they would expect Justin to arrive at about eight-fifteen, because that was custom, and his boss would give him a serious talking-to. He had waited too long again, and now Justin had to make up for lost time by being in a hurry. He took a shower, brushed his teeth, and put on some deodorant, all in less than a minute and drove off to work without letting his car warm up even a little. The clock said 7:54AM so he was not late yet, but he had a twenty-minute commute. Twenty minutes of feeling tension, anticipating mild embarrassment and disapproval—twenty minutes of anxiety that could have been avoided by getting up a few minutes sooner.

Justin thought about his ridiculous inability to make such a simple change as getting up on time. Snoozing did not prevent him from having to get dressed and go to work, and it did not really give him any extra rest either. It only hurt him. He lit a cigarette, and was struck by the thought that his smoking habit was a lot like his snoozing habit. If he did not want smoking to shave years off of his life, he would have to stop doing it sooner or later. Unavoidable things should be done right away.

Justin was helpless to change the fact that he would be late for work that day, and countless smokers are helpless to change the way they're dying. Everybody always ends up wishing wisdom hadn't waited so long. Everybody should have acted sooner.

Personality Artist

A commitment to quit smoking made by the person who you are today is of little use to the person who you might become tomorrow. This person who you are today might feel so strongly about giving up cigarettes that you refrain from smoking all day with righteous satisfaction, too excited even to suffer from nicotine withdrawal. You have new confidence because something has stirred up your passion for life today, and you go to sleep feeling certain that you've left the habit behind you.

Then, morning comes and you are different. You expect your spirit to be strong when cravings tempt you, but the person who you were yesterday is gone. Yesterday is nothing but a memory, although we like to think it is something more. You remember clearly the resolve of the person who you were yesterday, but you no longer feel it. You were so committed yesterday to breaking this addiction, but this morning you can't get yourself to care. You light a cigarette, wondering now whether any of your ideas really matter, delicate and fleeting as they may turn out to be.

How many aspirations have you left behind after losing interest for reasons you cannot explain? Important today, forgotten tomorrow, the object of your interest did not change; what changed was you. That change is always happening to personality is plain to see. Everyone agrees that people change every day and that environmental factors influence us. Everyone agrees that experience shapes personality. Even though we know that change is constant during life as a person, changes often catch us by surprise.

To understand that your personality will never cease to change is not enough. In order to maintain balance and focus, you need to *accept* that fact and all its implications. People are prone to games of make-believe, choosing acceptable dreams over disturbing truths, so the disturbing truth about personality changes often goes unnoticed. Random environmental factors alter your personality in subtle ways, and you embrace your new interests and values despite their randomness. A certain amount of pretending is

necessary for continuing to take your own personality seriously after you've noticed all the arbitrary change. To think that you might be nothing in particular, nothing but a jumble of arbitrary environmental influences—this is unacceptable to monkey-mind. To think that even part of your personality is arbitrary is hard to accept. What should you believe yourself to be?

You go through each day having thoughts and ideas that were inspired, at least in part, by things and people in your environment. Ideas are like clouds that pass, or falling snow, or hobbits: people can say that they are the owners if they want to, but nobody really owns them. Thoughts are naturally occurring phenomena, expressions of beauty by the Great Eternal Whatnot, and no one can rightfully claim ownership. So whatever factors led to your brilliant, unique ideas, you can be sure of one thing: they don't make you special. They are not even your own, for Christ's sake; you stole those ideas from that voice in your head. That voice, monkey-mind, just makes a lot of associations with random information dealt to it by a random environment. Even your most original thoughts are not really your own, because they never would have occurred to you if not for certain circumstances, certain knowledge you have happened upon, certain random shit. A thought is like a fish caught by a drunk fisherman; he gets all proud of a really good one, holding the big bastard up for the camera as if he invented it and built it from scratch—even though the truth is that he just happened to be fishing where that fish was swimming. But the drunken fisherman plays pretend, and so does everyone else. Good thoughts are like winning lottery tickets. They don't mean you are special, just lucky, in the right place at the right time with the right memories and the right vantage point and blessed with a healthy brain. Maybe you are creative, whatever that means. Your entire personality consists of nothing but ideas that are not your own.

So, how about that. The realization that your personality is just a reflection of your random environment can be a rude awakening. If you are brave enough to explore this truth and all its implications, you might just send yourself reeling into

several lonely years of depression. Surely, you wouldn't be the first person to fall into a hellish time of introspective misery after observing the profound emptiness of the individual kind of self. No siree. But God has a way of wrecking life-as-you-know-it, only to replace it with something that is a crazy amount of better. Yes siree. Truth is better than anything you can imagine when you are playing pretend as an individual, but you cannot experience truth until you stop experiencing separateness.

Here's the quick pep talk. It is irrelevant to this chapter, but you should know the good news anyway, just in case you are thinking of eating a bullet rather than dealing with the terrible insignificance of your own individuality. The good news is that there is something even better. Better than individuality. Environment affects thought, thought affects action, action affects environment, and the whole, happy shit is you! This is why swamis and yogis are so happy. The circulation of activity within this organism called reality is such that every little thing affects everything else. It could be said that you manipulate body directly, and you manipulate your surroundings indirectly by using the body. None of it is not you. "Separateness" is neurotic delusion, our mental disease. I play a different role for everyone I know, becoming many people in a lifetime; you have been me when you've stood where I stand. I see this man with this pen in his hand, but, essentially, there is only one mind, thrashing in a frenzy of activity, unable to fathom itself until the moment of realization. Hold still, and realize the insignificance of your individuality, and you will be depressed because you will feel as though you are nothing, but hold still just a little longer and you will enter bliss—you will remember that you are quite obviously something. You will *real*-ize that you are everything.

But let's save eternal bliss for later. Right now, we should concentrate on quitting cigarettes. Now we know why your enthusiasm for quitting is sometimes lost overnight: your thoughts are arbitrary. This can be hard to accept, because arbitrary, fleeting thoughts indicate an arbitrary, fleeting being. Thoughts are the building blocks for your person's values, religion, achievements, love for loved ones—so nobody wants

to believe that they are random. You go on acting as though you have full control over personality, believing in the opinions that develop and embracing random changes as if they were not random but intentional, enacted according to your will. But thoughts are reflections of external forms, like cars and clouds and trees and jet planes—not expressions of who you really are. Changes caused by environmental factors (such as thoughts) are often inconsistent with your long-term aspirations, naturally, but they catch you by surprise. You can't help pretending they are your own. You don't recognize them as the environmental pitfalls that they are. Your thought to quit smoking is arbitrary; your thought to give up and buy a pack is arbitrary. That is the nature of the game, and when you understand the nature of the game, your chances improve. You are the one who chooses.

Passive Thinking

Thinking Mind never stops talking. How long have you been making the mistake of living as that voice, brainwashed into believing that it is your own voice? The voice inside the person's head is not the voice of the higher being. It is the sound of circumstance, translated into the language you know by the person's brain. The voice of the higher being sounds like silence. Identification with monkey-mind causes passive thinking, a reactive way of interacting with the environment in which *circumstance determines the person's state of mind.*

"Lazy Mind" is a word to describe the consciousness of passive thinking. If you are too lazy to take Creative Action, and you stay in a receptive mode instead, life is harder. Pro-active thinking is not difficult; it makes everything easier! Justin would have an easier time going to work if he switched over to pro-active thinking, but he doesn't know how. If he did, he could even take steps toward finding a better job, one that he would enjoy going to. Pro-active thinking makes everything become easier and easier until you have reconstructed your life situation exactly the way you like. People

do not often do that, though. They often have only a tiny spark of Creative Action, or none at all, because most of their actions are based on passive thinking. The environment controls what they do, what they think and how they feel.

Pro-Active Thinking

If you were a cock in a cock fight, and you had quick reflexes, you would react quickly to attacks by other cocks and probably win a lot of matches. People would say, "Man, that is a quickly-reacting cock." But quick reactions are nothing compared to *pro-active* action. If you had to fight a pro-active cock, it would anticipate your reactions and attack the place where you will be vulnerable after you react. A pro-active cock doesn't need to hurry; it goes straight to the right location and executes a carefully planned strategy. You, as a quickly-reacting cock, would use quick reactions to win, but the pro-active cock overrides the impulse to react, choosing instead to assume control over the events that take place.

Lucky for you, there are not too many pro-active cocks. Cocks usually just hammer away in sloppy discord, caught in a blind, jabbing frenzy until they collapse and fall down.

Anyway, you are not a cock. With a human as your modality, you lack the cock's quick reactions but you are better suited for employing a pro-active strategy. If you had to go head to head with a cock, you would probably know just what to do. Beating the cock would be easy for you, as long as you stayed in control of the situation. That is because you are one of the humans, the complicated freaks of the animal kingdom, so you know how to imagine a desired outcome and control impulses long enough to take action. The quick reactions and keen instincts of many animals are the areas in which humans are inferior to them; the ability to be pro-active is the strength of the human. Because you are not a cock, you must accept that you cannot have the special attributes of a cock, and cultivate instead your special human ability to be pro-active. Pro-active

thinking requires nothing more than controlling the person's impulses while you decide what to do.

Controlling impulses is what the pro-active state of mind is all about. Before you acquired a taste for Creative Action, you tended to obey your impulses when you can, because that is the only freedom you knew: Freedom to act according to your impulses. People start to build creative power when they stand for something or strive toward something, when they attend to something other than the impulses that arise from the wanting of the little person. This is where you discover the freedom and power of the communion with the higher being.

Passive Action Personality

You play the role of a person who thinks like the voice that you hear in your head, acting out the role of a character based on your acquired self-image. The body responds to undesirable environmental factors with physical sensations that you actually feel, and you call them names such as "anger," "sadness," and "fear" — whatever monkey-mind comes up with for you to call them.

Like the person's body, the monkey-mind is entirely a product of your environment. Monkey-mind, with all of its memories, dreams and fears, comes from your present and past environments. All of your thinking is done in the language you know, the one spoken by people in your particular environment. All of your role models have been people from your environment. Everything you have ever learned has come from your environment. Even the size and health of the brain in your person's head are random environmental factors.

When you see the body and the monkey-mind as "you" and everything else as "not you", Creative Action is impossible, because there is no one to do the creating. You are only a creature, crawling around in creation, unable to create even the simplest deliberate change because you are entirely obedient to the person's impulses—the

compulsions that prevent you from being the way you would like to be.

As the person, you are strictly a product of your environment. You are unable to change the person into a nonsmoker, even though you want to, because any freedom that you seem to have is just an illusion. You seem to do what you want to do, but all of your actions are responses. Reactions. Passive thinking is simple obedience to the dictates of your past and present environments, instructions spoken by that voice in your head. You are just like one of those homicidal whack-jobs who obey the voices they hear, unable to help themselves against the impulses of monkey-mind. You ought to just commit yourself now for the safety of the rest of us, you loopy freak.

Creative Action Personality

A shift of focus, a change of mind, and you are suddenly disconnected from that little voice. Free falling into your day, there is nothing for you to cling and nothing to control your state of mind except your own creative inclination. Your hands are free. You step in the direction of positive change, taking Creative Action, playing the role of the person whom you choose to be instead of a playing a character based on self-image. Self-image is a picture of a person from the past, irrelevant now as you surf toward future on the present moment. Disconnected from thought, there you are. Quiet as ever, you are watching what goes on from no place in particular. The higher being sees through the person's eyes.

Pro-active thinking comes with Creative Action, and Creative Action requires pro-active thinking. You can't have one without the other. They need to happen at the same time. For that reason, it helps to have a task to perform when you want to shift into pro-active thinking. If there is no task, no purpose for the person in the present moment, then all there is for the person to do is listen to the impulses of monkey-mind. Environmental stimuli are judged either good or bad by monkey-mind, whose approval or disapproval you can feel as emotions that arise in the body, and the environment

strips you of your freedom. But even if you assign to the mind a task as simple as listening to the sound of the person's breathing, it is enough to maintain a pro-active state of mind.

Disconnect from thought. Freedom to follow the impulses of the mind is not real freedom. The passive thinking that results from identification with monkey-mind sets you up against your environment. Disconnect from that voice, and attend to the breath. Go deep into present-moment stillness by slowing down, and be the being that is beyond both subject and object. Spacious-mind practice enables you to perform Creative Action through the person that would never have been possible with passive thinking. Arrange for the person to influence the environment. Arrange for the environment to influence the person. Learn to act without applying effort.

How can you have this immovable peace? This higher ground, where you look down upon the subjective experiences of the individual person without being tossed about by them, is a place maintained by practice. You make renunciation into a practice when you discover the power that comes from this higher perspective. The person has stolen away into life, but you keep your place as a creator. Give in to the wanting of the person, and, in the moment of indulgence, you are living as the fearful, dying person. *Put aside* the wanting and, in the moment of renunciation, you are living as the higher being. The person tries to pull you all the way into the dream, but you can compensate for the person's pulling by adding a spiritual practice to your mixture of experiences.

A spiritual practice is being added now. You have determined to quit smoking even though some of the person's wanting will have to be put aside. You will constantly be telling the person, "No." For the next few weeks, you will be forced to ignore the person's wanting, re-establishing over and over again who is the person and who is you, the higher being. This is the sort of thing that clearly divides what is real in you from what is not. Quitting cigarettes is like any other practice of renunciation, or holding a fast, or giving up some time each day for prayer. Life is a beach, and you get to sit way up high on the lifeguard's chair, but only if you are willing to quit playing

around and climb up there.

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What, then, makes the difference between re-active and pro-active thinking, the difference between passive personality and creative personality? The difference is made by the practice of renunciation. Creative Action is possible when you renounce the wanting of the person, when you stop treating thoughts as your own and stop obeying them, choosing instead to express yourself by deliberate action. Thoughts are not who you are.

We say that Creative Action is deliberate. We say that it is different from other action because it is based on pro-active thinking rather than obedience to the impulses of the mind, but isn't a Creative Action also based on an impulse that occurred in the mind? Is there really such a thing as deliberate action? We say that to quit smoking can be Creative Action, because you must renounce the impulse to smoke in favor of your decision to quit, but isn't your decision to quit smoking also an impulse that arises in the mind?

All actions happen in fulfillment of some impulse of the mind, so we cannot truly say that some actions are deliberate and some are not. They are all reactions to impulses that arise in the person's monkey-mind. We qualify Creative Action by saying that it requires you to put aside the wanting of the individual person. Creative Action arises with renunciation practice, whereas action that is performed in service to the impulses of the person cannot be anything but passive. Impulses in the body do not reflect who you are. Impulses in the mind do not reflect who you are. The person's body and mind arise out of the environment; the elements that make up the person are no different from the elements that make up the rest of reality. The purpose of renunciation practice is to take attention away from your experience *as* the person in order to make it available for your experience as something more. The impulses of the person are nothing compared to the will of the higher being to take Creative Action.

You have to renounce the person's wanting in this moment if you are to carry out your decision to change the person or influence the environment, but what makes renunciation so special? You might have to renounce the person's want for sleep in order to sneak into a petting zoo late at night—does that mean the petting zoo excursion is Creative Action? Sort of. Any action that requires you to put aside some wanting of the person is a form of renunciation practice, because your attention is taken away from the individual, and you are given the chance to experience the rest of yourself. But why not renounce the impulse to take Creative Action? Why not renounce the impulse to quit smoking? It seems as if there is actually no such thing as pro-active personality, because Creative Action is also based on impulses that arise in the mind.

The explanation can be found in the experience of the wholeness that comes from spiritual practice. Wholeness encompasses everything, including monkey-mind. Monkey-mind *is*, and so *are* the person's body and environment. Your person's monkey-mind is the same one that I use; the difference between you and me is a matter of environments and memories. There is only one monkey-mind, and what we understand to be our individual selves are nothing more than so many perspectives. Different camera angles. How could it be any other way? Creative Action is based on impulses that arise from a deeper place within the one mind common to us all.

Spiritual strength grows when you practice renunciation, so we name action based on renunciation "Creative Action." Small renunciation, light spiritual workout; great renunciation, rigorous spiritual workout. To abstain from using profanity in order to teach pre-school is Creative Action, but it is not as deep as taking a vow of silence. To abstain from eating meat for a day is Creative Action, but not as deep as abstaining from all food for a day and holding a fast. Fasting is deep Creative Action, but not as deep as severe asceticism. Asceticism is not as deep as martyrdom, and so forth. The significance of renunciation practice is that it gradually frees you from the person. The person is a creature; renunciation of the superficial wanting of the person

allows you to be a creator.

Creative Action comes from deeper within the moment, and going deeper within the moment is like joining with all that is. The individual kind of self is empty, and the individual's perspective on monkey-mind is not important. Mind is important, but one angle is no more important than the others. There is a mind, and it does not belong exclusively to the person through whose eyes you see. It does, however, belong to you. This person's perspective is not all that you are, and neither is his or her experience. Clear your mental desktop of everything, and contemplate the meaning of "eternity." Everyone else's experiences are also your own. The difference is only a matter of time.

Mind Games

You did not notice the subtle change that was happening as you developed your smoking habit, giving in to indulgence again and again until you were hopelessly caught up in the person's story. But now you notice. Now you also notice the way renunciation practice, the opposite of indulgence, yields real power that you can use for Creative Action as the higher being. It reverses the process of identification with the person, giving you a foothold on higher ground. Renunciation practice allows you play an active role in creating each day, to help tell the story of the person instead of always being told.

The solution to compulsive action is *pro-active thinking.* Identification with monkey-mind causes you to regard freedom as the ability to act on your thoughts. To dis-identify from the monkey-mind allows you to control it, because you no longer embrace the thoughts as "your own." Pro-active thinking becomes possible when you dis-identify from monkey-mind. Pro-active thinking gives you real freedom, freedom to act like the person who you would like to be rather than following all the thoughts that arise. Having a thought is like drawing a card and adding it to your hand—you

can use it, discard it, or save it for later. The ability to 'change your mind' is the ability to choose your state of mind, exerting some control over the kinds of thoughts that arise, and managing them skillfully. Occupy monkey-mind (sometimes called "monkey mind" in Buddhism) with a game to play. It doesn't matter what the game is, as long as it holds the monkey's attention while you steer the person. This is an aggressive strategy for staying in control of the person by manipulating monkey-mind. Creative action requires that you coordinate the action of monkey-mind with the inclination of your will.

If you were in constant meditation throughout all your daily activities, monkey-mind would not be able to trick you into suffering for want of a cigarette. To carry a meditative state of mind with you throughout your day is what meditation practitioners call mindfulness practice, but it is a 'practice' because they practice it for years without getting it quite right. Unless you plan on checking into a temple or monastery, trying to remain in a meditative state all day won't work as a method for quitting cigarettes, because as soon as your mindfulness falters, you will bum a cigarette or buy a pack. No, we need something that is flexible. Something casual. Something mellow that only taxes your attention enough to keep monkey mind under control. The mind games that follow can also be called states-of-mind. A state-of-mind is easier to maintain than deep meditation, and you can shift into any state-of-mind you choose whenever you think of a cigarette. Change the channel. Just as an entrepreneur needs to be pro-active about business, a creative being needs to be pro-active about personality.

Depending on what kind of day you are having, some mind games will be more appropriate than others. If you want to smoke a cigarette because you are angry, you might use Furious Mind—the subtle difference will be that you are playing with the human experience of fury, and almost enjoying it in some way, rather than suffering because someone has 'made you angry.' Or, if you didn't get enough sleep, and today is going to be difficult even without the added burden of nicotine withdrawal, you

might call upon Stupid Mind—if you are feeling stupid because of a lack of sleep, at least be active about it so that your mind doesn't become idle. Once you get the hang of changing your mind, you can switch from one attitude to another as many times as you want. You can create new games, blend them together, or make them up as you go along. You can even practice with diligence the states of mind of your ideal self, the person you choose to create.

Let the games begin! These are the mind games for shaking free. Play around now with the subjective experience of the person. At the heart of the practice of changing your mind is this game you can play with the day. What you do depends on what thoughts you have, and what thoughts you have depend on your state of mind. Your state of mind is influenced, again, by what you do, creating the circle of your personality, and here is your opportunity to get into the game: if personality consists of what thoughts you have and what you do, you can shape your own personality by practicing to control your state of mind. It all comes down to a game that you play in your head as you go about your day. Mind Games are an entertaining way to practice changing your state of mind during the day. You are practicing to change your mind about cigarettes, but you will achieve something much more significant if you are successful. Smoking is a part of your personality that you are about to let go, and that is a scary idea when you only know of one way to be. But there are many ways for you to be, and it is good to explore all of them. You are going to become a personality artist.

1. Spacious-Mind

You breathed back into spacious-mind once each day for several days, and your experience of stillness became familiar. Breathing exercises end with a free fall into stillness, each session taking you deeper than the previous one. The thoughts that come and go during your nine-minute meditation seem further and further away. You hate to end the session and open your eyes to engage the worldly forms that will act upon your person. You hate to give up this bliss, so you keep your distance. You keep an eye

on spacious-mind as you start your day. No longer as involved with the thoughts and wanting of the person, you are free to be the unencumbered being of the present moment, and you have the prerogative to change the person's mind. Spacious-mind in the Morning is your formal practice, powerful even though it only takes a few minutes. Saturate your day with spacious-mind by making it one of your mind games, and have hypnosis consciousness any time you play. There is no need to be sparing in your use of spacious-mind; you are the creative one, allowed to influence the person and her environment according to your will. Your formal practices of spacious-mind and self-hypnosis will become more effective as your skill improves, and soon you will be able to go to a very deep level of consciousness in any situation.

Your mind is not confined within the body. You get to feel the feelings and see what the person sees, but you operate the body by remote control. You manipulate the body directly with your will, and you manipulate your environment indirectly by using the body. Worldly forces act upon the body, but mind is not confined within the body. Mind is spacious, and free.

2. Formless-Mind

This game is especially good to play when you have a headache. Feel the rush of air as you breathe. Speedy, sub-atomic particles make matter seem solid, but you are not solid. You are not dense. You are not the goo and slime and bone that make up the person. You are formless. The person has a headache, but the person is just a sketchy apparition that rises out of the world of form, a little piece of reality to call your own. The person's ache is in the person's head, and it has little to do with you. You *notice* the headache, but that is all.

Formless-mind is also good to play when too much pressure is applied to the person by environmental stressors during the day. To keep your cool within the chaos, let the stressors be surrounded by vast, open space. Operate the person the best you

can, and relax into the bad day you are having. Mind is your awareness, your attention. Free the mind to float around the room, alighting here and there like the white spot of a flashlight. Stressors cannot stress you out. You *notice* the stressors, but that is all.

3. Stupid Mind

Recent studies have shown that some people are actually too stupid to develop a smoking habit. Apparently, they lack the attention span necessary to smoke a whole cigarette. These studies, which I have conducted, suggest that there is a minimum necessary I.Q. score necessary for becoming a smoker, just like there is a maximum allowable I.Q. score for being in the Ku Klux Klan. Nonsmokers who remain so due to insufficient brainpower fall into a very special category. Most of us know at least one of these feeble people, and there is something to be learned from them. They are simple in the *same* way as not smoking is simple. That is, they operate on the same wavelength of simplicity. It is usually the hyper kind of stupid, the kind that can't shut up.

You have stolen away for a moment of inner silence and nicotine. A mellow cloud of smoke rises around you. You observe people from within a cloud where you have secluded yourself for a moment, just detached enough to regain your inner tranquility, your mental repose. Richie, your co-worker who is too stupid to know it and thinks he is smarter than average, bounds over to you and says something like, "Why were you thirty-five minutes late for work this morning? Don't you know we start at eight o'clock? Uherdie-her."

You take a long drag form your cigarette and turn toward Richie before exhaling, trying to reinforce the smoke cloud barrier in his direction. The smoke is like pest repellent that works on nonsmokers. You tell Richie that he is stupid, because somebody has to—you've told him before, but his blank expression always gives away the fact that he still doesn't get it. He always just blinks his eyes hard and represses it.

Richie doesn't mind that you have disregarded his question, because he has the attention span of aluminum foil, and he changes the subject on his own. "Why do you

smoke cigarettes, anyway?"

"Because of you, Richie. I smoke because of people like you."

"You know it is not good for you, so you should quit," Richie says, because everything is very simple to him, and suddenly, you get a flash of insight into Richie. You catch a glimpse of Stupid Mind. For a moment, you understand with primal clarity what it must be like to be Richie. Your jaw relaxes, allowing the mouth to drop slightly open. Everything seems to slow down, and your mind is quiet, like a radio tuned in to the dead air between two stations. You can almost hear the windy sound of a seashell pressed against your ear, except without the seashell. You are a motel with a vacancy.

Sometimes you have been bothered by the thought that other smokers were smart enough to overcome the habit while you have not been able to do it. Only now, thanks to Richie, do you realize that it is actually possible to be *stupid* enough to not smoke cigarettes.

After you have committed to being fully quit of cigarettes, you need to know how to call upon Stupid Mind. It is a matter of emulating someone like Richie just for a moment, when you find yourself tempted to smoke a cigarette. If you really do not know any nonsmokers like Richie, you might try thinking of a goldfish that stares out at you from behind the glass of its fishbowl, with its mouth doing that open-close-open-close thing. Inhale slowly, and then open your eyes a little wider. Glance to the left and then to the right without moving your head—just your eyes. Exhale, and think to yourself, "What the hell is happening? What's going on? What the hell is going on?"

Withdrawal from nicotine is a weird kind of pain. Stupid Mind is a safe, effective way to dull that pain. With practice, you can become as numb as Richie, who once tapped a thumbtack into his forehead with a rubber mallet just to win a five-dollar bet. If I had had five more dollars that morning, I could have gotten him to do it again.

There is no shame in using Stupid Mind, because it serves as a meditation technique. Stupid has a certain meditative aspect, and can bring you inner stillness. The craving will subside. Stupid Mind is especially good to use when you are tired.

4. Melancholy-Mind

The value of mind games is the *pro-active* attitude about your state of mind. Usually, there is a tendency to think of the person's state-of-mind as the result of circumstance, but Creative Action requires that we make the reverse true for us. We influence outcomes that are important to us by controlling our own state-of-mind, because we can (1.) avoid mistakes caused by emotion-driven action, (2.) influence other people's states of mind with our own, and (3.) restructure our thought patterns so that the person can enjoy *not* smoking in any situation.

The last point, enabling your person to enjoy being a nonsmoker, is very important. The decision to quit smoking is a decision that must be carried out not one time, but many times, over and over until the person has completely changed into a nonsmoker. Those who are able to abstain from smoking in the company of a supportive friend or lover might suddenly be overwhelmed by cravings when they are at work or alone. The very psychological nature of a smoking habit becomes apparent when certain situations trigger intense craving. Mind games help you to regain control over the person's state-of-mind.

How often do smokers-trying-to-quit give up their resolutions when tough circumstances have them too sad or frustrated to care? Just as a ninja-warrior must always be ready to whip out the ninja sword, you must always be ready to cut through the cravings, those physical sensations in the chest and throat, and the delusions within monkey-mind. You must be ready to abstain in every moment, and in spite of every kind of emotion.

Melancholy Mind is a game to play when the person is sad. Have you ever heard of someone who used sadness to get over a smoking habit? Some people acknowledge their own sadness, the sense of loss that comes from quitting. They say goodbye to cigarettes the way that one might say goodbye to a dear friend who is going away forever. When cravings arise, they mourn and reminisce. Never again is smoking

an option, but these sensitive people give expression to their pain in the form of sadness.

This works for some people. Personally, I like to feel happy. When I quit smoking, I also made many other healthy changes, and I did not feel sad about giving up cigarettes. I might not have been as emotionally involved with the ritual of smoking as some people are, so I did not need to mourn the loss of a friend. When I did personify them in my mind, I resented them for having controlled me. I resented the compulsion that made me fall prey to their shady appeal. Many of us have had to say goodbye to dear friends who were actual people, diagnosed and treated to little avail. Saying goodbye to cigarettes will be easier than saying goodbye to dying smokers, easier than saying goodbye *as* a dying smoker.

Even though I did not need to *mourn* the loss of cigarettes, I did need to practice continuing my renunciation practice in difficult situations—especially when feeling anger or sadness. See APPENDIX B for a Melancholy-Mind Meditation, which is intended to provide your person with different thoughts about sadness, smoking and loss.

5. Furious Mind

Sometimes, some of the other mind games are just not possible to play, because the person who is your boss at work is such a thick, unreasonable ass-hole. And you didn't sleep well. You ran out of the house this morning without eating breakfast, without doing any breathing exercises. You have no good excuse for being late to work. You just were. To discuss your tardiness with the boss will not help you to arrive on time in the future. It will only piss you off.

Wishing that you did not have to practice smoke-strike today, you prepare to listen to the boss. "This company cannot afford to employ individuals who are not team players," he tells you. "Inefficiency costs the company *money*, and your tardiness is unacceptable. This is not the first time you have been spoken to about punctuality, is

it?"

All this guy does all day is stroll around and bitch at the people who do all the work. You know that your tardiness doesn't compromise production, because you never do anything during the first half hour of the morning anyway, and the world hasn't ended because of it. You just hang out at your desk for that hour. This guy is the one who is costing the company money, by being a dick head, but you can't tell him that. You pull a crumpled bill from the front left pocket of your smarty-farty dress pants and hold it in his face, shouting at him, "*Do you want a dollar*!" You shake it in your fist at him. "*Is that what this is about*? *Here, here is a dollar!"*

Your boss accepts the dollar while still trying to stare you down. He shoves it into the front left pocket of his own smarty-farty dress-pants. You turn back toward your desk, but suddenly feel the need to have a cigarette. You stop, and head for the door. This is supposed to be a day for smoke-strike practice, but that just doesn't seem realistic anymore. You get a cigarette off one of your co-workers and step outside. You were ready to perform the smoke-strike until this morning, when your boss made you so angry. He has the authority to force you to play the subservient role in front of everyone, and that makes you so angry. Now, since you smoke whenever you are angry, he has forced you to cancel your smoke-strike. That affects you personally, making you even angrier.

Suddenly, you see the cigarette associated with your boss. Staring at the smelly cylinder between your fingers, mediocrity rolled-up neatly in white paper, you see the cigarette associated with everything that works against you in life. A moment ago, you were so angry that you *needed* to smoke; now, you are even angrier, but something unusual is happening. You toss your only cigarette on the ground without the slightest hesitation. Enough is enough. A little suffering during withdrawal is a small price to pay for your freedom. Furious Mind is a game that gives you power.

6. Looking Like a Goldfish

Remember that meditation involves the suspension of judgment.[8] To view a scene without judgment is to see the colors and the contrast and the movement as if you did not understand any of it at all. Your goldfish in your living room sees from inside its fishbowl all the same things that you see, but the fish sees it with spacious-mind because none of it means much to him. Everything is so utterly neutral to the fish; the images on the outside of the fishbowl might as well not even be real. To see the scene without judgment, it helps to imagine that the scene is not three-dimensional but, instead, a picture on a flat screen. This kind of looking leaves your mental workspace crisp and spacious, so that solutions to problems have room to arise in monkey-mind, and body can execute quality action with proper timing.

7. Whole Body Breathing

Attention will wander if you do not anchor it with the breath. Breath anchors attention to the body in the present moment. This is important when you are using spacious-mind for a physical activity that requires balance and precise motor control, but it is just as important when you are using spacious-mind for introspective problems, like resisting the urge to smoke. Body awareness is always important because body and mind are interrelated. Dedicating a small amount of your attention to body and breath prevents monkey-mind from running away with a great amount of your attention.

Whole Body Breathing is a game you play by shifting attention to the body, from the surface of your skin to the marrow of your bones, from head to heels, and breathing with a feeling that the whole body draws air in, and the whole body expels it. You open up and take in the world with each breath. It is breath that keeps you alive to the world, and it is breath that mixes you and the world together. Healthy, full breathing

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8 Jon Kabat Zin, *Wherever you Go, There you Are, 1994.*

makes possible a healthy, full feeling of being.

As you cultivate stillness in you mind, you must give attention to the breath. If you do not give attention to the breath, there will be some shabby attention, because breathing needs to keep happening whether you pay attention or not. To breathe with the whole body is a very powerful practice that will improve your performance with everything that you do. The pores of the skin open as you exhale and close as you inhale, and you feel the dynamic action of Whole Body Breathing.

8. Quickening Your Attention

Don't be silly. There is no such thing as quickening attention, because attention is not quick or slow. It's just attention. The only way you could possibly quicken your attention is to make it become quicker *relative to what you are doing.* That means that the way to quicken attention is to slow down the activity to which you are applying it and notice the change in the quality of your attention. You'll notice that it feels good, and it clears away some clutter from the mind.

Try this with something simple, like walking. Walking is really a great activity to slow down slightly in order to experience quickening of the attention, and the expansion of spacious-mind, because it is an activity that is very familiar to you. The resulting enhancement of your experience of walking and improved mental clarity during walking will be easy to notice. When you are walking and nicotine cravings start to bother you, quicken your attention and direct it to the place where you feel the pang of craving.

Cravings are often felt in the chest area. Clasp your hands behind your back to open the chest, and slow your pace to quicken your attention. You do not need to slow down your walking very much at all; the change should be subtle. Because you have been walking, you have been giving a certain amount of attention to the activity of walking. Slow your pace just a little bit, and notice the sensations that arise in body and mind. The extra vitality and mental focus that rushes over you as soon as you slow

your pace is pure attention, attention that was being applied to walking but is no longer necessary because you have slowed down slightly.

It feels as though your attention has become quicker, but your activity simply slowed down. Some activities to which you may apply spacious-mind might need to be performed quickly or with particular timing, so slowing down those activities would be inappropriate, but the real value of experimenting with quickening your attention is the lesson it has to offer about the nature of attention. Try it with many different activities for thorough understanding, as long as the activities are simple enough that you can notice the sensations that will result.

The slowing of your activity will be subtle, but the heightened mental focus will be easy to notice. This will give you a taste of the tremendous power that will become available to you when you cultivate stronger attention by keeping a spiritual practice. If you can find the same sensations next time you practice smoke-strike, you will have discovered the special knowledge that is the essence of renunciation practice.

9. "Current" Mind

If life is your dream, it might as well be dreamed by a comfortable dreamer who is sleeping in the most comfortable place. No matter what pressure and difficulty you encounter during the day—even if this day becomes a nightmare—rest easy. Imagine that this dream of today is coming to you while you sleep in the most serene place.

You row out into the middle of the pond and lay down on your back in the boat. Watch the clouds. What currents catch your little boat will move you, and the clouds are also moving. The air is cool and easy to breath, and the gentle gliding of your little boat across the water soothes you rocking-chair style, like a baby's cradle's sleepy swaying rhythm. You're not restless. There are no pirates, waterfalls or motor boats, so the worst thing that could happen if you fell asleep and drifted would be floating to the shore and being bumped awake in shallow water.

This makes for special cleansing of the mind, cleansing ordinary sleep does not

provide. You are care free. You have brought all your attention with you out onto the water, and your little boat is floating on the moment. Here, there is no yesterday, boat-floating on the moment, only drifting in the timeless here and now. There's no tomorrow either because time does not 'go by' as do the clouds you're watching drift across the scene.

There really is only one moment, one experience, one playing field for objects in your consciousness. The quality of your life is heavily influenced by your ability to be present in this moment. Meet each new activity with your mental desktop clear. If there is a stapler on the desktop of your mind, you'll never be able to experience a sunset—only a sunset next to a stapler. The way to keep staplers out of your sunsets is to practice current mind, so that your stapler moment does not spill over into your sunset moment. When moments overlap in your experience, you miss everything.

There is special cleansing when you drop into the moment and remember your original self. This moment is all there ever is, so you can rest right on it. You don't need to gather up any timelessness to take with you back into the world, simply watch the clouds and float across the water. You will be different when you leave the boat, and your experiences will be clear and pure.

Later on, you park your boat and go about your day. You hadn't known what you'd been missing with your messy mental desktop and all of its caked up clutter. Now you've set your burden down, your hands are free, and life feels blissful as you ride the moment. In tune with the here and now, you keep your cool. When you get knocked out of tune again, you can go back to your boat.

Mind Changing Practice:

Creative Action Countdown

As the games go on and your skill improves, you will come to know your more

subtle self, the higher being who plays around in reality. After every game, you come back to your unchanging self. This being, though you have known him as a smoker in the past, is not subject to such a classification. This being is completely free to be any way, at any time, and you should celebrate that freedom by taking action.

Creative Action Countdown is a number that keeps getting smaller and smaller. You start with the approximate number of cigarettes you usually smoke each day. Put that number of cigarettes in a pack, and keep the rest in a plastic bag at home. You will need to stay one pack ahead of your smoking to make sure that there will be enough cigarettes in the morning; otherwise, you'll end up having to buy and open a new pack during the day, and you might lose count.

This is easy to do, but it is also easy to forget. You spend nine minutes breathing back into spacious-mind every morning when you first wake up, and you should arrange your ration of cigarettes for the day soon after the breathing exercises so that you don't forget. Do not take this leisurely. It will be a pain in the ass to ration out your cigarettes, especially when you are in a hurry, but quitting cigarettes is hard to do. Many people try and never succeed. We often neglect our life-enhancing practices in favor of mundane things, like getting to work on time, but you have the authority to prioritize. You can decide that this morning ritual—breathing exercises, morning meditations, and Creative Action Countdown—is just as important as brushing your teeth.

Work is always easier when you see yourself progressing toward a goal. Dieters stand on scales, weightlifters max out, runners record their times, but smokers-trying-to-quit don't always monitor their progress. Ration out the cigarettes so that you know how many you smoke each day, and reduce the number gradually. When you can smoke fewer than twelve cigarettes each day without unbearable suffering, change the number to ten and feel good about your progress. Mark the change on a calendar and anticipate more progress in the days and weeks ahead. You don't have to wait until your final smoke-strike to feel successful—reducing the number of cigarettes you need

to smoke is a triumph by itself. Monitoring your progress builds faith in the effectiveness of your practice and keeps your spirit strong.

To monitor your progress is also important for decreasing your body's dependence on nicotine. It lets you know the number of cigarettes you need to smoke to avoid suffering withdrawal symptoms. When your body gets acclimated to smoking only eight cigarettes each day, you can limit yourself to eight without suffering. Someone who does not monitor her progress might smoke more than the necessary eight, increasing the body's nicotine dependence and undoing some of her progress.

Even before you have made any progress, monitor it! Start each day with a certain number of cigarettes; place them in some container other than a cigarette pack. From now until your permanent smoke-strike, always know how many cigarettes you have smoked at the end of the day.

Changing your mind is like changing direction, turning around and going back the way you came. Perhaps you went astray long ago when you started smoking cigarettes, and perhaps it will take some time to travel home, but to change direction takes no time at all.

Chapter Six

Hypnosis Consciousness

It isn't difficult to see that we create life as we go. Everything that is (or ever has been) was, at one time, just a vision in the mind of man or monkey. Or woman, or womonkey. Humanity changes according to ideas that have been entertained, and your own life also changes according to ideas. Hypnosis is the technique for accessing a deep place in consciousness, the place where subject and object meet. Ideas on that level of mind are more accurately named "beliefs." Understood as change applied to

the person's beliefs, hypnosis can be said to go on with or without your participation. You dream up a problem, and you dream up a solution. If you remember dreaming of being lost in a forest, you might remember having been afraid of the forest, but now you know that the forest was part of your dream. Subject and object were two in the dream, but the mind of the dreamer is one.

The part of the person that is controlled by the conscious mind is the *subject* and is called "self," but the parts of the person that the conscious mind cannot control—addictions, involuntary processes, the ongoing rant of the mind—cannot be called self. They must be "other." This strange problem results from the dualistic thinking that spirituality tries to overcome. The duo consists of subject and object. Dualistic thinking gives rise to ego, and the glorification of one's illusory, individual self. Ego causes a smoker-trying-to-quit to carelessly enter a smoky room, subjecting her person to temptation with a righteous assertion that her resolve too strong to be shaken by environmental influences. She either succeeds in resisting temptation, reinforcing his illusion of an individual self, or fails and smokes a cigarette.

But the mystic who has overcome such dualistic thinking can take better care of her person. Instead of knowing the person as her "self" and the environment as "other," the mystic knows a reality in which there is no such distinction. She delights not only in glorification of the individual through whose eyes she sees, but in all glory. Her experience of life is made ecstatic by her realization of one-ness. She has great power for Creative Action because she is not hindered by the egotistical need to act only as an individual person. The mystic might choose not to subject her person to temptation in a smoky room for the same reason she would not subject any other recovering addict to temptation. She has nothing to prove, no separate self-identity to assert, so she is able to negotiate the environment in a way that protects the person.

Some people, especially very intelligent people, scoff at the idea of using hypnosis in any form. They are disgusted with the idea that they need to talk to themselves or be talked to, repeating suggestions over and over with the reasoning that

repeated suggestion will help them to change. "I don't need to be told not to smoke over and over! I don't need to be put in a trance! I am an intelligent person!" A common misconception: The person may be intelligent, but you are most certainly not the person. When the person is intelligent, there is a stronger desire to identify with the person, a stronger ego. Humility is the source of great power, because true humility comes from the realization that you are not the person.

Great power becomes available to you when you let go of dualistic thinking. You can influence the environment by using the person, or you can influence the person by using the environment. The use of morning meditations is one way for you to use the environment to influence the person. The morning meditations in Chapter Four are thoughts from your person's environment that you can use to counteract temptations that she will face during the day. When you take Creative Action, you are acting as the Being behind all of this. The Wizard of Oz, concealed behind a curtain. Union with the wizard is the aim of all spiritual work. You can stand behind the curtain too.

Your assertion of that individual kind of self as separate from his or her environmental influences turns out to have been wasted effort. The person is under your control, mostly, but she is swayed by environmental influences until you find her acting in ways that you cannot seem to control. You can see some environment within your person, some "other" within your "self." Fortunately, because of your decision to quit smoking you are now practicing to relate to your environment in a more powerful way.

Unlearn identification with this separate self, this temporary person. Influence reality by *acting as both subject and object*, and notice the way reality begins to bend to your will—in seemingly miraculous ways. The word "synchronicity" means something like "coincidence," in the sense that they both refer to incidents that are synchronized. The popular use of the word "coincidence" is to express the notion that an odd occurrence was not part of some unfolding plan, but random. Because of that connotation, people use the word "synchronicity" to express a suspicion that coinciding

events are not coincidental at all; that there is a method to the madness of the man behind the curtain. Pay no attention to the man! He is your life-host, writing your life. Oh, alright, he is you! It was you all along, same as dreams. But don't go jumping to any conclusions. You are not alone; you get to have your cake and eat it too. Just go deep within, as deep as you can, and see what is revealed to you in stillness.

You can change this person. Christ, if you couldn't, life would hardly be worth living. Personal power is a concentration of the Wizard of Oz's magic in this particular person whom you are being. Your person of the moment. The flavor of the week. Hardly a big deal in the grand scheme of things, your personal power is a localized concentration of the same creative energy that is responsible for everything else. Practice renunciation, and you are free to create something new. Practice makes power.

What You Know To Be True

When you were born, the bright light outside of your Mom was harsh on your little eyes. The doctor took firm hold of you, and you cried out. You didn't know what the hell was going on. You started to learn then, and you learned in a very pure way because you had fewer beliefs to muddle your experience of things. When you saw your reflection in the mirror, you did not see a winner or a loser, an introvert or an extrovert. You did not see the person who appears in your mirror today. In time, you formed opinions and beliefs about life, and you developed your self-image. Beliefs accumulated and made you grow older, taking the freshness out of life and tainting your perception of things.

Everything you learn, you understand based on what you already know to be true. For example, Justin tested poorly in elementary school and entered high school with the idea that school was not his thing. Monkey-mind was trying to cope with this inferiority, when people began to discover that he was something of a musical genius. Monkey-mind rationalized that his lack of academic success was a counterbalance for

his extraordinary musical ability, and developed for him a self-image of a person who is artistic and not academic. He learned to accept this self-image. Now Justin can rip shit up on his guitar, but has difficulty whenever there is something he needs to learn—difficulty caused by nothing other than his self-defeating belief. He unintentionally imposes the limiting idea on his children, too; though he encourages them to do well in school, they mimic his disregard for scholarship in favor of art. The truth is that his capacity to learn and understand things, his ability to commit information to memory, could be just as strong as anyone else's, but his belief that he is not a scholar has been buried beneath his belief that he is a talented musician.

Layer upon layer of beliefs about the person and the world separate you from the aspects of this person that you need to change. What you know to be true is what limits you, keeps you stagnant. Children are supple, mentally and physically, and it is no coincidence that they often have an easier time learning new things than adults do. They are not as "self conscious" as we are. They are not encumbered by thick layers of knowledge and ideas.

Hypnosis is useful for making change because it is a way of temporarily forgetting what you know. At some point, you started smoking. You soon said to yourself, "I am a smoker." Since then, you have formed many other opinions about yourself. "I am a perfectionist." "I am a realist." "I am good at my job." "I am a dedicated parent." Who is this "I" about whom monkey-mind is babbling? "I" is many people, but one thing that you know for sure is that she is a cigarette smoker. You learned that a long time ago. The self-image that you have grown to accept happens to be one of a cigarette smoker. To change something that you learned about the person so long ago would shake the foundation of your self-image.

A cat stuck in a tree might want to get back the ground, but it resists you when you climb up there to save it. It clings to the tree because, even though it is afraid to be up there, it is even more afraid to release its grip. Your monkey-mind is like the cat, clinging not to a tree but to a self-image. Even though you want to change, monkey-

mind resists dramatic changes because they shake the foundation of self-image.

Hypnosis Consciousness:
Your Workspace for Changing the Person

Hypnosis consciousness, spacious-mind, becomes your personal workspace and sanctuary if you learn to let go of thinking. Improve your skill by keeping a consistent practice and you will dive deeper every time. The routine at the end of Chapter Three shows the basic structure of the technique. You (1.) state your specific purpose, (2.) induce spacious-mind, (3.) make hypnotic suggestions, (4.) return to "ordinary" consciousness. A thorough explanation of those five steps will make more sense after having practiced that simple routine. Here is that thorough explanation:

1. Specific Purpose

This is the first autosuggestion. You are suggesting to the person that this session will achieve a specific purpose. It goes without saying that the session will be effective; the confident statement of your intentions reassures and reminds the person about the task at hand. It serves to commence a formal practice, separating the ritual from the rest of the day.

Commence every session with a few magic words:

I am changing my person's mind. I know a method. I have decided to change her into a nonsmoker.

Or…

Spacious-mind is a familiar place. Right now, I am going there to program the person. I will instruct him to enjoy opportunities to deny himself a cigarette tomorrow.

Or…

Now I dive into my mind for self-hypnosis. I will leave thinking at the surface and go deep enough to change the person into a former-smoker.

Some sessions will be profound. Body and mind will remember the statement that started this dive into space, and the power of that statement as autosuggestion will intensify from one session to the next as you increase your skill and go deeper. You will cultivate for your person a strong notion that the technique is powerful, and your notion will become reality. *Belief* is the name for notions found in these depths of consciousness. Spiritual traditions attribute answered prayers to strong belief (faith), and pagan traditions also use strong belief during magic. Faith is power. Go behind the curtain for communion with the wizard, and you will learn the simple truth common to all spiritual traditions: Union means being able to imagine something up; create reality instead of falling prey to it. It is not blasphemous to want to be a co-creator instead of just a creature; communion is the goal of religion. Distinguish self-hypnosis by giving it a definite beginning, so that any results achieved will strengthen your faith in the practice. Self-hypnosis will be easy to believe in when you have made it a specific practice that yields specific results. After some time, the statement of your specific purpose with which you begin each self-hypnosis session will immediately send you plunging into Spacious-mind.

2. Spacious-Mind

Why does hypnosis work? Why is it necessary to go into an altered state of consciousness in order to give instructions to the person? The fact that you have been unable to change your person's smoking habit shows that "ordinary" consciousness is inadequate for making certain changes in the person. Changes are always being made at the deep level of mind where beliefs are held, but you can only influence those changes if you dive down to that place to make the change.

Spacious-mind. Plenty of room to push your problems aside. Plenty of room for working. A trance is an altered state of conscious characterized by (1.) increased precision of attention, and (2.) increased receptivity to suggestions. Your induction into

a hypnotic trance, therefore, must achieve both of those characteristics.

We achieve **increased precision of attention** by limiting the content of the mind—less content means more attention available for what content is introduced. Because monkey-mind is such a busybody, consciousness usually stays full to capacity; bliss is what you experience when you can empty consciousness of some of its content.

How is this done? Since you are unable to stop all activity of the mind, keep it occupied by attaching it firmly to the breath. The first step toward spacious-mind enables you to cultivate inner stillness during the movements involved with respiration. Ordinarily, people have trouble with meditation and self-hypnosis because their thoughts affect their breathing, their breathing disrupts physical stillness, and inner stillness is always a step away. But inner stillness can be achieved by *aligning* the attention with respiration. You and I can have stillness relative to one another if we are riding side-by-side in a car, even though we might be flying along the highway. You and a dance partner might by spinning across the dance floor together, but you have a special stillness relative to one another. Be your own person's dance partner now, and bring into alignment the action of your person (which is breathing) with the action of your true self (which is awareness).

Breathing in, I feel cool air at the tip of the nose.

Breathing out, I feel warm air at the tip of the nose.

Breathing in, I "watch" the breath with vigilant attention.

Breathing out, I "watch" the breath the way a cat watches a birdcage.

Attention is vigilant, and firmly attached to the sound and sensation of breathing. This enables you to have stillness despite the fact that there is movement involved with respiration. With the attention firmly anchored to the breath, mind will remain very spacious while you give suggestions. In this way, attention to the breath is the first step into spacious mind. The second step is to suggest to your person that every breath will take him deeper into stillness.

Breathing in, I feel the air with my entire body.

Breathing out, my tension empties out with the air.

Breathing in, my hands and feet tingle with energy.

Breathing out, an energetic stillness comes over me.

The second characteristic of a hypnotic trance is **increased receptivity to suggestions**. We understand that increased precision is achieved by limiting mental content and activity, but how do we achieve increased receptivity to suggestions? The answer is hilarious: since you are not the person, you can gain the person's trust in the same way that you might gain any other person's trust, which is to build credibility. You need to build credit. You build credit by proving yourself over and over again with credit companies. You gain credibility with colleagues by being right often. You win the trust of friends by never being caught in a lie. The hilarious thing about self-hypnosis is that you actually increase the person's receptivity to suggestions by proving a few suggestions to be correct. It is as simple as this:

Breathing in, my arms and legs are feeling heavy.

Breathing out, my attention is on the breathing.

Breathing in, I cannot move my arms or legs at all.

Breathing out, my attention is on the breathing.

Breathing in, trying to move the body brings me into spacious-mind.

Breathing out, my attention is on the breathing.

Breathing in, I like the stillness.

Breathing out, my attention is on the breathing.

You suggest that the body is paralyzed and then cooperate with the suggestion—and the person begins to believe in your suggestions! In your relationship to the person, you are superior. In your relationship to the body, you are the clever one. In your relationship to the monkey-mind, you are the one with the wisdom. The body is amazed at the accuracy of your prediction; the body really is paralyzed!

In the practice of hypno-therapy, this process is called "pacing," and it involves narrating the person's experience in a way that is similar to the narration that is usually

provided by that voice, monkey mind. Monkey mind might say, *I am getting so angry*, and it becomes so. In self-hypnosis, you use the voice of the mind to say, *I am going so deep into relaxation*, and it becomes so. During an interview with Paul Gustafson, a well-respected hypnosis practitioner in Burlington, Massachusetts,[9] he remarked that the four magic words in self-hypnosis are "make it so that." For example, when Paul teaches self-hypnosis he might instruct the client this way:

> *Visualize three switches and make it so that when, in your mind's eye, you flip the first switch, your whole body drops into complete relaxation and feels at ease. Make it so that, when you switch the second switch, the relaxation will penetrate your bones and internal organs, bringing you to an even deeper level of relaxation. Make it so that, when you flip the third switch, your powerful, energized state of relaxation will double, and you become transparent in your deep, hypnotic trance.*

This is where you begin to discover just how powerful suggestions can be. This is where you find out the extent to which external events are influenced by the unconscious. With some practice, you can go very deep into spacious-mind.

3. Hypnotic Suggestion

This is instruction from you to your person, powerful instruction surrounded by a lot of empty space. Have you ever seen Japanese artwork that consists of one focal point surrounded by a lot of empty space? In the art of deep communication, less truly is more. Less substance crowding the perception of the person is conducive to more clarity in the moment. Less content is conducive to more attention being left available.

Whisper your suggestions to the sleeping monkey-mind. Introduce an idea or two while the person is in spacious-mind. Limit your suggestions, so that the depth of your spacious-mind is not compromised. After making your suggestions, you will be

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[9] http://www.burlingtonhypnosis.com/

swaying back and forth between these hypnotic suggestions and suggestions to re-establish spacious-mind. Back and forth, you rest comfortably on the sound of breathing and drop suggestions from time to time. Speak a suggestion silently in the mind:

Life is changing again; it's strange and exciting to be losing the desire to smoke carcinogens…

Then, wait. You rest your attention comfortably on the sound of breathing, so that the mind stays spacious and the suggestion can hang in the air. Speak a suggestion silently in the mind:

With attention on my breathing, I am entering an even deeper state of consciousness.

With attention on my breathing, trying to move the body brings me into spacious-mind.

Watchful attention stays with the breathing, carefully adhering to the breathing in order to keep the mind still. Several breaths come and go, and you feel very peaceful. You leave the suggestion again:

Life is changing again; it's strange and exciting to be losing the need for cigarettes…

Again, your suggestion lingers in the spaciousness of the mind. In your stillness, there is cool clarity and warm relaxation. Your clarity is made cool by the cool inhalations, and your relaxation is made warm by every warm exhalation. Spacious-mind is maintained for several minutes, but suggestions are given only a few times because they are surrounded by extended moments of silence.

Renew your spacious-mind again:

With attention on my breathing, I am entering an even deeper state of consciousness.

With attention on my breathing, trying to move the body brings me into spacious-mind.

Rather than applying effort to stay attentive to the breathing, rest your attention on the breathing. Rather than struggling against thoughts that arise, pay no attention to them. Enjoy the stillness of spacious-mind. When you are ready, plant that suggestion

one more time:

Life is changing again; it's strange and exciting to be losing the need for cigarettes…

You can continue to repeat steps two and three, alternating between reinforcing spacious-mind and giving suggestions, for as long as you like. Remember to leave plenty of space between suggestions, plenty of silent attention to respiration. Remember to use only a few suggestions during the session in order to avoid ruining it with too much mental activity. Sway back and forth between planting suggestions and re-establishing spacious-mind.

4. Return

The power leaks out of your practice if you are wishy-washy about either the beginning or the end of the session. The statement of your specific purpose gave your session a definite beginning, and a careful return to the surface of consciousness will give it a definite end. Both are reference points that make the session stand apart from the rest of your person's day.

I am ending the session and returning from Spacious-mind. I know that this session will prove to have been effective, and that tomorrow's session will take me even deeper.

Suggestions for Transformation

The three types of suggestions that we will use are **transformative suggestions, post-hypnotic suggestions,** and **visualizations.** Here are explanations of each type and some examples.

Transformative Suggestions: These suggestions introduce a beneficial idea to the person. They should be worded in a positive way rather than in a negative way (Rather than, "*I do not enjoy the taste of cigarettes,*" suggest, "*I enjoy this new freedom even*

more than I used to enjoy smoking."). They should also be simple and brief, so that monkey-mind does not need to become too active. Most importantly, they should feel meaningful to you. Choose words that affect you emotionally, words that you can believe.

Give each suggestion with a feeling of grateful expectation, total confidence. Here are some examples:

I am stronger than I used to be, too strong to be controlled by habit.

To quit smoking is easy for me, because I know that my actions affect my family.

Cigarettes represent the past; I am stronger every day.

Post-Hypnotic Suggestions: These suggestions set up a response in the person that will be triggered by something from the environment during the day. Just as your smoking habit has attached itself to some of your other activities, like drinking coffee, driving in the car or eating lunch, you can attach instructions for change to a particular activity or situation. In this way, let the person's ordinary routine enhance your mind changing practice instead of working against you.

After I eat, I will feel nourished and healthy. Toxic smoke will not appeal to me.

While I drive to work, I will feel resolute about my life through this person. Nothing will be more important to me than being the master of my own mind.

The sight of a cigarette or cigarette pack will remind me that I am making a positive change by quitting. When I see cigarettes, I will feel happy, and enjoy the opportunity to not smoke.

When I smell the chemical-sweet odor of someone else's cigarette, I will feel strong about my commitment to quit. Instead of wanting, I will feel the desire to not smoke.

Why do post-hypnotic suggestions work? The answer comes from

understanding how hypnotists get around the censorship of the conscious mind. As mentioned previously, hypnotist Paul Gustafson teaches clients to "make it so that" one experience is established as a trigger for another (i.e. *When you flip this switch that you are visualizing, your body will become completely relaxed*…). Post-hypnotic suggestion works in a similar way. The technique of connecting a desired response to a particular trigger is effective, because the conscious mind has no time to interfere with suggestion. If you tell the person that he or she will not crave cigarettes tomorrow, the conscious mind might say, "Hmmmm… I don't know if I agree with that," But if you say, "Tomorrow during your drive to work, you will suddenly remember that you have been giving your lungs a break from smoking, and you feel great energy and mental focus," all the conscious mind knows is the this connection between the drive and the feeling has been made—and monkey-mind, a sucker for anything interesting, will wait in hopeful anticipation of the prediction coming true. To explain it another way, I'll pass along an excerpt from a book about Milton Erickson's Hypnosis:

Visualizations: These are suggestions in the form of visual images instead of words. Practitioners of self-hypnosis who are more visually oriented prefer to imagine a scene in which their desired change is becoming a reality.

See yourself standing among people who are smoking, happy because you have no desire for a cigarette. Imagine the scene in a familiar setting, some place where you will probably be tomorrow. Be sure to imagine a specific feeling, such as enthusiasm, determination, happiness, confidence, or vitality, instead of trying to imagine something abstract, like "not wanting to smoke."

Telemarketer Hypnosis

There are many methods of induction used by hypno-therapists, and one of them is called "Stimulus Repetition." Anyone who has indulged a telemarketer long enough

to hear some of the shpeel has found herself saying, "Yes…yes…yes…" It goes something like this:

"My name is so-and-so and bler-de-bler-de-bler, but I am not trying to sell anything and may I please take just a minute of your time?"

"Yes, but if-"

"Great! Are you the person who makes decisions in this household?"

"Uh, yes."

"Great! And do you agree that people who suffer from physical handicaps are less fortunate than others?"

"Well, yes…"

"Great! Here at such-and-such we share your concern and believe that it is our responsibility to help and don't you agree?

"What? Uh, yes."

"Great! Because for a limited time blah, blah, bler-de-bler, hoo-hah, and a portion of our proceeds hooey what what and so on for a long time reading far too quickly from the script for you to understand, and may I please have your credit card number and the expiration date?"

More often than you might think, people who have no real interest in their products say, "Yes" again, and the telemarketer-hypnotist makes the sale. Even more manipulative is the sales technique by which the telemarketer replaces the word *yes* with the word *okay*:

"I am only going to take a few minutes of your time, *OKAY?*"

"Okay…"

The idea is to get you saying *yes* and *okay* over and over again until you are in a very receptive and agreeable state of consciousness. People say that hypnosis is possible only when the subject is willing, but that rule only applies to a specific definition of hypnosis. The fact that a telemarketer can bring his victim to an altered state of consciousness in which the victim actually feels mild discomfort when it is time

to say "No" shows that mild hypnosis not so difficult to achieve. The "power of suggestion" is undeniable. Many people, having experienced such discomfort, hang up on telemarketers immediately to avoid it. They say, "Take me off your list. Goodbye." But they are missing the chance to play a very funny game with a real, live person, a game that can only be played when someone wants to sell you something.

"Well, I usually just hang up on telemarketers, but your offer actually sounds like a great opportunity for me."

"Huh? Uh, Great! Because for a limited time, you can-"

"I'm so sorry to interrupt…the truth is, I really like the sound of your voice, and that is why I am definitely going to go find my credit card right away."

"Well, thank you. I, uh, (looking for something to say from the script)…this…special offer…"

"What are you wearing? I mean, do you mind my asking what you are wearing right now? It will take a few moments for me to find this credit card…"

What we can learn from the technique used by telemarketers is that the manipulation of consciousness can happen outside of the formal session. Spacious-mind does not need to be deep. Complete your understanding of self-hypnosis, and what began as a simple technique will permeate your day to become a way of thinking. Techniques introduce the discipline from which they come. Exercise is a technique that introduces fitness as a way of thinking. Meditation is a technique that introduces mindfulness as a way of thinking. Before you make hypnosis consciousness your own, you regard it as a technique, but complete understanding takes you beyond technique to the spacious place where Creative Action becomes a way of life.

When you influence both person and world by making subtle manipulations and use renunciation practice to gather spiritual power, you relate to the person differently. You do not experience the world as a person; you experience both person and world, making manipulations when necessary. All action becomes Creative Action when you

are able to live this way. This is the way to "free the mind."

Beyond Technique

Here you are with all your cards to play. The game drags on and on, and you grow older. If you play your cards right, you can win your own freedom from this humdrum way of being, this passivity. You can discard the past and stand up on the bow of the *S.S. Present Moment*, no longer encumbered by preoccupation with random thoughts and compulsions. Choose to change reality according to your creative whim, because that is what creative beings do. It is appropriate that you should enact this change that pertains to the person and her cigarette habit. You have desired to make this change for quite a while now. If you play your cards right, you can actualize this and any other desire as you coast across the surface of the reality.

First, you started to keep track of how many cigarettes you were smoking each day. You reduced the number gradually, and you also spent periods of time practicing deliberate, mindful abstinence from smoking. These actions served as very subtle suggestions, subtle affirmations about change. They were thoughts that were brought to life when you took action. You stopped building momentum for your person's identity as a smoker, turned one hundred and eighty degrees, and started building momentum to make the change.

I don't smoke cigarettes anymore. I struggled, failed, agonized, struggled and failed again, doubted whether or not a smoker could ever really, truly, quit the habit without suffering forever, failed again, struggled again, and succeeded. It's like winning the lottery, not just because I quit my job and pranced around singing, but also in the sense that it was something I tried many, many times before my trying paid off. When it did pay off, no more struggle. No more trying. I actually enjoy not smoking now, because I finally snapped the hell out of it. "Oh yeah, it destroys my lungs to do that." "Oh yeah, I do feel better now that I stopped HUFFING POISON ALL DAY

FREAKING LONG." "Oh yeah, I'd better get over this withdrawal process and start trying to support the smokers I love—try to get them to snap out of it too."

The first week of my final smoke-strike (the permanent one) was filled with struggle. I got lucky when I had a powerful insight that came during a phone conversation with my nephew. He confided in me that he had developed a smoking habit and was too afraid to tell his mom and dad. He told me instead, because I was a smoker and therefore might be able to better understand him. It was that phone call that made me think of the ironic way that *having been a smoker* can be an attribute – a source of insight.

More importantly, it was that phone conversation that made me get excited about the possibility that I might succeed at quitting and acquire a new kind of personal power. I could not help another person quit smoking before I myself was able to quit. How could I help? I did not know how to quit. I wanted to help my nephew quit, but he enabled me to quit instead. I hadn't noticed that my idea of quitting had been filled with thoughts of suffering and struggling and that *excitement* had not been involved with my idea of quitting.

Excitement. Passion. Training to win the Marathon is a whole lot more work than giving up cigarettes, but at least it is something to get fired up about. I discovered that my nephew needed my help, and I got fired up. That was the end of the struggle for me. I finally gave a damn.

Ideas and images are introduced to the mind, and they change you. Suggestions need not be made only with language. Every idea affects your actions. Hypnosis consciousness, spacious-mind, is a mind with the door thrown wide open to allow the entrance of beneficial ideas. A well-placed thought can change your mind—a notion, a reflection, a remark by a friend, an appraisal of your person's life situation. Ideas affect your person, with or without hypnosis consciousness, but the strategic introduction of ideas when the mind is receptive has special significance as a pro-active technique. You began using hypnosis consciousness when monkey-mind reflected on your

performance of smoke-strikes, on your successful reduction of the daily allotment of cigarettes to your person, and all the time you spent reading this book. Your self-image as a smoker was fortified as you continued to smoke, failed to quit, and chatted with other smokers who, like yourself, were hip to the fact that, "We've all got to die somehow," but now you have begun to fortify a new self-image for this person, that of a resolute, creative being with the power to make changes when necessary.

My nephew gave me a gift that he will not fully understand until someone is able to give a similar gift to him. He tweaked my self-image. He caused a powerful suggestion to enter my mind: that cigarettes cause a serious problem for all of humanity, and I would prefer to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. I knew damn well that other people than me would benefit by my quitting cigarettes. A well-placed suggestion changed my mind.

This is where the struggle ends. Every move you make toward beating this habit serves as a suggestion that is planted in the deepest levels of mind. The most powerful aspect of self-hypnosis practice is the fact that you actually make time to do it. You give it your attention. Breathing exercises, morning meditations, Creative Action Countdown, smoke-strike practice, mind games, the Divide and Conquer Exercises—you continue to saturate your day with creative acts such as these, and the person's mind can't help but change. Action is suggestion.

Action is suggestion. This is the wisdom of the statement, "God helps those who help themselves." This is the wisdom of spiritual rituals that involve taking some kind of practical action to complete and commemorate a spell. This is the wisdom of hypno-therapists instructing their clients to complete each session by going out into the world and reinforcing the suggestions by taking real action.

You will castrate your own practice of self-hypnosis if you limit it to the formal session, as if the session is separate from your day, but you can intensify your practice by being true to your own intentions during the day.

Self-Hypnosis, Parenting, and Graduation from Ordinary Reality

To use a person is a very complicated means of experiencing reality. Your person's attention span can be excellent under the right circumstances, but she is also easily tricked. Habit-forming substances, flattery, relationship-demons and unchecked desires all can easily trick your person into straying from the path toward enlightenment, but you can just as easily trick her back on track. That is what hypnosis is all about: compensatory trickery. Most people do not understand hypnosis, because they refuse to believe that *you are not the person.*

You have a relationship with the person. It can be compared with the relationship between a parent and a rebellious teen-ager. If you want to control the relationship, you must be very clever, very tricky. Manipulating the person is necessary for the same reason it is sometimes necessary to manipulate your teenager. The reason is this: Environmental factors other than you are also making manipulations.

I have a rule for dealing with crazy people, not only the diagnosed ones but also people made to be temporarily crazy by alcohol, anger, or even simple stupidity. Craziness is just glorified unreasonableness. My rule for dealing with unreasonable people is that it is okay to trick them as long as it is for their own good or my own protection. With my teenagers, my trickery was for their own good; with my smoking habit, my trickery was for my own protection. I had to trick my own person in a variety of ways before I finally lost my taste for cigarettes, and I did not feel conflicted about tricking my person. I had grown to understand that I was not the person. The person needed to be tricked in order to correct a fault (the smoking habit) that had resulted from other environmental factors. So, I tricked him shamelessly, just as I have shamelessly tricked my own daughters into staying safe when they were out with friends. If you make them think they are choosing the beneficial changes by

themselves, you can manipulate your person or teenager in any ways necessary.

An interesting point about this kind of manipulation is that it requires certain humility. To trick the unsuspecting teen into obedience by complementing her for her sensible, mature ability to think like an adult, and act courteous to the people who care and worry about her (i.e. by giving us a call to let us know where she is), *without* letting her know that the flattery was intended to make her obey you—this requires that you renounce the need to assert your authority during the process. Egotistical, authoritative parents lose control of their children during the teenage years, because they insist on trying to command obedience without having to resort to trickery. "You are the child, I am the adult, and while you are living in this house, you will do as I say." How can this be met with anything but resistance? Parents who are humble enough to use trickery can keep on manipulating their children for the rest of their lives, giving subtle suggestions with proper timing and "expecting" their intended change into becoming reality.

The way that this principle applies to your person's smoking habit also involves humility. Be willing to tell your person that she is "losing her taste for cigarettes" or "enjoying the performance of a smoke-strike," even though you can't help feeling like the suggestions are silly lies—and *expect* the change to happen until it does. Your person will learn to believe the suggestions as soon as you first notice how effective this technique can be. She will start to believe, because she will have seen that your suggestions really do become reality. When your person starts to believe in your suggestions, believing with both mind and body, you actually feel that a change is happening during self-hypnosis sessions. Progress accelerates at a crazy pace.

When you discover that you can enact any change at all by moving the "self" out of the way and "expecting" intended changes into becoming reality, you can dive deep beneath the surface of this silly trip and swim in the sacred depths of reality where eternity is apparent and reality is negotiable. Creative beings swim in bliss, existing without suffering the friction on the surface, far away from their old illusions in the

shallow reality from which they have graduated. Hypnosis consciousness is your temporary dive, your practice for dissociating from the person in order to experience existence in a deeper realm.

Mind Changing Practice:

Plans for the Person

Looking back on life of the person you call "me", you can see the ups and downs of his or her personal strength. You know when the person had heightened energy and mental focus, and you know when energy and focus were out of whack. The ups and downs of personal strength can be observed by looking back across your timeline of events, the things you've done and the skill with which you've handled things that happened. Sometime, go over the hundreds of months and outline the fluctuation of your strength during earlier times in the life of this person. See if there have been any patterns. See what times made you the strongest, what times made you the happiest. You can learn a lot about the Great Way of Everything by studying the way everything has been happening to the person through whom you live.

Later, looking back on now, you will see that this was a time of great personal strength. The person cut back on smoking, began a regimen of breathing exercises, meditation and self-hypnosis, and continued in the direction of positive change. Looking back on now, you will see that energy and mental focus were up. Up, and still climbing. But the challenge that caused an increase of strength is no longer a challenge for the person. If you allow yourself to feel content with this increased strength instead of raising expectations and presenting new challenges, the climbing will stop, and clarity might be lost again. The way to keep strength climbing also happens to be the way to make best use of this kind of time. You cultivated this strength by presenting challenges for the person, like the challenge to take control of the smoking habit, and

you watched the person rise to the occasion. Now that the person has become stronger, you can lock the new strength into place by raising expectations, presenting new challenges. The person will learn to live from this new level. And if the strength is ever lost, you will want to have made the best possible use of this time by accomplishing more life-enhancing changes.

There are blurry times when things seem purposeless and dull, and nothing happens, so you don't know what to do, but this is not one of those times. Drastic transformation has been happening. Your experience of life through this person is changing, not just with regard to habit and nicotine dependence but also on a deeper and more abstract level. You have been living from a place of stillness that is not confined within the person, and now the being that is beyond thought is coming to the foreground. You are starting to remember. You may have noticed during self-hypnosis that, even when you are already at a very deep level, you can still go deeper. You can go even deeper into life as well. To issue new challenges to the person when he or she is still occupied with the smoking problem seems unreasonable at first, but the Great Way of Everything is tricky. New challenges are new occasions to rise to, and you will discover that the rising has just begun. Up and up. Things that cause such struggle now will become effortless as you look to the future, embracing change.

Recently, you have set and achieved specific goals by performing smoke-strikes and reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke each day. You assumed greater control over that part of your life and, although there was some struggle and pain, there was also a corresponding increase of your power—mental clarity, confidence in dealing with others, energy level, your moment-to-moment contentment and repose. The changes that occurred in your mind and disrupted habitual patterns caused the same kind of prolonged suffering that would be caused by a rigorous workout, so you are stronger now. Now, you often choose discomfort over indulgence when cravings occur, and it has become easier for you to abstain. You have cut your daily smoking down to a number of cigarettes that would have been unbearable a few weeks ago, and much of

your suffering is overshadowed by excitement from noticeable increases of your personal strength. Calm and resolute, you look ahead to other aspirations as you gradually reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke each day to zero. Set short and long term goals that have nothing to do with cigarettes and shift your attention to them instead. Smoking and not smoking have already taken up too much of your attention. It is time to focus on more important things.

It is time to make plans for the person. You will use a special kind of list. Find something to write on, and divide it into two columns. This is your "Plans for the Person" list. **The column on the left is for your life-enhancing challenges**: financial goals, weight loss and fitness goals, travel interests, artistic interests, spiritual interests, business ideas, odd topics to study, other habits to break, and so forth. **The column on the right is where you list the first step** that needs to be taken if you are to attack the corresponding challenge. So, you might write, "Save $2,000 for vacation in Nova Scotia," in the column on the left, and, across from it, write, "Go to the bank and open a new savings account." You are the one who makes plans for the person. The person is just part of the environment you experience, but it is a part that has special significance for you. Making this list of plans for your person is the way to win greater control over your experience of life.

Plans for the Person

Life-Enhancing Challenges	First Step to Carry Out each Plan
1.	
2.	
3.	

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

****By carrying out your plans for the person, you will keep the person in high spirits. This is your source of your strength for taking Creative Action -- and for changing the person's mind.**

You should easily come up with many challenges for the list, because everything qualifies. Short term goals, long term goals, even simple things that you will do later today. Unrealistic goals are okay too, because you only have to come up with the first step right now. The purpose of this list is not to accomplish every goal you've ever had; the purpose is to take your focus off the problem of smoking while keeping you in a powerful, proactive state of mind. Goals will be accomplished, but that is only of secondary importance. The immediate reason for the list is to keep your person occupied and excited as he rises to new occasions.

Start by writing items in the left column, the life-enhancing challenges. A long list is better, because the challenges serve as new distractions for the person. They fulfill the need for distraction that you have historically sought in cigarettes. List as many goals and aspirations as you can, and do not worry about the feasibility of achieving them. When the list is long, go back and write in the first step or two for each challenge. Even the most complicated, long-term aspirations have a first step. You know that the list serves a double purpose and that it is intended for your benefit, so have fun with it. When the column on the right is full of things to do, you can note the ones that you'll have time to do tomorrow.

Soon, you'll circle items on the left side as well to indicate that you have met that challenge and succeeded. Circle after circle, your life situation will change, and new lists will need to be made. Look to the future. Plan a good life. Attend to more important things than cigarettes.

Your list of Plans for the Person is part of your spiritual practice of renunciation. Cigarettes are not the only things that can be renounced to make room for the higher being; lots of things that the person wants will need to be denied him as you carry out your more important plans. If your list says, "save two thousand dollars," you will need to renounce some spending. If your list says, "earn a masters degree in counseling psychology, and open a practice," you will need to renounce some leisure time in favor of classes. If your list says, "Shop at Food Yummy Family Market for healthy food, so that my family will have no choice but to eat right," you will need to renounce some chocolate hooey-what cakes and salt chips. If your list says, "Tutor the kids so that they do well in school," you will need to renounce drinking for a few nights and learn how to read. Even the most obscure item on your list will require some kind of renunciation, because the person is always wanting something—usually it is something that interferes with your plans. You will have to make the person wait while you take steps toward achieving each goal. This list of work that brings direction to your days, never finished and always changing, is more than just a list. It represents the secret of taking Creative

Action, the action of the being beyond the person. Renunciation is the secret. Your practice consists of letting something go and choosing something else.

Chapter Seven

Addicted To Not Smoking

When you are ready, go ahead and cut the cord. It's about time. A successful attempt at quitting is made when enthusiasm takes the place of suffering. You can hardly wait to get to your permanent smoke-strike, that day when you actualize this change for which you have been preparing, and you begin to live from your new level of consciousness.

Your permanent smoke-strike is very different from a temporary smoke-strike. Temporary smoke-strikes are trials of your self-discipline—they are exercises, marathon runs for your mind. This permanent smoke-strike is like cutting a cord and floating out into space, surrendering to the change that you have chosen. It should feel like bitter-sweet victory. Instead of debating with yourself about whether or not to give up and smoke, you settle into your new role as a former-smoker who had the strength to quit, suffering when necessary. Smoking is no longer an option, and suffering is no longer

necessary. You have risen to a new level of consciousness that enables you to make decisions for the person, and you remain at this level by keeping your place as the higher being. You call the shots. You act instead of reacting. Even when it hurts, you hold your ground. The moment of truth is when cravings tempt you, and your life will be full of these moments of truth after you begin your permanent smoke-strike.

Less Person, More Power

Keep an eye on the prize as your game drags on, as your body aches for nicotine and monkey-mind argues in favor of giving up. The prize to keep an eye on is what pulls you through, but many smokers try to quit without any vision of success. A dieter sees his goal weight as success, but what marks success for you? A runner keeps an eye on the finish line, but what marks the finish line for a smoker trying to quit? Health, longevity, reduced risk of cancer, saving money—these are great rewards, but they were only ideas to you until now.

Until now, you were not even convinced that the suffering would ever go away; you half-believed that you would always crave nicotine. There was no specific finish line for you, only nebulous ideas. Does the running go on forever? As the nonsmoker cannot imagine being addicted to cigarettes, the smoker cannot imagine being free. Even after several days of not smoking, there is no finish line in sight. A wimp can imagine growing big and strong, but a smoker cannot imagine not wanting.

Now, you have become resolute. You govern the person from a place of spacious stillness. Getting the "self" out of the way is like opening the floodgates of your power.

Addicted to the Power

You are starting to like it, no? That you do not always need to serve the impulsive, needy wanting of the temporary person, but instead have the option to frolic around on Earth as the creative being you are, is a fine awakening. It enables you to get shit done, but that is only a side effect of the practice. The real significance of the practice of renunciation is that you gradually emerge as the higher being, the one who will not die when the person dies.

The person is always wanting one thing or another. Usually the person wants something that has caught his or her attention, and remains fixated on it until distracted by some other silly thing. During any hour of the day, you can either respond to the person's wanting or take Creative Action, but usually not both. The person almost always wants something that will interfere with Creative Action (like when you fail to save money because the person wants to shop or gamble), so you need to make the person wait. Make her wait while you create; this is the practice of renunciation.

The person consists of both body and mind. Sometimes people come to really understand that the physical body is not who they are (important knowledge for those who do not feel beautiful), but seldom do people realize that monkey-mind is not who they are either, that monkey-mind's thoughts are just the echoes of things in the environment. People who understand that they are not their bodies often identify even more with monkey-mind, distinguishing one from the other but remaining trapped within the person anyway. Oops. Certainly an understandable mistake. But nope, both body and monkey-mind are phenomenal experiences. They are not you. You are something else. To know the higher being requires that you step aside, shattering the illusion that you are this simple person. You know that you are more than just this slowly dying body, but monkey-mind is much trickier to *dis-identify from* than the body was. It takes practice.

Living through this temporary person, taking thoughts personally because you

were still disoriented in your life trip, your tendency was to immediately attend to the person's wanting. In the past, you recognized no difference between the wanting of the person and the inclination of your own will. But you are a creator. You might create a happy family or a successful business, but the wanting of the person often gets in the way of your Creative Action. You might create an experience, perhaps a vacation in Holland for your parents, or tuba lessons for your spouse. You might create a great day for yourself tomorrow. You might create something altruistic, like a successful fundraiser for a good cause, or you might create something for your own comfort, like a fat wallet. Your acts of creation can be serious, or they can be as whimsical as the wanting of the person. All of it is sacred if you are true and real, not losing your cool in the dream. The wanting of the person must be checked before you can carry out your will. Put the wanting of the person in check, and you can perform Creative Action.

Creative Action requires that you choose to put aside the wants of the person, which is the spiritual practice of renunciation. In turn, renunciation strengthens your will, your creative power. More power allows for greater acts of creation. You will see the person grow into an awesome, strong and happy hero of a person, like Jackie Chan or Paul Simon. You will see the truth beneath the surface of things and be without fear. This is the process of spiritual refinement that makes room for the higher being to emerge. You will experience the pang of craving, and it will be a small price to pay for this developing power. Renunciation practice makes Creative Action possible; both renunciation practice and Creative Action heighten the spirit and infuse the personality with power.

Having the Serve

Any time someone tries to begin a permanent smoke-strike and fails, they risk fortifying the person's self-image as a smoker. Like a boxer throwing many punches

but landing only few, you take the power out of your fight. Before you undertake your final smoke-strike, it is wise to take inventory of your situational and emotional preparedness for success. When the time is right, catch the rhythm of the day and claim your freedom. Here are some factors to consider:

Sense of Purpose

Why is it absolutely imperative that you succeed in removing cigarettes from your life? Is it for your health? Someone else's health? Is it to prove something to your self? Is it to save twenty or eighty or three hundred dollars every month? What motivates you, charges you with a non-negotiable obligation to quit the nasty things?

Enough Sleep

Sleep is one of those needs that throw you into some crazy survival mode when you fail to meet them. The quickest way to lose your balance in life is to lose some sleep. It muddles your thinking and castrates your will power. Interestingly, nicotine in your brain uses the same receptor sites as acetylcholine, a chemical that stimulates your body to enter sleep. That is why you sometimes smoke more when you are trying to stay awake. Nicotine actually blocks sleep from happening. Insufficient sleep turns the odds against you when it is time for your permanent smoke-strike, so if you need to smoke that one, last, "goodbye" cigarette, do not smoke it too late at night or the quality of your sleep might suffer.

You've Resisted and Cut Down

Recent progress and smoke-strike practice have affirmed your unwavering strength of will. Having cut down and acclimated to the intake of less nicotine takes the edge off withdrawal. You might as well do these things if you are to make a serious

attempt at a permanent smoke-strike. It's like the way you can kick a soccer ball gently to get it rolling a little, and then run up and boot it a lot further than you could have if you'd just kicked it when it was not in motion. Momentum. Wait, is that what it is like? Yes, it's like that.

Plan Ahead

Can you structure your upcoming week more than usual, so that there is plenty of time for everything and no hectic struggle? Can you minimize your involvement with unforeseen difficulty and drama? Turn the odds in your favor by planning ahead to keep life simple while you get acclimated to zero cigarettes each day. It's wise. And it's only fair. Plan to treat the person well this week, because the person is going to be suffering.

Having the Serve

What is the game where you can only score a point when you have the serve? Like, you have to win the serve first, and then you can win points. Is it tennis? I don't think it is ping-pong; I think that in ping-pong you can score any time and you have five serves in a row no matter what, then it's the other guy's turn. Maybe the game I'm trying to think of is badminton. Whatever. All I'm saying is that, in some games, you can only score points after you win the serve. Quitting cigarettes is one of those games.

Don't try to score a point when you don't have the serve. You'll only dishearten yourself. Having the serve in life means enjoying a time of balance and clarity. It means being "on a roll," or something. If life were a video game, the screen would be flashing "EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!" and you would be racking up the points. That is when you have the serve.

Now, we are not talking about lucky life situations here. An unexpected pay raise, a winning scratch ticket, and a happy new romantic prospect all in the same week

do not necessarily constitute having the serve. Those are lucky life situations, and sometimes they can even do more harm than good to your balance and focus. Having the serve is something subtle. It is possible to win the serve even during unlucky life situations, so if you are going through a divorce or being shat on at work, or if you accidentally backed over yourself with your car—these things do not give you an excuse to quit quitting. Sometimes unlucky life situations can actually *win* you the serve. They force you to think clearly and rise to the occasion. Having the serve is not about the state of your life situation, but about your state of mind—your energized mental responsiveness in dealing with problems as they appear, your raised-eyebrow slant on reality, your confidence in the tricks up your sleeve.

See if you have the serve. Is there a fulfilling hint of curiosity or playful sarcasm in everything you do, regardless of whether you are succeeding or not? Is there humor? Are you enjoying yourself as you doodle around in the world? If not, maybe it's not time to begin the final smoke strike. Resist until you're ready. It might be time to wait. Don't wait long though, or you might just wait yourself into losing your resolve. Only wait a little bit, just to catch the rhythm. Quit tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, tops. Or the day after that, but only if you intend to hold the optional one day fast described in the next section.

(Optional) One Day Fast

Here is a way to win the serve. Eating and digesting food is hard work for your body. You don't think of it as work, but it is. To eat when you are hungry is the natural thing to do, so people rarely take time off from eating unless they are forced to do so by circumstance. When you do hold a fast, for whatever reason, you notice a weird process that goes on in your body. First, you feel hungry. Then, after a while, you feel very hungry. It hurts, but not the way it hurts to chew your own leg off in order to escape from a hunter's trap. It might be likened to the feeling of a nicotine craving; it is

a more ambiguous kind of pain, and to endure it seems to purge your spirit. When your spirit is squeaky-clean, usually sometime late in the afternoon of a one day fast, the hunger pangs subside. You will feel spacious clarity, and a strange kind of euphoria. Send yourself to bed without dinner, and you will wake up feeling great. Breakfast will be a wholesome pleasure, like a satisfying blowing of the nose.

Hunger is a kind of pain that has something in common with nicotine withdrawal, an empty feeling that wears you down, so it is appropriate that you give hunger some attention as you prepare to suffer nicotine withdrawal during your final smoke-strike. You might want to rehearse for your permanent smoke-strike by performing a hunger-strike. A fast weakens the body temporarily, but strengthens the spirit permanently. You'll see. Some people fast for many days, but a one day fast is enough to win you the serve. Hold a one-day fast on the day before your final smoke-strike, and you will feel healthy and strong on your first day as a nonsmoker.

During your fast, you might notice that cigarettes do not appeal to you as much as they usually do. Cutting down on smoking purifies you. Rather, it allows your body time to purify itself of all the toxins you have been breathing in. Holding a fast allows your body to purify itself in a different way, and purified people lose their taste for toxic junk. Some people would argue that giving up cigarettes is enough of a challenge without trying to give up food as well, but those people are wrong. Stop eating for a single day, avoid strenuous physical activities, drink plenty of water and go to bed early, and you will find it easier to refrain from smoking cigarettes on your first day as a nonsmoker. You will enjoy the healthy feeling that follows your fast, and you will enjoy being allowed to eat. Your senses will be heightened, and cigarettes will have less appeal.

Metaphorically Shaving your Head

Shave your head by quitting. You know, some people shave their heads in order to show support for their friends who are dying of cancer. You can shave your head too. You can make a sacrifice for the people who need some support. Only rarely do you meet someone who has successfully quit smoking cigarettes; you much more often meet people who smoke and cannot figure out how to quit. Shave your head, make this sacrifice, quit smoking and show them it is possible to succeed. It's the right goddamn thing to do.

Actually Shaving your Head

My friend Walt decided to quit 20 years ago, so he went to the top of a mountain, shaved his head, and smoked his last cigarette. He commemorated it by having one last butt, and then shaving off all his hair. I like the fact that he sacrificed something (his hair), creating a situation in which the person could not smoke another cigarette without rendering that sacrifice meaningless. He attached a sacrifice the shaving of the head, memorializing the moment. This is how head shaving is used in religions and militaries as well, but what've these entities got that you haven't got? You, too, can manipulate the person. So try shaving your head, and tell everyone what you are trying to do. Put some pressure on the person.

Reward and Punishment

Research studies show that certain areas of the brain seem to be associated with "rewards." So, each person has an assortment of experiences for which he has agreed to reward himself—having a cigarette, snorting some cocaine, getting Chinese food, beating up that jerk that stole his motorcycle—some rewards come from drugs, some

from foods, some from achieving goals, and so forth. When you start to be able to practice meditation each day (say, for 20 minutes) and really enjoy it as a reward that you give yourself, you know that you are getting life under control. The important point is that YOU are the one who sets up the various agreements about what things you will chemically "reward" the person for.

In the same way, you also punish the person when things happen that are unacceptable. If the person loses a bet or fails a test, he will feel something. It's not a good feeling. The person has arranged ahead-of-time to have certain physiological responses take place whenever the person is insulted, embarrassed, frustrated, mistreated, etc. This is the way things are: You, the one who sees through the person's eyes, are manipulating him by rewarding him for things that you like and hurting him when things happen in a way that you don't like. So, the person is like your henchman, and you are like that crime boss in a movie, yelling at him over the phone, "I don't care what your excuse is! If you don't get it right this time, I am going to hurt you!" Imagine that. The crime boss knows that this must interfere with the henchman's ability to concentrate, but he needs to use fear-of-pain to motivate the henchman. How creepy.

So, imagine that. You are like the crime boss in a movie, and the person is like your henchman. You reward the person when things go well, and you hurt the person when things go wrong. And how can you tell that *you* are the one hurting the person? Because it is *your* opinion about the events taking place that cause the person to feel frustration, sadness, anger, or some other form of pain! Now that you know you are the one who arranges it, you can gradually reprogram the person so that he can be spared the punishment, and so that rewards can be given for… everything that happens!

Then, you will be an enlightened master. Along the way, your skill will improve. You can use this knowledge of rewards and punishment to set up new rituals, new rewards. Some people chew a tooth pick in order to replace the lost ritual and attend to their need to put something in the mouth. Heh, heh. I don't know what they get out of

the tooth pick. Give your self a better reward, like two solid weeks of trying out different restaurants with your friend or spouse (save up money for it if necessary). Take yourself on a whale watch. Replace the reward that you used to find in cigarettes.

Amazing. It is amazing that you can so easily replace the reward and move on from the smoking habit. All you need is to give the person something that he or she loves. Find other ways to fire up that "reward" center of the brain that has for too long relied on cigarettes for its stimulation.

Holding Down the Pillow

Miyamoto Musashi, a warrior of feudal Japan who lived in the seventeenth century, wrote instructions for future generations to practice his martial science. In his book, *Go Rin No Sho*, or, "The Book of Five Rings," he explained various principles of warfare. One of them was, *holding down the pillow.* "… doing whatever you do scientifically, thwart your opponent's very first impulse to try something, thus foiling everything. To manipulate opponents in this way is mastery in the art of war, which comes from practice. The act of holding down the pillow requires thorough examination."[10]

Your smoking habit is like a useless, smart-ass punk disrespecting you in public. Without warning, you extinguish your cigarette in his eye, and then you hit him – first with your fist, and then with your elbow. You kick his knee, the one that is supporting most of his body weight, so that he starts to fall but then you hold him still, with fierce, fighting hands while you kick the same knee over and over with your steel-toed sneaker. He falls forward, but you hold him up and continue to kick him without mercy, and he cries out—there are ashes in his eye. You slap his face, and then look at him, all bleeding, babbling, and regretting ever crossing your path. You let it go, and let it fall.

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[10] Musashi, Miyomoto. *The Book of Five Rings.* Translated by Thomas Cleary, 1994.

You have dropped the habit and walked away. Now, to turn around and mess with the old smoking habit—the day after tomorrow, or sometime next week—would expose a lack of resolve, a streak of frail mediocrity. Every day, the person wakes up different than he or she ever was; every day presents the threat of demons, insidious ones that come for you, to take away your freedom. Practice breathing exercises in the morning to maintain your place as a creator. Do not submit. Do not give up your spacious-mind, your clarity, in exchange for the phony, stale pleasure of a cigarette.

Chumps! Every time you see a rack of cigarette packs at the store, you're thinking, chumps! They are for chumps, and chumps are weaklings who cannot help themselves. They give away their money to the companies that kill, companies that cause cancer to their customers without shame. You were one of them until now, supporting that which is not good, but you have changed your mind. Of course you have.

In this game, the difference between a chump and a champion is made in the moment cravings try to overwhelm you. It is a thin line that you approach when monkey-mind begins to lie to you, urging you toward the line by pleading that one cigarette will do no harm. But you see the thin line, and you know what it represents. You are too grounded to be moved across the line. You are resolute.

The demons that attack you and would hurl you into habit, the forces that would work against you as you practice what is good, are ruthless and cunning. They conceal themselves until you let your guard down, waiting until you grow weary from life's pressures. It will happen when you are sleeping; they will come for you when you lay down, when your strength needs to be replenished. Fatigued by life, you need to rest. Your consciousness is dim. Your enemy approaches in the darkness, plotting evil, but you are prepared for him. When your eyes abruptly open, the demon recoils. Even in your slumber, you have strength in reserve. You switch on the light of your consciousness and take hold. Wrestling your demon even in a time of weakness, you call upon the power you have cultivated by practicing renunciation. You throttle your

assailant while you glare into its eyes, and then you pin it down where you'd been sleeping moments ago. Habit struggles when you cover its face, but you restrain it. Spiritual demons will come for you again unless you kill them. You hold down the pillow.

Writhing Around On the Floor

One important technique to employ during your final smoke-strike is *writhing around on the floor*. This is when your spirits are low and the only thing keeping you from smoking is your imagination, as you pretend something outrageous, like that smoking one cigarette will kill you or something. So, when cravings overwhelm you, you get all crunched up in the fetal position and writhe around. Determination falters, and you can't take it anymore. You feel like you *need* to smoke. Other people in this position, noticing that having a cigarette has become unavoidable, would immediately light one and fail. You falter the same way but you still have one last trick up your sleeve… geeking out. Losing it. When you realize that you need to have a cigarette or you'll go crazy, you choose crazy. What's the worst that could happen? Get arrested or something, maybe, but when you are diagnosed with emphysema or some other respiratory malady that your doctor says would not have happened if you had not been smoking, you will wish you had chosen a disorderly conduct arrest rather than failing your final smoke-strike all those years ago. Seriously, you might never overcome this addiction. So don't fuck around after having come so far. Don't take it lightly.

Go on, do it. It's okay. You are doing a great thing by rising above this addiction; it's a victory for all of humanity when one person acts in a deliberate way, sets aside his or her fearful compulsion, and faces the terror of reality head on. So if you need to get down on the floor and writhe around, you just go right ahead.

No Big Deal

Let's not make this thing into something too serious. Lots of people have quit smoking and lived to tell about it. They are the minority, granted, a superior breed of humans, but what have they got that you haven't got? Whiter teeth. You have as much potential for white teeth, fresh breath, and strong lungs as anyone else. As you fulfill your potential by changing your mind about smoking, it's best to do it as if it is no big deal. Make it look easy. If a strong ninja can quit smoking, an even stronger ninja can do it gracefully.

One peculiar trait of reality is that a big deal can actually become a little deal for you if only you treat it as one. Your cigarette habit is like a toddler who fell down the stairs—if you rush to the bugger's aid too quickly, you'll never hear the end of his yelping and whining. You will have made it into a big deal. No, no. Go about your business for the moment, until the kid calms down. Then, give him a sideways smile. Take care not to add energy to the problem.

Ugly is in the eye of the beholder, as the saying goes, and to focus on the ugly aspects of your permanent smoke-strike creates an ugly experience for you. Monkey-mind dwells on ugly sometimes, if you let it. There is so much beauty to behold as you focus your attention and transform your life, but you will miss the beauty if you focus on the negative. Dealing with your habit has been teaching you the way to take firm hold of your attention and direct it according to your will. Keep your eye on the prize, the vision of a smoke-free you with white teeth and extra money, a you who does not crave a cigarette whenever you smell one. This vision is often forgotten by smokers-trying-to-quit, and the drive to quit is soon forgotten too, because it never seemed real. But smoke-strike practice has shown you that a smoke-free you can be real. Dieters don't suffer when they see themselves becoming beautiful; they're so excited, hunger feels like a 'good hurt'. Focus on the beauty of your positive change, and have a good time instead of suffering.

The Breath of Your Final Smoke-Strike

Breath is your connecting link to life. No breath, no life. Strong breath, strong life. Your lungs have changed. Having smoked less frequently, you feel the healing happening when you do not smoke, and you feel the tender, soft tissue of your trachea and lungs get scratched and blackened by the poison when you do. *Not* smoking strengthens your life, and you can take your practice to a brilliant extreme. Instead of indulging in an occasional cigarette and resting in mediocrity, be impeccable in your practice. Instead of stopping progress, wasting time and moving backwards, press on. You can strengthen your life and watch your progress by paying attention to the feeling of stronger breath.

The thing is, cigarettes are the basis of this spiritual practice. You may have other spiritual practices besides this renunciation, but renouncing cigarettes is the basis of *this* practice. That means there is a world of difference between occasional indulgence and impeccable renunciation. You are either practicing or not. Since you have changed your mind about smoking, to have a cigarette is to be untrue to yourself. To have one or not have one has become a heavy question. The moment of temptation has become a crucial moment of truth. Because of all the progress you have made, and because smoking has come to represent mediocrity, there is healthy pressure on you in that moment of truth when you renounce the smelly thing. To renounce it will reinforce your creative power, but to smoke it makes your power leak away. Lost progress. Apathy. Stagnation.

What is not good is evil, because it does harm to humanity, opposing good, promoting peoples' pain. What is not good is smoking, clearly. Smoking is not good. You renounce the habit, as you renounce all that is not good, bringing purity and wholeness into life. You've changed your mind. Now you stand for strong breath,

strong life, and all that is good.

You do not smoke. You used to, but you took a stance against it when you saw the mediocrity of habit. You *create* now, and uphold life, killing demons that would close in on you if you let them. You are greater than your demons, strengthened by your practice of renunciation, and you will never let them see you smoke.

Be impeccable; of course you can. You are on to more important things. You are the higher being, vast, creative and immovable. You do what you like, what suits your creative inclination. You care for the person, as you care for all people, but you know that the person's wanting must be kept under control. More important challenges will appear if you press on, exploring life, moving deeper toward the center of things instead of giving in and sliding backwards.

Perform with calm resolve this final smoke-strike, and be an example of self-direction to your friends. Demonstrate Creative Action and wisdom, and do not taint your creation with occasional indulgences. Right here, this life is spraying virgin moments at your feet as you walk forward, never giving in to things that are not good. You protect the breath of life now, and receive your power from the spiritual practice of renunciation.

Saturate your Day with Practice

You drive to work, thinking of the way that this smoking habit has become an opportunity for spiritual cultivation. Stopped at an intersection, you read a bumper sticker on the car in front of you that says WWJD, and you recognize it as the Christian question, "What Would Jesus Do?" You suddenly understand what it means to saturate your day with a spiritual practice. Buddhists let the sound of meditation bells call them back into mindfulness,[11] Christians use reminders such as WWJD or the "Jesus

[11] See Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*, 1992.

Prayer,"[12] and Muslims stop five times each day to pray. Dr. Yang explains that Taoist spiritual cultivation involves meditation at dawn, noon, dusk and midnight.[13] Spiritual people are saturating each day with practice!

You are included among them, saturating your day. At night, you practice the simple self-hypnosis technique before falling asleep. You wake up in the morning and spend nine minutes breathing back into spacious mind. You choose a meditation to take with you into the day, so that it can occupy monkey mind during idle times that are conducive to cigarette cravings. You play mind games such as furious mind, stupid mind, and melancholy mind, entertaining the person with the use of proactive thinking. When you fall out of alignment with the present moment, you breathe back into the *now* with one cool inhalation and one warm exhalation. These are the practices that saturate your day. They are not burdensome, but liberating. You know that each moment is an opportunity for Creative Action, as long as you can control the impulses of the person, and this spiritual practice of renunciation is what keeps you in control.

As it turns out, your practice is a practice of mindfulness. What is mindfulness? It is the constant care, the clear frequency, a mellow attendance to the present moment that becomes possible after your nine minutes of breathing exercises in the morning. What does mindfulness have to do with breathing? Breathing is always happening, like the change of seasons in a steady routine, an energy exchange with all that is. Establish attention on the breathing, and you are attending to the person instead of *being* the person. Breathe back into Spacious Mind, and be the higher being who watches through the person's eyes.

Yours is the perfect spiritual practice. Cravings are constant at first, and you must be *passionate* in your practice. Cravings start to subside within a few days or weeks, and you find yourself *empowered* by your practice. You settle deeper into life, steady, acting as the guardian of the person instead of identifying with him or her. You

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12 See Anthony DeMello's *Sadhana: Christian Excercises in Eastern Form, 1984.*

13 See *Qigong Meditation: Embryonic Breathing*, by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, 1997.

see the symbolic significance of that cigarette habit: it is the self-destructive inclination of the forsaken person, the person who has been neglected. Use your attention to save the person, and the person will breathe deeply. Catch the trick of nourishing the person with your attention, and you can use your attention to nourish other people as well. Your sphere of influence expands with your spiritual practice.

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When a long time has passed and you have not smoked, your spirits will have risen to heights that nicotine cravings cannot reach. Reward yourself by stepping to the next level of the practice: Learn the ancient practice of "embryonic breathing" that is explained in detail by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming. His books and DVDs are available through YMAA Publications at www.ymaa.com. Also, visit me at www.painmanagementcafe.com.

APPENDIX A

Bell and Timer Meditation

Can you get yourself to sit still for a few minutes with closed eyes, relaxed shoulders and upright posture? Say, three minutes. Go find a suitable stopwatch, alarm clock or cooking timer, nothing that will tick as it times you, and nothing that will shriek hellish turmoil at you when the time has elapsed. Some bad alarm clocks will detract from your meditation session because you spend the whole session anticipating the loud, startling jolt that will bring it to an end.

While you are out shopping for a timer that will allow you to sit for three to twenty minutes without having to continually stop and check the clock, you should also look for a small bell that will reverberate for a long time after you strike it. A bell that will sound for a long time will be a tremendous aid to you as you begin the process of quieting mind and body at the start of each session. Both the bell and the timer are so important, I wish they could be included with this book. But they can't, so you are on your own. Choose a bell and timer that you will like very much, and use them to send your person into deep meditation.

APPENDIX B:

Reading Hypnosis

Melancholy Mind: A Narrative Trance

Use this somber, melancholy trance, somewhat sad but also loaded with energy. You will take a stand against cigarettes and the dull pain, the sadness, the damage that they eventually cause. You will cut through the complacency and renounce cigarettes. Sit up straight with face and shoulders relaxed, rest the person's attention on the sound and sensation of respiration, and induce a subtle trance for the person by reading the following passage. Some attention should remain with the breath, while the rest is used for reading. Achieve great receptivity in the person by fully engaging the senses. The person's body and mind respond to every suggestion. Establish the person's attention on 1.) the words on the page, 2.) the posture of the body, and 3.) the sound and sensation of the breath. With a relaxed mind and fully engages senses, you begin the trance:

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and fill the lungs to near capacity.

Exhale warm air now, from the tip of the nose, gentle hesitation slowing down the action of the breath.

Inhale coolness once again, controlled, cool air slowly stimulating skin at the nose.

Exhale now, forgetting all the stuff of the mind and rest attention only on these lines that carry you.

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and feel the change occur, sharp precision.

Exhale, resting blissfully; simplicity is breathing, doing nothing but the one thing that sustains you.

Inhale, essence rushes past the nose, into the lungs, and all the way down to the heels.

Exhale, reading slowly so that breath slows down, until you narrow your attention to a point on the page.

Inhale, let a subtle trance consume the monkey-mind; attention resting on the page.

Exhale, floating on the moment, you prepare to change your mind.

Inhale coolness slowly as you read this line, and fill the lungs to near capacity.

Exhale warm air now, from the tip of the nose, gentle hesitation slowing down the action of the breath.

Inhale, (one… two… three… four… five **be patient!!**… six… seven… eight…)

Exhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Inhale, let a subtle trance consume the monkey-mind; attention resting on the page.

Exhale, floating on the moment, you prepare to change your mind.

Inhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Exhale, (one… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight…)

Floating on the surface, you begin self-hypnosis. You hold the person still and set up your attention to establish hypnosis consciousness. *I am going to a deep level of mind to work on the person. I reconstruct reality when I change the person's mind, and I exercise my creativity now by freeing her of the need to smoke.* Balancing the breath so that inhalation is equal to exhalation, listening to the sound of rushing air, you slip beneath the surface.

The body feels limp. Breath is steady and sure, and I go deeper.

Your attention is anchored to the breath as thoughts come and go. Images appear in the imagination, but you continue to attend to the breath. The inhalation, rising, gently fills your lung capacity, yields for a pause, then reverses its direction and descends. Bodily sensations try your stillness, but the person must be patient while you dive into the mind.

The body feels limp. The breath is steady and sure, and I go deeper.

The breath is like a heavy weight that sinks the diver down, on to the lower levels where the turbulence near the surface can be felt no more, and some of the person's restlessness subsides. The weight of the breath, the stone-sinking certainty with which you submerge, manifests as a sense of overwhelming heaviness. The person surrenders some more control, heaviness becomes mild paralysis, and mental chatter ceases as you pay attention only to the sound of breathing and the sight of the words. From this deep perspective, the stillness of the body and the action of the breath contrast one another. With the person in a self-induced semi-hypnotic state, you notice the refined quality of your consciousness.

The body is limp. The breath is steady and sure, and I go deeper.

Now that the surface is far away, you enjoy the pure experience of spacious-mind. You maintain this deep level of mind by keeping a part of your attention anchored to the sound and sensation of the breath. This deeper level seems to be the right place for working on the person, but you know from earlier sessions that this is only the beginning of stillness. The heightened receptivity of the person makes suggestions even more powerful.

Now, I am entering a deeper state of consciousness.

The change that occurs when you give this command is dramatic. A rush of bliss comes over you, the euphoria of stillness. Depth increases pressure, locking you into place. The

person feels uneasy without any control, but has no option other than to give up resistance to change and surrender to the profound stillness of this spacious place. Here you are, anesthetized and outside time, tentatively pushing at a new frontier. You had to practice spacious-mind several times before you made it to this place, and when you did, you thought it must be the deepest level of mind. Holding still the person and suspending fear, you relax into the pressure at this unexplored depth and find yourself beginning to descend again. Might there be some level even deeper than this? Going there, could you even accept such vast, spacious freedom?

The change that occurs when you give this command is dramatic. A rush of bliss comes over you, the euphoria of stillness. Depth increases pressure, locking you into place. Inhale coolness, and experience cool clarity. Exhale warm air, and experience warm relaxation. At this deep level, suggestions have a powerful influence on the person. You enjoy the crisp coolness of each inhalation, and you keep some attention on that inhalation-coolness in order to maintain this profound level of mind. You enjoy the cleansing of the lungs that occurs with every exhalation, and you keep some attention on that exhalation-warmth in order to maintain this deep level of mind.

You leave this suggestion hanging in the stillness of the mind, following the action of the breathing. You rest your attention on each inhalation and exhalation, keeping perfect stillness in the mind. You reinforce spacious-mind with another suggestion.

Now, I am entering a deeper state of consciousness.

Inhale coolness, and experience cool clarity. Exhale warm air, and experience warm relaxation. You enjoy the crisp coolness of each inhalation, and you keep some attention on that feeling in order to maintain this profound level of mind. You enjoy the cleansing of the lungs that occurs with every exhalation, and you keep some attention on that feeling in order to maintain this deep level of mind. At this deep level, suggestions have a powerful influence on the person.

Changing my mind is easy. I choose to let my lungs heal.

You rest in stillness. You maintain this solid, fixed stillness with resolute attention, firmly anchored to the sound and sensation of the breath. For a few moments, you stop to enjoy this profound stillness and this healthy circulation of the breath. You slow down your reading

in order to fully experience the effects of each cleansing out-breath and energizing in-breath. Your reading becomes very slow for the duration of several breaths, while the lungs and mind continue their process of recovery.

My lungs have begun to heal. I have no desire to smoke.

Her rhythmic steps on the wet dirt road took her closer to home, to her children. She shuffles along on loose, floppy sandals, scratching through the silence and stillness of midnight in her neighborhood. Her hair and skirt flow behind her; they move with her, and turn with her, and stop with her for a moment to look at an odd-shaped puddle of rain. Gently and for no particular reason, she touches the surface of the water with the toe of her sandal. It is indeed a puddle, so she walks on.

Light from a streetlamp hits the girl, and she casts a beautiful shadow. She notices the shadow, but she doesn't notice how flawless, how quietly feminine. She thinks it is spooky. Approaching the streetlamp, her shadow gets smaller as she steps further into the light. Soon, everywhere she steps there is light from the streetlamps near the center of town. Light like daytime in the middle of the night.

She thinks about this silly walk through the light on this spinning rock that flies around the sun. She thinks about her children, how she loves them with a larger love than she had ever known before she became a mother. How quickly the years had gone by, and how sad she used to be. She had been hurt as a child, and then she had been hurt again as an adult—always by men. She had been misused like a picked flower. The beautiful ones always get picked. She lost her own father when she was young, and soon after her father's death she had to fight off a stepfather time and again. He would always come for her at times when he knew she was weak, and he would hurt her. She was hurt again by the father of her older son. She was not strong enough to defend herself against him. He gave her a black eye and a broken arm, and, nine months later, a baby.

Now the young mother was tainted by pain from the past. The men were all gone, so there was no more fighting; just the little ones, and other young mothers who would babysit for one another to accommodate work-shifts. There was not much money, but she was alright. The children were alright. She had handled her pain, and, like some crazy alchemy, transformed it into compassion and empathy. Sensitivity. Young mother touches the same source of love and

abundance as does the Great Mother who nourishes everything. From pain had come purpose, something she had been searching for. Purpose had amplified her love for her kids and for all kids and for all people. The empathy made young mother real, and the realness made her eyes shine deep brilliance.

People were often drawn to her. Men propositioned her, but she knew better than to let anybody in. Her children, and her self—that was her self-sufficient system. It worked, sort of lonesome and sort of not, at least it was safe. She had missed much of childhood, but her children would not. She was dedicated to them even at the forfeiture of all else, selfless, because her self had stepped aside to make room for fulfillment and bliss.

Walking alone through the center of town, the girl felt glad that her work-shift was over. Nearing her home now, the bright light of Main Street fades behind her. Her floppy sandals scratch along the side-street that passes her apartment. Young mother sits on the stairs beneath her door to steal one last moment alone. Her clothes have no pockets, so she has to fumble through her purse for a cigarette. In the darkness, she flashes a light of her own. The tip of a stale cigarette glows as she draws smoke into her body.

In a life of so many things out of control, the act of smoking remains simple; it is something that remains simple and all her own. Sleep will lead to morning, and morning will only bring her to her other job, but all that will wait for a moment. She stops it for a moment with her cigarette.

Young mother needs a little break, so she takes a little hit, breathing smoke that gently hurts her lungs. It is a good hurt, a small price to pay for a moment of stillness, a moment that she can control. The nicotine will make it difficult for her brain to let go into sleep when she goes inside, but that's okay. She's not even in it for the nicotine; she's in it for that familiar moment, that little reward. The cigarette sustains her in a difficult life.

In the steady, sure way years pass by, young mother becomes steady in her maturity. The children are teenagers now, but her love has never faded, not in all these years. She has given of herself completely and found happiness for a time. Her sons bring something real into her life. Something complete. High school boys with high school problems. Young mother has been through those experiences, and her sons can sense her wisdom. The boys acknowledge to themselves and one another that she has great personal strength. "My mom is the coolest

person I know," they say. Her boys are so smart and so secure; she has given them confidence and clarity. The pain from her past has transformed into something wholesome, because she accepted it. Young mother was strong for the sake of her children.

Now the boys graduate from high school. Young mother is there, and she is proud of them. So open and real she has been with her love for her boys; the pure selflessness of her intentions has kept her youthful and playful. The boys will always remember her playful wisdom. Young mother loves, because to love is her nature. When the boys go off to their graduation party with friends, young mother claims a moment of her own. It is a clear moment in solitude. She flashes her light and breathes some smoke.

Now, when she is fifty and no one is around, young mother walks home again in the darkness on a wet dirt road in her town at midnight. She should have had more time to stay, but it is too late now. The diagnosis, the little, malignant black spot, the strange cough—nothing lasts forever, but knowing the approximate number of months before her life ends is almost too much to take. Young mother remembers how it had hurt her when her father died, and she wishes her own sons could be spared that hurt. They will be hurt, though, when she leaves them. Her sons wish that she could stay with them for at least five or ten years longer, but she cannot. The diagnosis and the time-frame create awkwardness among them. They all wanted to cry and embrace one another. They all wanted to wish the diagnosis away.

This is a true story. It is true over and over again. When cigarette cravings tempt you, you can call on Melancholy Mind. Respond to thoughts of smoking with appropriate sadness, and do not allow monkey-mind to use sadness to justify smoking. This is nothing to take lightly. You will take a stand against cigarettes and the dull pain, the sadness, the damage that they eventually cause. You will cut through the complacency and renounce cigarettes.

Attention is still on the breath, and you can actually feel the difference that has been made in the lungs after several minutes of deep, profound breathing. You can feel the subtle change that has resulted from this session. Before returning to the surface of mind, you reinforce the effects of the session again:

My lungs have begun to heal. I have no desire to smoke.

At your own pace, you begin to return to the surface level of consciousness. A cool inhalation energizes the mind. A warm exhalation sends energy throughout the body. Coming

out of the semi-hypnotic state, you clearly feel the difference that you have made for the person. A cool inhalation energizes the mind. A warm exhalation sends energy throughout the body. Returning slowly to the surface, you have changed the mind of the person. For you, future sessions of self-hypnosis will be even deeper than this has been.

Returning slowly to the surface, I have changed the mind of the person.

Changing your mind is like changing direction, turning around and going back the way you came. Perhaps you went astray long ago when you started smoking cigarettes, and perhaps it will take some time to travel home, but to change direction takes no time at all.

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