

My Introduction to Emotional Freedom Technique

By Tom Porpiglia, MS, LMHC, DCEP, EFT-ADV

My first introduction to EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) came in August 1997 at a Transactional Analysis conference in Salem, MA. A man named Jon Weiss did a short presentation (10 to 15 minutes) on "this tapping process." I took notes and wondered how I could use this interesting process. Six months later, in January of 1998, I met Jon again in Jamaica and he did another short presentation on EFT and spoke of the web site. I again took notes and promptly filed the information for later use.

I have to admit that at both presentations, my skeptic was out in front. That is the part of me that has difficulty believing that something like EFT or Kinesiology (muscle testing) works, until I get proof. I can read about some things, or you can tell me about them and the skeptic says, "No way is this going to work." I also have the ability to recognize this and stay open to what may happen. Quite often, this process proves my skeptic self wrong.

The next day, we went snorkeling.

Now, I am not a good swimmer, even with a life vest on. The water was a bit on the rough side and even the experienced swimmers were having trouble. I tired out and called for help. The boat captain rescued me and as I sat on the boat, sobbing in terror I heard two voices ask if they could tap on me. I agreed and was amazed at how quickly the terror subsided. It was like flushing the toilet and watching the water go down the drain. The terror just rushed out of my body.

There were Jon and Laurie, tapping on my face, hands, and collarbone, saying words and phrases that I could not remember if I had to. They actually had to tap on me two more times to get the terror to remain subsided. I felt emotionally drained from this experience, and I was present and alive. The terror came from a very deep place and I later realized that it was familiar to me. Two weeks later, upon examining the feelings, I was able to connect them to two other seemingly unconnected situations and now as I write this article, a fourth. They all involved this threat of engulfment. This feels like I lose myself in what ever is going on around me, losing my identity. If I lose my identity that is as terrifying as death.

Six months later, from a place of desperation around another situation, I went looking for the web site, took the EFT course, and started using it on myself and in my practice. The successes have been amazing and faster than most of us counselors ever dreamed possible. I went to an EFT Conference in Cleveland in September 1999 to study with the master, Gary Craig, and learned more about the process. My creativity got stimulated and I learned how to imaginatively and playfully apply it to almost any situation. I also learned another energy therapy process called Tapas Acupressure Technique, or TAT. While there, I also met several other local practitioners of "Energy Psychology." Needless to say, the energy in the room was terrific!

Jon and Laurie had no idea, until January 2002, how important, powerful and life changing their intervention had been for me. Neither did I until my friend Ravi pointed out to me how I have totally embraced the process and the concepts. I was able to celebrate this with Jon and Laurie when we gathered in Jamaica in January 2002 and to express my deepest gratitude for their help. The greatest blessing came when Laurie told me I



had taken it further than they had ever thought of and asked ME to help her out with an issue! I felt honored and grateful to be able to return the gift.

I continue to use EFT on myself and found an EFT therapist to help me out with specific issues. I helped create a supervision group for EFT practitioners. My creativity led me to develop a smoking cessation program and adapt EFT to Transactional Analysis techniques like Redecision Therapy and Gestalt Processes. I even use EFT safely on disassociated or covert ego-states without any side affects. The work of Helen and John Watkins, pioneers of using hypnosis with these ego-states inspired me in this arena. I began teaching EFT in classes and to friends and conducting small, healing workshops that use EFT for parts of the process. I teach it to all of my clients, although some of them only use it during session.

Like Transactional Analysis, EFT has become a part of my life. I take it with me wherever I go. I use it often and I have healed many of my past hurts and wounds, some of which I had no idea where there. EFT facilitates healing at the speed of energy. I liken it to peeling an onion with a laser knife, rather than a paring knife. I believe it truly to be a healing tool for the new millennium.

One of the interesting things I want to point out is that many therapists who are not invested in sticking solely with the traditional methods are adopting this process. It is being adapted to many aspects of therapy, including couples therapy, and it is quickly replacing EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing) for two simple reasons. It is easier to use and the client learns self-application. Additionally, some people have bad reactions to EMDR because it goes too deep too quickly.

So, if you want healing and insight at the speed of energy, look into EFT, TAT, or any of its cousins. Your world could improve quicker and easier than you believe.

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