

by Lana Ackermann

LANA ACKERMANN is an EFT practitioner based in Johannesburg. See pg 4 for details.

EFT

emotional freedom technique

EFT, the acronym for the everyday activity of electronic funds transfer, is a term usually associated with banking. However, it is also the acronym for a healing modality called the Emotional Freedom Technique – a rather compelling name as surely there is not a person alive who does not want to be freed from their troubling negative emotions!

The technique was developed two decades ago and, at that stage, regarded by many as being a little wacky. However, its effectiveness is now backed up by a considerable amount of research, and it is rapidly becoming a common accompaniment to traditional psychological treatments.

What is it?

EFT, also called tapping, is a body-mind practice which combines the principles of ancient Chinese medicine with modern psychology, and can be viewed as a kind of emotional acupuncture. It involves the light tapping of the fingertips on selected acupressure points situated on the head, upper body and hands. While tapping, affirmative phrases associated with a specific emotional problem are spoken out loud.

According to Chinese medicine, we have meridians or energy channels

running the length of our bodies, ending in acupressure points. These channels can become blocked due to subtle or obvious emotional traumas resulting in negative thoughts, destructive behaviour patterns and a long list of psychological and physical dysfunctions. Tapping on the acupressure points, while focusing on the problem, sends vibratory signals to the meridians, unblocking them and enabling healing.

whenever she thought about the rain of the previous evening. Dr Callahan asked her to tap under her eye, the location of the endpoint of the stomach meridian governing anxiety. What happened next astounded him. Mary said that both the stomach ache and her fear of water had gone! Dr Callahan tested this by taking her to his swimming pool and asking her to put her feet in the water which she did with complete ease.

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How was it developed?

In the early 80s, American psychologist, Dr Roger Callahan, was working with a client, Mary, who had a water phobia. This phobia was so severe that she was unable to shower and could only bath in a miniscule amount of water. Dr Callahan had been aware of the limitations of “talk therapy” and was investigating the alternative practices of acupuncture and kinesiology. Mary underwent a year of conventional therapy, but it had no effect on her phobia. One day, she came in for her weekly session complaining of a stomach ache which occurred

As a result of this miraculous success, Dr Callahan began experimenting on patients with other phobias, using a variety of acupressure points. He eventually developed algorithms, referring to the specific order of tapping on acupressure points to combat specific psychological conditions. He called the method Thought Field Therapy. One of his students, Gary Craig, discovered that a single algorithm could be equally effective for all conditions and called his one-size-fits-all tapping method, the Emotional Freedom Technique.

MY STORY

FOR YEARS I HAVE EXPERIENCED PANIC ATTACKS WHENEVER I USE AN ESCALATOR. A while ago, I visited a shopping mall in Johannesburg. When I wanted to leave the mezzanine floor of a clothing store, I discovered that there was no alternative but to use an escalator. I had a severe panic attack and ended up in hysterics. Eventually my brother had to request the shopping mall maintenance office to switch off the escalator. Holding on to the side of the escalator for dear life, I inched my way down under the gaze of stunned shoppers and mall staff.

I have also frequently experienced extreme anxiety when I am in enclosed spaces, including that of an aeroplane. It has always taken a considerable amount of willpower not to leave an aeroplane immediately after boarding.

A short while ago, I attended an EFT workshop and, the day after, flew to Cape Town. I did several rounds of tapping and was curious to see if this would help me. Amazingly enough I was able to use the escalator at the airport with ease. And I had three heavy bags in tow! On boarding the plane, I had a very mild attack of claustrophobia. However, I did a round of tapping and the panicky feeling dissipated very quickly.

Thanks to EFT, it seems I can now function at a level that is considered normal!

– Suzette Drouault

To contact Suzette, email
✉ stories@thrivemag.co.za
See page 2 for more info.

FURTHER READING

- *Clinical EFT as an Evidence-Based Practice for the Treatment of Psychological and Physiological Conditions*, Psychology, 2013, 4(8): 645-654
– D. Church

In the 90s Craig created a website emofree.com which made information about the technique freely accessible to the public, resulting in it being practiced world-wide within a short space of time.

EFT has been shown to be particularly beneficial for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic attacks and phobias. Recovery can occur almost instantly or may need repeated practice of the technique. In addition to acting on the meridians, tapping induces an alpha brain wave state. This is a mild hypnotic state in which old memories can enter conscious awareness with ease, making EFT a powerful tool for use in conjunction with any type of therapy. Indeed, one of the most highly valued characteristics of this technique is its ability to be used alongside standard psychological and medical treatments. Thousands of health care professionals are now using EFT in combination with their own therapeutic approaches and are finding it to be of considerable value in hastening and enhancing the effects of these.

Want to try?

Think of a difficulty that you are currently experiencing which is causing negative feelings.



Step One

As indicated above, **tap on the fatty part of the little finger side of the hand**, using all the fingers of the other hand, and say three times:

“Even though I have this (difficulty or negative emotion), I deeply and completely accept myself.”

Examples:

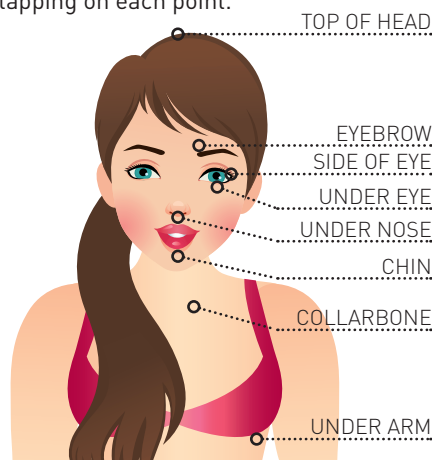
- Even though I have this fear of public speaking, I deeply and completely accept myself.
- Even though I have this anger towards my father, I deeply and completely accept myself.
- Even though I have this depression, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Step Two

Tap on the points on your face and upper body as indicated in the drawing below, using both your index and middle fingers. Start on the point on the top of the head and work your way down. While tapping on each point, say your chosen statement, as above.

Step Three

Repeat step two, but instead of saying your chosen statement, consecutively use the following affirmations while tapping on each point.



- **Top of head:** I choose to have a better feeling.
- **Eyebrow:** I am open to accepting where I am at.
- **Side of eye:** I am willing to believe there is hope out there for me.
- **Under eye:** Just for today, I am willing to feel differently.
- **Under nose:** I am open to the possibility of ...
- **Chin:** I am learning to accept myself in this moment.
- **Collarbone:** I deserve love.
- **Under arm (10cm below the armpit):** I am perfect just the way I am.