The What, How, and Why of Emotional Freedom Techniques

EFT 101: What is EFT and what can I use it for?
EFT 102: How to do EFT, the basics.
EFT 201: Why did that happen while using EFT?

By Gene Monterastelli
Disclaimer

EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) is a member of a new class of treatment techniques and protocols referred to as Energy Therapy. While still considered experimental, these techniques are being used by therapists, nurses, physicians, psychiatrists and lay people worldwide. To date, EFT and other Energy Therapy Techniques have yielded exceptional results in the treatment of psychological and physical problems.

They are NOT, however, meant to replace appropriate medical treatment or mental health therapy. Personally, I have not experienced any adverse side effects when applying these techniques when the treatment protocols and suggestions were followed. This does not mean, however, that you or your clients will not experience or perceive negative side effects.

If you use these techniques on yourself or others, you must agree to take full responsibility for your own well-being and you are required to advise your clients to do the same.

Before beginning any new regimen (diet, exercise, stretching, yoga, martial arts, or EFT) check with your primary care physician.
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Do you have a question about EFT that isn’t answered here?

This book is just the basics. It is just an introduction. With it you can achieve powerful results, but you can do more.

Check out http://eftQandA.com for more than 100 articles on the What, How, and Why of EFT.

If you have a question, you can ask it at http://eftQandA.com/contact.html

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EFT 101: What is EFT and what can I use it for?
What is Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)?

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) was developed by Gary Craig. According to his web site (http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025 which is home of hundreds of articles and case studies about EFT) EFT is:

EFT is based on a new discovery that has provided thousands with relief from pain, diseases and emotional issues. Simply stated, it is an emotional version of acupuncture except needles aren’t necessary. Instead, you stimulate well established energy meridian points on your body by tapping on them with your fingertips. The process is easy to memorize and is portable so you can do it anywhere. It launches off the EFT Discovery Statement which says...

“The cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body’s energy system.”

And because our physical pains and diseases are so obviously connected with our emotions the following statement has also proven to be true...

“Our unresolved negative emotions are major contributors to most physical pains and diseases.”

This common sense approach draws its power from (1) time-honored Eastern discoveries that have been around for over 5,000 years and (2) Albert Einstein, who told us back in the 1920’s that everything (including our bodies) is composed of energy. These ideas have been largely ignored by Western Healing Practices and that is why EFT often works where nothing else will. As you will clearly see, conventional healing methods have overlooked the obvious.

In the most basic terms, it has been found that in many cases by providing simulation to very specific parts of the human body, healing can occur.

When I am at a loss for description I generally say, “Not only is EFT very effective in helping with specific physical and emotional issues, it does a
great job at quieting the little voice in your head that says you are not able, good enough, or worthy.”

You will notice the name of the tool set is plural, “techniques”. This is because there are many different variations to this type of acupressure system. EFT is very flexible in its application.

As a beginner it is best to learn the basic recipe, which is explained in EFT 102: How to do EFT. As you gain confidence in your ability you will start to get more creative in its application.
Does Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) work for...?

The most common question I get is, “Does Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) work on ...[insert physical or emotional ailments]?” The answer is yes and no.

In my own practice I have seen EFT be successful in helping with joint aches, headaches, warts, nasal congestion, upset stomachs, and swollen kidneys. Some of my clients have had success with anger, inability to forgive, sadness, and loss. It has worked on writers block and focus issues. I have clients who have seen progress with learning disabilities and autism. There has also been success with killing cravings for sweets, carbs, and cigarettes.


So, yes, more than likely EFT can be helpful for whatever you would like it to work on.

Gary’s mantra is, “Try it on everything?” Because there are no known side effects to EFT, the only thing you have to risk is the time you take to tap.

BUT, (and this is a very important but) it is very important to keep two things in mind.

First, some issues are going to take much more work than others. As you spend time doing EFT, you are going to have “one minute miracles”, where after one round of tapping you will find total relief. This isn’t going to happen every time. You wouldn’t expect a cut finger and a torn muscle to heal in the same way and at the same rate. EFT is no different.
Keep your expectations realistic when doing EFT.

Second, some issues are much more complicated than others. Some issues are going to be very straightforward to deal with. Other issues, especially issues that have taken years to grow, are going to be very complicated. For a beginner, it might be overwhelming in knowing where to start.

That’s okay. We all were beginners once. Just because you didn’t have success this time does not mean EFT does not work on that issues. It only means how EFT is being applied at this time is not successful. It is very possible that you are just not approaching the issue the right way.

Like all things, this will come with time. The more you try EFT, and the more time you spend reading others experiences with EFT, the better you are going to get and the higher your success rate is going to be.

Even to this day, after years of experience, I still set aside four or five hours a week to continue to hone my skills and to learn more.

If EFT is not working, see it as a blessing, as a chance to dig a little deeper, and a chance to get better at EFT.
The What, How, and Why of Emotional Freedom Technique

Are Emotional Freedom Techniques’ (EFT’s) results due to either placebo effects or distraction?

That depends...

Our bodies are very powerful healing machines. Healing machines that we still don’t understand. There have been a number of studies in the last 100 years that have shown the body will heal if it thinks it is receiving some sort of healing agent (eg treatment or medication) even when it is not. In one recent case people were told that they were going to receive anti-depressants without the active ingredients (meaning it didn’t contain the medicine) as still saw progress in some clients.

This phenomenon of the body healing itself without any treatment has been termed “the placebo effect”. It gets its name from the fake pill given in double blind drug tests, called placebos. It first was noticed when test subjects receiving placebos showed improvement.

If you are interested in the topic, I highly recommend the book **Timeless Healing** by Herbert Benson and Marg Stark. In the book they explore what remembered wellness (a more precise term than the placebo effect) is and how it might work.

It is very possible for this to be the case with some experiences of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). I wouldn’t even be surprised if this were the case with some of my clients. But for remembered wellness to work there needs to be belief on some level that it is going to work.

I have worked with skeptical clients, even clients who didn’t want it to work because they thought it was a bunch of “new age mumbo jumbo.” If I was able to get them to actively try the protocol we had success, letting me know anecdotally there is a mechanical component to it.

With all of that being said, I don’t really care. I don’t care if EFT is powerful or if it is just the power of the body and mind believing EFT is powerful. All I am worried about is healing in a safe way.

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There are no known side effects to EFT, so we aren’t doing any harm. Therefore, to me, it doesn’t really matter why it works.
Is EFT the only thing you use for your health? & Should EFT replace traditional medicine and healthcare?

I am not one of those fanatics who completely reject western medicine. There is a time and place for using diet, exercise, yoga, EFT, massage, drugs, and surgery. There are no one size fits all solutions.

There is still a great deal we don’t know about the body and how it works. People living one hundred years from now are going to think our approach today at the beginning of the 21st century is going to be quaint, out dated, and maybe even foolish in the same way we look at civil war era medicine.

I would be wary of anyone who tried to convince me that Emotional Freedom Techniques (or anything else) is the one and only way. I have experienced in my own life and seen in my client’s lives the power of EFT, but it is not the only answer.

EFT is a great complement to many other health practices. I would never advise anyone to only use EFT. My advice is always:

- Be educated about your body. Know what is going on now and what your family history is.
- Be educated about all your possible treatment options. Know what the short and long term effects and side effects are.
- Remember it is your body and your health. You should get advice from professionals, but the choice should always be yours on what treatment options you pursue.
How long do the results last?

That depends.

I have seen Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) provide relief for 5 minutes, 5 hours, 5 days, 5 months, and forever.

No two problems are alike. A cut finger and a torn muscle are going to heal in different ways at different rates, just like your partner saying horrible things about you is not going have the same impact as a total stranger saying the same thing.

The amount of healing that is provided by EFT is in direct proportion to how much of the problem we can tune into at any given time. Some issue has many aspects to them. At this moment we might only be aware of one or two of these aspects. This is where we can do work at this time. At a later date we might find other aspects of the same issue.

This does not EFT didn’t work. It just means there is still more work to do.

Also, it is important to remember if it has taken a lifetime to build a problem, it is unlikely to go away with a round or two of tapping.

EFT is a great tool for providing temporary relief. Every time we create relief in the moment, we are making progress on the issue as a whole and how it will affect us in the future.

An analogy I use a lot is of weeding the yard. We can cut the heads off of dandelions and the yard will look good, but they will grow back. If we also get the leaves, they will still grow back, but it will take much more time. But, if we get the roots they will never grow back.

Sometimes when we do work on an issue we get the heads, sometimes the leaves, and sometimes the roots. This will determine how long the progress sticks.
Just remember, all progress we make, no matter how small, is progress to a healthier self. With EFT we are doing this in a way that does not require any surgery or for us to put any drugs in our bodies.
Are there any negative side effects or abractions?

There are no known side effects to using Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). With that being said, you should keep 4 things in mind.

1) Before you begin any physical or emotional treatment you should ALWAYS seek the advice of your primary care physician. This is true for a new diet, a new exercise program, or EFT. The understanding of the human body is constantly growing and changing. Everyday we know a little more than we did before. Make sure you find the most current information before making any choices about the type of care you are going to pursue.

2) If you encounter any negative side effects or abraction, STOP. Seek the advice of a trained medical professional. It is also common for the tapping points to be a little sensitive. The article It Hurts!* talks about tender tapping points and what you can do.
[* http://blog.eftQandA.com/2007/08/14/it-hurts.aspx]

3) Just because EFT is a useful tool for a problem, doesn’t mean you are the right person to use the tool. For example, EFT is a wonderful tool for working Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly known as multi-personality), but there is no way that I am qualified to do this sort of work. DID is very complicated and I could do more harm than good.

Just because you are proficient with EFT, doesn’t mean you should use it. EFT is a tool to use in a context. If you are not trained to work in the context without EFT, then you shouldn’t use EFT in the context. You should seek a professional who is trained.

4) There are two physical reactions I have encounter using EFT, scratches and pimples. When my fingernails are too long I scratch myself up when tapping. I also forget to wash my face after an hour of tapping. A day later it is very easy to find the tapping points on my face. Just look for the pimples.
Does it matter I am skeptical about EFT?

Yes and no.

From my experience, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is mechanical. This means if it is done right it works. Much like you don’t have to believe an aspirin is going to work for it to help your headache, if EFT is done correctly it will work regardless if the person believes it is going to work. But there are a few things must be kept in mind.

1) You must do it right. For the EFT protocol to work, it requires the person who is doing the tapping to tune into the issue that they are working on. Just because you are saying the words out loud doesn’t mean you are tuning in to the problem.

I can be saying “This pain in my foot. This pain in my foot. This pain in my foot...” and be thinking about what is on TV tonight. If this is happening I am not tuned into the problem and I am not doing the protocol right. Therefore it won’t work.

If a person is skeptical they are less likely to fully commit to the process. In this case EFT won’t work because they are doing it wrong.

2) Understand what you mean by success. We call an aspirin a success if it stops a headache for a few hours, but we don’t expect to never have a headache again. Hold EFT to the same standard. It is very easy for a skeptic to dismiss EFT because the change isn’t forever.
How much EFT do I need to know to make it work?

No two issues are alike.

Similar issues don’t always have the same root. You can have a headache because you are dehydrated, because you received a blow to the head, or because of a sinus infection. The symptom is the same, but causes are very different.

For each of these causes it might require a different approach and a different amount of time to receive relief with Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) or any other approach.

With mechanical EFT (the basic recipe, which can be mastered in under an hour) you will have success with a number of issues. You will be able to be success with most non-chronic physical pain and many simple emotional issues.

Remember, each time you don’t have success with EFT it is a chance to challenge yourself to get more creative with protocol and to seek out more information.

Every time I encountered an issue that I have not found immediate success, I have learned something new, which makes each successive attempt more efficient.

Learning new things is hard. We don’t like being unsuccessful. Someone who is very good at EFT makes it look effortless. This is because they have made lots of mistakes along the way and have chosen to continue to learn.

You didn’t learn to walk in the first time. EFT is no different.

The more you try, the better you will get.
How does EFT differ from Thought Field Therapy (TFT)?

Thought Field Therapy was developed in the early eighties by Dr. Rodger Callahan. Over the years the techniques have evolved. Different variations can be referred to as Thought Field Therapy (TFT), Evolving Thought Field Therapy (EvTFT), and the Callahan Techniques Thought Field Therapy (CTTFT). Gary Criag studied TFT with Dr. Callahan and innovated Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) from this and other trainings.

Here is how Gary describes the differences on his web site (http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025):

"TFT uses similar principles as EFT but asks the student to learn 10 or 15 different tapping routines (called algorithms), each of which is designed to cover a specific issue such as trauma, phobias, depression, etc. Anything not covered by those individual routines (e.g. insomnia, TMJ, dyslexia, etc.) requires a diagnostic process. EFT, by contrast, uses only one comprehensive tapping routine to cover all issues (not just 10 or 15) and doesn’t require diagnosis. A more thorough treatment of the EFT/TFT comparison is covered in The scientific evolution of EFT from TFT (http://www.emofree.com/articles/scien-i.htm).

When EFT relieves pain, does it merely mask the pain and thus thwart the ability for pain to signal danger?

I doubt it...but no one knows the answer to this for sure. However, I have applied EFT thousands of times and have never heard of anyone whose pain was “inappropriately blocked”. Many people have reduced or eliminated their pains with EFT and some have witnessed swelling disappear before their eyes. But, to my knowledge, no one has complained that the pain was “merely masked”.

This concern is a valid one. However, I think its genesis comes from the use of medications which, indeed, often mask symptoms. By contrast, EFT is not a medication and does not enter an artificial substance into the bloodstream. Thus I am at a loss to conclude that it masks symptoms. Even
if it did, some may find it preferable to pain blocking medications.

In my experience, if EFT doesn’t solve the problem by eliminating the cause, then the physical discomfort will re-appear. To me, this simply calls for more rounds of EFT on other aspects and/or referral to a specialist.
What’s the best way to learn EFT?

There are lots of wonderful ways to learn Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). What is important to remember is it is going to take some time. You can learn EFT in minutes, but can take years to truly master. The more you do it, the better you are going to get.

1) This book has a very straightforward approach to teaching EFT. EFT 102: How to do the basic EFT recipe takes you step by step through learning the process.

2) There are over 100 articles on EFT here at EFT Q & A (http://eftqanda.com), over 1000 articles at http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025, and many EFT practitioners who have written about their experience as well. (See http://eftqanda.com/resources.html). If you can’t find the answer to your question just ask! (http://eftqanda.com/contact.html)

One of the reasons I love EFT so much is because of the EFT community. I have found the majority of the community loves sharing their insight.

3) The basic EFT manual from Gary is free. (http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025/1)

4) Get the intro DVDs. The basic training from Gary is wonderful. Not only does he explain in great depth how to do EFT, but you see him in action working with clients on real issues. (http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025/2)

5) **Most important:** DO IT! The only way you are going to get better is if you try.
102: How to do EFT, the basics.
Four steps of the basic EFT protocol (mechanical EFT: an overview)

One of the beauties of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is it is very simple and very powerful. It is a tool that is easy to learn, and can be done anywhere by anyone. But it is important to note there are many ways of using EFT and there are many subtleties to the tool set.

In many ways it is like a knife. A knife is a very simple tool, that anyone can use anywhere, but how the knife is used is going to depend on the person using the knife. If I have knife in my hand I am going to be able to cut rope and cut my stake for dinner. If the same knife is placed in an artist’s hand they are going to be able to carve beautiful woodwork.

It is the same knife, but who is using it makes a difference. This doesn’t mean that the knife isn’t useful for me, but I am going to be limited in how I can use it based on my skill. But, if I wanted to get better with my knife skills I could. I could study and train to become more proficient.

EFT is no different. It is a simple tool, that is very flexible, and what you can do with it is going to depend on who is using it.

Like all skills, it is best that you master the basic steps before you try to attempt more difficult tasks. With that being said, it is important that when you are learning EFT that you master the basic skills before you move on to the more difficult approaches. If you try and jump ahead too quickly you are not going to see any progress, be discouraged, and miss out on the power of EFT.

In our analogy of the knife we must first learn how to use it mechanically (simple cuts) before we can use it to create art.

Please don’t be discouraged by this. The basic mechanical EFT recipe that you are learning here is very powerful. Even if you never move past this mechanical version of EFT you will be able to do wonderful things. Just remember you must walk before you learn to run.
The basic recipe has four steps that are spelled out in the next few articles. They are:

- Step 0 (it is not really a step, but something you need to do before you start) - Drink Water
- Step one - Tune in and Rate
- Step two - clear PR
- Step three - tap
- Step four - tune in and re-rate

If you follow these basic steps you are going to be able to use EFT in most setting in your daily life.
Step zero – Drink water

Depending on our age, we are 60% - 80% water. Water structures are the glue that holds the body together. Without water there is not life.

One of my favorite bumper stickers of all time reads, “You are not sick. You are thirsty!”

Many people often mistake being thirsty as being hungry. [Note: The next time you are craving a munchy, have a glass of water. If you are still hungry 15 minutes later, then have the snack.]

Water is a wonderful conductor of energy (which is why we are not supposed to use the toaster in the bathtub). It is the water structures (called the living matrix) that hold the body together. These are also the paths that much of the energetic information of the body’s communication system travels.

If there is no water, there is no path for this healing information to pass. James Oschman points out in his book Energy Medicine in Therapeutics and Human Performance a 5% increase in water in the body increases the ability for information to pass along the living matrix to increases 5 million fold.

As a general rule, being hydrated is one of the keys to health and well-being. Water is critical to Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). If you are dehydrated, EFT will not work, much the way a dry batter won’t work.

If you haven’t had any water in the last two hours, you should have a glass before you start tapping. You don’t have to drink so much that you are floating away. Six to eight ounces should be more than enough.
Step one - Tune in and Rate - (one thing at a time)

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is a very powerful tool. As you saw in EFT 101 there are many applications of the protocol. But, if you are going to be effective using it, it is important that you understand its nature. EFT is like a sharp knife. It is not a sledgehammer.

Let’s pretend we are trying to break a table down. Using the sledgehammer, we would just smash it to bits. We wouldn’t have to give much thought to where we hit. We could just have at it.

On the other hand, with the knife we would have to give it a little more thought. We would have to consider how the table was put together and were its weakest points are. More than likely, we would start with where the legs and the tabletop meet.

We can get rid of a table with both tools, but would do it very different ways.

When we use EFT we have to give the issues (both physical and emotional) some thought about how we are going to approach them. We need to approach the issue at a very specific point and complete the work at that point before we move on.

I used the image of a table because it is an image Gary uses a lot when he is talking about emotional issues. He states that general emotions are like the tabletop. The feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, or loneliness would be examples of general emotions. We can’t have these general emotions in our lives without specific experiences/memory that support the general emotion, the table legs.

Let’s take frustration at my boss as an example. The general feeling of frustration that rises in my chest when I think of my boss is the tabletop. The specific memories (the table legs) are:
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• last week when my boss took credit for my work
• Thursday when my boss gave me an extra task right at the end of the day causing me to stay late
• Monday when my boss screwed something up with corporate causing me a bunch of extra work

Each of these specific memories contributes to create the general feeling of frustration at my boss.

When I am going to use EFT on this feeling of frustration it is important I remember I have a knife and not a sledgehammer. I would really like to destroy the feeling of frustration, but I can’t do it all at once because of the tool I have.

To begin with I am going to choose one of the legs, being asked to stay late Thursday, and do work on that. After, I have finished one leg, I move on to the next, and then the next. Over time I will have taken out enough legs (and I don’t have to get them all) that there will no longer be enough legs to hold the table top up, cause the emotion to collapse.

It is also important that you finish one table leg before you move on to the next leg. At first, it is very easy to jump from memory to memory, because they are all so frustrating. But focus is rewarded. Imagine it in terms of another analogy. It is like cleaning your house. You can’t start on the dishes, then jump to the laundry, then work on your bed, then move to the bathroom without finishing any of the tasks. You will do a lot of work, but nothing will really get done.

When you pick a table leg to work on, stick with it until it is done. Then move to the next one. Just like cleaning the house, you don’t have to do it all at once. But you do need to start somewhere.

It is critical that you keep these points in mind when working with EFT. Be specific and stay focused on one part of one issue. If you do this, you will easily make progress.
There are a number of articles that speak to how to do this in this series and on this web site. If you have trouble with this, read on.
Step One – Tune in and Rate – (Physical Issue)

After you get a little water into your system there is one final thing you need before you begin. I always recommend to my clients to have some paper and something to write with near by. This is not a piece of advice just for beginners. This is something I do as well. We will talk about why we need paper in a minute.

We are ready to being.

The first step of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is to tune and rate whatever we are going to do work on. To “tune in” has a very special meaning in EFT. We need to be as focused as we can on the issue in order to do work.

To being with, we are going to work with physical pain. The next article will deal with how we do EFT for emotions. Please don’t skip ahead. There is information in this article you will need to work with emotional issues. We are starting with physical pain, because it is a little more straightforward, and an easier place to begin.

In the example of a physical pain “to tune in” simply means we need to pay very close attention to the pain, so that the pain is fully in the energy system for us to start doing work. The reason we are in pain (or unable to heal a physical pain) is because of a disruption in the energy system. For us to do work on this disruption we need to focus on it. It is really much easier than it sounds.

Think in terms of dirty dishes. The only way that you can clean a dirty dish is if it is in the sink. The dirty dishes can be all over the house, by the TV, on the kitchen table, or on the counter. None of them can be cleaned until they are in the sink.

The work we are going to do with EFT is no different. We need to get what we are going to work on in the “sink”. The way we do this is by focusing in on the issue. The reason we need to focus in is because we are not pay-
ing attention to all the information we are receiving each moment.

For example, think of your feet and your socks. The instant you read that line you could feel the socks on your feet (or if you aren’t wearing socks, you felt whatever your feet are touching). Your socks didn’t start magically touching your feet the moment you thought about them. Instead, your mind decided your socks touching your feet was not an important piece of information most of the day, therefore it was ignoring that piece of information. The instance that piece of information was important (because I told you to think about it) that piece of information was no longer ignored, but passed into consciousness.

We do this with physical pain all the time. You can have a sore knee, but you don’t really feel the pain in the knee until you sit down. Your knee didn’t start to hurt the moment you sat down. Instead, as you moved through your day, a part of you decided to tune out the pain, because it wasn’t a piece of information that was helpful. But, the moment you sat down, the body knew it would have your undivided attention and let you know how much the knee really hurts.

That is a perfect example of “tuning in” to a physical pain. When we do EFT we take this process of tuning in to information and make it intentional. It is a very easy thing to do.

The best way to understand is to just try it.

Remember, what was said in the last article of only working on one thing at a time. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and scan your body for any tension or physical pain. Pick one of these pains to work with.

To begin with, it is best NOT to pick a chronic pain. It has taken months or years to build the pain; we are more than likely not going to get rid of it in one round of tapping. To begin with I would like you to have success, so you can see EFT in action.

Pick one pain/tension.
Now ask yourself the following questions about the pain. Write each of your answers down. Some of the questions might not have an answer, which is fine. Please don’t skip the question because you think it is odd. Ask the question honestly and think about it for a moment. If something comes to mind write it down. If nothing does, move on. Remember, the more information you have, the faster EFT will work.

- Where is the pain located? (Be as specific as possible. Don’t write, “My neck.” Instead, “It is on the right side of my neck. It starts at the base of my neck and moves up to the base of my skull.”)
- How big is it? (Give a description in terms of size and shape. “It is long and skinny like a pipe and is 4 inches long”)
- If you were going to paint a picture of the inside of your neck (or where ever the pain is), what color would the pain be? (I know this sounds like a weird question. That is because it is a weird question. Just trust your instincts. If it is blue, is it electric blue, sky blue, or navy blue? Whatever color it is, write it down.)
- If you were going to make a model of the pain for your second grade class, what material would you make it out of to show what the pain is really like? (Yes, another weird questions. But trust me on this. Is it a hard rubber, ice, or cotton candy? Again, trust your instinct. We are just trying to tune in as much as we can. The better you can describe the pain, the more tuned in you are, the faster EFT is going to work.)
- What kind of pain is it? (Is the pain sharp, dull, pulsing, or is it just stiff? Imagine you are trying to explain the pain to your doctor. How would you describe the type of pain?)
- Is there an emotion associated with the pain? (You will be surprised at how quickly something springs to mind with the question.)
- If this pain was a cartoon character and you pained a little face on him, what would he say? (Again, trust the process. Nothing might come to mind, or a something surprising will. It is just information.)
You have a great deal of information written down about your pain. More than likely, this is the most focus you have ever given to a specific pain in your life. Because you have tuned in to the pain in this way, it will be easier to do work.

The last question is the most important.

- On the scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no pain and 10 the worst pain you have ever felt in your life, how much does it hurt? (This is just a guess. There is an article in this section that gives more information about this scale, which we call SUD).

The reason this is the most important question is this becomes our benchmark. The only way we will know if we are making progress is if we know where we started. For example, let’s say the pain in our neck might be a 6 to begin with. After we do a round of tapping we will know if we have made progress by asked the question, “0 to 10, how much does it hurt now?”
Step One – Tune in and Rate – (Emotional Issue)

Even if you are learning Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) to work on an emotional issue, I have found in my practice it is often easier to learn EFT with a physical pain before moving on to an emotional issue. Also, there is information in that article that is assumed you know before reading this article. If you have not read Tune in and Rate – (Physical Issue) yet, please do.

The biggest problem most beginners have with using EFT for emotional issues is not getting specific enough.

When looking at emotional issues, Gary Craig’s analogy of a table is very helpful. The general emotions we feel (e.g., anger, frustration, helpless, fear) are like a tabletop. For a tabletop to held up, there needs to be table legs. These legs are the specific memories that support the emotion.

Table top: Fear of walking in to a room of strangers
Table legs: I walked into a to the wrong room, interrupted a meeting, I walked into a room and everyone stopped what I they were doing and stared at me, I walked into a room to hear Sally talking about me.

The reason we have the fear of walking to a room is because of the specific memories where this was uncomfortable in the past.

EFT, as a tool, is a very small sharp tool, like a knife. It is not very good at taking out the tabletops, but is very good at taking out a table leg.

When we are going to work on an emotional issue, it is very important that we get as specific as possible, choosing only one leg. Be careful not to choose multiple legs or the tabletop.

This is easier than it sounds. Once you name an emotion, think of a specific time you felt this way.
For example, let’s pretend I have don’t think I am very smart. Once I have picked the emotion of thinking I am dumb, I think of a time when I felt dumb, like when I was doing a math problem at the chalk board when I was in third grade, blanked out, and the teach said, “Why don’t we have someone who knows what they are doing help Gene out.”

[Side note: Yes something from decades ago, like being embarrassed by a grade school teacher can affect us today.]

My reminder phrase (which we are going to use in steps 2 and 3) would be, “feeling stupid and embarrassed when I couldn’t do the problem and the teacher said I couldn’t do it.”

If you are having trouble constructing the phrase, ask the magic question, “Why?”

Why do I feel stupid? Because the whole class saw I couldn’t do it.

Write your phrase down.

Once we have tuned into the issue, we now rate it.

In this case, we have two emotions to work on: feeling stupid and feeling embarrassed.

0 to 10 how stupid do you feel? 
write: stupid - 8 (or what ever your number is)

0 to 10 how embarrassed do you feel?
write: embarrassed - 9

When you are coming up with a number, it is the level of the emotion when you think of the memory now, not the level back then.

Sometimes when we think of something form our past we have a different emotion now, than we did back then. For example, I found myself
wondering the stress of Valencia, Spain at 2 am looking for a place to stay. I didn’t want to look like an easy mark as the dumb tourist, so I was sneaking into the shadow to look at my guidebook to find another hotel/hostel to look for a room.

At the time, I felt a little scared. Today when I think of the memory I feel stupid for putting myself in a situation that I should have known better. If I were to tap on this memory I would tap on what I feel now, not what I felt then.

Now that you know a specific instance of the emotion you are ready to go to Step 2. Once you have cleared the emotional charge for this emotion, you can repeat the process with as many memories as you can think of. At a certain point you will clear out enough legs that the tabletop will collapse.
Step two – clear Psychological Reversal

*Psychological Reversal* is a term that coined by Dr. Roger Callahan when he was developing Though Field Therapy (TFT), the precursor to Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT).

Dr. Callahan found that in some case (less than 1 of 8) no matter what tapping the client did with his regular protocol, no healing would occur. The physical pain or emotional issue would persist.

Typically when this happens, the body is psychologically reversed. This is a state in which there is a reversal in the energetic field of the body around a particular issue. The human body has an energetic field, just like a magnet. When the body is in the normal state of health and healing the energy is flowing out the top of head and in the bottom of the feet, much the same way energy flows out the North end of a magnet and into the South.

When we are psychologically reversed, this flow of energy is reversed (going out the feet and into the head). When this happens it is impossible for the body to heal. It is much like if you put batteries in backwards in a flashlight. The right amount of energy is there, but since it is flowing in the wrong directions, it won’t work.

This might sound concerning. We have something that can happen in our body that will stop the healing process. It is possible to be psychologically reversed around one issue and not another. You don’t know when it is going to happen, and at this point you still might not understand what I am talking about.

But there is good news! If you do step two of the basic recipe, you will clear psychological reversal. It is easy and quick to clear psychological reversal. Best of all there are no penalties for clearing psychological reversal (mean if your not psychologically reversed and you do step to it doesn’t hurt anything).
Think of like wearing your seat belt. It takes little time and little effort to do it. Most of the time you arrive safely. If you put it on every time you will be set that one and million times that you really need it.

If you would like, you can put everything you have just read out of your head about psychological reversal. Just pretend to for EFT to work you must do this step every time. (Really, which would you rather do, understand psychological reversal or just do EFT and get better?)

To clear psychological reversal, we are going to tap on what we will call the “karate chop (KC)” point. It is located on the side of the hand, the place Hong Kong Fu would use to brake through a wall). You can see in the picture, where it is located.

It doesn’t matter which hand to use. (Later in this book we will examine the question “Which side of the body and which hand to tap with?” For now, use your dominant hand as the tapping hand.)

You will take all four finders of your dominant hand and tap on KC of your non-dominant hand. You will keep tapping here until you finish saying the four phrases.

In step one you focused in on what you want to be working on. Take that information and distill it down to one phrase. For a physical issue you might use, “the pain on the top of my shoulder.” For an emotional issue you might use, “I am very frustrated at my boss because he always gives me work as I am walking out the door.”
You simply need to add these phrases in to the formula below. Replace the “...” with your phrase.

Even though I ... [have this pain on the top of my shoulder or am very frustrated at my boss because he always gives me work as I am walking out the door], I love and accept myself.

Even though I ... I forgive myself for how ever I added to this situation.

Even though I ... I forgive anyone else who has contributed to this situation.

Even if I ... for the rest of my life, I love and accept myself.

To do step two you will

• Start tapping on KC
• You will say the phrases out loud
• You will say the phrases with energy
• You will say the phrases as if they are true, even if you don’t believe them

One of the common questions I get is, “I know I am supposed to say the phrases like I believe them, but I don’t really forgive my boss. Is it going to hurt the process if I don’t believe the phrases?”

The answer is “No.” At this point in your learning process it is not really important why, but there is a full article on not believe the words you say. After you have give EFT a few tries you might be interested in that article.

Step Three – Tap

The third step of the Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) Basic Recipe is to tap through the body points.

It is important to note the Basic Recipe that I am teaching here is really the “short cut” version. The original version included 6 other points. If you purchase The EFT Course DVD from the main EFT web site (http://www.emofree.com/a/?2025) website you will be introduced to these extra points. The reason they are not taught here is because in most cases they aren’t needed. Personally, I love the fact that Gary Craig (the innovator of EFT) doesn’t think he has all the answer, or that his techniques should be static. In EFT’s evolution, it has grown and changed. One of the changes is the body points can be reduced from 14 to 8 without any significant decrease in results.

I will introduce the eight points first; then I will show you how to use them.
Unless noted you should tap with your index and middle finger.

1) **Eyebrow (EB):** The eyebrow point is located as close to the inside end of the eyebrow as possible. You should not be down on the bridge of your nose.

2) **Side of the eye (SE):** This point is as far forward on the side of your head without poking your eyeball. If while tapping your vision blurs or you see big light or dark flashes, you are tapping the wrong spot.

3) **Under the eye (UE):** Located directly below the pupil on the cheek bone. This point might be a little tender because a sinus canal is under it. If it is tender, tap lighter.

4) **Under the nose (UN):** Located directly between the nose and upper lip.
5) **Under the month or chin (UM):** This point is the dip between your lower lip and our chin.

6) **Collarbone (CB):** The point is a little tricky to find. It is right where the collarbone and the sternum meet. The easiest way to get this point is to look at the palm of your hand. Make a letter “L” with your thumb and index finger (with your hand open). Place your thumb on one collarbone and our index finger on the other. With your full palm, tap.

7) **Under the arm (UA):**
This is another slightly tricky point to find. It is located along your side. It is closer to your back than your front it is about 4 inches down. It is about where your bra strap would be, if you are wearing a bra. The nice thing about this spot is it is a little tender. It will feel a little bit like a burse. If you poke around the general area, you will know it when you find it. To be on the safe side use all four fingers when tapping here.

8) **Top of the head (H):** Again we are going to use all four fingers. Tap on the highest point on the crown of your head. This is the stop where they place the device to measure how tall you are at the doctors office. Tap as if the four fingers were tracing the mohawk you wished you always had (fingers in a line from back to front).
The steps of tapping are very easy. We are going to use the same phase that we used in the last step.

1) Tap on the first point and say your reminder phrase (form our examples) “this pain on the top of my shoulder” or “this frustrated at my boss because he always gives me work as I am walking out the door”. Tap as many times as it takes to say the phrase
2) Move on to the second point. Start tapping. Say the phrase.
3) Repeat until you have tapped on all 8 points.
4) Take a deep breath.
5) Take a sip of water (if you would like).
6) Did anything come to mind while you were tapping? Did you get an image, a phrase, a memory, or a picture? If so, write it down, it might useful for the next round of tapping. As I said before in a previous article, at the beginning you are going to be so worried about doing it “right”, you are not going to notice these sorts of things. As time passes, and you get more comfortable with the protocol, you will notice things coming to mind. For now, just put in the back of your mind this is a possibility, that won’t happen every time, but might.
7) Move on to step 4

A few things to keep in mind while tapping:

- The order of the tapping points is not important. I am teaching them in a top down order because it is easier to remember. If you want to mix the order up, please do.
- It doesn’t matter which hand and which side of the body you tap on. To begin with use your dominate hand on that side of the body. Later in this series there is an article that speaks to the options you have when tapping.
- When you tap, tap about as hard as if you were tapping on someone’s shoulder to get their attention. Don’t kill yourself. If hurts, tap lighter. If no matter how light your tap it still hurts, you can just touch the point while saying the phrase.
• Tap between 5 - 7 times. Generally, tap as long as it takes you to say the reminder phrase.
• You just need to be close. The points you are trying to tap are the size of a pinprick. The reason we are using 2 (and sometimes 4) fingers is because give us a little margin of error. There is no penalty for tapping a spot that is not the point we are aiming for. Be easy about it. The protocol is very forgiving.
Step four – tune in and re-rate

This is the easiest of the four steps. Take a deep breath, and a sip of water if you would like.

Then tune back into the issue.

Ask yourself a few questions.

Did the intensity go up?

Did it go down?

Did it stay the same?

Did the pain change locations?

Did the pain change textures? (Ex. It was pain, but is now stiffness)

Also, did anything come to mind while you were tapping? Did you think of other memories or other people? If you did they might be related to the work that you are doing now.

Write down these new aspects and memories. It is important that you stay focused on the work you started. It is very easy to have something that is a 9 come down to a 6, but it reminds you of something that is a 10. In most cases it is best to stay with one issue until it is gone before moving to the next issue.

It is like our cleaning analogy. If we start to wipe the bathroom mirror and then realize how dirty the sink is and jump to the sink. As we are working on the sink, we then see how filthy the toilet is and jump to it. By doing this we will spend a great deal of time cleaning, but not get anything done.

Stick to the first issues and stamp it out before moving on.
NOTE: At first you are going to be so worried about tapping on the right points and saying phrases “right” that you are not going to have many thoughts come to mind. When I am first working with a client and I ask them, “While we were taping did anything come to mind?” they often feel bad because they can’t remember anything. This is very natural in the beginning. When you first learned to drive you had to be completely focused. Now, after years of experience you can drive, eat, talk on the phone, and tune the radio. (Not that I recommend you do this, but you are able.)

Just keep the idea in the back of your mind that other thought might come up as you are tapping. When it does you will often be surprised. I love it when my clients say, “You know this probably has nothing to do with this, but...” If they say that, more than likely it has everything to do with it.

For example, If we are tapping on how you feel uncomfortable at work and you think of your third grade teacher, we have probably have found an important piece of information.

Step four looks like this:

- Deep breath and a sip of water
- Write down any new aspect or issues that popped up
- Re-rate the original issue
- If the original is to a 0, pick a new issue and return to step one
- If the original issue is still there, return to step 3 and tap through again

It is really that simple. Now the only thing to do is give it a try.
What is Subjective Unit of Distress (SUD)? How do we use it? And What if I don’t know my intensity level?

In step 2 and step 4 of the basic recipe of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) we are asked to rate the level of intensity. For this we use the Subjective Unit of Distress. Generally this is a rating of intensity from 0 to 10 (with 0 being no intensity and 10 the highest known amount). Some practitioners will use a 1 to 7 scale, a 0 to 100 scale, or some other convention.

There are few things to keep in mind when using a SUD scale.

First, the most important word is “subjective”. This is not a precise calculation. It is not like measuring how much something weighs. It is a guess that is relative to your experience. Imagine we both have a headache. The level of physical pain might be the same, but since I have a much lower pain tolerance than you, I might call it an 8 and you only rate it a 6.

What is important, when getting the SUDs level, is we are creating a benchmark to determine progress. If you gave your headache a 6, then after a round of tapping it is half as intense as before, you would now give it a 3. This is useful because it shows we are making progress. The SUDs level is only a guide to tell us what the next course of action is.

One of my favorite responses ever to the “How intense is this feeling of fear 0 to 10?” was when my client said, “52!” What this told me was this is a big deal; keep working.

Second, don’t get too wrapped up getting the number exactly right. At first it is going to be very weird to judge how sad you are 0 to 10. If you are struggling, think of it these terms: 0 is feeling no sadness at all and 10 is the saddest you have ever felt in your life. On that scale where is your level of sadness right now.

When in doubt, just guess. After doing a round of tapping, check to see if
it is more or less. Remember, our first number is just benchmark to see if we are making progress.

Finally, there are going to be times when you are not going to be able to come up with a number at all. This is especially true when working with kids. Rating anger 0 to 10 is far too abstract for them to handle. In these cases I have them show me with their hands, like they were showing me how big a fish is, how much fear they are feeling. I say, “Do you have this much fear?” holding my hands all the way apart, “this much?” holding my hands 18 inches apart, “or this much?” holding my hands a few inches apart. They can usually do this.

If you are struggling to give a number to your intensity, ask yourself, “How big is this feeling?” Is it the size of a beach ball, a loaf of bread, a mini-van, or a golf ball? There are no right or wrong answers. You are just looking for a benchmark. If your mind gives you some off the wall answer, trust it and start tapping.
What words and phrases do I use?

When I was working with the person who taught me EFT, it worked great. Now that I am working on my own, I don’t know what phrases to use. Do you have any suggestions?

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is different from most protocols in its flexibility. There is not just one way to do it. What works on one problem might be less effective on the next. What works for one person is not going to work as well on the next. This is particularly true with the words and phrases we say.

It is very easy to get wrapped up in the question, “Are these the right words?”

The problem is that is the wrong question. When I say wrong, I mean it in terms that it is not a helpful question.

There are no right or wrong words with EFT. The words we use are not magical. They are only useful insofar as they help us to stay focused on the issue we are working on. Just because we are saying words out loud doesn’t mean that we are focused on what those words mean.

On more than one occasion I have been in church saying the creed with the rest of the congregation. The words are just coming out of my mouth as my mind wonders to what I am going to do with my afternoon. All of a sudden I snap back into the moment and I have no idea where we are in the prayer. I have been on autopilot. Words have been coming out of my mouth, but they mean nothing to me.

In the same fashion, I can be saying, “This pain in my knee...This pain in my knee...This pain in my knee...This pain in my knee...This pain in my knee.” and be thinking of anything but my knee.

Also, it is possible for me to tune into the pain in my knee without ever saying those words out loud.
Often when my clients are dealing with something that is very emotional, rating a 9 or 10, I don’t have them say anything out loud. To start, they can just tap. If they are at a 9 or 10 they are fully tuned in to the emotion. As the emotion starts to come down then we start using reminder phrases to keep them focused.

**The key take away is this:** It is more important to remember why we use the reminder phrase than how to do the reminder phrase. If you remember its purpose, to keep us focused, then you can say anything you want while tapping as long as it keeps you focused on the issue at hand.

For example, I have worked with clients who have an issue with a person who I know as well. The client doesn’t want to put me in the middle of the dispute. When they are tapping I have them say, “This anger at old what’s his name because he stabbed me in the back.”

In this example my client knows who “old what’s his name” is. By using that phrase, they are tuning to the issue, and I never have to know who the issue is with.

Here are a few guild lines for choosing phrases:

1) Keep it simple. Using the phase, “this pain in my knee,” is powerful enough. You don’t have to get any more sophisticated that that.

2) Be as specific as possible. Before you start tapping on “this pain in my knee,” make sure you think about the pain in your knee. Ask the question listed in *Tune In – (Physical Pain)* to get a really good idea of what it feels like. You can even use those words:

*This pain in my knee*

*That feels red*

*And is the shape of a rod*
That feels like it is made of fire

These descriptive words will help you tune in.

3) For an emotion, just tell the story of what happened.

My boss came in at the end of the day to give me extra work

I needed to get home to help my wife

It was so inconsiderate

I can’t help it if he can’t get his work done on time

It is unfair that he is heaping it on me

It really made me mad

It hurts that he doesn’t think my time is as important is his

And so on. It is as simple as telling the story. State the facts and state how they make you feel.

4) Break the issue down in to the smallest pieces possible. The easiest way to do this is to keep asking why.

I am mad at my roommate

Why are you mad?

The kitchen is a mess.

Why does this make you mad?

Because it feels like I live in a pigsty.
Why does living in a pigsty make you mad?

Because my friends see it when they come over.

Why do your friends thinking you live a pigsty make you mad?

Because they think I am irresponsible.

Made the kitchen is dirty and mad it makes me look bad are very different things. Get specific. You can now tap on, “When my roommate make our place a mess I am afraid that others are going to judge me.”

5) If you don’t know what to say, tap on that.

I don’t know what to say

I am worried I am going to use the wrong words

I am worried this is a waste of time

But I know you really can’t do this wrong

Even if I have no progress I am only going to waste one minute of time

There really is no penalty for doing it wrong

I give myself permission to try.

Then give it a shot. You will find the right words.
Which hand to I tap with, what side of the body should I tap on and can I tap on both sides at the same time?

You will encounter Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) practitioners who are fanatical about this point. They believe theirs is a way that is best. Some of the philosophies are:

- Tap with your dominant hand for positive statements and your non-dominant hand for negative thoughts.
- Always cross your bodies mid point when tapping (eg use the right hand to tap on the left eye brow)
- Use both hands at the same time while tapping

There are actually some good reasons for these points of view.

- Donna Eden (one of the most prolific and best writers on energy medicine) has found some energetic benefit for crossing the mid-point
- Any NPL practitioner worth his/her salt knows that by changing your physical position you can change your mind. By using your non-dominant hand, you are change the way you physically do things, therefore it is easier to change your mind.
- Using Lindsay Kenny’s analogy if using one hose to clean a car is good, then using two must be better because it faster, therefore why not use both hands. (Lindsay’s web site http://www.lifecoachingwithlindsay.com)
- I even know one EFT trainer who says, “Always use your dominant hand.” He doesn’t think it’s better, but instead he knows he sound more authoritative speaking with certainty and specificity. People are more likely to believe him if he knows precisely what he is doing.

To be honest, I really don’t know what is best.

For me the rule of thumb is, “If it works for you, do it!” There are times I use one hand, and others I use both. Sometimes I use my left hand, while
others I use my right. Sometimes I cross over, other I don’t.

I have found it is best to not get bent out of shape over this question. Your experience will be your best guide. Try every thing. Even try things not listed her (like tapping while standing on one foot.) If it is not working for you, try something else.

Remember it cost you less and a minute of your life to try a round of tapping in some new way.
Why do I have to say negative statements?

The second most common question about Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) (after, “Does it work on...?”) is why do I have use negative phrases.

For years we have be taught that we are suppose to be positive people. We should think good thoughts. We should think happy thoughts. (The most famous of these is Emile Coue’s, “Everyday, in every way, I’m getting better and better!”) To think negative thoughts is to bring negative things into our lives.

This is true to an extent. But consider this, the thoughts we choose to have are not the only thoughts we have. Let me give you an example.

Let’s pretend I am trying to loose 65 pounds. I can say out loud, with great force and great belief, “I want to loose 65 pounds!” But that is not all that is said. In my head there is a little voice that says, with just as much power and passion, “You can’t do it. You will fail like the last time you tried. You will just gain it back again. When you loose that weight you are still not going to be good looking. Even if you loose that weight, you won’t be able to find a mate!”

Even though I wanted to have a positive thought, I had 5 negative thoughts as well. So much for positive thinking!

One of the powers of EFT is its ability to quiet the voice in our head that chimes in with all the negative thoughts. (At a conference recently someone commented that they didn’t have an inner critical voice, but instead a full committee.)

Let’s go back to our dirty dish analogy. The only place we can clean the dishes is in the sink. The dishes can be by TV, on the kitchen table, or on the counter. We can know were all the dishes are, but until they get into the sink, we can’t clean them.

These negative thoughts are the “dirty dishes” and we must move them to
the “sink” to clean them. The only way we can do this is to bring the feelings and thoughts up and then tap on them.

The dishes aren’t going to get clean by thinking over and over again, “My dishes are clean. My dishes are clean.” Because there is a part of us that knows, they really aren’t and they are not going to clean themselves.

When we are doing EFT and saying “negative things”, we are saying the same negative things the little voice in our head is already saying, but now we are taking control of them and cleaning them up.
Why do people use different tapping points?

When doing Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), or any meridian based pressure based system, we are tapping on points along the meridian system. The meridian system is one of the major energy systems of the body (which has been used in health care for more than 5000 year all over the world, not just the far east). The meridian system has 12 main meridians (each associated with an organ of the body) and 2 main vessels.

When pressure (by touch, tap, needle, or even just thought) is applied, healing can happen in the body. When Dr. Callahan was developing he found it most effective to use the end points of each of the meridian for tapping, but a number of changes have happened over time as these meridian based healing practices matured.

For example, the point we call the “eyebrow” point is not the end of the bladder meridian. The real end to the bladder meridian is the inside of the bridge of the nose. Dr. Callahan was originally worried that people tapping on the inside of the nose might miss and poke their own eye. To compensate for this, he tested the TFT protocols with the second point on the meridian, which is on the eyebrow. He found this was successful.

You will also notice, when I introduced the basic recipe I only used 8 points. This would mean that we are skipping 6 of the meridians. In 1996 when Gary Craig originally introduced EFT he used all 14 meridians. But Gary is always an innovator. He is always looking for ways to make EFT quicker and easier than it is already. To that end he experimented with cutting out all of the tapping points on the fingers. He found by doing this it did not effect the results. Therefore we have the “shortcut” basic recipe we use today.

Many of the professional who use EFT come from many different backgrounds and experiences. They are bringing their experiences as therapist, acupuncturists, chiropractors, hypnotists, Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners, other forms of energy work, and western medicine. When they do this they bring a great deal of experience and
When you learn EFT you are not asked to dismiss everything you have learned in the past. It is one more tool to add to your health tool kit. Also, remember EFT is called Emotional Freedom Techniques (plural), because there is not one and one only way to do this.

I know in my practice there are tapping points I use that are not part of the basic recipe, which I have found to be very helpful from experience. If you master the eight point basic recipe you are going to have a great deal of success. After you have done this you can then expand your repertoire.

You must first learn to walk before you can run.

Also, if while tapping you get the inspiration to tap some part of the body that is not part of the basic recipe, do it! Trust your instinct. You can’t hurt yourself (assuming you aren’t poking your eye out). The worst thing that can happen is you might poke your own eye out.
201: Why did that happen while using EFT?
It’s not working! What am I doing wrong?

When is Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) not making progress, it does not necessarily mean that EFT is not working. There are a number of reasons why you might not be having progress. The three most common are psychological reversal, dehydration, and not being specific enough. When I encounter someone who is not making progress these are the steps I take.

First, we clear psychological reversal. To do this tap on the karate chop point and use the four set up phrases:

“Even though I feel ... I love and accept myself.

Even though I feel ... I forgive myself for however I contributed to this.

Even though I feel ... I forgive anyone else who contributed to this.

Even I feel ... for the rest of my life, I love and accept myself.”

We then do a full round of tapping on the issue. If progress is made we can continue working on this issue. If there is still no progress we look to the second possible reason EFT is not working.

The second most common reason for not making any progress is not having enough water in the system. We talked earlier, in EFT 102, about the importance of water. This is an easy problem to solve. Drink some water.

You don’t have to drink so much that you are floating away. In most cases four to six ounces is more than enough. After taking a drink, wait a minute or two. After a few minutes try doing a round of tapping. If you make progress you can continue to work on the issue. If you don’t make any progress you move to the third possible reason you are not making progress.
The third hurdle I approach is the fact that we are not being specific enough about the issue when we are tapping.

EFT is a very powerful tool, but it is much more like a laser than a wrecking ball. When you are using a wrecking ball, you just need to be kind of close to knock down what you are after. With a laser, you need to be much more precise. In order to make progress with EFT we must be as precise about the issue as possible.

For example you might be tapping on feeling frustrated. The emotion of frustration is very general. It is not uncommon not to make progress when we are this general. The most powerful tool I have found in getting more specific is the question “Why?”

Here is a conversation with a client to show how it plays out:

Client: I am very frustrated!

Gene: Why are you frustrated?

C: Because the family business is closing.

G: Why does that frustrate you?

C: Because I am worried about being able to take care of my family.

Feeling frustrated about the business closing and worrying about not being able to care for my family are very different issues. Without a lot of self-examination, on first blush, it might feel like frustration. But that is not the real issue. By tapping on frustration we are not likely to make a lot of progress. When we start to tap on the worry about being able to caring for the family we are much more likely to make progress.

When in doubt, keep asking, “Why is that?” When you get an answer ask again, “Why is that?”
Lindsay Kenny has written a great article on the topic called 9 Stumbling Blocks that explores these three reasons and 6 more less common reason for EFT not to work. It can be found at:
Why did the intensity go up when I started tapping?

One of real benefits of using Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is the fact that each rounds of tapping are so short that we are giving immediate feedback to how we are doing. In my experience there are four typical outcomes to a round of tapping which give us information.

1) The pain/emotion reduce in intensity. This tells us we are doing the right work in the right place.
2) The pain/emotion increases in intensity. When this happen it simply means that as we were tapping we have tuned more precisely into what ever we are doing work on. I am reassured; when the intensity increases it is good. It means we are closer to the root of the problem.
3) The pain/emotion changes in location, texture, or type. This informs that we are getting closer to the root, but haven’t found our way there yet. We are getting closer, but need to keep working.
4) There is no change in intensity. This means we need to change our approach. Typically this means we don’t have enough water in the system, are psychologically reversed, or we are not being specific enough.

All four of these outcomes are good news. We are either healing, or have more information about what the next step is to healing.

As you can see when the intensity goes up it is not a bad thing. For example, you can have a very sore knee. As you move through the day you notice it knee, but it isn’t until you sit down that you can really feel it. The moment you sit down and take deep breath all your attention goes to the aching knee. You knee didn’t start hurting more the instant you sat down, you were just giving it more attention.

Right now, think about your feet and socks. A moment ago you couldn’t feel your socks on your feet, but the instance you put your attention to your feet, you could feel your socks.
This is no difference, when intensity goes up we are simply putting more attention to a problem then we were before. Even though it feels a little worse, it is good news, because it lets us know we are on the right path.
Why do I sometimes get sad, depressed or agitated after a session?

This is not something I have experienced very often, but for time to time it happens. Here is how Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) Master Lindsay Kenny responds to this question on her web site (http://www.lifecoachingwithlindsay.com):

It’s not uncommon for people to experience a negative reaction after (or during) an EFT session, especially if you are tapping for yourself. Feelings such as anger, anxiety, uneasiness, sadness or even temporary worsening of the issue(s) might emerge. They are not side effects of EFT, nor is there anything wrong with you. There are several possible causes for these odd-feeling emotions you may experience during or after tapping. Here are some of them:

1) You may be regretting previous choices you’ve made in life (or things that have happened to you.) Or you may be saddened when reminded of the “opportunities wasted” in your life due to your issue. These regrets or feelings are often suppressed until EFT is introduced and things become stirred up. It’s natural to think, then, that EFT has caused these “new” feelings, when in fact EFT has simply reminded you of something you have suppressed that needs to be dealt with. Remember EFT’s Discovery Statement is “The cause of ALL negative emotions is a disruption in the body’s energy system”. Left untreated, those energy blockages (manifested as negative emotions) can lead to a plethora of physical ailments.

2) While in the process of clearing major traumas or issues with EFT some people become anxious or fearful sensing the possibility of living life with a different set of rules. Being free from past baggage might mean risking rejection rather than living inside a “bubble of protection” provided by the previous challenges. For instance, those who have been victimized may have often blamed others for their crummy life or bad choices. Once EFT starts lifting the curtain of pain, blame, shame and resentment, they realize that they don’t really know how to live a life of accountability. They might feel like a fish-out-of-water as they begin to see life from a completely

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different perspective.

We often have two parts of us that battle for dominance. The old, familiar part feels out-of-sorts or fearful because it doesn’t know how to conduct itself in a different paradigm…with a new identity. Being accountable, responsible and optimistic can be frightening if you’ve never or seldom experienced those sensations. Yet the “other” part of you may yearn for that freedom and peace of mind. It could be this dichotomy that causes the discomfort during or after tapping.

3) Another cause for anxiety or fear during or after tapping is that there may be a payoff for keeping your issues. Some people are financially compensated for a disability, while others may get emotional support with attention, sympathy or special favors as a result of their issues. When these payoffs are threatened by using EFT, a part of you may be reluctant to change or to give up these payoffs. Similarly the grief over losing a loved one, the pain from being traumatized or victimized, or the memory of a horrific incident can grow into an “excuse” for your life not working. The realization that you may no longer have this excuse might be overwhelming.

Please don’t misunderstand. I’m not saying that you would consciously choose to be incapacitated, or stay ill, or continue to live in pain or to remain traumatized. However, a part of you may be very protective of these secondary benefits and therefore be reluctant to let them go, triggering the anger, sadness or anxiety after an EFT session. (For more information on this read my Reversals article here on Gary’s site, or on the Free Stuff page of this website.

4) A part of you may be sad (or even sick to your stomach) when you strive to leave the old identity behind. Sometimes there’s a reluctance to do say goodbye for reasons that vary among different people. Just as people stay in bad marriages or keep a clunky care because it’s at least familiar, we sometimes want to stay with what we perceive as a safe place, habit or personality. To change what’s become so familiar is disconcerting to some, while exhilarating and uplifting for others.
5) The most likely cause, however, for feeling unsettled after doing EFT is that you simply haven’t reached the core issue yet. Sometimes getting close to a painful memory causes us to back off. Perhaps you’ve peeled the first layer of the onion and the layer underneath is “stinging your eyes.” You may be only partially into your issues and are stirring things up before completion. My friend and workshop co-facilitator, Zoe Walton says this about core issues:

“If you don’t know what your Core Issue is when you start a session and you proceed to tap on the various aspects you do know about, you may end a session without finding the actual cause of your problem -- the Core Issue. For example, you may be tapping on an uncomfortable emotion or body sensation that is happening at the moment, such as rage or tightness in the throat. But you would only be addressing a symptom, not the main cause. Underneath that rage, a deeper Core Issue, such as “he never really loved me” or “my mother abandoned me” still needs to be addressed for full resolution.

When the Core Issue is not dealt with, it is like chopping off the green weeds in a lawn but never getting to their roots. Also there might be many Core Issues around a particular issue and one session only dealt with one of the Core Issues, leaving more work to do. Confusion, “foggy-headedness”, anxiety, headaches, anger, or sadness often means that you’re simply not done with the problem or haven’t found the all-important core issue.

It is often hard to discover Core Issues on your own. It is sometimes hard for us to see our own problems clearly, just as a dentist would have a hard time giving himself (or herself) a root canal. That is where a good practitioner can help.”

6) There’s still another possibility for post-tapping problems. It’s highly likely that you are working on issues far too complex for you to handle alone. EFT is magical and extremely effective in the right hands. Beginners should generally stay with simple, rather than complex issues.
Serious trauma issues, abuse, depression and other complex topics usually need the perspective of an accomplished practitioner. Sometimes people get frustrated that EFT isn’t working for them, when in fact it’s just that they’re not experienced enough to deal with their own issues.

Look at it this way -- if you experience negative stirrings after a session it’s actually a good sign that EFT is in fact starting to work. Your body or emotions are reacting because you’ve scratched the surface of something that needs to be dealt with.

So if you get stuck, don’t stop! Find some help to work through your issues. Check Gary’s practitioner listings on this site for a competent practitioner to assist you and don’t give up on yourself or on EFT!
When and why should I ask a professional for help?

One of the reasons I love Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) so much is because it a powerful self-care tool. It can be done anywhere and anytime. But there are times when it is best to work with a professional.

1) Working with a professional is a great way to learn. I know in my practice, one of the goals is to equip my clients so they don’t need my help in the future. In most forms of therapy the only time you can do work is when you are in session. You make progress for an hour, and have to wait until your next appointment before you can continue the work. All of my clients receive homework at the end of their session, so if they choose they can make progress between sessions.

When you work with a professional, tell them you are not only looking for help with the current problem, but are trying to get better at doing EFT, so you can be more empowered in the future. With my clients we spend a great deal of time talking about why I am making the choices I am making so they can do the same work on their own later.

2) Getting outside perspective. Sometimes we are so close to a problem, we can’t see what is really happening. This is the same reason we talk through our problems with our friends and family. They give us a different perspective. A professional is trained in helping you to see things another way.

3) It is a really big problem. There issues which are just too big for us to do on our own. By working with a professional, they are going to be able to guide you through tough problems and do it in such a way that you are healing is a safe way.
**Big issues v. small issues**

I can remember when I first introduced to Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). I was blown away. On some level I was blown away, and on another I was very skeptical.

As I got better at applying the protocol I started sharing it with anyone who would listen. Typically one of two things happened. It was either a great success or a great failure. There didn’t seem to be much in between.

As time passed I came to realize that not all problems are equal. All stiff necks are not the same. One stiff neck might be from poor posture, while another could be from years of working for an over bearing boss. One is a small problem; the other is huge.

As a beginner it is easy to get caught up in the excitement of EFT. It is important to keep in mind that every issue and problem is different, even if all the symptoms are the same.

At first you are going to be very good at small problems and struggle with larger problems.

The first step is to start to be aware of the difference between small and big problems. This is just going to take time and experience. As this becomes more apparent you will then be more skilled at dealing with the big problems.

I would encourage you to read as much as you can about EFT as you can. Check out the resources page (http://eftqanda.com/recources.html) for more information. You are only going to get better with practice and education.
When is EFT not the right course of action?

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is not a treatment per se, it is much more a tool. Just like a knife is not a process, but a tool instead. EFT can be used in many ways, but the best rule of thumb is this:

If you are trained to work with an issue safely without EFT, then it is appropriate to use EFT as part of the healing. If you are NOT trained to work with an issue safely without, then it is not appropriate to use EFT as part of the healing process.

Just because EFT works well doesn’t mean you should be doing it. Always check with trained healthcare professions before trying anything new.
Do you have a question about EFT that isn’t answered here?

This book is just the basics. It is just an introduction. With it you can achieve powerful results, but you can do more.

Check out http://eftQandA.com for more than 100 articles on the What, How, and Why of EFT.

If you have a question, you can ask it at http://eftQandA.com/contact.html

ALSO, make sure you sing up for the EFT Q & A newsletter which brings you:

• The latest questions and answers
• Information on training
• Free teleseminar schedule
• Other EFT resources
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