

RE/FRAMING ADDICT/ION

in balance. This imbalance leads us to find something, an external source to lean on: alcohol and cigarettes to “calm the nerves”, coffee and cocaine for a “pick-me-up”, television for a “distraction” from feeling and observing our emotions, and so on.

So how does the ancient healing wisdom of Ayurveda and yoga fit in with this modern re-frame of addiction? Ayurveda and yoga, often referred to as “Sister Sciences”, are based upon ancient teachings of creating balance within the body, mind and spirit, encouraging a harmonious existence with our Anamaya kosha (physical “sheath”) and the sophisticated intelligence of the natural world with our spiritual selves. The use of ayurvedic yoga therapy to prevent, treat and heal addictive behaviours makes perfect sense. With the practices of meditation, we learn to observe our thoughts and to be with our emotions as they come up, allowing them to pass through without engaging in reactive tendencies that can cause stress that, as we now understand, can lead to addictive behaviours and a build-up of ama (toxins) in the tissues of the body. Eventually, this toxic build-up can create illness and dis-ease. With pranayama (breathing techniques) and physical yoga forms, we learn to release the accumulated emotional trauma in our bodies, creating new space for healing and a greater understanding of our connections with all living beings. Within ayurvedic practices, we address the nutritional

deficiencies that can coincide with addiction with a new understanding of our physical and mental constitutions and how to support the healing process with diet and cleansing routines. The summation of support on all levels, emotional, spiritual and physical, creates a sophisticated healing system for a loving, gentle, compassionate and effective process to address addictive behaviours.