

A Powerful Self-Help Technique

Combining Tapping Therapy and Free Association

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What's this about?

Herein is presented a technique that will allow the vast majority of people to work through emotional problems in the privacy of their own home, either alone or with an assistant.

The technique requires only one or two hours to learn, but more practice to perfect.

With this technique it is possible to increase communication with the subconscious mind, experience new emotions not previously experienced, make leaps of understanding regarding issues in your life and discover new perspectives.

I thoroughly recommend anyone interested in the workings of the mind or personal development, or anyone dealing with stresses or emotional problems to give it a try. The only cost is your time.

Good luck!

The Technique

The Technique - Overview

There are two parts to the technique:

1. Learn and practice the 'tapping therapy' known as 'Emotional Freedom Technique 'EFT' [1]. The technique involves tapping on various parts of the body whilst repeating fixed phrases that address negative feelings you are experiencing. I did not develop Emotional Freedom Technique, and will not go into detail on it here. I will not explain the theory behind it as it is not a prerequisite to use it successfully. It is not a faith based technique, so you don't need to 'believe in it.' Simply follow the process and you should see results.
2. Apply the Emotional Freedom Technique with a focus on free association and tapping on whatever comes up WITH NO FILTER or VALUE JUDGEMENT on the material that is experienced. More on this later.

The Technique - Detail

Stage 1 - Learning EFT

You can learn the EFT tapping technique from the creator's website at the address here:

<https://www.emofree.com/eft-tutorial/tapping-basics/how-to-do-eft.html>

Follow the instructions in the linked document. You only need to understand the 'basic recipe' and there is no need to read the section on 'Other Tapping Points and Routines' for our purposes.

It is strongly recommended that you practice the basic recipe before proceeding further. It is important to commit the simple routine to memory until it becomes a reflex as having to remind yourself what you're doing or think about it too much will interrupt the experience. You should be able to learn it in an hour, but of course practice makes perfect.

Stage 2 - Applying free association and the 'no judgement' rule

The technique is extremely simple:

- Apply successive rounds of the EFT tapping 'basic recipe' you have learnt. You can begin with a recommended phrase that encompasses the issue you are trying to deal with, alternatively just say whatever leaps to your mind as you tap. Personally I usually don't assess the intensity of my emotions on the 1-10 scale. Whilst it can be useful, I find it interrupts the process and the stream of thought.
- As the tapping process continues, your thoughts will change. All you have to do is tap on each thought as it comes up and follow the stream of thought.
- DO NOT make a conscious decision on what to accept as part of the process and what to reject.

Congratulations, you now know how to combine EFT with free association.!

Simple, isn't it?

The devil, however, is in the detail.

YOU MUST STICK TO THE **GOLDEN RULE!**

The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule for successfully applying free association is this:

"Do not make a conscious decision on what to accept as part of the process and what to reject."

So what is the point here? The point is, that the conscious mind, let's say 'the ego' has a habit of getting in the way and distracting us when we try to get to the root of the problem. The way to deal with this is simply to follow the golden rule and tap on any thoughts that come up, regardless of content, even if they seem to be nothing to do with what you're trying to work on.

This is best illustrated by some examples...

You're tapping on a problem and the thought comes to your mind that you need to clean the house up. You could try to ignore it and hope it goes away, you could make a great effort not to think about it, but ultimately trying to suppress it is likely to make the thought even more intrusive, and is essentially an act of trying to battle one thought with another; the direct opposite of our aim... we seek integration!

You simply tap on this 'I need to clean the house up' and keep tapping on it until the next thought comes up. This is not a waste of time, it is part of the process.

By following the Golden Rule, we allow all aspects of the mind to contribute. The Golden Rule allows all aspects of the mind to 'have their say.' Nothing is to be suppressed. To do so would be to suppress the progress, because the same blocker will repeatedly emerge.

Now some common sense is required here. Obviously if there's something pressing that needs doing, you can't tap your way around it. Tap on 'the dinner is burning and I need to take it off the hob' as much as you like and it is unlikely to stop intruding... it's something that needs to be done. Similarly if you hear a car horn outside and it distracts you, by all means tap on what comes to mind, for example 'I'm trying to tap and this horn interrupted.' All well and good, but again if the noise from the car is continual, this distraction is going to hinder your progress and there is no point trying to 'tap your way out of it.' For this reason, it is important to make time and space to follow the process. Allot yourself sufficient time to immerse yourself (I recommend at least an hour, even if you don't end up using it all), and ensure you have a space free of external interruptions and noise.

Suppose you are tapping and you feel you're wasting your time and getting nowhere- don't give up so easily. Remember the golden rule and tap on it. "This is crap and I'm getting nowhere." I have had similar thoughts come up a number of times in a session prior to making real progress. I wouldn't have got there without acknowledging the thoughts and tapping through. It can take many rounds of tapping if the thought is persistent.

It can occur that you tap through a persistent thought and move on, only for it to reappear again some time later. Don't be disheartened if this happens. THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED!

These things serve as a defence from getting to the core of the issue, but again, do not ignore or attempt to 'get around it.' Just follow the golden rule and tap on it. As new, deeper levels of the issue are revealed, old defences can reappear. They work together in a dynamic fashion. Just keep on tapping through, and if you're frustrated because something came back, don't reject that thought... it's part of the stream. "I'm sick of this issue coming back", "I'm sick of this issue coming back", "This is boring", "I'm tired." Just keep on tapping as it presents itself.

If you're tapping with someone to assist, for example a friend or therapist talking you through the tapping points as you voice your thoughts aloud, something can come up that you don't feel comfortable to say in front of them.. and again, this is another block. Ideally you can discuss your concerns with the therapist and reach an agreement and comfort to talk freely. If not, then it is better to tap alone.

When we discuss that nothing is to be rejected or filtered, it is to be understood that the intent to allow all thoughts to be expressed and tapped on. This does not mean you have to 'be okay' or agree with all the thoughts that come up, it just means that you acknowledge the thought, voice it (either verbally or in your head) and tap on it. If an unsavoury thought comes up and you have a conscious reaction to it, for example "This isn't me," or "that's disgusting," again don't reject that judgement... just tap on it. In some instances this can lead to a 'back and forth' dialogue between your conscious mind and expressions bubbling up from the subconscious. Just allow it to occur, tapping on each expression as it arises.

The 'basic recipe' of EFT talks about creating tapping phrases that focus on negative emotions. With the free association technique, it is perfectly possible that positive emotions come up. Follow the golden rule- tap on the positive material that comes up. It's part of the stream of consciousness just like all the rest, so we do not reject it.

The 'basic recipe' also talks about not wanting to focus on 'someone else's issue,' and uses the issue of a son who is addicted to drugs. Now it is pointless to tap on yourself in an attempt to cure someone else, but within the framework of EFT with free association, it is not only okay to tap on someone else's issue if it emerges spontaneously within your flow of thought, it is imperative. To do otherwise would violate the golden rule. It's not about curing the son, it's about allowing your mind to express itself freely on a subject that demands expression.

Emotions and imagery arise in addition to internal verbal thoughts. The golden rule applies to everything. Don't try to run from any emotion, just tap on it, and use a phrase like “this sadness,” Allow yourself to feel each emotion and tap on it... and if you get angry because you disagree with an emotion that has bubbled up, for example compassion for someone who has been abusive towards you, follow the golden rule and tap on the anger when it arises. Remember that compassion towards someone who has wronged you is okay. It does not imply that what they did was 'okay,' nor does it mean you should 'act like nothing happened' or put yourself back in harm's way by continuing a relationship.

Other distracting feelings can include “I’m getting nowhere,” “am I doing this right.” Just follow the Golden Rule and they will pass. Baby noises, laughing, ‘gobbledygook,’ bizarre images.. the things that can emerge are as limitless as thought itself. Just apply the Golden Rule and tap on it all.

Okay, I've banged on about the Golden Rule long enough now. Please bear in mind are just some examples. The mind is very clever in its distractions.

Summary of Technique

1. Learn the EFT 'basic recipe' from <https://www.emofree.com/eft-tutorial/tapping-basics/how-to-do-eft.html>
2. Apply the tapping technique, but just tap on each thing that comes to mind as it arises and follow the stream of thought.
3. Follow the **Golden Rule**. *YOU GOT THAT YET?!!!!*

A Selection of the Author's Experiences

For many years I had a recurring dream where I was driving a car on a public road, whilst controlling a second full-sized car by remote control. I was able to cope with this, but other traffic on the road began getting in the way and as time proceeded the remote control car was getting further and further ahead of my vehicle until it was almost at the horizon and the task of keeping it from crashing was becoming impossible. I didn't think much of the dream but it did make me a little anxious. Whilst tapping on something unrelated, I felt I needed to move my arm, and a spontaneous involuntary movement of my arm somehow connected me to the memory of this dream, and instantly the answer came to me- it was a representation about me planning far into the future without planning the more immediate steps to get to where I wanted. This wasn't an act of guessing, or reasoning it out, it was an instantaneous flash of knowing.

I have suffered from self-esteem issues in the past, and during EFT I had an experience of feeling brilliant.. then even beyond brilliant. For several minutes I experienced what I can only describe as intense narcissism, like 'I'm the shit. I'm the best. Better than anyone else. Look at me.' Not just words here, an incredibly powerful feeling that emerged. Now obviously narcissism is not true self love and is a pathological emanation rather than a positive thing, but the point here is, you can experience deep new emotions with this technique. I tapped through it and it passed, as it needed to.

It's useful to be aware of the 'transference' phenomenon which can appear with this technique. I was working with an EFT therapist and several sessions in I became attracted to her. Within the space of 15 minutes, I was besotted with her. Now she was an attractive, likeable woman, but the intensity of these feelings out of nowhere began to strike me as something unhealthy. Long story short, as I tapped through the feelings my emotions towards her became very negative and it became apparent that these were feelings from earlier in life towards someone else. This projection of emotions onto someone involved with the therapeutic process is to be expected. You should work with someone who understands this and allows you to express these feelings (with of course, the understanding that it's not something personal) or work alone.

The story my mind created during my tapping sessions regularly involved the appearance of a 'Jester' character. I find this interesting because the Jester archetype is one that regularly appears during experiences with psychedelic medicines such as Ayahuasca which are currently a hot topic at esteemed universities across the world, under research for their healing power in relation to the full gamut of emotional problems, for example PTSD and depression. Since I had no knowledge of this history of the Jester archetype at the time, it cannot be explained away by expectation.

Continued work with the technique revealed that this jester character to be something created by myself at a very difficult time in my very early life, either consciously or unconsciously, I do not know, that served a protective function – the mind's method of coping with that with which I could not cope. In that capacity it served it's purpose, however whilst not apparent to my consciousness as a Jester, this subconscious 'personality fragment' if we can call it that would cause me to respond in an inappropriate manner in certain interpersonal relationships, damaging them in the process. It literally wasn't consciously apparent to me how I had acted, and I always believed the other party had merely lost interest in me.

So there you have it, a few of my more interesting experiences by way of illustrating the power of this method.

Precautions

Be wary of taking everything that comes up literally. Formerly subconscious fears, beliefs etc. can all come up, and the experience previously mentioned of emotions projected onto a therapist should illustrate that not everything is always what it seems. Work through it and hopefully clarity will emerge in time.

Disclaimers and Final Thoughts

There you have it. This is a therapeutic technique that should be accessible to most people without excessive effort, although do understand it can take time to really 'dig deep' into the mind.

As previously mentioned, I did not invent the concept of EFT, nor am I formally qualified or associated with any official body of EFT.

I discovered the use and principles of free association alongside EFT whilst working with the latter and find it to be an extremely powerful combination. I do not claim to be the first or only one to discover it; honestly I haven't investigated, nor do I care. I'm someone who found a cool thing and wanted to share. Nothing more, nothing less.

**Remember, the mind is the power,
There are many keys.
This is just one.
Good luck.**

-Lee

References

- [1] 'Emotional Freedom Technique' developed by Gary Craig. Official website:
<https://www.emofree.com>