



Newsletter January 2010

Hello everyone

Thanks for your patience while I took a break from producing newsletters. For those who aren't aware of it, there is a new EFT blog with lots of great articles that you can sign up for a weekly feed from, if you are interested check it out at <http://www.eftfree.net/>

This month we have four new articles on the portal:

Kicking myself in the butt

This article gives some interesting insight into one possible driver for self-criticism. If you find yourself regularly blaming yourself or feeling guilty for things, there might be something in here for you. The article also shows the power of an EFT protocol called S-L-O-W EFT – a method that can be really helpful for those working on their own with big issues.

Turning Towards Ourselves

In this article we take a look at one of the most important aspects of healing, and discuss why this simple truth is so hard to implement in our lives. If you have ongoing issues that you are struggling to resolve, this article may give you some insight into the healing process.

The Importance of Deep Relaxation

A brief look at an important subject which many of us overlook. While getting to the bottom of our issues is very important, so is giving our body the conditions it needs to heal optimally.

Tapping with Food Cravings: A New Approach

I've tried tapping on food cravings in the past without success, but recently while tapping I had a bit of an AHA moment which I thought I'd share in case it's of use to anyone else.

Kicking myself in the butt!

Several days ago, twisting into an awkward position to reach something, I felt a pain in my butt. Over the next hour it got a lot worse, and got to the point that I was really worried that I'd done some major damage. I was aware in the hours following the injury that my reaction to what had happened was a little unusual – if someone else had hurt themselves as I had, I would have been very compassionate and nurturing with them, but far from compassionate, all my self-talk was about how stupid I had been to hurt myself like that.

This morning I was a lot more mobile than I have been but the discomfort in my butt was still there. I noticed myself writing in an email to a good friend that I was still kicking myself for a mistake I perceived myself to have made several months earlier. She replied "Don't be kicking yourself, because that is only going to make your butt worse!" As I read her jovial reply I remembered my initial reaction to the injury and realised I needed to do some tapping along the lines of "kicking myself in the butt", "this pain in the butt".

Before long I felt emotion well up and I felt really sad that I am so hard on myself, even after all the years I've been tapping and saying ET... I deeply and completely love and accept myself and all the shifts I've seen in [Focusing](#) when I am able to be in empathy with the part of me that is hurting. I started crying and tapping through the points with Why am I so hard on myself?, Why do I keep kicking myself in the butt?

All of a sudden I felt a shift, like I'd gone from being angry with the part of me that was kicking me in the butt to having empathy for it – it must have a reason for criticising me. Intellectually I knew this was the case, but as often happens with [EFT](#) I'd only gone far enough into it to start realising what was going on, so I continued tapping on the same theme to see where it would lead me.

A couple of tapping rounds later I suddenly realised that the self critical part is just trying to stay in control. If I say it's my fault, then that implies that I must be in control, the outcome must be within my realm of influence, I must be responsible for what happens. I could see so clearly that my blaming myself was my ego's way of feeling in control of the situation, because I am terrified of losing control.

This arose with a lot of emotion, so I continued the tapping with ET I am terrified of not being in control, I honour that there is a reason for this even though I don't yet know what it is., and I alternated through the tapping points with I am terrified of losing control, and I don't know why, and that's OK. It occurred to me that this would be a good time to start doing [S-L-O-W EFT](#) on I am terrified of losing control so I started on the karate point with ET I AM terrified of losing control I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself anyway, and then I started tapping on my eyebrow point.

Twenty minutes later I was still tapping on the same point, after many tears, yawns, sighs, burps and various other releases! While I was aware of a few thoughts floating through my mind around control, in the main I simply watched my left brain trying to explain what was happening and did my best to assure it that it didn't need to be aware of what I was clearing, that it could simply flow through without me needing to be consciously aware of what I was letting go of. At one point a sentence floated through my mind: "It is the nature of all egos to seek to be in control – loss of control is perceived as death of ego." This reminded me of something that had arisen in a recent Focusing session with my Focusing Partner, where I realised that a part of me is terrified of just going with the flow because then most of my mental chatter would be completely redundant (ie the part of me that spends hours thinking things through and planning the future giving itself the illusion of control became horribly aware that it wouldn't have a job to do if I just trusted and went with the flow!)

By this time my arms were getting sore from the constant tapping, so I decided to have a break and to go back and continue with tapping on the first point until I'd exhausted what there is to come up around I'm terrified of losing control. I shall continue to revisit this over the coming weeks/months/(years!) as I work with this fundamental aspect of being human and will watch with curiosity to see where it leads me.

So if you find yourself blaming yourself or dwelling in guilt over something, consider doing some tapping to see if you can have experiential realisation of how the blame and guilt are to give you the illusion of control over what is happening, and in doing so find empathy for yourself as a regular human being with a fear of not being in control!

Note added later: I have since continued to use the [S-L-O-W EFT protocol](#) with this issue and found a whole lot more aspects unfolding as a result of it. If you have a "stubborn" issue, I recommend experimenting with this style of EFT.

Turning Towards Ourselves

I'm starting to think that healing is a lot more simple than most of us think, and it's simply our social conditioning and upbringings that make it so much more difficult! Everything that I'm reading and experiencing at the moment seems to be pointing to the exact same message: if we can simply turn towards, rather than away from, that part of ourselves that is hurting, we heal. It is as if our body and subconscious mind hold everything for us that we cannot truly embrace – all the difficult experiences that we went through, hurtful things we've heard or seen, thoughts about ourselves that conflict with the way we see ourselves through our filters, everything. And if we can truly turn towards and create a space for the feelings and thoughts, our subconscious mind and body can let them go. We don't need to fix it or make it go away or make it like it never happened, all we need to do is truly allow the space for how a part of us continues to feel about what happened.

It's easy to think that it's the tapping or the protocol for the method of healing that we are doing that is doing the healing, but I now believe that it really doesn't matter what method we are using – they are all simply enablers for us to create the space for us to allow what we are truly feeling. Each method has its own way of doing that – with [EFT](#) the setup statement is a powerful way of acknowledging and creating that space (Even though I have this x I deeply and completely love and accept myself.) With [Focusing](#) a major part of our learning comes from simply being with whatever is hurting, without an agenda, simply keeping it company. Each provides a process in which we turn towards something inside us that we have been turning away from.

In his book "Beyond the Myth of Dominance" Edwin McMahon writes:

...there is a strange paradox about the way we are created inside. It is a paradox which Dr Gendlin clinically verified with numerous clients in the laboratory. What causes emotional blockage is neither past pain or trauma, nor our fear that this will gobble us up. Rather, it is being cut off from the body-meaning this has in our lives, being out of touch with what one might call our unique, personal "story". This is an amazing discovery. The fear comes from being out of touch with the unknown, unavailable to hear the story in our catastrophic expectations. Whatever is down there is you! It is a pained, hurting, sometimes fear-filled part of your being, wanting to be respected, cared for and listened to by you.

Without having experienced the shifts that come from Focusing, I wouldn't have understood this, but with the benefit of seeing time and time again that I don't need to fix anything, I don't need to resolve anything – all I need to do is give the story inside the space to be heard, I can now relate to what McMahon writes.

If it's that simple, why is it so difficult for us to simply turn towards the hurting spaces inside us? I feel that we only need to look to our cultural conditioning and upbringings to answer this – our whole society and way of being is about shrinking away from pain, repressing anything that doesn't feel good. The whole "positive thinking movement" simply reinforces this – if it doesn't feel good find another way to think about it that does! I think it's important to acknowledge that the bottom line is that it is difficult, because few, if any, of us have grown up learning how to embrace all that we are and all that we are feeling.

So how do we begin to turn this around? How do we tap the power of simply turning towards? McMahon shares a story in his book that I feel gives us some clues to this:

I smiled the other day, sitting on the porch, as our cat reminded me of ... Frankly, I've never been attracted to cats, but this one wandered into our lives from the wild. Looking out my office window each day, I could see it stalking the birds around our feeder and bath. Partly to save the birds, as well as feed this poor emaciated thing, I started to put out food. The cat was very wild and would never let itself be seen when I worked in the garden, but the food would disappear each night. This went on for weeks. Finally the cat began to appear at a great distance, hissing at me as I went into "its" feeding territory to replenish the food. Slowly, day by day, it came closer and closer until I could see it was a tom who stood only feet from me while I put out his water and dinner. Then one day, he brushed against my leg and I was a goner...

I see the cat in this story as representative of the hurting parts inside us. Having gone so long since we've fed them with any energy at all, they are emaciated and elusive when we first start trying to give them attention. If we hang in there, then we might find that they come closer but "hiss" at us – showing their distrust of our attentions and wanting to keep us at a safe distance. Then if we are consistent in continuing to reach out to them, eventually they will feel safe enough to brush up against us, and our hearts will melt and we will embrace that part of us.

EFT and Focusing both give us the tools to start to feed these places inside us. In this quick-fix culture we live in, it can be disheartening to sit with these tools for a while and find we still aren't getting in touch with the issues inside of us. However if we can have the patience and caring presence that McMahon extended to the cat, we can find that over time with the help of whatever our chosen tool is, we are able to truly embrace the pain inside us.

It's not easy. Even with all the healing I've done, I still find it difficult at times. And sometimes I neglect the issues to the point where something has to happen that allows my body and subconscious mind to scream loud enough that I can no longer continue to turn away. But I know from my experience with my own healing and in holding a healing space for others, that if I can find a way to feed that starving cat inside me, it WILL end up being my friend.

It is my hope that this article helps you to find a way to befriend something inside of you that is hurting, and in doing so enable your subconscious mind and body to let it go. You don't have to figure it out or find a way to fix it. All we have to do is give it space to be. And like with the cat, that can take some patience.

Are you living with tigers?

In the fast paced way most of us live our lives these days, it can start to feel like our healing is all about doing and fitting in as much tapping or some other form of focusing on our issues as we can. It can be easy to forget that our bodies are most able to heal when we are really relaxed, and instead turn all of our attention the things occupying our minds. The best analogy I know that shows the importance of giving our bodies the relaxation they need involves a tiger:

Imagine you are out camping in the woods somewhere. You've gone to bed to get a good night's sleep, after a delicious meal by the campfire. All of a sudden you hear the unmistakable signs of a tiger coming straight towards you. Your unconscious mind makes an instant decision – digesting your meal and repairing your body (two things that take place when you are deeply relaxed) are no longer a priority. Getting away from the tiger before you become his meal is. Your body fills with adrenaline and other chemicals designed to get you moving.

At any one time our autonomic nervous system is either attending to healing and digestion OR dealing with the tigers in our world. You might think this is a silly analogy because you don't live with tigers in the modern world, but think again. The average person lives with many stresses in their life that have the same effect on them as an actual tiger would, but they come in forms that we can't actually physically run from or fight, so our body never gets to discharge the effects of all that adrenaline and other chemicals. Some people don't even get away from tigers in their sleep as they come to them in the form of dreams or a restless mind that prevents them from getting enough sleep.

While dealing with the core issues behind our physical and psychological symptoms is very important, it's also important to ensure that we give our bodies the chance to do the repair work that is required on a daily basis. This is something that few of us would disagree with, but if many of us take a good look at our lives, we find that we don't actually provide our bodies with this space on a regular basis.

My usual way of giving my body this space on is my regular yoga practice, however in the last few weeks as a result of an injury to my back and shoulder, I have had to break from my yoga practice and find another way to give my body the space for the deep healing it needs to do in order to recover from the injury. I've been using a CD by Betty Moore-Hafter ([Deep Relaxation](#)) that I've found to be really good in helping me to allow my body to totally relax. I haven't been successful in finding anything as good free on the internet (if anyone knows of something, please let me know and I'll post it in this article for others' benefit.)

Are you giving your body the opportunity to deeply relax on a daily basis? If not you might be missing out on an important part of the healing process. Remember that your body cannot fight tigers and digest a meal and have a strong immune system all at the same time!

Tapping with Food Cravings – a new approach

I've tried tapping on food cravings in the past without success, but recently while tapping I had a bit of an AHA moment which I thought I'd share in case it's of use to anyone else.

I'm in the process of changing my diet and it's resulting in some food cravings. The first few days I couldn't shift the cravings at all with tapping. Then a few days ago I found myself tapping in a different way and it was really effective. I realised that in the past I have been tapping basically with a whole lot of judgment. Even though I've been saying the Even though I'm craving this food I deeply and completely love and accept myself, the bottom line has been that I don't accept myself at all – I'm judging myself big time for even having the craving.

What finally shifted the cravings (and so far they haven't returned!) was total acceptance of the fact that I wanted the foods. I tapped with things like:

- * Even though I REALLY want to eat X, I give myself permission to crave this food.
- * Even though I SO want to eat X, I allow myself to dream about eating it.
- * Even though I REALLY want to eat X, I want to eat a whole bowl and then another one, I give myself permission to want to eat as much as I want.

Then I tapped through the points getting really graphic about exactly what I wanted to eat and how much. In doing so the energy shifted and I realised that the cravings were largely coming from a feeling of being deprived of the particular foods I wanted to eat. When I gave myself permission to really want and crave the foods, that part of me must have no longer felt deprived and so no longer wanted the unhealthy foods I'd been craving.

The power of "and I love and accept myself" is so great, but we really can deceive ourselves at times just saying it and not seeing the judgment we are really feeling.

Best wishes everyone,

Jo

www.selfheal4me.com

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