

Qigong Technologies -- Effective Energy Therapies for Emotional Trauma and Associated Physical Pain, Part I: Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

By Brad Gilbert and Lori Gilbert

"When nothing else works" is the motto of the dramatic paradigm shift in *qigong*-type technologies that seems to work by magic much of the time. Cases of back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome and headaches are significantly reduced or disappear altogether after just a few rounds of tapping one's fingers on a few acupuncture points.

The tapping also helps cases of emotional distress: anxiety; panic attacks; past traumas that are relived every day and are completely debilitating; depression; anger; grief ... the list goes on. It seems too good to be true, but we have seen it happen time and again.

In some Chinese medicine texts, we have found references to using meridian tapping (rather than needles or other instruments) on certain acupuncture points to help release energetic blockages, but nothing very concrete on how to use these techniques has emerged. Fortunately, there are some people who have revived these practices, in a modern context of art and science.

The particular energy therapy we will discuss is called Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), developed by an engineer named Gary Craig in northern California and based on techniques discovered and taught by Roger Callahan, PhD. This energy therapy can be applied to clients by the practitioner, and also can be taught to patients for personal use at home.

The EFT technique involves tapping on specific points on the meridians of the body while thinking or speaking specific phrases that represent a particular emotion, feeling, sensation, or event of concern. The art of the technique is finding the specific statement best suited for each issue. The level of success, and the

speed at which the roots of a particular problem are found, often depend on how deep the underlying mental or emotional roots are; how many different aspects there are regarding the problem; and how quickly you or your client find the issues.

Performing the Technique

The client is sometimes asked to describe, before the tapping begins, the "intensity level" of this issue or symptom (0 meaning no intensity, 10 being the highest intensity imaginable). The client taps for him/herself, or the practitioner can tap on the client's specific meridian points, until the intensity level drops to 1 or lower. The mind is focused on the issue or problem at hand while the tapping is being done. The intensity may not go down to 0 or 1 during the first session, but with continued tapping at home and further sessions, it will drop down most of the time. Often, it only takes a few rounds of tapping sequences, on carefully selected issues at hand, to obtain permanent relief of a given problem.

As certain parts of an issue are cleared, however, other aspects of the client's issue may come up that need to be addressed. Each aspect may represent another memory or emotion, or a different pain. Typically, each aspect is treated as a separate issue, and the tapping is performed on each one separately to make sure each part loses its "charge."

Examples of EFT

A woman named Jan had a headache in her forehead. She worried a lot, and tended to get these headaches when she was under a lot of stress. She had the headache now, and was not sure what she was stressed about, but rated her level of intensity at about 7. I showed her the tapping method, and tapped myself at the same time she tapped herself, so she could follow along and know where to tap (this is a common way to do EFT). We began with both of us tapping a particular acupuncture point (SI3) as I had her say a preset phrase aloud: "Even though I have this headache, I deeply and completely accept myself." This was performed a total of three times.

Jan followed my actions by continuing to tap other meridian points while focusing on the headache, until we finished this "round" of tapping on the meridians. The intensity of the headache had gone from a 7 to a 5. It was now just behind her eyes, but we had not found out the reason(s) for the stress yet. We did another round of tapping as before, except the statement was changed to, "Even though I still have some of this headache, I deeply and completely accept myself." Jan then remembered, while tapping a Spleen meridian

point, that she felt sorry for her mother when she was little, because her mother would get stressed about all kinds of things and she wished she could do something about it. (My thought was that Jan became empathic with her mother, and possibly thought she could take her mother's pain away by taking it on herself.) Her headache was now at a 3. We did another round of tapping until her headache was reduced to less than one.

The headache was better, much to her relief, but this other aspect that Jan uncovered - the feeling she had to take on her mother's pain as a child - was bringing up a lot of grief. We started another round of tapping with the statement, "Even though I was powerless to help my mother with this stress, I deeply and profoundly accept myself!" with strong emphasis. After about two rounds, her grief subsided. During follow-up, we found Jan's headache returned to an intensity of 4 on one occasion a few weeks later, so we worked on it again, finding more specific incidents in her childhood that were related to her headache/stress response. The headaches did not return after this session.

Sometimes, things are not quite as simple as Jan's case, but one should not be afraid to try EFT on just about anything. It certainly couldn't hurt to try, especially on conditions or issues that have not responded to other therapies.

EFT is great for freeing up the meridian blockages associated with physical and emotional stress. The location of the blockage is not always known, and EFT allows help in healing the issues, because the practitioner and client can access all of the meridians with great ease. In chronic conditions such as depression, migraine headaches and fibromyalgia, there are emotional components that need to be cleared. With chronic issues, there often can be temporary relief with other types of treatments, but the stress surrounding the emotion or memory cause has not been found. Therefore, the symptoms may return easily and need continuous treatments to bring relief.

As an example of a more difficult case, a client had serious psychological problems and was looking for an alternative to the conventional psychological/psychiatric approaches. Over a period of months of regular EFT sessions regularly and performing the tapping at home on his own, he was able to trace back to specific events in his life that caused this "dysfunctional" way of being and clearing/releasing the "charge" from these events.

Occasionally, one may be unable to find the exact memories of a particular trauma, or the root cause of an issue that resulted in emotional distress and/or pain. EFT may work in those cases as well, just by focusing on the anxiety itself, or the feelings inside the body. It is usually slower this way, though. EFT seems to

work best when targeted at one particular incident or event at a time. Once enough events and/or traumas are cleared, the other related events/traumas will usually fall away, leaving the person with much more peace and much less pain. Being able to apply the technique at home or anywhere else also gives clients a sense of empowerment over their own healing.

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