

TARGETING COMPULSION: A Tree that Only Grows in the Dark

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Summary

“There is nothing sweeter than seeing the emptiness of all things.” This is what Scott Kiloby’s work is all about.

After a twenty year battle with addiction, Scott Kiloby began looking in a different way. Instead of turning away from negative thoughts and feelings from the past and looking for release in the future, he began to face his suffering directly.

He began to allow all negative and positive energies of thought, emotion, and sensation to be as they are. He began to rest and recognize presence as the stable foundation in which these energies temporarily come and go. Through inquiring into the nature of the belief in separation, and how it arises, and making presence primary in his life, Scott discovered that the key to release from the addictive cycle exists in the one place addicts refuse to look—the present moment.

In the summer of 2012, Scott began experimenting with Colette Kelso, a facilitator of his Living Inquiries. As a result of those sessions, Colette and Scott developed the Compulsion Inquiry, which will be elaborated upon in this article.

Scott Kiloby is the author of *Love’s Quiet Revolution: The End of the Spiritual Search*; *Reflections of the One Life: Daily Pointers to Enlightenment*; *Living Realization: Your Present Experience As It Is* and *Living Relationship: Finding Harmony with Others*. Scott has developed the “Living Inquiries” which are tools for seeing the emptiness of self as it shows up in relationships.

He is also the creator of a new addiction/recovery method called Natural Rest for Addiction along with an effective tool for dissolving addiction called the Compulsion Inquiry. The Natural Rest website is www.naturalrestforaddiction.com (This site is not up yet. It will be launched in the early summer of 2013).

Scott’s main websites are www.livingrealization.org and www.kiloby.com. These sites contain writings, videos, and audio interviews with a wide diversity of teachers, authors, scientists, and psychologists as well as information about private sessions with Scott and online interactivity groups.

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The Velcro Effect

At Natural Rest for Addiction, we consider compulsion to be one basic movement of thought and bodily energy that arises in a particular moment and results in the urgent, present reaching for an addictive substance or activity. We call this concurrent movement of thought and bodily energy the “Velcro Effect.” The Velcro Effect is the experience of a mental “ghost image” (usually a mental picture of the addictive substance itself or the person ingesting the substance) appearing *stuck* or *glued* to some bodily energy (i.e., emotion and/or sensation). It’s called a “ghost image” because it flashes through the mind with little or no awareness of it.

This Velcro Effect is a present movement. Seemingly out of nowhere, like a snake striking from a poised position, a subtle, unconscious “ghost image” of the substance or activity arises unconsciously, instantaneously and involuntarily in the present moment. And with the Velcro Effect, the bodily energy arises along with it, creating this sense of an urgent desire for something or someone. The arising of this image almost always precedes the behavior of acting out itself. It comes before one picks up a drink or walks to the computer to watch porn. Most people are largely unaware of this image when it arises until they are taught to see it.

Focusing on Compulsion As It Arises Instead of Addiction as a Time-Bound Pattern

With addiction, the movement to seek pleasure that is hard-wired into being human becomes overblown, exaggerated, and overindulged by the mind. A pattern of seeking towards substances and activities goes beyond the simple need for survival, food, sex, and shelter. It creeps into other areas that have nothing to do with physical survival (e.g., chocolate, heroin, alcohol, gambling) and the movement of compulsion takes over, appearing again and again, as if the body and mind are hijacked by it. We refer to addiction as the pattern of this present moment compulsion appearing repeatedly in one’s life, over time. Yes, addiction, like any other time-bound pattern, is “just a story.” But it can be a painful, life-altering story that has serious health consequences.

Addiction is like a tree that only grows in the dark. It has many branches. The branches are all the substances and activities to which one becomes addicted over time as well as the mental chatter around addiction including stories about guilt, self-deprecation, addiction/recovery, moderation, shame, willpower, and control. The particular substances or activities to which one is addicted, as well as the stories around addiction, often change throughout a lifetime. The branches look different as the season’s change. At one stage of life, the primary substance may be alcohol. Once alcohol is given up, the primary branch may become sugar or tobacco or some activity such as gambling, shopping, or sex. But this basic movement of the Velcro Effect is the proverbial trunk of this multi-branched tree. It is the same movement, regardless of the substance or activity at any particular stage in life. The movement is largely unconscious; hence, it grows in the dark i.e., only when it remains unseen. As long as

the image of the substance or activity keeps rearing its head in the moment, along with emotions and sensations that feel stuck to it, compulsion tends to keep arising, creating the pattern of addiction over time.

At Natural Rest for Addiction, we do not focus on the pattern of addiction, but rather the compulsive movement itself, in the moment. This provides a new and direct approach to releasing the compulsion when it arises, which then automatically releases the time-bound pattern of addiction itself as a consequence. Issues of guilt, shame, self-deprecation, willpower, and control are dealt with separately through non-dual self-inquiry.

Many of the commonly-known recovery programs focus a lot on the branches, attempting to change the behavior itself without directly focusing on the Velcro Effect, “white-knuckling it,” settling for substituting one substance for another, engaging in conceptual stories about being an addict or being clean and sober, or intellectualizing about brain chemistry or philosophizing about addiction. At Natural Rest, we cut to the chase. Here’s the chase: when the Velcro Effect is no longer operating, people begin to experience a “take it or leave it” attitude around substances and activities. Stated another way, when the ghost image is either no longer appearing or it is appearing without bodily energies attached to it, the addiction itself is released, or at least is in the process of being released. This process is like a deepening into the experience of the present moment being complete as it is, with nothing lacking or missing.

By focusing on the Velcro Effect of compulsion, there is either a complete release from any desire to use the substance or activity at all or a relaxation around using, which shows up as “I can truly take it or leave it.” This “I can take it or leave it” attitude should not be confused with denial, in which a person tells the story of being able to moderate his or her use of the substance or activity. “I can take it or leave it” is not willpower. It is a change in the way the body and mind relates to the substance or activity itself, with the compulsion relaxing. Some who use the Compulsion Inquiry, described below, end up naturally refraining from using the substance or activity altogether and others find that they may use it occasionally, with the difference being no physical compulsion at the heart of the using.

The Compulsion Inquiry

The tree of addiction cannot continue living, breathing, and growing in the light of awareness. The movement from unconsciousness (thoughts and bodily energies remaining unseen) to consciousness (thoughts and bodily energies becoming seen) is the key here.

The Compulsion Inquiry, developed by Scott Kiloby and Colette Kelso in August 2012, is the primary tool used at Natural Rest for Addiction to target, illuminate, and release this instantaneously-arising Velcro movement. We find this tool works best through private sessions with a facilitator trained in this technique. In the private sessions, we first teach clients to spot the ghost image, making it conscious every time it arises. We then move the client’s awareness into the body, to experience and release the bodily energies. By targeting that instantaneous

Velcro movement, as soon as it arises, the focus on particular behaviors (or branches) becomes largely unnecessary. The content of the ghost image may change throughout the day or throughout one's lifetime, from alcohol, to sugar, to sex, to something else, but the basic movement itself is the same throughout all these experiences. Spot the ghost, and the entire movement of compulsion begins to relax, regardless of its content.

What's left when this movement of mind and bodily energy relaxes, or is at least made fully conscious, is an unshakeable peace and rest in the present moment, as it is. As that present rest is felt, known and experienced on an ongoing basis, the time-bound pattern of addiction begins to disappear entirely or becomes so faint that there is no longer any *compulsive* energy contained in the thoughts and bodily energy. As this change happens within, outward behavior itself is deeply affected, resulting in a tremendous decrease in addictive behaviors or the complete disappearance of them altogether.

The Compulsion Inquiry is a simple question that one asks about any thought or emotion that arises regarding a particular addictive substance or activity. The asking of the question allows the thought and emotion to become conscious, or seen through direct, non-conceptual observation. For example, if the addiction is chocolate, and the ghost image is a chocolate bar, the facilitator trains the client to retrieve that ghost image once it flashes quickly in and out of awareness. Once it is retrieved, the client is taught to look directly and unwavering at the image with awareness, asking the question, "Is there a command to eat chocolate anywhere on the image itself?" This is not a question for the intellect. Mere observation is enough because if there is truly a command on the image it will be apparent through direction observation alone. The key, of course, is to see that there is never a command on any mental image. There is only the appearance of the image itself. The sense that the image is commanding one's body to use a substance or engage in an activity comes from energies within the body. That combination of the image and the bodily energy is the Velcro Effect.

The client is then asked to feel into the body, noticing whether there is any energy such as craving, contraction, sadness, excitement or fear. The same question is asked to the client: "Is there a command to eat chocolate in or on the energy itself?" Again, the question is not intellectual because if there is a command it should be readily observable on the energy itself. As the client is gently observing the energy, without any words or pictures being projected on it, the client sees no command. At that point, the facilitator encourages the client to allow the energy to be as it is, until it burns out and disappears naturally, or morphs into some other innocuous energy.

Addiction is an attempt to escape from or avoid these bodily energies through ingesting a substance or engaging in an activity. Therefore, coaching the client to "sit with" the energy allows a new disposition to take place with regard to these bodily energies. The energies are allowed to come and go, without hooking back into the ghost images again. The Velcro Effect is undone in that seeing. During the sessions, clients are also taught to find the point of relaxation

in their own experience. The point of relaxation is the recognition of presence that is felt when the client imagines following through with a particular craving. At the moment the decision is made to follow through in the mind, the body begins to relax along with all of the energies that were attached to the craving, in the imagined fulfillment of the craving. As this point of relaxation is experienced, the facilitator shows the client that this present relaxation was not the result of ingesting any substance or engaging in any behavior and was not the result of the future at all. The client recognizes his or her own true nature as presence through feeling the relaxation in the moment. As this is realized, the client sees that presence is what he or she was seeking all along and it's right here, available always in the present moment. This further releases the addictive pattern of thought and bodily energy as seeking quiets across the board for all substances and activities. The client is then taught how to do the inquiry on his own throughout the day.

Results of the Compulsion Inquiry

Since the Compulsion Inquiry was developed, it has been used by a multitude of facilitators in different private and group settings. The results have been very promising, if not astounding. It appears to work on virtually every substance or activity. Facilitators have followed up with clients for a few months after the initial sessions and have found that the Inquiry works on a long-term basis. Some compulsions are seen through immediately and never return after those initial sessions. No ongoing inquiry is needed in those cases. The Velcro Effect has been undone permanently. Other compulsions, especially around the more addictive substances such as opiates and alcohol have generally taken a few weeks or a few months to release. But in all cases, the success rate has been very high. The clients are taught how to do the inquiry so that it becomes a tool they can use whenever they wish on any compulsion.

Many clients find that once a particular compulsion is dealt with (e.g., food) the inquiry begins to automatically work on other compulsions, illuminating more ghost images that were previously hidden from view. The result is a deep and abiding peace in non-dual, non-seeking awareness.

For more information about this inquiry, visit www.naturalrestforaddiction.com (This site is not up yet. It will be launched in the early summer of 2013).