

Common Questions, Comments, and Problems

I've trained thousands of people in EFT over the years in various formats. These range from small in-depth training workshops to brief demonstrations following keynote speeches at large conferences to Internet radio and television shows. I've fielded many questions during that time, and these are some of the most common ones asked.

How do I find the right words?

One of the most common worries of newcomers to EFT is that they'll select the wrong words for the Setup Statement. How can you be sure you've phrased it correctly, especially if you're in a situation where you don't have the instructions in front of you?

The answer to this question is to start tapping the Karate Chop point and say the first thing that pops into your head. It's more important to tap than it is to formulate the Setup Statement perfectly. You say the Setup three times, and you can change it on the second or third rounds if a more descriptive phrase occurs to you.

Keep it simple. If you've hurt your thumb, and you're tapping for that, you can simply say, "My thumb hurts." If you've been emotionally triggered by a bad experience, you can say, "This bad experience." If you're feeling annoyed, you can say, "Even though I'm feeling annoyed"

while you tap. Start tapping, say any words that keep you focused on the problem, whether they're the perfect words or not, and complete a round or two of EFT. You don't need to go into elaborate explanations of why you feel the way you do, such as, "I'm annoyed at Sally. She told me to mind my own business, and she's always saying things like that. She's such a pain that I don't know why I ever talk to her..." and so on. Just keep it simple: "I'm annoyed at Sally."

With experience, you'll find yourself easily selecting the words that have the most emotional impact, but at the beginning, it's fine to use any words that come to mind. What's important is to stay focused on the problem and tap, and avoid getting into mental considerations about the relative merits of this or that Setup Statement.

Do I need to tap on the exact points?

No. You can tap near the points, or even far away from the points, and still get some effect. At the beginning, just tap, without worrying too much about whether or not you're on the exact points.

Researchers have asked the question of whether using acupuncture needles on sham points that are not real acupuncture points is as effective as needling the points themselves. Their research results are ambiguous, with some studies showing equal effects from sham and real points, while others show the real points having a larger effect (Harris, Zubieta, Scott, Napadow, Gracely, & Clauw, 2009). If you can imagine a line between the full effect of stimulating the points and no effect, stimulating the wrong points may lie somewhere in the middle. It might be better than no acupuncture at all, and less effective than using the precise points.

When you next have an EFT tapping point diagram available, note the location of the points and practice tapping on those exact spots. When you practice EFT using the instructions in this book, you can find the exact points by looking at the diagrams and then in a mirror. Most of the points have tiny indentations in the bone and cartilage right below the skin, and you can find them with your fingertips. It's

worth doing that a few times, so that you get into the habit of tapping on the actual acupuncture points rather than nearby places on the skin.

When you need EFT in real life and don't have a diagram available, however, just tap on the locations as you best remember them.

Is it essential that I tap every point?

No. If you forget a point, skip it and tap the next point.

With practice, you'll quickly memorize all the points, and tap them all. At the beginning, it's fine to skip a point or two. Even experienced practitioners sometimes forget to tap a point if they become completely focused on a client. You'll be doing many rounds of EFT, and you'll catch the missing point later on.

What if I don't feel a change in my SUD scores?

Sometimes you'll do EFT on a problem, but when you test your SUD levels before and after, they stay the same. You don't feel your emotions or your body change.

That's okay. There are many reasons why your SUD score might not change. You might need to tune in to the problem more strongly. Part of your psyche might be reluctant to confront the problem. Changes might be happening on a level too subtle for you to notice. You might be dehydrated. Your mind might be convinced that EFT can't work that fast, so it dismisses or minimizes real change. You might be tapping on an associated problem, skirting the real problem. You might be tapping on a surface issue, not yet having discovered a deeper issue that's the real problem. Some issues, like compulsions and addictions, have many layers that can take a long time to reveal themselves. You might need the help of a practitioner or a workshop to address this particular issue. There are thousands of reasons why your SUD score might not go down.

If you finish a round of EFT and your SUD score hasn't dropped at all, don't be discouraged. Pick up the work later on, and you might find new insights and better progress. You might also discover that

when you think about the problem a day or two later, your SUD score is now lower. EFT might have had a delayed effect. When your SUD doesn't drop for a particular issue, don't assume that EFT hasn't worked or will never work. Sometimes it works in the background, or has a delayed effect.

What if I can't figure out my SUD?

You might have memories of events that were painful, but when you try and assign them a SUD score, your mind goes blank, or you don't feel any strong feelings. There are several approaches you can use in such cases.

One is just to invent a SUD score. Perhaps a bully beat you up in second grade in school, and you know it was a horrible experience, but you can't figure out what your SUD number is. You can simply imagine a score, making it relative to other experiences in your life. If a happy memory is a 0 and the worst experience of your life is a 10, give the beating a number that seems logical even if you can't come up with a SUD number based on your feelings.

Another is to tap without identifying a SUD score. You can formulate a Setup Statement and perform a whole round of EFT without any SUD rating at the beginning or end. Afterward, think of the problem and ask yourself, "Do I feel better now?" If you do, that's an indication EFT has worked, even though you never assigned the problem a numerical score.

SUD is a useful way to assess progress, but like any other part of the EFT routine, if it hangs you up, drop it and tap anyway. Don't let the inability to come up with a SUD score serve as a bock to starting a round of EFT.

Do I measure my SUD level right now or at the time of the event?

Now. You might remember a traumatic event like a car crash and recall that your SUD level was a 10 at the moment of impact. Perhaps that was 7 years ago, and your SUD level when you now recall the

event is a 5. Use your SUD level now, not your SUD level at the time of the event. The reason for this is that EFT works on your nervous system in present time. When you recall the crash and give it a SUD rating of 5, that indicates that the part of your neural network carrying the signals associated with the trauma is active. That's the neural activity we target with EFT.

Some events may have been a 10 when they happened, but you've integrated them into your life story and they're now 0, completely neutral. You're at peace when you think of them, even though they were tragic at the time. Others may still be a 10 when you recall them decades later. Using your current SUD level allows you to focus on events that carry a lasting emotional charge.

This focus on the present level of distress, not the past level, also allows us to test the results we're getting with EFT. If your SUD level around the accident goes down to a 1, you know you've discharged four fifths, or 80%, of the emotional intensity now associated with the accident. If instead you had tried to use your SUD level at the time of the accident, you'd then be comparing a SUD level in the distant past with one now, which would not give you an accurate barometer of progress.

What if my SUD level doesn't go down to 0?

There are many reasons why a SUD level might not drop to a 0, and this is not a problem with EFT.

One case is when you achieve slight progress. Perhaps your SUD rating goes from 9 to 7, or from 5 to 1, but won't go down to 0, despite many rounds of EFT. Even a drop from 10 to 6 is a 40% drop, which represents enormous progress. Sometimes that's enough.

If you're working on a long-standing issue, it's possible for your SUD level to drop to a 0, but a drop even of 10% or 20% indicates a significant reduction in your degree of emotional suffering. That's the goal of EFT. A reduction in suffering is good, even when we can't completely eliminate that suffering.

Another reason your SUD level might not go to 0 is that EFT often has a delayed effect. You might have pain from a bone fracture,

for instance, and tapping brings it from an 8 to a 3, but it won't go down further, even after you've tapped several times. You might find it's a 0 or a 1 the day after.

Emotional problems often respond the same way. You might find that you've gone from an 8 to a 2 around some bad childhood event, but your intensity isn't going lower. The next day, try thinking of the event again and assessing your SUD score. You'll often find it's now 0.

If you're working with other people, ask them about their SUD levels frequently during a session. If their SUD levels don't go to 0 for every issue, that's fine. Some issues are easy and go to 0 after just one round of tapping. Others might drop gradually over time. Some might be very difficult, and drop only slightly even after years of tapping. Whatever a client tells you, whatever your own body tells you, trust and accept it.

Another reason why a SUD level doesn't go down to 0 is that it might take time for the reality of change to sink into our bodies and brains. I've often tapped with people and seen their pain or upset go away based on the expression on their faces or their body language. I witness clearly that they're at or near a 0. But then when I ask them for a SUD score, I can see the wheels turning in their heads. Their minds are saying, "Wait a moment! Where's that pain? I can't find it? Where did it go? It can't really be gone." They might get confused or panicked, as the mind searches for pain that's no longer there. The mind is baffled by this sudden absence, and can't explain it. These individuals might give you a SUD above 0 simply because their minds can't believe the pain could vanish so fast.

That's okay. It can take us a while to adjust, especially if a long-standing problem simply vanishes. A big chunk of our inner story might be tied up with that problem, and its sudden absence produces a hole. It can take the mind a while to adjust to the absence of the problem. That's a common reason why people report a high SUD even when it's a 0.

If you believe that a client's SUD is lower than the client's last number, you can gently ask, "Are you sure it's that number?" Sometimes, when you ask a second time, the client tunes in, and realizes the number has gone down further than first believed.

That might not happen, the SUD rating stays high, and that's okay too. In every case, you accept what your clients say, and give them time to adjust. Love and patience provide fertile ground for healing, and a good practitioner accepts the pace of healing just the way it is.

What if I can't remember a specific event?

You might feel bad emotionally or physically and be unable to tie it to any specific event. There are several options in these cases. One is to create an imaginary event in your mind. Perhaps your parents fought when you were a child, and you can't remember the specifics of even one of those fights.

If you use your imagination to fill in the blanks, and just create a likely scenario in your mind, you have a starting point for your EFT session.

This method is usually very effective. The reason it works so well is that the elements of the imaginary situation are being retrieved from our own memory banks. They might be fictional, but the only reason you can imagine them at all is that they resemble an actual event you once saw or heard. To create any imaginary event, you have to draw from reality. So while your fictional event might not have actually happened, it has a high affinity for literal events.

You can also start tapping without an event. You might have an uneasy emotional feeling, for instance. Though it's helpful to trace that uneasiness to an event, you might not be able to remember one, no matter how hard you try. In that case, simply tap on the uneasy feeling.

Interesting directions for an EFT session often appear when you experiment with tapping on the inability to remember an event. You incorporate this situation into your Setup Statement, for example, "Even though I can't remember a specific event, I deeply and com-

pletely accept myself.” I’ve done this many times with clients, and found that it often sparks the recall of an event. Tapping seems to lower the barriers to remembering events, and tapping on accepting the inability to recall them removes the pressure to come up with one. That act of relaxation then opens the doors of memory, and specific events pop out.

What if I have many similar traumatic events in my history?

Start with one of them. You can use a particularly troubling one, or go to the other end of the spectrum and tap first on one of the least triggering events.

Imagine working with a client who, as a child, was beaten repeatedly by her mother. She has many beatings, perhaps hundreds, all contributing to her emotional distress. Which one should you pick?

You can ask her if one beating stands out in her memory, and tap on that particular beating. You can also work with the worst beating, if the client is willing and able to handle the emotions that come up. A client might very well not want to remember the worst beating. In that case, you can work on the least severe beating, and tap only on that. If the client is able to dispose of the emotional trauma of that mild beating and go to a low SUD number, they may gain the confidence to tap on more beatings and worse beatings.

Another possibility is to tap on the first beating. You might ask, “What’s the first time you remember your mother hitting you.” The chances are good that the first in a series of bad memories was a particular shock to the child, violating her expectations of safety and love from a parent.

Because of EFT’s generalization effect, when you tap on a particular beating and then tap on a few other particular beatings, it’s likely that the emotional charge around all beatings will diminish. Our brains make associations between similar events, and when we process the distress around one, our brains may remove the emotional charge around others too.

Whether you tap on a big event or a small one, a recent event or the first one, don't be deterred from tapping just because you have a frighteningly large number of similar events. Collectively, they may look too big to handle, but you'll typically find that once you tap on a few of them, your SUD score goes down for the whole collection.

What if an event is too big or scary for me to deal with?

Most of us have events in our lives that are too horrible or frightening to contemplate. We can't imagine talking about them, let alone tapping on them.

Don't force yourself to tap on any event for which you are not ready. Tap first on events that you feel are manageable. Gain confidence and experience, and you'll increase your skills. Then you can tackle bigger problems.

Clinical EFT also includes a set of skills called the Gentle Techniques. These are specially designed to deal with overwhelming emotional trauma, and there's an extended section on them in this manual. After you learn these, you'll become more sophisticated in your ability to use EFT for big or scary events.

Can EFT work if my problem has existed for many years?

Yes. You'll be surprised how effective EFT can be even if you've had a problem your whole life. Many clients with lifetime problems believe that EFT won't work because nothing else has. It's very moving to witness clients find release from an issue that has plagued them for many years.

You'll find many stories of EFT working for pain that's been afflicting a person for decades, or clearing emotional baggage that's been weighing someone down for years, or changing a core belief that's kept someone limited their whole life. Long-standing problems don't always disappear as if by magic, but they do sometimes, and the fact that a problem has endured for a very long time is no barrier to now using EFT to work on it.

What if I have physical as well as psychological problems?

Many people use EFT for physical issues like pain and disease symptoms. These are often compounded by psychological issues. For instance, a person might have pain after breaking his or her arm 2 weeks ago. That fracture, and that pain, is a physical problem.

Yet it might also be a psychological problem. Perhaps he broke his arm playing football. He might be angry at the person who knocked him over, or at the referee, or at the doctors at the hospital. People with symptoms are often fearful that they won't heal, worried that the pain won't stop, and angry at themselves for getting into the situation. These psychological problems interact with, and compound, the physical problem.

You can use EFT at both ends of the spectrum. You could tap on the football player's pain. You could also ask him about the circumstances surrounding the injury. Who does he blame? Why is he angry? Who were the people and what were the conditions involved in the event? You can tap on all the negative emotions associated with the physical problem.

It's always worth exploring the psychological aspects of physical problems, even if the problem seems purely physical. You can ask, "If there were an emotional element to this physical problem, what would it be?" This and similar questions often uncover a whole collection of emotional issues associated with the physical problem.

It's also worth exploring the physical parts of psychological problems. If someone is angry, ask, "Where do you feel that anger in your body?" Often the person will report a particular physical location. There may be pain, tension, or other physical sensations at that site. You can tap on both the emotion, and also the body sensations. Perhaps the angry person feels a thick black bar of tension embedded in her shoulders. You can work this physical description into a Setup Statement like "Even though I have this thick black bar embedded in my shoulders, I deeply and completely accept myself." Many clients

will make additional progress by tuning in to their bodies as well as tuning in to their emotions.

Do the positive effects last?

Generally, yes. In all the studies that have included a follow-up assessment, the effects of EFT last over time (Feinstein, 2012a). That's true whether the problem was posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), phobias, depression, or anxiety. Once people reduced their psychological trauma with EFT, they tended to remain at that reduced level. In the Health Care Workers study, we also compared those who did more EFT with those who did less (Church & Brooks, 2010). We found that those who did more EFT after their initial one-day workshop had a better long-term result than those who did less.

While you might get immediate relief from EFT, you're strongly encouraged to continue using it long-term. Sometimes our immediate problem goes away after we tap, and we then don't do any more tapping. Although that positive experience is a good thing in and of itself, it's better to regard it as a pointer toward the direction we should take for the rest of our lives. We can work on many more issues, and release stress whenever and wherever it affects us.

It's interesting to note how some clients stop tapping once their immediate problem is solved. In the Health Care Workers study, about a third of participants didn't use EFT again after the workshop. Another third used it a few times over the next 6 months. Only a few became regular tappers.

To me this represents a missed opportunity. Why release only a small portion of your suffering and live with the rest? Yet you'll find many clients are quite content with having the immediate problem solved, and don't continue to use EFT. You might want them to heal further, but it's up to them to make that choice. You can certainly encourage people to clear more of their emotional distress after their first positive experiences, but many won't respond. As practitioners, we love and validate people where they are, and know that when the time

comes for the next step on their healing journey, help will be available to them.

How do I know if a loved one has or I have a mental health diagnosis such as depression or PTSD?

You can find lists of symptoms on authoritative websites such as that of the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH.gov) and the American Psychological Association (APA.org). Diagnosing mental health conditions is the province of licensed professionals, and you're not going to be able to know for sure until a person has been formally diagnosed by such a professional.

If you suspect a loved one has one of these serious psychological problems, encourage that person to visit a mental health practitioner for a diagnosis.

For individuals diagnosed with a serious mental health disorder, we recommend using EFT only in conjunction with proper medical care. EFT isn't ever a substitute for proper medical or mental health care. It's for use in addition to proper care. In my experience, mental health professionals are supportive of EFT under these circumstances.

When should I work with an EFT practitioner?

There are several circumstances under which you might consider working with a certified EFT practitioner. An obvious one is when you aren't making progress working alone.

You'll find you can easily solve some problems by using EFT on yourself. On others, you'll find you make little or no progress. In these cases, the advice of an experienced practitioner is valuable.

You might also consider working with a practitioner who specializes in your condition. Most practitioners develop specialties. They have clusters of clients with common problems, such as sports performance, PTSD, self-esteem, or obesity. Some have specialized training in the form of a credential such as Certified EFT Weight Loss Coach or Certified Psychological Trauma Coach. Such a practitioner will

bring a wealth of experience to your situation, and you're likely to make much faster progress than you'll make alone.

You can often make faster progress learning the subtleties of EFT by working with one or more practitioners. Each one has a different style, and you'll start to notice varying tricks and techniques. You'll learn which of these work best for you, and incorporate them into your process of learning EFT. This gives you a wider spectrum of techniques and perspectives than you're going to develop doing EFT all by yourself.

Having a practitioner can contribute to your psychological and physical support system, even if you don't see them very often. Just talking to them once in a while might give you the boost you need to overcome a particular problem. Knowing there's a practitioner who is there in case you need them can provide security. After a few sessions, your practitioner will get to know you, and your patterns, and can be a powerful ally on your healing journey.

A practitioner can also provide accountability. We often break promises that we make to ourselves. We make a pledge we'll go to the gym and work out 3 days a week. Then when the alarm clock sounds in the morning, we turn it off and catch an extra hour's sleep instead. Having an external person to whom you make yourself accountable can help you meet your goals. If you've told your practitioner you're going to the gym three times a week and are e-mailing your practitioner at the end of each week, you're much more likely to stick to your commitments. An accountability partner provides us with an external reference point to keep us on track with our goals. If you feel resistance to going to the gym coming up, you can tap with your practitioner on that resistance. Your practitioner can help you identify secondary gain that might lie beneath self-sabotaging behaviors as well as keeping you accountable.

Many practitioners work over the phone, or via video conferencing services such as Skype. This makes it easy and convenient to do an EFT session without leaving home or work. Other times, however, a

session in the office might be more powerful than a phone session. You might try in-person sessions with a practitioner in your geographic area, and see if you make faster progress this way. In a study of veterans with PTSD, those who received in-person sessions had a significantly greater reduction in symptoms than those receiving phone sessions (Hartung & Stein, 2012). While remote sessions were still useful, an in-person session provided the practitioner with many therapeutic cues that could help get to the heart of an issue.

How do I find a practitioner?

There are several ways to find a practitioner, and many different types of EFT practitioners. There is a free resource called the EFT Community Map. This allows any practitioner, anywhere in the world, to enter their information free of charge. You can locate practitioners who are geographically near you using the EFT Community Map (CommunityMap.EFTUniverse.com).

There is no screening of these practitioners for competence. Some may be highly competent and well trained; others may have watched a 10-minute EFT video on YouTube and then hung out a shingle as a practitioner. It's essential to examine the credentials of a practitioner before entrusting your psychological or physical health to their keeping.

The practitioners listed at Practitioners.EFTUniverse.com are certified in Clinical EFT. Clinical EFT is the method that has been validated in over 20 clinical trials, and has a large evidence base showing that it works. These practitioners have taken academic classroom training in all 48 Clinical EFT techniques, had their competence assessed by a written exam, submitted case histories to demonstrate their abilities in offering EFT, and complete continuing education (CE) classes every 3 years.

There's no guarantee, however, that a particular practitioner is a good fit for you just because they've put so much time and energy into getting certified. That's why most practitioners offer a free session. I

recommend you sample the services of several practitioners and then choose one with whom you get particularly good results. Think of this as a long-term relationship you're establishing to support your health and well-being, and give it commensurate importance. Your EFT practitioner is a vital part of your personal support system and your health team, and should be cultivated as a key healing relationship.

How do I know if a practitioner is competent?

Certified Clinical EFT practitioners pass through several layers of training to determine if they're competent. This includes a written exam, the presentation of case histories to a mentoring consultant who gives them feedback, and many classroom hours. Only those who have gone through this process are listed in the practitioner database on EFT Universe (Practitioners.EFTUniverse.com). There are also several other organizations other than EFT Universe that certify practitioners, and each has different standards.

Check out practitioners with your head first, and then with your heart. A practitioner will usually have a website and provide information about their credentials there. Read these, and assess how credible they seem. You can ask a practitioner questions about his or her training and experience. Also see what certifications and training the practitioner has accumulated in methods other than EFT, and which other continuing education/ continuing medical education (CE/CME) courses they've taken, since these are often a guide to how dedicated a practitioner is to improving their skills over time.

Once you've used your brain to assess whether or not a practitioner has the external trappings of confidence, use your instincts. A sample session will tell you a lot about whether you and a practitioner are a good fit. You'll usually feel good once you've found a practitioner who's right for you.

How do I explain EFT to friends, family, and colleagues?

My preference is to demonstrate EFT rather than explain it. A single 5-minute session is usually more effective at convincing people

than reading a 500-page book. Once they feel it in their bodies, their minds usually come along for the ride. I keep my explanations brief, even when talking to medical professionals such as doctors, psychiatrists, and nurses.

EFT can be briefly summarized as:

- A relaxation technique.
- Simple physical exercises to reduce stress.
- A scientifically validated method for addressing anxiety and depression.
- A fast way of shifting the fight-or-flight response.
- Acupressure such as is used in massage methods like Shiatsu.
- A body-based stress reduction system.
- Acupuncture without needles.
- A quick method for reducing cortisol and stress hormones.
- A way to regulate the nervous system.
- Like qigong and tai chi, exercises to balance the body's energy system.

In time and with practice, you'll find your own brief "elevator speech" that allows you to explain EFT fast so you can get people tapping. Once you've given them their first experience, little more explanation is necessary.

Can I tap on a family member?

Yes, as long as you've asked permission, just as you need permission from an adult who is not a family member. In the case of a child, you need permission from the child's caregiver, usually the mother or father.

EFT is a wonderful resource for families. You'll find yourself wanting to use it with your parents, your children, and your spouse, as well as cousins and uncles, nephews and nieces. Many types of problem

that would otherwise interfere with goodwill and love within a family are solved by EFT. This ranges from arguments and disagreements to physical scrapes and bumps.

If, for instance, your child has an injury, you might tap the points on their body immediately. The same applies to an emotional upset. When upset, the child is unlikely to be able to focus on the points, and the most expeditious way to relieve their suffering may be to tap on them. Children are usually very much in touch with their feelings, and so you don't usually need many words. Tapping on or with a child who is crying is usually effective without words till at least the teenage years. From the teen years on, work with a child as you would with an adult.

My preference is to see both adults and children learn EFT and use it themselves, rather than relying on someone else to tap on them. So when using EFT with a family member for the first time, it's wise to focus on teaching it to them as a self-help technique, rather than you becoming the family's resident tapper. There are many stories by people who've used it successfully with family members at RelationshipStories. EFTUniverse.com.

What if I begin, or someone I'm working with begins, to cry uncontrollably?

This is a scary situation for a newcomer to EFT, or a novice practitioner. You're working with a friend or client on a small emotional issue, and they get in touch with a big emotional issue. They're overwhelmed by the intensity of the emotion, and begin crying as though they'll never stop.

I was working with a therapist once on the issue of her annoyance with her boyfriend. Every Wednesday night, he left her to attend a book reading group. He'd had this hobby and been a member of the group since before their relationship began, and it was one of the joys of his life. Yet she felt annoyed that he'd make the choice to be with other people rather than with her on a regular weekly basis. She was tapping on her annoyance, but rather than going down, her SUD level kept going up, and she began to cry uncontrollably.

She got in touch with a memory she didn't want to think about. From birth, she had huge challenges with her family. Her mother was depressed, and spent time in and out of mental institutions. Her father was overwhelmed trying to take care of his wife, as well as her and her brother.

Then, when she was 2 years old, her mother committed suicide. That morning, her father was getting her and her brother ready for school, and the three of them were in the kitchen. They heard a loud sound and her father said to the two children, "Stay here," while he rushed from the room. Despite his instructions the two children ran after him, and they found their mother in a pool of blood where she'd shot herself.

This was the memory that had surfaced when the therapist thought about her boyfriend. She'd worked on this memory using talk therapy many times before, but during the EFT session it brought up a flood of emotion. She cried as though she were never going to stop. We tapped for about half an hour on all the different aspects of the experience, and eventually her tears abated.

It also became apparent that the current annoyance, her boyfriend leaving for the reading group, was only an issue because it recapitulated her abandonment by her mother (suicide) and her father (overwhelm). While we believe our feelings are caused by others, the way she believed hers were caused by her boyfriend, they're usually not caused by the current person or situation at all, and instead have their roots in very early childhood. We're triggered by a current event, like the book group, only because it resembles some early experience. We tap on the book group, but underneath might lurk a huge loss, like her mother's suicide. When you start tapping on the small loss of the boyfriend leaving the house on Wednesday night, the overwhelming emotion encapsulated in the big loss comes to the surface. You might try and keep an EFT session focused on modest and manageable goals, but emotions are unpredictable. Open a door just a crack, and you might find you've unwittingly opened Pandora's box.

When you're in the heat of the moment, the experience of overwhelming emotion might seem endless. You or the client might feel as though it will never end. Yet eventually it will. Emotions are fluid, and even the most intense of experiences has a start, a middle, and an end. At the start, the degree of feeling might be small. In the middle, it's large, and it's difficult to believe that this will pass, but eventually it will have an end.

So the answer to the question of what you do when you encounter overwhelming emotion is this: Just keep tapping. The emotions, and the tears, will flow, but eventually the cycle will come to an end.

Whatever you do, *don't stop tapping*. I've often seen people in EFT practice groups get so caught up in a client's tragic story that they forget to tap. The client keeps talking and crying, and the listener gets so enmeshed in the emotion that both of them forget to tap. So it's vital that you remember to tap, no matter how big the emotion. Talking without tapping may simply be reliving the experience without emotional release or catharsis. Add tapping, and the emotion is being processed and released, not just relived. The next time the memory is recalled, it might be accompanied by much less emotion.

Though most clients cry in response to overwhelming emotion, others (especially men) may express it differently. They might become silent and withdrawn, shake, or feel acute physical pain. Whatever the manifestation of intense emotion, just keep tapping, and remember that the process has a beginning, middle, and end.

Can I combine tapping with my regular psychotherapy?

Yes. If you're currently seeing a psychotherapist and you're also learning EFT, the two work well together. We often hear reports of people making much faster progress in therapy after adding EFT.

If you've just learned EFT and you've been seeing a therapist, you might feel so elated at the changes you notice in yourself that you're tempted to abandon your course of therapy. The therapy has been part of your mental health support system, however, so rather than make

an abrupt change, consider taking things slowly. Talk to your therapist about the improvements, and get their perspective on your condition. Most courses of therapy have a natural end point at which the client feels they have made progress on the issue that brought them into the therapist's office. Marking that end point with your therapist is a more graceful way to conclude the process than an abrupt end. As future challenges arise in your life, you may well need your therapist again, as well as EFT.

Should I tell my doctor I'm doing EFT?

Yes. I have lectured to thousands of medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, and psychiatrists, and I have generally found them to be interested, curious, and respectful when it comes to EFT. Your primary care physician needs to know about all the complementary and alternative medicine approaches you are using, including EFT. It's important to tell your doctor about a Chinese herb you're taking or a dietary supplement you're experimenting with, because some of these can interact unfavorably with drugs your doctor might prescribe. It's also important to tell your doctor about EFT and other approaches you might be using for stress management, weight loss, or psychological health.

If your doctor wants to know more about EFT, it's useful to reference the research pages at Research.EFTUniverse.com. This will give your doctor a sense of the strong research base that underlies Clinical EFT.

How does EFT work with medical prescriptions?

EFT can work well with medical prescriptions in several ways. One I use myself is to tap when I'm taking a prescribed medication, imagining that this pill is going to do me the maximum amount of good. Tapping while affirming my highest good engages my belief system, and I get the placebo effect working on my behalf. EFT may be able to enhance the positive effects of a medication in this way.

You can also tap for your body accepting a medication easily. Some prescription drugs have severe side effects, and EFT can mitigate these. This has been done by cancer patients receiving chemotherapy, for instance. Several have reported that when they imagine the chemotherapy cocktail clearing out the cancer in their bodies, while tapping, they don't experience the side effects that most other patients endure.

Another example is the drug Xanax. Research shows that the drug helps one person in six, which sounds good. However, one person in three experiences negative side effects (Whitaker, 2011). The net effect of these two numbers is that twice as many people experience harm (3) as benefit (6). If you're able to reduce the side effects of Xanax or any other drug, then you're able to get the benefits without the side effects.

Research has not shown that combining EFT with prescription drugs poses a risk. One study of hospital patients monitored their prescription drug use during their EFT treatment; no adverse reactions were reported (Karatzias et al., 2011). Similarly, veterans with PTSD had their prescriptions noted before and after EFT (Church et al., 2013). Their prescription drug use did not go up or down during the 6 weeks of the study and, again, they did not report any adverse events.

Finally, by reducing stress, EFT makes it easier for your doctor to prescribe drugs for you appropriately. Recall the Health Care Workers Study, which showed that two thirds of physical pain vanished after a brief EFT session (Church & Brooks, 2010). The remaining one third might well require medication. Your doctor is likely to appreciate that you've taken care of the two thirds of your pain that's emotional using EFT rather than trying to suppress the symptoms temporarily through high levels of medication. This also signals to your doctor that you're a responsible patient taking responsibility for your own well-being.

If I feel better after using EFT, should I reduce my dose of medication?

Only after consultation with your physician. There are few absolutes in the health world, but this concept comes close to being one of them. Your doctor has prescribed a certain dose of a medication based

on his or her rigorous training, extensive experience, and the results of clinical trials, so it is essential that you follow the dosage instructions carefully. If you're feeling better after EFT, consult your physician about your dose. Your doctor might want to taper it down gradually, see you frequently to monitor your progress, or counsel you to maintain your dose for a certain period of time. Don't modify your dose unless in consultation with your physician.

Can EFT be harmful?

My experience is that EFT, at worst, produces no effect. There are rare cases in which people tap and absolutely nothing happens, then or later. In many thousands of cases, I haven't yet encountered a single one in which EFT has harmed someone. The same applies to acupuncture, which is generally considered safe.

The primary danger with EFT is overconfidence. You'll find that many problems that bothered you before are suddenly gone. This makes it tempting to believe that EFT will be equally effective on every problem.

That's not usually the case. There are many problems that require good medical care, expert mental health care, spiritual counseling, or professional life coaching in order to make progress. There may be some issues in your life that don't improve, despite EFT and everything else you try.

One danger of overconfidence is an inflated ego. If you're a practitioner, such as a life coach or psychotherapist, and you begin using EFT, you're likely to see much better results in your clients. This can lead to an unwarranted belief in your own powers. It's tempting to ascribe the results to your personal brilliance, not to EFT.

The world of spiritual development and transformational teaching, as well as EFT, is full of cautionary examples of great practitioners and teachers who have fallen victim to the siren song of the ego. They attract large groups of admiring followers who reinforce the ego of the leader. The leader takes the adulation of these followers as proof that

they're specially gifted, and the ego puffs itself up even further. Power corrupts, and the more influence a leader has, the greater the temptation and possibility of corruption.

The main potential for harm with EFT lies in your own ego, and the egos of others who have been seduced by the results EFT has produced for people around them. I don't believe EFT itself is harmful, but there have been several unfortunate cases of prominent practitioners blinded by ego engaging in behavior that is harmful to others.

Watch these tendencies in yourself. Maintain a daily spiritual practice such as meditation, and remain humble. Abide by the Golden Rule. Ask yourself, "Is the way I am about to act or speak to this other person the way I would like this other person to act or speak to me?" Maintain high ethical standards. When in doubt about a course of action, talk to a wise and well-informed supervisor. Always be open to feedback from those around you, even if it's bad news. It's important to listen carefully to criticism, whether or not it's accurate. You can often find benefit even in uninformed criticism. If you remain spiritually and ethically aware, you can moderate the pull of the ego, and you're much less likely to engage in harmful thinking or action.

Are there cases where EFT should not be used?

I don't believe it hurts to try EFT, but I have encountered rare cases for which EFT was not the appropriate path to take.

For example, a participant at one particular 4-day workshop seemed to be helped by EFT. She'd start out every practice session weeping as she thought of her emotional problems. Her starting SUD level was usually a 10. She'd then usually go down to a 2 or 3 by the end of the session.

The next session, however, she'd be back up to a 10. This went on for all 4 days of the workshop. I worked with her privately, and I came to the conclusion that she did not have a strong enough set of positive beliefs and experiences in her mind to support her healing. She'd been weepy and overwhelmed most of her life, and had a very poor self-

image. Psychologically, there wasn't a lot of positive material to work with. So while EFT could help delete negative emotion, there wasn't any positive emotion available to emerge at the end of the process.

I recommended she work using another method with a licensed mental health professional to build her inner psychospiritual resources first, before trying EFT again. Six months later, I asked one of my team members to follow up with her. When they contacted her, she reported that she'd begun working with a good psychotherapist, using methods other than EFT, and made great progress. She was very grateful that I'd recommended a path that was productive for her, rather than insisting that EFT was the answer to her every problem.

So the primary set of clients with which to consider using methods other than EFT, or using EFT in conjunction with other methods, are individuals who have limited inner resources. If they have no positive beliefs or self-concepts to support them, they may need to develop those resources first.

Though the standard approach in EFT is to identify negative life events and tap on them, there are exceptions to this rule. One is when a client needs to build up a sense of self first. You can use other psychotherapeutic and spiritual methods to do this, and you can also tap on positive cognitions. Examples of these are: "I am lovable. I am competent. I have inner strength. The world is a safe place. I am a good person. My life can turn out well." Tapping for the positive is usually not the most productive way to use EFT, but in such cases, it may be the place to start.

Why does EFT focus on negative problems rather than positive thinking?

This frequently puzzles newcomers. EFT practitioners keep asking about negative life events to tap on. They ask you about problems that have occurred in your recent past, in your work, your family, your marriage, your finances, your health. They dig deep into your childhood for negative events that happened early in life. What about the power of positive thinking? Why don't we tap on positive affirmations as well as negative feelings and life events?

There are several good reasons that EFT takes this approach. The first one is that our culture emphasizes positive thinking, and does not emphasize fully processing negative emotions. From an early age, we receive messages like “Big boys don’t cry” and “This too shall pass.” We’re encouraged to look on the bright side of life, to find the silver lining behind every cloud.

As a result, we rarely mourn our losses, or grieve adequately. Children are urged to stop crying and cheer up, rather than receiving a respectful hearing as they grieve pets, relatives, and friends that they’ve lost. After decades of this, most of us have a large backlog of unprocessed emotional trauma. EFT sessions are often the first real opportunity we’ve had to catch up on this backlog of grief and loss. If you go to the positive side too quickly, you short-circuit the natural process of letting go, grieving, and moving on.

As with every rule, there are exceptions, but one of the biggest mistakes novice or poorly trained practitioners make is going positive. What you’ll notice is that once you’ve really and truly processed your negative emotions, you’ll naturally move to the positive pole without any prompting or urging. If you’re working with a client, you’ll find the client will choose when the grieving process is complete, and tell you when they’re ready to go positive. Leading them in a positive direction before this point actually aborts the grieving process, delaying their progress and ensuring that they have to come back to their negative feelings in the future in order to heal. You can’t easily go wrong focusing on the negative with EFT, but you can easily deprive yourself or a client of an opportunity to heal by going positive. That’s why EFT has you focus relentlessly on the negative. When it’s time to go positive, you’ll naturally shift to that perspective, with the healing process complete.

Why is drinking water during a session helpful?

Your body is 70% water, and water is an electrolyte that conducts electricity. Water is essential for the biochemical processes by which

your cells signal each other. Many people are dehydrated without knowing it, because we're rarely trained to drink enough water. We've become accustomed to being dehydrated, and may mistake our body's signals of thirst for hunger, anxiety, or compulsive behavior. It's a good idea to drink water before and during an EFT session, to make sure that you and your client stay well hydrated.

During the experience of strong emotion, your sympathetic nervous system becomes active. It shifts resources toward body systems required for fight or flight, such as blood circulation and your muscles. It shifts resources away from nonessential systems like immunity and digestion. That's why your mouth goes dry when you're under stress. Remember that intense job interview during which your salivary glands dried up? Or when you proposed marriage to your spouse? Or when you had to make that public speech, you were very nervous, and your mouth went completely dry? Those are symptoms of the fight-or-flight response.

The simple antidote is to have water handy during each EFT session, and take frequent sips. This helps reassure your body that it's being taken care of, even though you're processing strong emotion.

How do I find other EFT users with the same problem as mine?

Connecting with other tappers is a great idea. You can find support, encouragement, insight, and the answers to questions that might perplex you. On the whole, the tapping community is helpful and supportive.

There are many ways to connect with other tappers. These include:

Tapping Circles. These are groups of tappers who meet regularly to talk and tap together. The gatherings may be weekly or monthly. Some circles have a fee while others are free. A couple are virtual. You can find a list of them at TappingCircles.EFTUniverse.com, which also provides time-tested instructions for how to start your own local tapping circle.

Meetups and Hangouts. You can find EFT groups through social networking sites such as Meetup.com and Google Hangouts. There are

several EFT Facebook groups. You can also make local tapping friends by advertising in the “activity partners” classified section of sites such as Craigslist.org.

Online Forums. You’ll find many free discussion groups where you can post messages and interact with other tappers. There are specialized forums for weight loss, business, families, and many other topics (Forums.EFTUniverse.com).

The Tapping Insiders Club. This is a paid resource with many excellent articles and the opportunity to discuss them with other members of the EFT community. You can find it at TIC.EFTUniverse.com.

Search. Among the thousands of stories in the EFT Universe archives, you can easily find people who’ve used EFT for problems similar to yours using the Search and Advanced Search features. Many of these stories include links to the writer’s website, and their e-mail address, allowing you to make personal contact.

Just Get Started

Whatever your questions are, don’t let them stop you from jumping in to EFT. The saddest outcome is for you to continue suffering because you have the tools to end that suffering but don’t use them. Perhaps your mind goes blank when you try and formulate a Setup Statement. That’s fine. Just tap each of the points in turn anyway, and say any words that come to mind.

Perhaps you’re embarrassed about tapping in front of your children or spouse, but you’re extremely upset. Tap anyway. It’s more important that you take care of yourself, and relieve your pent-up emotions, than that you worry about what other people will think of you.

Perhaps you have a child in pain and are afraid that your inexperience with EFT makes you unqualified to tap with them. Jump in and try it. You can’t go too far off track, and you won’t gain experience until you release those worries and risk messing up. Even the most experienced EFT practitioner started somewhere and, at that beginning, was as puzzled and incapable as you are at the start of your healing journey.

Our minds can invent 10,000 reasons why we shouldn't do EFT on the problem in front of us. Ignore them, and dive into tapping anyway. Your mind can become a labyrinth of arguments and counter-arguments, tying itself in logical knots and preventing you from taking action. It's more important to launch yourself into your journey of practicing EFT than it is to first answer every objection and qualification to practice.

You'll find you quickly gain confidence and expertise as you use the tools in this book, and soon you'll be surprising yourself at how quickly you've learned. Only as you use EFT and witness it work in many different situations, often with startling results, will you gain experience and confidence. Whether your question was addressed in this chapter's FAQ list or not, you'll find the answers emerging when you understand EFT from the inside out, by having applied it in many situations many times. Tap first, and ask questions later!

Resources

- EFT Community Map: CommunityMap.EFTUniverse.com
- Forums: Forums.EFTUniverse.com
- Practitioners: Practitioners.EFTUniverse.com
- Relationship Stories: RelationshipStories.EFTUniverse.com
- Research: Research.EFTUniverse.com
- Tapping Circles: TappingCircles.EFTUniverse.com
- Tapping Insiders Club: TIC.EFTUniverse.com