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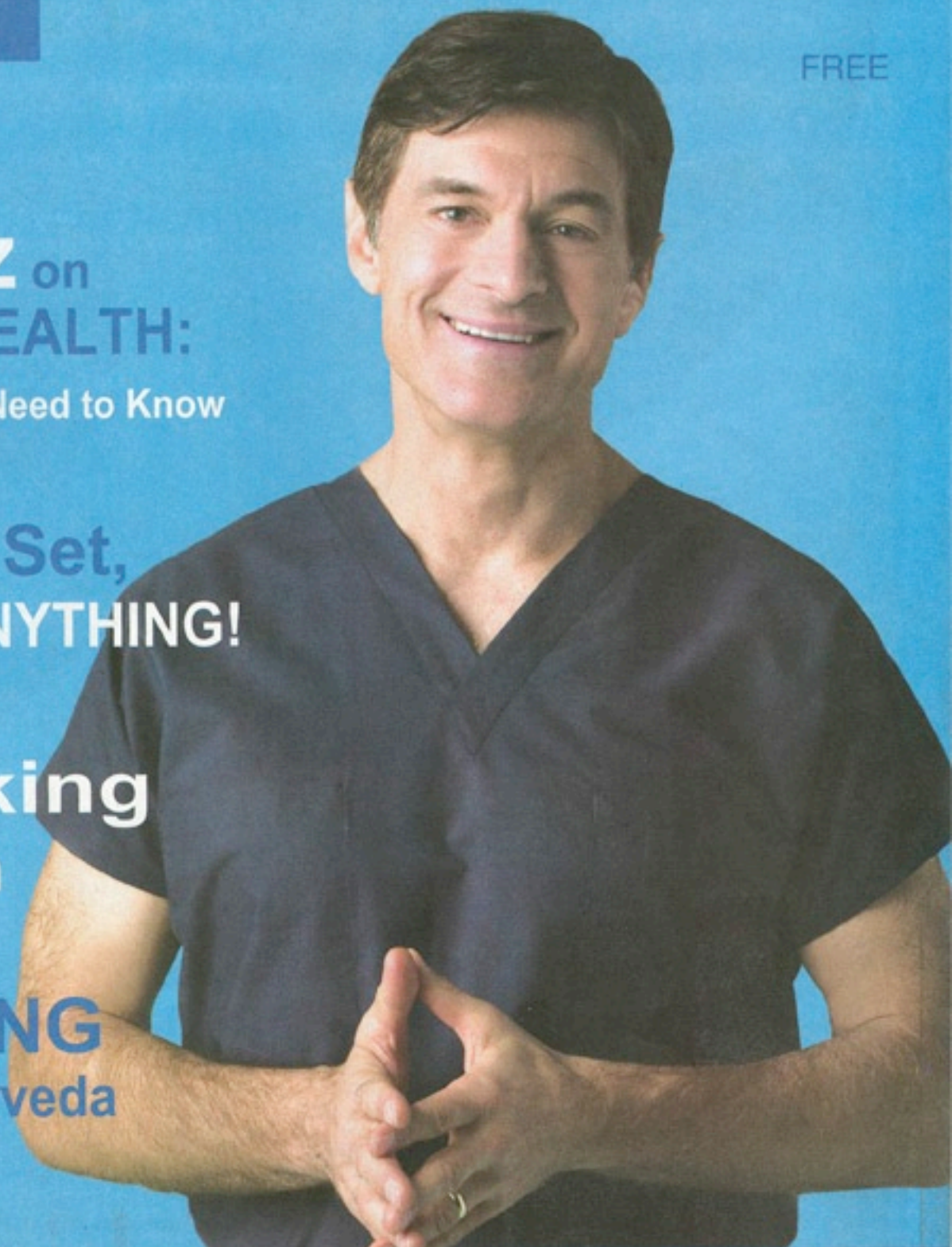
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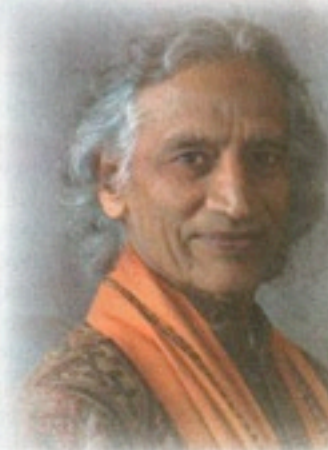


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Healing the Root Cause of Addiction with Ayurveda

by Linda Sechrist

Ayurveda means the "Science of Life," a holistic view of keeping our bodies in balance by combining applied principles of yoga, meditation and diet.



It's no secret that individuals who adopt unconscious ways to escape from stress and conflict can often become victims of their own self-destructive habits and behavioral patterns. "Conflict creates stress and addictions, like [to] alcohol, food, work, sex and drugs," says Yogi Amrit Desai, founder of Kripalu Yoga. "Addictions are antidotes that provide a temporary escape from the stress-producing, conflict-creating reactions you have about what you are doing, where you are going and who you are with. Addiction, which is only an effect, occurs when you continue to use inappropriate external resources to reduce stress and restore a sense of balance, while failing to resolve the cause of the stress hidden in the unconscious."

Desai further explains how the body's own homeostasis works to naturally regulate the internal polarities of tension and relaxation. However, when the amount of tension exceeds what can be balanced by relaxation, people call the unresolved tension stress.

"It is important to recognize that most people don't know the difference between tension and stress," cautions Desai. He observes that stressors—thoughts and reactions to our lifestyle, relationships, work environment and family life—are introduced through the ego mind. Emotionally charged thoughts and feelings of blame, shame or guilt then get metabolized into our biological body system. Stored in the form of toxins and neuro-glandular imbalances, these feelings create energy blocks that prevent the free flow of energy, or *prana*, the body's self-healing wisdom. Energy blocks may take the form of muscular tensions and weakness in liver, kidney and digestive functions. Gradual decline results in a progressive deterioration of biological processes and consequently can manifest in external symptoms of fatigue, fear, anxiety and insecurity.

"But, when our thoughts are free from stressful emotional feelings, they naturally pass like clouds without leaving footprints in our biology," counsels Desai, whose approach to Ayurveda is designed to solve addictions by resolving internal causes of stress.

"Shift your focus inward to your inner source, instead of reaching for external distractions; go within to resolve

any excess tension and all surface symptoms will begin to erode," advises Desai, who points out that addictions prevent us from connecting to the innermost core of our being. With the release of unconscious, stress-producing conflicts, an individual naturally becomes more securely established in their core self; thus, their life force is freed to activate and accelerate the power of pranic healing.

Ayurveda, a holistic health system and sister science of yoga, works from the outside in; yoga works from the inside out. Yoga physically initiates an unfolding of the spirit and a consequent transformation. Ayurveda initiates the same process, beginning with in-depth purification of body and mind. Ayurvedic treatments such as diet, nutritional herbs and an herbal detoxification process known as *panchakarma*, as well as meditation, not only work hand-in-hand to create a shift on a physical level, they also remove unconscious blocks that create chronic stress.

Desai's approaches to yoga and ayurvedic treatments are focused on working on subtle pranic levels of healing. Ayurvedic treatments are geared towards restoring energetic balance, according to an individual's physical and psychological constitution, which are considered to be interrelated and interactive. Healthful herbs and recommended lifestyle changes are precisely tailored to an individual's primary psycho-physiological constitutional type—*vata*, which controls movement; *pitta*, which rules metabolism; or *kapha*, which controls structure. This approach determines an effective program of diet, exercise and other regular measures vital for maintaining inner balance and reducing stress.

Desai's Amrit Yoga Institute combines ayurvedic treatments with the practice of Amrit yoga, yoga nidra (a form of meditation) and quantum breath meditation to create harmony, balance and union and to connect individuals with their inner source of integration. This works to restore a natural balance, preventing people from being the victim of stress.

"Relaxing in a zero stress zone helps to dismantle the preprogrammed self-image, phobias, addictions and stress-creating conflicts that lie beyond any mental or intellectual approach," Desai explains. "When you join yoga with Ayurveda, you have the combined power of body and soul, a powerful synergy for healing and recovery from addictions," which he refers to as unwanted weeds. An analogy is that while Western medicine fights weeds with herbicides, ayurvedic treatments cleanse and rejuvenate the body, mind and consciousness, thus "keeping the soil inhospitable for weeds to grow in."

"Spirit, representing our core self, and the energy body, through which our spirit manifests, are eternal and insepa-

rably one," concludes Desai, who clarifies that the visible physical body is an extension of the invisible energy body. In the release of blockages and the purifying of the body, we are linked to our invisible presence, oneness. We enter the domain of divine presence and grace, which initiates spontaneous healing. In this domain the doer, the ego mind, disappears and "the presence performs the miracle."

For more information on Ayurveda and the Amrit Yoga Institute, visit AmritYoga.org or call 352-685-3001.

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