

EFT protocol¹

This gentle, meridian tapping is an affective form of acupuncture². It is an experiment in clearing emotion that binds unresolved situations³ to the present. To read and initially learn the process from this article will take about 90 minutes.

Note: Adopt a "split-level" approach to all instructions: On the one hand follow the instructions exactly, so that you can discover the experiences to which they point. On the other hand be sensitive to yourself and your own body. Assume that only sound expansive experiences are worth having. The moment doing it feels wrong in your body, stop following the instruction, and back up slightly. Stay there with your attention until you can sense exactly what is going wrong.

Step 1

Think first about a recent situation that is unresolved for you, and feels yucky, sticky or disturbing when you deliberately bring it to mind. An unpleasant memory that arises without overwhelming you is one to start with. If you have had some practice with the method, start with a recent, higher distress but not overwhelming event.

Disturbing events get placed in a network of related mental/emotional issues. If many unpleasant memories come to mind as you scan the recent past, list them in discrete and concrete statements and then rank them according to their emotional charge, using the 1 to 9 scale in Step 3 below and imagine putting them on the floor beside you or in a container. Then start the process with 'the freshest fish', the one that jumps out at you.

After running this experiment on one or a number of recent issues, you may feel encouraged to try an old and unresolved issue that is charged with reactivity or unfinished emotion, using the same protocol. If you describe the issue in simple concrete terms, your brain and nervous system will understand what it is to do. If you are too general in your description the effect will be diluted and sprayed over the whole area rather than concentrated on a single point of resolution.

Step 2

Find a phrase or a sentence that describes the problem simply, clearly and specifically in an 'I' statement. For example: 'when my partner is late home I panic'; 'when I ask for a hug I'm told that I'm too demanding'; 'if I want

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²Adapted from Gary Craig's Emotional Freedom Technique <http://www.emofree.com/> Craig was a student of Roger Callaghan, who first explored tapping acupuncture points to release emotional problems.

³ 'It is normal and healthy for the individual to be able to defend the self against specific environmental failure by a freezing of the failure situation. Along with this goes an unconscious assumption (which can become a conscious hope) that opportunity will occur at a later date for a renewed experience in which the failure situation will be able to be unfrozen and reexperienced in an environment that (supports a good enough) adaptation.'
<http://mythosandlogos.com/Winnicott.html>

an explanation, I get into trouble'; 'when I get home late, invariably I am criticized'; 'when the bank stuffs up my credit card payment, I get the shits'; 'I expect to get hay fever in mouldy places', 'I totally freaked going into day surgery' or 'I have this self-shaming pattern after my inner nazi has taken over and I beat myself up mercilessly'.

With an old memory that lies frozen in the past or unresolved, the opening statement might include, 'when I think about the past stuff to do with my friend; parent; sibling; former partner; teacher or employer; their or my accident or illness etc., I still feel awful or stirred up about it'.

Step 3

How upsetting is the issue? Give it a score from 1 to 9. 1 being almost no emotion at all and 9 being almost unbearably painful or the worst or the most scared you have ever felt in your life. If the whole issue is too painful to think of at once, then break it up into phases such as its beginning, middle and end or into the differing times or places or people involved for example at work and at home, or with one partner or one parent. Then ask yourself, 'am I willing to let this issue move on to the next step in its resolution?'

Crazy as it may sound, we hang on to pain or self-blame because it defines us; gives us a sense of belonging to a condition; belonging to a time or a place or to a special person or group of people, or because it is useful in managing ours or another's related present day behaviour. Hanging on to pain may provide a story that we can rely on to explain a recurrent situation and make meaning of life.

The issue may be like an ingredient in the cake that makes you who you are. But reacting to the ingredient is not necessary for it to define you. The reaction may contain energy or emotion that might be used elsewhere in life, mind or body and to better effect. The reaction may be an inefficient use of a non-renewable energy in an emotional economy that appears to have energy to burn.

Time is a resource like that. We can waste a lot of it reacting to stuff long since passed its use by date.

Step 4

Place the palm of your hand on your chest, either left or right, just above your heart. Wait until you can feel the warmth of your hand through your clothes, and then rub the hand round in a small circle and say the opening statement:

'Even though (insert your statement of the issue), I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself' (or if you prefer, 'I fully and completely accept myself').

Repeat this opening statement three times in all, continuously rubbing the chest area just below the collarbone.

In the examples above, you could say, 'Even though I get hay fever, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself (or I fully and completely accept myself).' Or, 'Even though I still panic when she's late... I deeply etc..'

This is a resolve or a sankalpa. It is a declaration of unconditional love and acceptance of your self at the outset of the process. It forms the attitude with which you employ your will⁴. It is like a promise to yourself that you support your very being without conditions, that you will stand by yourself no matter what it takes, not giving up on yourself when the going gets tough.

⁴ Will: the means by which the mind controls its attitudes and goals.

Attitude: a mind set, established and maintained by will, that controls what the mind perceives.

Goal: an objective or desire established and maintained by attitudes and the will.

Motivation: tension produced by an existing and unachieved goal.

Success: relief from tension, gained by the achievement of a goal.

Quoted from 'Unconditional Love and Forgiveness' by Edith Stauffer p 43

Rubbing your heart does not solve any problem or change the problem situation. It affirms your intention to be with your self, to walk your talk. Together with the resolve, it forms the basis on which you agree to work with the issue on hand.

Notice any objections you have to working with the situation such as, 'nothing has worked before' or 'it's all too hard' or 'it will work for a day or two and then the old pattern will come back as always' or 'who would I be if I gave up the issue and what would I do with the energy released or without the motivation that drove me.' Objections like these rest beneath your overt intentions, under the surface of mind. Hearing them can provide a clue to your underlying story of self-sabotage or self-defeating behaviour. That can itself be the issue you work with. For example 'even though I struggle with my habit of messing up my life, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself (or I fully and completely accept myself)'

This alone may be a change of intention that has flow on effects, but it doesn't happen because you rubbed your heart. It happens because you changed your mind. It is conceivable that you or a part of you doesn't or won't agree to unconditionally love and accept yourself as long as the issue exists.

One reason for that may be that shame or toxic shame⁵ is locking you out of connection with yourself and of resolution with the situation. If so, that can be the opening statement - 'even though I struggle with accepting myself in the situation because I feel so ashamed about it, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself (or I fully and completely accept myself)'

Step 5

Now use a short hand version of the opening statement as a reminder, for example, 'I'm told I'm too demanding' or 'I get in trouble' or 'criticism' or 'panic' and tap gently with one or two fingers (or in any way that feels right for you) about seven to nine times, on the following spots (either or both sides is fine), saying the reminder to your self or out loud on each point just the once:

If strong emotion comes up, slow down, breathe through it and let the tapping do the work. It is unlikely that you will become overwhelmed but if you do or are afraid that you might, bring the process to a slow halt. Take 10 long, slow, ABDOMINAL or yogic breaths and go back to hand on the heart and choose an issue with a lower rating, or better still, break the overwhelming issue up into the smaller units as suggested in Step 3.

These are the tapping points, pictured below.

1. Start of the eyebrow - where the bone behind your eyebrow turns into the bridge of your nose, U. Bladder 2. Quality⁶: inner direction.
2. Corner of the eye - on the bone in the corner of your eye, Gall Bladder 1, Quality: harmony.
3. Under the eye - on the bone just below your eye, in line with your pupil if you look straight ahead, Stomach 1. Quality: contentment.
4. Under the nose - Between your nose and your upper lip Governing Vessel 27, influences all Yang meridians. Quality: strength.
5. Under the mouth - In the indentation between your chin and your lower lip, Conception Vessel 24 influences all Yin meridians. Quality: nurturing.
6. Collarbone - in the angle formed by your collarbone and the breastbone, Kidney 27. Quality: gentle spirit.
7. Under arm - in line with a man's nipples on the side of the body, Spleen/pancreas 2. Quality: choice.
8. Thumb - all finger points are on the side of the finger facing towards you, in line with the nail bed, Lung 11. Quality: self worth.
9. Index Finger, Large Intestine (Colon) 1. Quality: letting go/forgiveness.
10. Middle Finger, Circulation, Sex 9. Quality: conditional love.
11. Little Finger, Heart 9. Quality: unconditional love.
12. Karate Chop Point - on the side of your hand, roughly in line with your life line, Small Intestine. Quality: trust.

⁵ <http://www.soulselfhelp.on.ca/tshame.html>

⁶ 'The Tapping Points & What they Do' by Alister Bredee

13. Gamut Point - on the back of your hand, just behind and between the knuckles of your ring and little finger, 3 Heater, Thyroid and Pericardium

Other Points: You can add any of these to fit the situation or by following your intuition.

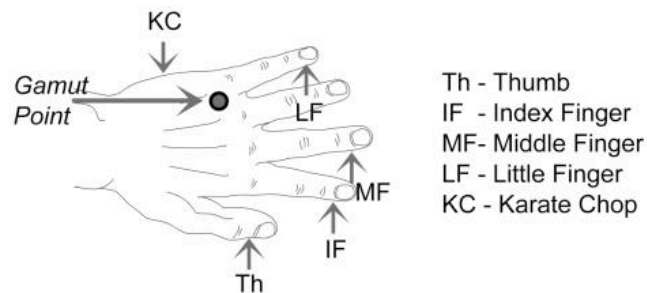
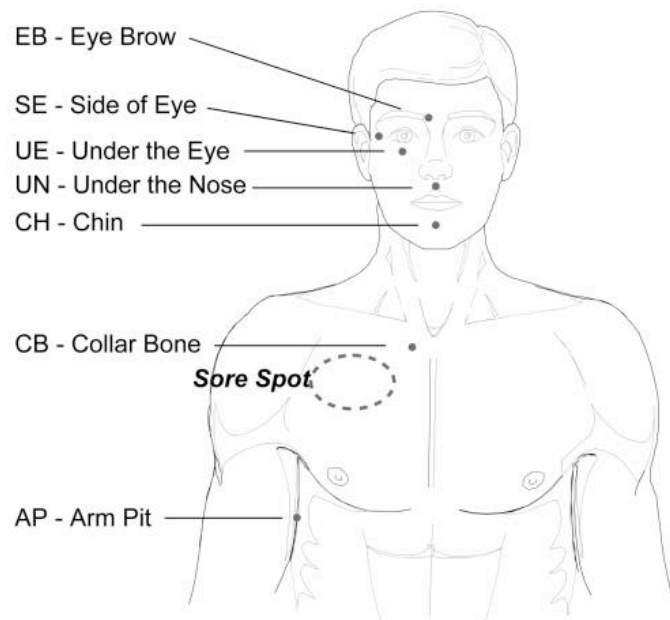
Under breast: Liver 14. Quality: loving kindness

Ring finger: 3 heater 1. Quality: flight or fight

Inside wrist: Triple heater 4

Inside knee: Spleen 9

Top of head: Governing Vessel 20. This is an energising point and a good place to close a treatment session.



Step 6

At the conclusion of tapping, take a deep breath in and out. Wait for about half a minute then go back to the issue you began with, say the original sentence to yourself and listen to your body's reactions. Give it a score between 1 and 9. With a fresh issue that is well contained in time and place you are likely to see a significant reduction in distress.

If there is disturbing emotion remaining, do the sequence again, starting with a new set up statement that reflects the change, such as, *'Even though there is some of this problem remaining, I deeply and profoundly accept myself'*. When there is only a little remainder, you may be able to completely remove the rest of the unpleasant emotion with this form of statement, *'I want to get over this problem entirely and I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself (or I fully and completely accept myself).'*

With an issue that is multifaceted and resides in complex chain of events, in a network of association or reciprocal interactions, you will get a slight shift from the initial scored reaction.

For EFT to work well with a complex issue, the situation has to be reduced to core components that you do have control of and for which a small change might have a pivotal effect on the whole system over time. This requires a big picture ecological view and/or a microcosm view rather like a micronutrient perspective.

It helps to write it all down in a sequence of events, for example, and talk about it with a friend in order to come up with a pivotal statement about the issue with which you then go back to tapping. Relief of tension from a success in dealing with a small part of the problem reduces the distress of the whole. This occurs because you have gained a sense of control and self-efficacy⁷ in a previously distressing or out of control situation or memory.

Special Applications

1. EFT can be used to 'install' healing modules into the management of chronic illness, chronic pain or painful negative beliefs with its network of associations. For example, a visualization used in cancer treatment is a pac-man module (like the computer game) that goes around the body's tissue and fluid channels, finding and then eating abnormal cells, digesting them completely and then discharging the neutralised waste harmlessly through urine, faeces, sweat, skin, hair or breath. In order for that to work well, one requires a clear image and intention AND having worked through any objections one may have to such a process. Build a clear understanding of how the pac-girl will do its job thoroughly. Then hold the image gently in mind as you tap the points again and score the distress after tapping.

Paradoxically an objection to consider is the idea that this will cure the illness or chronic pain or rid you of the negative thoughts. It will not. What it will do is reduce the distressing reactions to the sensations and thoughts of the illness and of its healing. That will free energy absorbed in managing distressing reactions, to be used by the body for self-healing or to facilitate the effect of external treatment or to think clearly about what else needs to happen in your life space.

A pac-girl module or a similar scavenger visualisation can be used to enter the complex biochemical pathways whose dysfunctions have lead to chronic illness. You don't need to have precise knowledge of the chain of biochemical events, only a clear intention (**and no objection**) to intervene in the wayward body process. Again this can be used to reduce the distress around the illness.

I cannot emphasize enough the role of obliquity⁸ and of materialism⁹ in the path of health and healing. There is a sane, awake quality within, which manifests itself only in the absence of struggle.

2. Once having experimented with the method using a current and contained issue in the recent past and perhaps having practiced installing a healing module, it may be time to try using the technique in letting go of the long past¹⁰.

⁷ <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/BanEncy.html>

⁸ The principle of obliquity says that some objectives are best pursued indirectly. When a characteristic such as health or healing is selected for in an uncertain and imperfectly known environment, deliberate action to promote that characteristic is often self-defeating, and the highest values of the characteristic will often be achieved by chance.

⁹ Whenever we have a dualistic notion such as, 'I am doing this because I want to achieve a particular state of consciousness, a particular state of being' such as health, then automatically we separate ourselves from the reality of what we are.

As before the first principle of application is to frame past events in a concrete and specific statement, which you can then rate your reaction to. For example, 'my father/mother/sibling or other relative suffocated me as a child and today I notice that I carry this within me when I pull away from a safe intimacy with someone I love and who loves me'. That might then become 'even though I pull away I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself (or I fully and completely accept myself).' Then tap as before.

In this process I have yet to find a better self-help procedure for uncovering the issues layer by layer, than that described in the six-step procedure of Focussing.¹¹

3. EFT can be adapted to manage fears and self-doubt around performance enhancement or in extreme sports; for modifying the distress of, for example, learning difficulties or fertility treatments and in altering self-limiting beliefs and self-sabotage patterns.

¹⁰ A best-practice page of ideas for using EFT from an Australian source is http://www.eftdownunder.com/articles_EFT.html and including these wise patterns for discovering issues by these leading questions:

*What is the first/ worst/ last time you remember feeling this feeling?
What does having this problem mean about you?
Who taught you (to think/feel) this?
Where did you learn about this?*

Fear: Underlying issues of fear and self-esteem are essential to identity. I might lose my identity if I get over this problem (Bruce Eimer). Fear that the problem is permanent. Fear that the problem might return after treatment.

Self-worth: Whether the client is deserving of the healing (someone else needs me to have this problem...) Victim-hood. Treat the underlying negative beliefs by incorporating them in the set up phrase, and by being persistent with E.F.T. as self-help over time.

Anger: This might present especially in men as a protection from fear or sadness or hurt. It leads to blame, resentment, judgement, criticism and unforgiveness, all of which can be fruitfully treated with E.F.T. Note that rage may comprise old anger and grief

I'm angry at myself for having these problems, and not handling them better... at (someone) for causing this problem, or for not helping to prevent this problem... at the world for being like this... at God, for allowing this problem to happen to me... (Larry Nims)

Sadness: Legitimate sadness and negative emotion will not be shifted by E.F.T. but we must find out what proportion of the suffering represents that. As always, a sensitive approach to the loss and grief of a life-changing trauma will help the person own and accept the significant changes.

Deep Hurt (leading to anger and fear). Treating the deep hurt may radically streamline and shorten treatment of consequent problems. Distinguishing guilt: I did wrong, from shame: I am wrong.

Unforgiveness: True forgiveness is the ultimate aim of all healing (Gary Craig). Forgiveness is about the client, not the other; it is letting go of contraction, constriction and judgment, and of the consequences (in life) of holding on to anger and resentment. As the saying goes, while you're getting depressed, they're out dancing... My recovery is no longer dependent on your apology (Gloria Arenson)

Forgiveness is ultimately a spiritual issue (Larry Nims) I forgive and release..... and turn our relationship over to God...I now call back all parts of my spirit and life force which are attached to..... and any thoughts or events concerning..... (Susan Parker)

Beware of trying to go straight to forgiveness without working through sadness, anger or fear the spiritual bypass! (Harry Corsover). Forgiveness emerges when the healing is near completion. I never hurry anyone (Marilyn Gordon) Holding on to the hurt never helped anyone, but forgiveness is a very personal issue and may not eventuate according to the wishes of the therapist or at all. Keep this in mind and avoid the demand to conform to a non-authentic version of their world.

¹¹ <http://www.focusing.org/sixsteps.html> The six step titles are: clearing a space; felt sense; handle; resonating; asking and receiving.