



Getting started with EFT

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A couple of cautions

1. EFT can be a brilliant health aid. But it is not a substitute for conventional medical diagnosis and treatment. It is still experimental and may be most useful alongside rather than replacing an orthodox pathway for physical conditions. . Check symptoms with your doctor, too.
2. EFT is usually gentle but it is can be a rocky road. It has a wonderful way of showing us where we need to go. That is part of its strength. But it may be that it takes us to stuff that could be overwhelming without the help of a skilled therapist. Promise yourself that you will look for help if you get out of your depth.

Where it all began

EFT – Emotional Freedom Techniques - is a fascinating blend of old and new, and of East and West. It is an energy therapy for the 21st century.

The idea of energy therapies and of the meridian system on which EFT is based, had early origins in China and Japan. Similar concepts have cropped up in many different parts of the world including the Bantu in Africa and the Inuit in the Arctic. These are difficult to date. But the earliest well-dated evidence really is early. It comes from a mummified body found in the Alps between Austria and Italy in 1991. The body was preserved in a glacier in the Oetz Valley and has been reliably dated to about 3200 BC. It carries 15 groups of tattoos identifying points which are the acupoints that would be used today for arthritic pain and a stomach condition. This body shows that man had suffered both.

In the West, science rejected the idea of meridians until recently. They were thought impossible to identify or measure and therefore not to exist. Now, however, with more sensitive measuring instruments, it has been possible to show that the ancient idea of meridians does coincide with measurable energy differences over the body. This evidence for the existence of something like meridians adds further weight to evidence of outcome studies which have shown the efficacy of acupuncture, also based on using them, for many conditions.

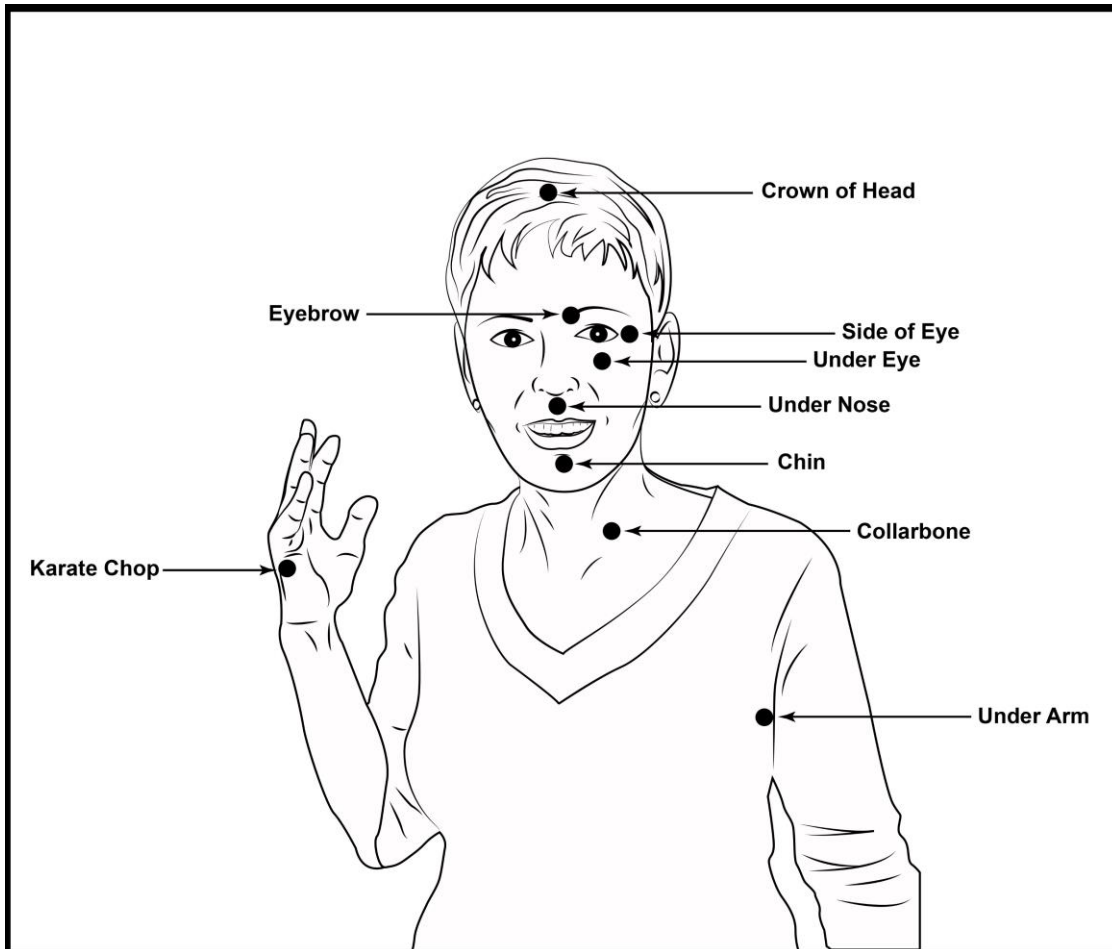
And it is intriguing to see how this fits Einstein's idea that everything is energy. We embraced the concept decades ago. Yet it took us a long time to realize that might even include ourselves.

In the last century, a number of people began to explore how traditional insights into meridians and muscle testing – ways of asking the body for information – could be used. One of them was on clinical psychologist Roger Callahan inventor of Thought Field Therapy (TFT). Callahan's day job was doing traditional therapy with clients. One of them was a woman called Mary with a water phobia that was extraordinarily resistant to conventional treatment. So Callaghan began to try using some acupressure points to see what would happen. What happened was that she went with amazing speed from being unable to tolerate even thinking about a swimming pool to happily being in one. So TFT was born.

EFT was devised by Gary Craig, a Californian Stanford-trained engineer turned personal development coach, who trained in TFT. After he learned TFT, he had the idea that it did not take long to use a sequence of points which covered all bases rather than working with specific points in a specific sequence according to the problem being addressed as TFT did. The result of his insight was a tapping therapy which lends itself brilliantly to self-help as well as to therapy.

EFT continued to evolve. The original sequence was shortened. It seemed to be a natural for a therapy of the Internet age. By the end of 2009 half a million people worldwide were getting an EFT newsletter from Gary Craig in their inboxes twice a week. And it continues to spread.

The points



The points are:

Karate chop point: side of the hand, where a karate practitioner would hit bricks.

Crown of the head: the point where half the meridians in the body meet. Do a bunch of fingers round the point.

Start of eyebrow: on the eye socket straight up from the tear duct and beside the nose

Side of eye: still on the socket. You can feel the bone as u tap.

Under eye: still on the socket. You can still feel the bone.

Under nose: about halfway

Chin: also about half way

Beginning of the collarbone: where the collarbone, first rib and breastbone meet. Or, if you find that tricky, just thump about where a man would knot his tie

Under arm: about nipple level for a man and on the bra strap for a woman, at the point that is something between sensitive and painful. Imagine you are seamed up the sides and find the seam.

The procedure

The basic EFT procedure is:

Calibrate – on a scale of 1 – 10 - how bad does this feels, where 10 is the worst you can imagine and 1 only just enough to register.

Tap on the karate chop three times while saying: “Even though I have this xxxxxx I deeply and completely accept myself “where xxxxxx describes what you are feeling.

Tap around the other points, something like 7 -10 times each, firmly, while saying the reminder phrase” xxxxxx” were the “xxxxxx” is the descriptive bit taken from the sentence above.

Recalibrate. On a scale of 1 – 10 where are you now?

Reword. So now it might be: “Even though I still have some of this xxxxxx....” And the reminder phrase might be: “Remaining xxxxxx.”

Continue to zero.

How do I know the number?

If you have trouble knowing the number, just guess. Guess is a way of letting your unconscious mind tell you. You do know. You just don’t know you know.

What is zero?

What zero is can sometimes be a problem. If, for example, you were working on a snake phobia at zero you may still feel a bit wary around snakes. Zero doesn’t mean you have thrown common sense out the window. It means you no longer have any of the phobic fear.

A phobic fear means you would run into the traffic if you thought the other option was to go close to a snake. A frisson of wariness and warning when you see a snake is a good survival tactic, unless you are a snake expert and know which ones are harmless. Most of us need a little anxiety around snakes.

Similarly, zero doesn’t necessarily means that you no longer wish you had not done something wrong or that something bad had not happened. It simply means you are no longer carrying all the negative energy of doing it or its having happened in your own body. Sometimes zero means you are now in a good state to go and do something by way of reparation for what you did, or to try to prevent something you do not think should happen from happening again, rather than being so upset about it that you become powerless.

Zero doesn’t mean that anything goes. It means that whatever the issue was no longer disrupts your energy system, causing you physical or emotional problems.

The 'right' words

Getting the right words:

So many people get hung up on what the right words are. There are just three things you need to know about them.

1. The words are not a magic mantra. They are used just to keep your attention on what it is you are tapping on. If you are really feeling emotionally overwhelmed you can even skip the words and focus on the feeling. But generally we need the words to hold our attention.
2. . Only you know the words. No one can tell you. They are the words that best describe whatever it is that you are feeling. Ideally they describe the sensation and not what your head tells you the sensation means. So, for example, "this light, fluttery, dull feeling in my gut" is better than "this anxiety."

With physical pain describe in as much detail as you can. For example: "This dark, stabbing, heavy pain in the top of my left thigh" beats "this pain in my leg" every time.

3. Tell it as it is. When you clean it up, your unconscious mind doesn't know what you are talking about. If you feel like swearing, swear. Say what you really think.

The acceptance phrase:

Some people have a problem with saying: "I accept myself" or some other variation like: "I deeply and completely accept myself" or " a variation I particularly like and use a lot is: "I accept myself anyway."

That feels like acknowledging the problem but not rejecting the whole of me because one part of me has a difficulty. It is fine to use that variation if it feels better for you. It also, of course, reminds us that we have a problem, and that does not mean that we are the problem.

To me it makes sense to think of the first part of the sentence, the "even though I have this xxxx" as referring to one part of us, but then going up a level to talk about the whole organism that we are and accepting that.

If you truly feel unable to say any variation of "I accept myself" at the start, you could tap on "Even though I cannot say I accept myself, I accept myself anyway."

Or if nothing stronger, "Even though I am open to the possibility of coming/learning to accept myself".

Tapping without words:

Remember the words are to give our attention a focus. If we are feeling very emotional, so emotional it is hard to think in words anyway, we can tap without words. We obviously don't need them to make us focus on the feeling at that point.

The EFT approach

The discovery statement

What Gary Craig called The Discovery Statement is this: “The cause of all negative emotions is a disruption of the energy system.” So stuff happens, or we have certain thoughts or experiences. The thoughts or experiences disrupt our energy systems. What comes out the other end is unhappiness or ill health. And the point of intervention is on the energy system of the body, while focusing our attention on the problem we want to clear.

Try it on everything

EFT works on an amazing array of physical and emotional problems. Try it on everything – but with common sense. If it is physical, EFT is not a substitute for a diagnosis. You could find yourself trying to mask symptoms that are trying to tell you something important about your need for medical intervention.

If you use it on serious psychiatric symptoms, you could risk removing a defence without which you would be worse off. Don't go where you common sense or your intuition tells you you do not belong.

Symptoms v drivers

EFT as limited ability to help us extinguish cravings or feelings that are being emotionally driven. If we calm them, the underlying driver starts them up again. What we need to target is the driver or drivers. And that often means dealing with the memory of negative experiences we have had. It calls for detective work.

Covering all the aspects

Problems often have lots of different aspects. We need to tap on each, almost as if they were different problems. So, for example, if you have a fear of spiders, different aspects might include:

- A spider being in the room
- A spider moving
- A spider coming towards us
- A spider's legs
- A spider's eyes
- The way a spider moves

Whatever aspects are relevant for you in any problem have to be cleared one after another. Just tapping in “this fear of spiders” is unlikely to be enough.

Being specific

The more specific you are the better results you can expect with EFT. So “Even though I am not good enough” is too global. But “Even though my mother said I was not good enough when I bought home those exams results” is more likely to be effective, though it may be only one of a number of such experiences you will need to deal with.

There may be quite a number of similar memories and, in theory, we would need to deal with each of them separately. In practice, there is usually a generalization effect when we have done a representative sample of similar memories. It is good, too, if we are tapping on an emotion to link it to the physiological feeling it creates in our bodies. Or, if we are tapping on a physical symptom to describe it as accurately as we can.

If you are really stuck for specifics, then start on something global and see what comes up. Or ask yourself, what does this feeling remind me of?

Being persistent

Even complete EFT newbies have had some amazing results when they have been prepared to persist. And I really mean persist. It can be a substitute for experience and expertise.

Staying on course

One of EFT’s strengths is that it tends to tell us where we need to go. It does the detective work for us. But the downside of this is that sometimes it makes us jump from one aspect of a problem to another without finishing anything, and we end up lost in a tangle of things we have started but not finished. It is okay to go off at a different angle if what is coming up feels stronger. But we need to keep track of what we have not finished and go back to it. Making notes as you go helps.

The myth of the one-shot wonder

EFT does once in a while produce a one-shot wonder so fast it seems like a miracle. Mostly it doesn’t. Don’t wonder what is wrong with you if you find you have to spend time and thought.

Emotions often underlie illness

EFT sees negative emotions as probable contributors to serious illnesses. They make us more vulnerable and less able to resist and to recover from illness. Emotions that might underlie illness (you can guess) and emotions we have about having illness are worth processing. Don’t mistake this for the idea that illness is our own fault. It is not.

Working with memories

Working with negative memories, whether they are “everyday” childhood traumas that do not still seem traumatic through the eyes of an adult, or major life-threatening events, is one of the things EFT does well.

It is from specific events in the past that we decide who we are, and how safe the world is. Hence their importance in the way we are in the world now.

EFT can resolve after-effects of negative memories with minimum risk of retraumatization. It is not necessary even to access a memory to begin to work with it.

We used to think memory was more static than we now know it is. It is a constructive process. Every time we remember something, we also edit the memory. What we put back into storage is not exactly the same memory as it was when we retrieved it. EFT takes advantage of that constructive quality of memories to deliberately lower or delete the emotional charge on memories.

The movie technique

This works for memories a few minutes long with just one emotional peak. If you want to deal with something longer you will need to cut it into chunks and do them one at a time.

Here is how you do it:

Make a mental movie of a past specific event.

Give it a title. The title can be any label you choose, but preferably one that is specific enough to evoke a specific memory. You don't need to win an Oscar with it. Run the movie in detail and calibrate. What you are looking for is not the 1 – 10 level you remember but the level you feel when you run it in your imagination/memory now. Make a note of it.

Tap on: “Even though I have this (name of movie) memory, I deeply and completely accept myself.” Do this three times. Then tap twice on the points using the movie title as the reminder phrase.

Calibrate again. Repeat if necessary.

When only low or no feelings remain, switch to seeing if you can tell the story out loud to yourself with no emotion. If emotion comes up, tap until it clears and continue.

Working with memories (cont.)

The tearless trauma technique

If you have a trauma that you know is a big one, don't run the movie. Just guess how high your feelings would go if you did. Tap on it as in the movie technique. Guess again. Repeat until you are guessing a medium to low number. Then switch to the movie technique.

And finally tell yourself the story.

NB You would be wise to hesitate before you deal with really big trauma alone. This is especially true of sexual abuse or rape but also applies to any situation you perceived at the time to be life-threatening. It is safer to have someone holding the other end of the rope. If you do try, promise yourself you will get professional help if it does get to you.

Learning more – resources

There are many ways to learn more about EFT. If you go back to my website (www.judybyrne.co.uk) you will find on the HOME page some short DVDs one of which shows you the exact location of the points, one of which introduces EFT briefly, and several others.

There also a number of audios in the FREE STUFF section of my website.

In the EFT Shop you will find longer DVDs which demonstrate and discuss EFT to a much more sophisticated level and some carefully selected products from other people which are for sale.

There are some good books out there, too. See my recommendations, also under the RESOURCES button.

I have written a much more extensive and thorough introduction to EFT called *Introducing EFT – a practical guide*. It is available in paperback and on kindle. It is a pocket-money prize and pocket-sized and has a lot more detail about using EFT in more specific ways.

My chapter in the book *EFT and Beyond*, which you can buy from My Taping Shop, is about being your own EFT Therapist and has been well reviewed.

If you have specific questions, you may find the answer in my website. FAQs

You can also join a workshop. Again, lots of details on my website. The Foundation level is both for people who want to learn to do EFT better for themselves and for therapists who intend to go on to do another level of study which will qualify them to take EFT into their practices.

Troubleshooting

- You are not being focused enough
- You are not doing EFT as if you really mean it
- You may be getting reduced emotion but not realizing it because you are jumping from one aspect to another
- You may need to have a break, walk around the room and start again
- You may need to drink more water
- It may be that part of you wants one thing and part wants another
- It may be that part of you wants your goal but another part doesn't
- It may be that what you are tapping on is part of a much bigger problem that
- you are acknowledging to yourself
- Ask yourself what is the upside of having the problem. Tap on whatever you answer.
- Or switch tapping for a bit to whichever of these resonates, or you guess is relevant, or just all in turn: "Even though I don't deserve/maybe I don't deserve to get over this ...
"Even though I don't know/maybe I don't know who I would be if I got over this ...
"Even though I don't believe/maybe part of me doesn't believe I can get over this ...
"Even though if I got over this it would be letting them off the hook ...
"Even though I am afraid to get over this problem ...
And any other variations as you can think of.

About wood and trees...

Sometimes it is difficult to see our own issues clearly because we are too close to them and cannot see the wood for the trees. It can help to have a tapping buddy - someone we talk and tap with on our stuff and theirs. Sometimes we get insights when we hear ourselves talking to someone else about what is troubling us.