



# About

Thanks for taking good care of you! Please let me know how I can help. With classes, telephone coaching, and text messages, we're trying to offer helpful, flexible, personalized support for folks who are brave enough to make this journey. **You deserve to be free!**  
**Tim** - Mons, Tues, & Weds, at **413-800-2334** (voice or text)  
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Over 20 years ago I observed a **way to look at addiction** that seemed like it **might** be helpful. People I served in my tobacco cessation practice often seemed overwhelmed by the idea of quitting smoking. I felt that way myself every time I tried to quit smoking. Logic led me to look at ways to break it down, or deconstruct the relationship with tobacco. Maybe if we presented it in 'bite sized chunks' people would feel less overwhelmed.

That's when I saw it – a way of looking at addiction (to tobacco, originally) that gave people **hope** and **direction!** **Hope** – because the overwhelming, amorphous, idea of my addiction actually consists of five components. When I look at them individually, addiction seems a little less overwhelming and I have hope that I **might** be able to escape addiction's hellish grip. **Direction** – because even if I'm not ready to take aim at the whole thing, I can still work on at least one of the five aspects. I have a clear direction and I can take at least a small step **today** along the path towards my freedom. **This way of looking at addiction was a game-changer!**

Thousands of brave hopeful folks have used this approach and found their freedom from tobacco, typically in small groups meeting in community and corporate settings. Many years ago people started applying the BESOCHEMPS model of addiction to **other** substances and even to behaviors that weren't typically considered to be addictions at the time (binge-spending, self-injurious behavior, gambling, etc.) Today the BESOCHEMPS model is being used to address the full spectrum of addictions.



## BESOCHEMPS – The Five Headed Dragon

The reason more people aren't more successful at quitting is that nobody told us that there are **five distinct aspects of our addiction that we need to address in order to get free and stay free.**



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If we handle one or two aspects (like most people do) we will **get** free, but we won't **stay** free.

Ask yourself how many times have you tried to quit before? Did you focus mostly on the chemical addiction and perhaps the behavioral triggers, and manage to stop? After a few days, a few weeks or a few months did you slip, cheat, or just cave in? To use the imagery of the five-headed dragon, by defeating a couple heads of the beast, you **wounded** your foe, but didn't **defeat** it. Fear not! This quit attempt can be different. This time you're going to learn how to deal with **all five heads of the dragon** so you can get free and **stay** free!

## Knowing BESOCHEMPS

First, we have to memorize the dragon's name. Look at it again... BESOCHEMPS. The dragon's name helps us remember each of the five heads: **BE**havioral, **SO**cial, **CH**emical, **EM**otional, and **PS**ychological.

We call the dragon **BESOCHEMPS** to help remember all five heads. We all have a "dragon" if we drink to excess, use illicit drugs, smoke, gamble, etc. Even activities like going on spending binges can create a release of endorphins, which can cause a chemical dependency for some of us.

### Your mission is three-fold:

- 1.) Can you see all five heads of your dragon?
- 2.) Which one (or two) of the heads are most dominant or prominent?
- 3.) Can you learn the tools and tricks that give you back your freedom?



*This stunning and sobering depiction of the 5-Headed Dragon, BESOCHEMPS, was created by the very talented **Santiago Bautista**.*

**Please do not be mistaken.**

This discussion about a 5-Headed Dragon is neither frivolous nor foolish. This method of teaching about addiction has been associated with drastically better outcomes than other methods. Each of the heads is different and influential to varying degrees. Subsequently, each person has a unique relationship with their substance of choice.



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Let's take a closer look at each of the heads:

**BE havioral** - The **things we do** just before we use or while we are using—the **triggers**—become cues to use.

(Example: Pouring a cup of coffee can trigger a smoker to light another butt, not because they're addicted to the chemical but because the ritual or habit has become familiar.)

How you can respond: Starting today, call this kind of want a "**trigger**."

- **Disassociate** the partnered behaviors from using before quit day so that they cease to be triggers to use. For instance, if you're a smoke and you tend to smoke while drinking a cup of coffee, leave your coffee cup inside when you go outside to smoke. Isolating the using behavior from all pleasurable activities until quit day means that you don't have to stop the pleasurable activities (coffee) in order to stop smoking.

*(Note: Some addictions don't lend themselves to gradual weaning and must be halted completely and immediately because of imminent danger of a single use.)*

- **Data collection** can help you better understand your using. Try to figure out which head of the dragon is behind each desire to use. (TAMI card can help with this!)

- **Doing it differently** can help you avoid some triggers. Getting your morning coffee at the drive-thru window can help you avoid the familiar routines that were associated with smoking.

- When you discover that you want a cigarette because of a behavioral trigger, be **delighted**! Don't despair.

This want is just a trick and you don't have to fall for it!

**SO cial** - Many social situations (the places and faces) can become **triggers** that make you want to use.

How you can respond: Starting today, call this kind of want a "**trigger**."

- You may need to completely disconnect from some of the people you've been spending time with. If you're going to try to stay in touch with them, some things will need to change. This will **disrupt** social patterns and you might even inspire your friend to try to quit!

- Change the place where you and your buddy meet, at least for a few weeks, to **disassociate** the social situations from smoking. Perhaps going out to the movies would be an easier substance-free night out to replace your dart night at the club.

- **Distract** yourself by doing some new healthy activities with your buddy.



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**Chemical** - Your body may have a physical response to the reduction or absence of a chemical in your bloodstream or **craving** for a dose. This state of withdrawal can be uncomfortable, and depending upon the substance, may be relieved with medications.

How you can respond: Starting today call, this kind of want a “**craving.**”

- **Decrease** your dependence by gradually reducing your smoking.
- **Drink water** as a way to help detoxify your body and give your hands and mouth something to do.
- **Deep breathing** is a great way to give your brain a fresh supply of oxygen and change the way you feel.

**Emotional** - Intense emotional feelings or the absence of emotional stimulus (boredom) can cause **urges** to use. We’ve trained ourselves to use when we are stressed or want to avoid unpleasant emotional states.

How you can respond: Starting today, call this kind of want an “**urge.**”

- **Deep breathing** can help defuse these brief periods of anxiety, anger or even boredom.
- **Distract** yourself until these episodes pass—and make it fun! Try a crossword puzzle or drawing. Change radio stations, take a brisk walk or learn how to hula-hoop.
- **Daily disciplines** such as prayer, meditation and yoga can help you manage stressors in healthier ways.

**Psychological** - To some extent, anyone who knowingly participates in a behavior that causes harm has decided to allow harm to come to him or her. For some reason, we have **compulsions** to either cause harm or allow harm to happen to us. Smokers (as well as overeaters, alcoholics, etc.) might ask themselves why it’s acceptable for harm to come to them.

How you can respond: Starting today, call this want a “**compulsion.**”

- **Daily disciplines** of a spiritual and/or emotional nature may help restore a healthier sense of self-worth.
- **Dig deep** within yourself to find answers and strength.

While it’s not necessarily comfortable to discuss and share personal spiritual beliefs, a focus there may be a way we can hope to become “slip-proof.” Some folks find that when they learn to **see** themselves differently, it becomes easier to **treat** themselves differently.

**Good luck!** This is hard work and **you’re worth it. You deserve to be free!**



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