

Association of Integrative Coach-Therapist Professionals

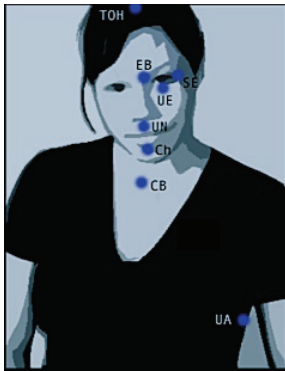
where coaching, counselling and therapy meet



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EFT within my integrative practice



EFT tapping points

Keren Smedley explains how the combination of tapping and talking – a widely used meridian energy therapy – is accepted as a powerful tool by her clients once they can entertain the idea that negative feelings are energy based

I have worked as a coach and counsellor for many years. When I sat down to write this piece, I reflected on the training I'd done since I first trained as a person-centred counsellor 30 years ago. At that time, I worked from the one discipline in a rather rigid way (I didn't think so at the time!). I have increased my repertoire over the years by attending numerous short courses and longer trainings and collected a few more qualifications, both in therapy and coaching.

I now work as an integrative practitioner and use the skills and knowledge I have to work responsively with my client, to enable them to move forward in their lives. The balance of the different disciplines will be different for each client, as will the techniques used.

I was first introduced to a technique called Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) by a psychiatrist about nine

years ago at a friend's dinner party. (In case you're wondering about our dinner party conversation, the majority of us round the table were therapists and he expressed amazement at how helpful this technique had been in his work with adolescents.) I am always interested in new ideas so I decided to do a two-day introductory training, which taught me the basics and offered me a way I could work with myself. I was very taken with it and went on to train and become a qualified practitioner and trainer.

What is EFT?

EFT is based on balancing the natural flow of the body's energy system. If you've ever had a 'bad hair' day where your hair appears to be 'electric', you'll know that your body contains a great deal of energy. When the energy flows smoothly, we feel good; when it gets blocked, we feel below par. EFT has its roots in ancient Chinese medicine. It works through

stimulating the energy meridians (as used in acupuncture) – a network of pathways that traverse the body and through which invisible energy flows.

EFT is a non-needle version of acupuncture. By tapping on the ends of meridian points, it's possible to move energy along and help it flow through the body. The fundamental belief behind EFT, in the words of its founder, Gary Craig, is that 'the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system', and that, while these remain unresolved, they cause physical and emotional pain and illness.

Craig's lifelong interest in personal improvement psychology led him to the field of energy therapy. Because Albert Einstein stated back in the 1920s that everything (including our bodies) is composed of energy, Craig's interest led him to study with Roger Callahan, a clinical psychologist who

discovered that stimulating the acupressure points by touch enabled his patients to deal with and dispel long-held phobias. Callahan explored through his therapeutic work the energy factors behind the common conflict that we have between wanting to change something and our resistance to that change. Gary Craig has built on this and produced a clear and simple formula that has remarkable success rates.

When we have either an emotional or physical disturbance it can cause a break in our energy system – much like a break in the Christmas tree lights’ electrical circuit – and a negative emotion is set up. If it’s a severe break in our body’s energy flow, it stops working and we can end up physically sick or emotionally out of sorts. If it’s less severe, it goes on working like the lights: they’re ok if you don’t touch them but they can remain unpredictable unless the root problem is addressed.

EFT in practice

The very first time I used EFT was with a client who had come to talk about issues at work that were causing her some distress. She arrived for her first appointment and told me that she wasn’t sure she could stay as she was in ‘agony’. She had a problem with her knee and the walk from the tube had been longer than she expected and now all she could think about was her leg.

I asked her if she would be happy to try something to see if we could reduce the pain, so she would feel able to talk to me and to use the session. At this point, I think she was up for anything! I explained the theory behind it and that it was different to what we’d discussed in our initial conversation on the phone.

I asked her to tell me from one to 10 how great the pain was, with 10 being the worst, and she said 10! We then tapped the sequence (explained below). After two rounds, I asked her to score it again. It was now at seven. We continued to do this until it was at three. This was the level at which she said it became a dullish ache and she could focus on something else.

Her knee problem was mechanical – we were never going to cure it. However, what she did was find a way to manage the pain. She used this over the next three months while she waited for surgery and reduced her intake of painkillers and their side effects.

Using the routine in a way that fits

If I’m honest, I was really surprised this had worked so well, as I had not used the technique much in my practice. I began to wonder why, and took this to supervision. I realised that in my training it had been suggested that the practitioner tapped on their client. This felt

uncomfortable to me and I had not adapted it to my way of working. Many of my clients are in business and I didn’t think this would be right for them (I’m not going to discuss this here as it is another issue which is also worth exploring).

I decided that I could, of course, teach my clients to tap on themselves by following me. This opened up a lot of possibilities.

EFT has a very clear, easy-to-learn routine which combines articulating the problem alongside tapping. It’s important to note that no EFT practitioner would say that it replaces medical treatment for physical or mental health problems. But many EFT practitioners have had remarkable results in even longstanding physical and emotional disease. They would also rightly say that you need to be trained before you work with others.



Work with John

To show you the steps, I’m going to use an example from my work with a male client who was a middle manager in the NHS. John was offered three sessions of coaching as part of the

latest round of NHS reform, as his post was at risk.

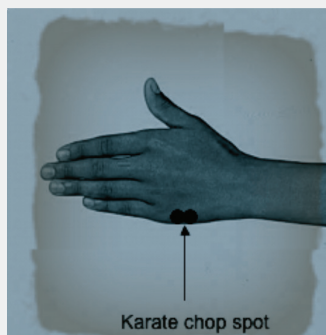
He was understandably very anxious about his future, as he was 61 and thought he was unlikely to get another job at that age. Although he would get a reasonable pension, he was worried sick about money. He had four children. His youngest was going to university that year and he had another in the third year. He had no idea how he'd cope with the fees. He said that when he had his children, he never dreamt he'd be paying out £9,000 a year for their further education. His eldest two were living in rented flats and really want to buy. He couldn't give them money for a deposit and he felt they were stuck because of him.

He felt he'd let his family down – he should have been able to support them all. He was also worrying about his and his wife's future as they aged and needed care.

1. I asked him to start by thinking of the problem and rating the intensity on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 being least and 10 being most). He gave his fear about money a 10.
2. Before tapping, you need to create a statement about your problem. This is called the set-up statement and has two parts to it: it clearly states the problem and then adds a positive affirmation, such as *'I completely accept myself'*. This helps put your

body into a receptive state and stops you adding all the negative bits – for example, if you were to say, *'I will now feel good about money'*, you won't immediately add, *'No, I won't because of x, y and z.'* This two-part process is known as psychological reversal and it stops your unconscious working against your conscious mind.

3. Take a look at the diagrams and get ready to tap. You can use either hand and people usually tap by using their index and middle fingers.



4. I asked John to start by tapping the 'Karate Chop' point continuously (see the spots on the picture of the hand) and to say his 'set-up statement' out loud. His was: *'Even though I'm worried about money now and when I think about ageing, I completely love and accept myself.'*
5. He then tapped each acupressure point up to seven times while repeating some part of the negative bit of the statement. The sequence is: end of eyebrow near nose; side of eye on bone (in other words, other end of eyebrow); under eye; under

nose; under mouth (chin); collarbone; under arm and top of head. (See diagram at head of article.)

- He said as he tapped:
- Eyebrow: I'm worried about money.
Side of eye: I do not have enough money.
Under eye: I do not want to be poor when I'm old.
Under nose: I do not want to age.
Under mouth: I feel scared I won't be able to manage my life.
Collarbone: Money is a worry.
Under arm: I do not want my children to suffer from my lack of money.
Top of head: I'm sorry I do not have enough money.

He then tapped, stating what he would prefer, rather than what he was experiencing. This allowed him to introduce the positive into his system.

- John said:
- Eyebrow: I feel good about how I've managed my money so far.
Side of eye: I like the fact my family has not gone without.
Under eye: I appreciate how well I've done to send my children to university.
Under nose: I have let go of the fear of being poor.
Under mouth: I like the house I live in and pay for.
Collarbone: I know I am resourceful and can find ways of making money.
Under arm: I am a planner so can plan for my old age.
Top of head: I enjoy knowing my children have

the skills to develop their own lives.

I then asked him to take a deep breath and go back and think of worrying about money. I asked him to score it from one to 10. He went to seven. We then did it again. This time, we started with *'Even though I still have feelings about lack of money now and when I'm older'*. This way, you acknowledge that the negative feeling remains but it is now different from how it was. You can then repeat this again until the feeling goes to two or below.

Tail end

I've been interested to see how many of my business clients have found this technique helpful once they've changed their beliefs about – and can entertain – the idea that something is energy based!

I worked in a large financial services firm in the city as a coach. Many of them had to travel by plane regularly and several were anxious about it. As they were often sitting near their staff, they didn't want to reduce their anxiety through excess alcohol or by taking Valium.

I told them about this technique and asked them if they'd like to learn. I was amused when, a few weeks later, one of them told me they'd been on a flight and she had started tapping when there was some turbulence. She'd turned round and noticed one of her colleagues was doing the same thing and both said out loud: 'Keren!'

I have found that a combination of talking and tapping on a problem has a very powerful effect and that this technique fits well within my practice.

If this is of interest there is more information at www.emofree.com – Gary Craig's official site – and on the internet.

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