Question: Will thinking positively and suppressing my urges help me to keep my addictions at bay?

by Yuliya Cohen

We as humans have learned that everything has a cause and effect. At some point, you’ve probably heard the idea that ‘what you focus on is what you get’ and that if you think positively and have the best intentions, then good things will happen to you.

As for the negative things, the advice is to ‘try not to think about it’. Thought suppression is the method most frequently employed for controlling negative thoughts or habits. So, you might think that if you could only stop focusing on the negative, your potential problems will go away? Right? Not so simple. . . . In this article we will explore how understanding the role of negative forces in your life can set you free.

Suppressed Thoughts Suppress Energy Flow

Surprisingly, thought suppression is likely to backfire, particularly when you work with addiction. This is the result from a recent study reported by James A.K. Erskine, of the Division of Mental Health, St George’s, at the University of London. Researchers asked two groups of regular smokers to spend a week either suppressing or allowing thoughts about smoking without changing their actual smoking habits. When they compared the results of the two groups, those who had tried to block their thoughts ended up smoking more the following week. The researchers also found that those who tended to suppress negative thoughts in their everyday lives reported having failed more in their attempts to
give up smoking, overeating and drinking, as well as other addictive behaviours.

Why might this be so? The human body, surrounded by a biofield, forms a complex flow of energy. When you try to suppress your thoughts, you block that flow. This is the way of the universe. I am not talking about anything esoteric right now, either. Just think about it. If you try to suppress the flow of water through a pipe, when you finally let go, the water gushes out with more force. We know better than doing that to our breath or bladder, so why would we think it would work with the energy of our desires?

These findings have obvious implications for individuals seeking to give up excessive behaviours of any kind—smoking, overeating, drinking, sex. While you are focusing on suppressing your addiction, you are not addressing the real reason you are in an addictive behaviour in the first place. You are not entering into the essence of your behaviour or realising all the forces in play.

Suppressing your thoughts and desires by focusing on positive thinking alone may not shield you from falling prey to an addiction. Being clear about all the contributing factors that control your behaviour and plugging energy leaks in your biofield will.

**Finding the essence of the addiction**

Let’s now examine some of the non-obvious strategies for dealing with addictive behaviours. We will look through the lens of blocked energy and the energy loss that results. I will illuminate this point by sharing with you my own personal addiction story.

When my two sons were young boys, I developed a seemingly un conquerable addiction to video games! And not to only the brainless or action ones, but to ones that could be termed ‘intelligent’, such as Tetris, a game in which geometric shapes stream down with ever-increasing speed and complexity and have to be strategically aligned at the bottom of the screen. I would stay up late into the night playing, until my eyes could no longer follow the shapes. With time I reached a rather impressive score, but on too many days I would wake up sleepy and exhausted after a night of obsessive playing.

My family tried to help me in different ways. My husband and my kids, all computer wizards, tried to hide the game in obscure file folders or delete the game entirely from the system. But I would summon my own computer science expertise and unfailingly fish it back to life out of the annals of hyperspace. It seemed impossible for me to stop this self-sabotaging behaviour. I even tried all the healing techniques I knew, but to no avail.

I blamed myself for being so helpless, yet the urge to play felt utterly beyond my control.

That is when I considered an idea rooted in many indigenous traditions, one that I had not thought connected to addictions—that behind every addiction there is some form of a dark force. This is the the kind of dark force made famous in popular media, such as the movies *Star Wars* or *Lord of the Rings*. This force links itself to some pre-existing self-defeating belief you hold (most likely a belief that holds a grain of truth) and that you try to suppress. It amplifies that thought pattern to such a degree that it begins to control your life. It creates a vortex-like dark and dense energetic structure in the form of an addiction to which you continually lose your own energy, and to some extent also drains the energy of those who love and care about you, for they inevitably get caught up in your struggle and, so, in the vortex of dark energy connected with it.

In other words, energetically your addiction is not entirely of your own making. To some extent this reality may allow you to blame someone else for your behaviour, which goes against the grain of what we have been told about positive thinking and taking responsibility. If a dark force is influencing you, then you may feel that you have no control. But this is not true. Just as I eventually did, you can succeed in overcoming your addiction if you are willing to not ignore it and examine it directly. Here’s how I did it.

Let me say that I was initially skeptical of the reality of a dark force. However, not having much to lose, I decided to explore the concept to see
if there was some truth to it in connection to my addiction. Rather then continuing to suppress the desire to play video games, I asked myself instead, ‘What is the belief that I have been trying to suppress about this addiction?’

I realised that I did have a limiting belief—that my time was not my own. I felt that I was not in control of my time, my family was. As every parent knows, there is more than a grain of truth to the thought that your children control your life. I realised this belief was overwhelming me; it was frightening and depressing. I tried to suppress that thought by spending time playing video games, an activity which gave me a sense of control as I was expertly manipulating the shapes in the best possible way. This was the mastery of time that I wished I had in my own life. In truth, however, my obsessive game-playing was stealing creative and productive time from my day. The more I played, the more hopeless I felt at gaining any measure of self-discipline and the more ashamed I became of my behaviour. And, most importantly, the more energy I lost to this dark force that was feeding on my belief.

The belief I held that ‘the time was not my own’ was my Achilles’ heel, a weakness in my otherwise strong and competent self. While the literary origin of the term ‘Achilles’ heel’ usually refers to a physical vulnerability, the term can be applied to psychological, and even energetic, attributes or qualities that can lead to potentially deadly downfalls. Many shamanic and magical practices cite that an existing physical, emotional or energetic weakness is the only point of entry to invade someone’s energy field.

Just the notion that I might be feeding my energy to a dark force jolted me back into reality. Rather then suppressing my addiction to the game, I needed to acknowledge the blocked despair of not being in control of my life. Otherwise, I was blocking myself from my creative expression.

I changed the contract I had with myself that allowed that force to link to my energy. The new contract said, ‘Yes, my time is not entirely my own, but not to such a degree as I think. As much as it is true that I am not entirely in control of my life because of my kids, I can still be in the world in a way that expresses my gifts. On my path for spiritual growth, my energy is not there for feeding the dark side. I want to take all the lost energy back so that I can move forward with my life.’

Then the impossible happened. My addiction to the video games was gone—almost instantly and without much effort. And now years later, the thought of playing video games still holds no appeal (although I do seem to have a pull towards liquor-filled dark chocolate!).

Less than six months after this energetic transformation, I was invited to teach a graduate course in energy awareness at the New England School of Acupuncture. One of the requirements was to have a course textbook, and that is how my Energetic Boundaries book was born. Part of its focus is on how we must treasure our truth and our reality, and allow ourselves the human failings—including those moments of despair. The reward is in the discovery of the origins of our behaviour that comes from a place of mindfulness and acceptance somewhere deep inside of us. The acceptance is both that there are forces that are vying for our energy and the recognition that we can take our energy back. This practice can free up so much otherwise ‘lost’ energy that you may be astounded.

**More about Dark Forces and Addiction**

Neither science nor alternative spirituality has truly accepted the reality that dark forces exist. However, consciousness about the nature of negative forces is growing. Carolyn Myss bluntly calls those forces demons, which sounds like an exaggeration, but actually may not be. Vampire books fill the bookstore shelves and are the subject of immensely popular TV shows and movies. Perhaps we ‘moderns’ are returning to the roots of the indigenous traditions that have always maintained that dark energy is as real as light energy.

Most of us are familiar with dualities, such as the inherent simplicity and wisdom of yin and yang: the black and white feeding each into each other, so that darkness is in fact tied to the
light. Darkness may be the fuel that ignites the light. The tension between the two forces causes enough contrast and discomfort that it is almost impossible for us not to notice when something does not work. However, we tend to seek a magic bullet—something that will quickly, easily and painlessly resolve this tension. But, as my own story illustrates, we sometimes have to get to the deeper roots of a problem first in order to heal, and that investigation can take time or be challenging.

Some people believe that at its core dark forces are parasitic in nature or are the viruses or bacteria of the invisible energetic realm. As an adult, you know that your physical environment is teeming with viruses and bacteria, which may make you a bit uncomfortable. But you also know how to protect yourself from getting sick from them, such as through good hygiene and maintaining a strong immune system. You take the necessary precautions and your fear goes away. In the case of physical threats, it’s what you don’t know that can hurt you. Well, the same goes for the energetic realm.

The dark forces create vortexes of negative energy that are like black holes that suck energy into them. As an individual, you cannot easily fill up such a black hole, so it creates a persistent pull on your energy. Most people who have struggled with addictions know that pull. They have the uncanny feeling of being uncontrollably drawn into the dark hole of their desires and cannot resist. They then blame themselves for their behaviour at the same time that they feel they have little control over their thoughts and urges. The result is a vicious psychological and energetic cycle. But now that you know about the existence of dark forces, you can protect yourself from their influence or remove their effect by getting to the root of the belief that allowed them into your biofield in the first place.

Energetically, all Addictions Are Alike

With time I have come to see that all addictions are similar energetically. Although different traumas can lead to different kinds of addictions, in terms of how we lose our energy to our desires they are all alike.

And you can heal yours quickly, as I did mine. Yet, you have to remain conscious of the process and check for hidden pitfalls.

Let me explain again using an example from my own life. Instant healing always held an attraction for me. Several years ago I declared to the universe that my overriding desire was to learn to heal people as quickly as possible and that I was willing to do whatever it takes to acquire this ability. I was careful with both my intention and my practice, making sure I would not be deluding myself into thinking healings were real when they were not.

I thought I was safe as my intention began to materialise. Patients were transformed in the course of a single session, sometimes multiple traumas were healed. What used to be accomplished in months, or days or hours, was now happening in a matter of moments—and with a greater degree of precision. However, I also saw warning signs that something was not quite right. I felt something very unsettling about the whole experience. Things began to feel as if they were almost spinning out of control.

My clients felt it, too. Many emerged from a session puzzled and feeling somewhat overloaded by such sudden and effortless change. They had no framework for understanding and believing it. I, for my part, often felt disoriented after a session. That didn’t surprise me too much as I was working energetically through an investigation of clients’ past lives and exploring their ancestral trees, making multidimensional shifts of all kinds during every session.

As healing accelerated, however, I felt as if I were in a race. I felt a sense of anxiety that I would not have the time to heal all there was to heal. I also had heard a voice whispering toward the end of many sessions. It was hypnotic as it urged me to keep going, to do more—just one more energetic investigation, one more healing intervention. I felt it led me into a trance state, urging me on by coaxing my ego: ‘It will feel so good. You will feel so satisfied. Just one more healing, one more exploration, there is time...’
All of this was incongruent with the easier and softer ways of my craft of effortless healing. I knew something was wrong; I just did not know what it was, except that there was that ‘not enough time’ belief again! I gradually became aware that in this instance I was being given an opportunity to explore how a good intention can go wrong. Healing had turned into an addiction. My desire to ‘heal others as fast as I can’ had entrapped me. I gained a clear realisation how any desire, no matter how well intentioned, can turn into an addiction if it is not given boundaries.

The truth is that we all are trapped in different kinds of addictions in ways that we fail to recognise as we go about navigating our ‘ordinary’ reality. There are probably only a few of us who have never experienced addictive behaviours or beliefs—who have never felt a loss of control. Acknowledging our weakness is the first step to regaining control. The awareness of darkness can serve to shake us up, to wake up our unconsciousness, to lift us above our fears and encourage us to act in a much wiser way.

Then we will eventually come to see that all addictions are alike, both the ‘ill intended’ and ‘well intended’ ones. The desire to take another drink is the same as the desire to devour another pint of ice cream, to get another fix, to bite your nails, to become rich, to have sex with yet another partner, to hold onto a relationship no matter what the consequence, or to heal the world at any cost. Every desire at its core has a potential to turn either into a dream come true or a disaster (as in an addiction) because it can be claimed either by the dark or the light.

The key to your freedom lies in yourself. There is nothing wrong with an underlying desire. What matters is to remain connected to the essence of your behaviour and to sense if it is causing you to lose energy and control.

With time and experience I learned that the path of entrapment has its own structure and even has an order. Darkness has the ears for our thoughts and an eye for our vulnerabilities. It has the capacity to envelop us in confusion, feed our hankering for the objects of our desires, and steal our life force and energy. This knowledge is now my shield as I help my clients and myself retrace our steps back to wellness and freedom from the gripping hold of addictions. You can too.

**TIPS**

1. Notice an addictive behaviour or some aspect of your life that you have lost control over. Acknowledge that you no longer have clear boundaries around it. If you are not sure what exactly is causing you problems, ask your family or friends. They will be happy to oblige!

2. Do not be ashamed or embarrassed. Remember you are not in full control because some other force is part of the equation. Acknowledge that you have been entrapped. Acknowledge that this state is not entirely your fault.

3. Figure out what belief or contract/agreement with yourself made you vulnerable. Do not judge it or make it wrong. Beliefs are always half-truths.

4. If you feel that you are somehow less of a person, less worthy, less attractive, less lovable, less capable, less full of energy than everyone else around you, it is at least partly because the forces behind your addictions are robbing you of your energy and life force. You will need to take all this energy back.

5. Break and rewrite any old agreements or redefine old beliefs. Most likely you do not need to abandon your desires; you simply need to add a clause that creates a boundary: ‘I still want this, but not at such a cost’. Remember this reframing of the situation, as it is important.

Of course, this is just a quick run down of the basic steps for your daily practice of Energy Intelligence. Even when you address energetic forces, some chronic addictions may be hard to heal on your own and may need a skilled intervention. Seek assistance from a professional health care practitioner. You also can learn more about the powerful universal principles of energy recovery so crucial for dealing with any form of addictive behaviour in *Energetic Boundaries: The New Paradigm of Effortless Healing*.

*For more about the book and Yuliya Cohen, visit www.healingwithouteffort.com*