



Newsletter July 2009

Hello everyone

This month's newsletter includes a focus on using imagery with healing, and has a discussion about how imagery and visualisation are quite different, detailing why it is important not to be put off using imagery just because you think you can't visualise. It also has an article on Domain Focusing and a review of an excellent book that could be useful to anyone on a healing journey. To follow any of the links in this offline/print version, click on the link directly under the title of the article, as the other links are not active.

The difference between imagery and visualisation

<http://www.selfheal4me.com/Newsletter/July.php#ImageryVisualn>

Ever since listening in on Betty Moore-Hafter's fabulous [Tapping Secrets Teleclass](#) series I have been incorporating a lot more imagery into the [EFT](#) I do. It feels really good because I have seen amazing results from imagery shifting during [Focusing](#) sessions and it made me wonder why I hadn't incorporated more imagery into my EFT before.

After some time I realised it was because I have always been very uncomfortable with my inability to visualise, because I am not a visual person at all. Even if you ask me to close my eyes and imagine my bedroom or something else I know really well, I can't see a thing forming in my mind's eye. But through Focusing and the success I've had using imagery with EFT, I know that despite my inability to visualise, I can use imagery very effectively. I simply have a sense of something unfolding, it's not pictorial and I don't see it, I just "know" what is forming inside me and I tend to describe it as imagery, just as if I was seeing it.

One day as I was supporting someone with EFT I heard myself make a statement that explained this mystery and I thought it might be useful to others to understand this (this is a great example of how EFT is "by me not through me" and I never cease to be amazed by what I learn as I simply allow the EFT to unfold through me.) I had invited my friend to play with Cartoon EFT (see article below for more information) and she said that she wasn't very good at visualising and didn't think she could do it. I said something along the lines of:

"Imagery and visualisation are different. When we visualise, it's like we are using our conscious mind to create a picture in our mind, so we are in effect saying to our subconscious mind that we have it covered and we don't need its help. When using imagery with EFT it is completely different – in this case we are issuing an invitation to the subconscious, effectively saying that we don't know what the answer is and that we would like the subconscious to communicate with us in the form of imagery."

Since hearing these words I have seen this come up several times and it's really helped me when supporting others to understand that there is a real difference between visualisation (something that comes naturally to some and is really difficult for others) and playing with imagery with our EFT. So if you are sure you can't visualise at all because you simply aren't a visual person, don't let that put you off using imagery with your EFT. Trust that your own way of sensing things will allow the imagery to unfold – you may simply have a sense or knowing like I do, or you may hear a story unfolding in your mind, or you may have another way of accessing imagery as the language of your subconscious. Playing with imagery is so incredibly powerful and can really open doors to communicating with our subconscious, so I seriously recommend trying it. If you don't know how to get started, check out the article on Cartoon EFT (see below) as a light and enjoyable way to invite imagery into your healing.

Cartoon EFT

<http://www.selfheal4me.com/Newsletter/July.php#CartoonEFT>

Sometimes it's easy to get bogged down in our healing, particularly when we are working on our own. One way I've been experimenting with to provide a lighter approach is something I'm calling Cartoon EFT. Many of us believe that we are unable to visualise and are put off anything that requires any sort of visualisation, but if that's the case for you rest assured, this is not about visualising – it's about simply inviting our subconscious to create a cartoon character that represents the issue that we are working on. (For more information on an important difference between visualisation and imagery, see the article above.)

Cartoon EFT is simply giving an invitation to your subconscious to play with some imagery in the form of a cartoon character. It can be a great way to access the subconscious as it invites the shift from the left brain ("I need to figure it out") to the right brain approach of simply allowing what we need to focus on to surface. While it often lightens the healing session up, it can also evoke very intense feelings, but either way if we are able to step aside from the left brain need to attach meaning to the cartoon figure that comes up, and simply tap on whatever it is that we are experiencing in the moment, it can facilitate some really big shifts.

Before going on to give some ideas of how you might use this sort of approach it's important to realise that you don't have to be a visual person to benefit from playing with this sort of an approach. I personally am not visual at all, when asked to visualise something I never see a picture, no matter how well I know the subject that I am visualising. I simply have a sense of whatever is unfolding, and cartoon EFT works just as effectively for me as it does with some of my highly visual friends.

Here are some ideas for how you can use Cartoon EFT:

- If there is someone in your life with whom you are having difficulties, try inviting a cartoon character to represent either the person with whom you have conflict, or a character to represent the relationship between the two of you.
- If you have a sense of an issue in your life that you are really having difficulty getting a handle on, simply let go of needing to describe it and instead invite an image that represents the issue.
- When there is something that you really want to do but you continually find yourself not doing it (or vice versa with something that you want to stop doing that you continue to do), invite a cartoon character to represent the part of you that doesn't want to do (or stop doing) the activity and see what comes up.

If you have difficulty allowing an image to surface, try imagining that you are the director of a play and you are simply asking a person to play a role for you. Just create any cartoon character in your mind and ask the character (no matter how seemingly unrelated to what you are working on) to play the role for you as you tap along and see how the imagery changes. You may be amazed at what comes up and the shifts that you have as a result.

The most important thing to remember when playing with Cartoon EFT is that any attempt to attach meaning to the cartoon character or analyse and explain how the character represents the issue is counter-productive. This isn't about finding an answer for your left brain (if it had an answer you wouldn't need EFT!), it is about simply playing with whatever imagery comes up. So if you invite an image to represent your troubled relationship with your partner and a green frog with bulging pink eyes comes into your mind, simply tap on "Even though I have this image of a green frog with bulging pink eyes when I think about my relationship with X, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself" and watch to see what happens to the image as you tap. Imagery often transforms well before the intellectual understanding of an issue comes, and sometimes the understanding that satisfies the left brain never comes but we experience a huge shift with the issue. If you really have difficulty with your mind trying to figure things out, take a few moments to acknowledge your mind and tap with something like:

“Even though a part of me so desperately wants to be able to explain what is happening, I honour that part of me for trying to keep me safe and OK. I acknowledge all that you are doing for me and I ask you to simply watch and see what unfolds.”

Something that can be very useful is to ask the cartoon character that represents your issue what it needs. Remember that you don't need to be able to give the character what it needs, you are simply tapping to acknowledge that it has this need. One day I was working with a cartoon nervous horse that represented an issue I was working on, and when I asked it what it needed it said that it wanted to know that it would never be hurt again. Even though I couldn't promise that this part of me would never be hurt again, in tapping and truly acknowledging its deep need to know that it is safe I had a major shift in how I was feeling about the issue I was working with.

This approach, while it can be quite light and playful, can really assist us in building empathy with the parts of us that are hurting. In the tapping session I did in which the nervous horse came up I shifted very noticeably from an adversarial stance with the issue that I was working on, to one of having real empathy around why I developed the issue in the first place. Tapping with the nervous and high strung horse really helped me to empathise with the younger me and it felt like that moved mountains.

Another time I've seen this sort of approach result in empathy was when tapping with a friend of mine who was going through a very difficult patch with her teenage daughter. When she rang me she was adamant that her daughter was at fault and that she had done the right thing sending her off to spend time with her father. She was absolutely furious with her daughter. We played with some cartoon EFT and the image that came up was one of a very wicked looking witch, who as we tapped morphed into my friend's mother and all of a sudden as we were tapping my friend realised that she was behaving with her daughter in exactly the way her mother had behaved with her when she was a teenager and in that moment she suddenly felt so much empathy for her daughter and what she was going through and it was a real turning point for her.

Something I see time and time again in my own healing and in supporting others is that we can be so incredibly hard on ourselves, and that can be what is causing us to be stuck in an issue and not moving forward. One day when I was tapping with a friend and felt that she just couldn't move forward on the issue because she was being so hard on herself, I decided to attempt to lighten things by suggesting she invite a cartoon character to represent the part of her that was so hard on herself. Immediately she saw an image of a Tasmanian Devil cartoon character (which she later emailed a picture of from on the net and it was seriously frightening!) and she had a real shift in understanding of how she was treating herself and basically paralysing her ability to move forward. As we tapped, the Tasmanian Devil turned into a quiet timid little creature and my friend felt that she had started to build empathy with herself in a way she hadn't experienced before. So if you are struggling with an inner voice that is very critical of you, try inviting a cartoon character to represent it and tap with whatever comes up and you might be surprised to see what arises.

The steps for doing Cartoon EFT are really simple and the only real challenge is in sticking to the steps and not embellishing them with any left brain analysis! Here are the steps as I use this form of playing with issues:

1. Decide what issue you want to address with the EFT. It can be anything at all.
2. Close your eyes and take a few breaths to relax, consciously intending to relax your left brain and allow healing to flow without your direction. (Note that this is simply an intention – you don't have to do anything to relax, just intend to let the right brain have a turn with this and trust that that will happen.)
3. Issue an invitation inside yourself for a cartoon character to appear in whatever way you feel comfortable, that represents the issue you are working on.

4. Tap on whatever image comes to mind (without attaching any meaning to it – so simply tap “Even though I have this x image when I think about this issue, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself”).
5. If it feels appropriate, try asking the cartoon character what it needs and tap to acknowledge its needs.
6. Continue tapping with the image and watching it transform for as long as feels useful.

And remember – this is play not work!!! Enjoy.

Domain Focusing

<http://www.selfheal4me.com/Newsletter/July.php#DomainFocusing>

Focusing is the name that psychotherapist and philosopher Eugene Gendlin gave the skill of going inside to get what he calls a “felt sense” of an issue. The felt sense as I understand is a bodily feel of the whole of an issue, but it is not limited to the physical body because it can come in physical form, through imagery or simply as an idea that pops into the mind. Domain Focusing is a particular style of Focusing which I learnt a couple of years ago and have found to be so supportive on my healing journey. It was developed by psychologist Robert Lee.

Domain Focusing is founded on the three “domains” in which we can focus – the issue (also known as the mind), the felt sense (the body) and empathy (the heart). When you first read about Domain Focusing this division into three separate domains can mistakenly give the impression that it’s quite complicated, but I found as I learnt Domain Focusing that this three-way split instead made it easier for me to learn Focusing.

When we focus using Domain Focusing we can start off in any of the three domains, and then shift between them as we go throughout the session. Once we’ve learnt and experienced this style of Focusing a few times the shifts between the domains become seamless and a lot of the time we aren’t even consciously aware of it happening. But the three domains also give three different doorways into an issue when it is feeling stuck and we aren’t getting the forward movement that we sense is possible. The best way to understand this is by way of example.

Let’s say that I sit down and decide to focus on a specific issue (I’m starting in the “issue” or mind domain). After sitting with the issue intending to allow some words to come that just feel right I might become frustrated that nothing is happening. If I’m aware of that frustration coming sneaking in then I can turn my Focusing to that, acknowledge it and sit with it. But if I’m identified with the frustration and unable to separate from it, I may just sense a stuckness. When this happens I know that I can move to one of the other domains and that might help me to pull back from whatever I’m identifying with so that I can see it more clearly. I might choose to move to the heart domain and bring some empathy to how I’m feeling and through doing this realise that I need to acknowledge the frustration, or alternatively I might switch to the body domain and invite a felt sense of the whole of it and become aware of the frustration that way.

If instead I started the session with a felt sense and I hit a sense of stuckness, I know that I can either bring empathy to that felt sense and see if that opens the door, or I can simply ask what issue the felt sense is associated with and that may well give me a new avenue to focus on. I’ve also found that starting and ending in the empathy domain can be very powerful – so often the stuckness that we feel with an issue comes from our not accepting ourselves or the issue and empathy can really oil the wheels of healing.

Empathy is an interesting concept. My Focusing Partner said to me one day that she had no idea what empathy actually was, it was really just a word to her when she started learning Domain Focusing, but as she focused with her teacher, and then later with me, she started to get a felt sense of what empathy was and how powerful it is. I’ve had a similar experience with this. When you learn Domain Focusing you are given a set of questions that goes with each of the domains, which can look rather overwhelming when you start, but I soon learnt that they are to be put aside and just referred to if I get a sense that a question might help to open things up. In the empathy domain there is a wonderful set of questions that you can

work through that really helps you to try on all sorts of different stances to see which one can help you to bring empathy to the situation – for example, “Can I be kind to this feeling?”, “Can I tolerate this feeling?”, “Can I bring gratitude to this part of me?” There are questions within each of the domains that I’ve found can really help to open up the Focusing for me when I feel stuck and am not sure which way to move forward.

The emphasis with Domain Focusing is very much on self guiding and aside from the first few sessions in which the teacher guides you to help you gain a sense of Focusing, most of the time we guide ourselves through the process, which I’ve found to be very liberating. It means that I am not reliant on there being someone with me as I focus, and empowers me to allow the Focusing to unfold as my Focusing Partner simply listens and reflects when I am Focusing with her. It has also opened the door to me being able to focus with anyone as listener because there is no need for them to know how to guide me, all they need to be able to do is be quiet and listen and occasionally reflect something back so that I know that they are really hearing me. I have found a tremendous richness in my Focusing Partnership, it is just so incredibly supportive to know that each week there will be 45 minutes where she totally listens to me and hears what I am saying in a way that makes it much easier for me to hear what is going on inside of me, and I will forever be thankful for this amazing mutual relationship in which I am able to offer to same to my wonderful Focusing Partner.

I’ve personally found that within the framework of the three domains my Focusing experiences have been very rich. I’ve discovered the real power of imagery and am continually amazed at what comes up. My Focusing Partner and I have an analogy of a Mystery Weekend for Focusing – here in NZ the local airline sells Mystery Weekend packages where you just turn up at the airport on a Friday and have no idea where you are flying to, and the flights and accommodation are all organised for you. We’ve found our mutual Focusing sessions to be like a Mystery Weekend, where instead of showing up at the airport we meet together on the phone and then find out as the Focusing unfolds where our journey is taking us. My “mystery weekends” are filled with amazing imagery that communicate a depth of feeling that I simply cannot capture in words alone. So often I am feeling stuck with something and then some imagery unfolds that just opens the whole issue up and leave me in awe of how rapidly I went from, for example, the unhappy coach of a team screaming at the one team member who was having difficulty with the direction the team was headed in, to urging the other team members to have compassion and patience with the struggling team member (an example of some of the imagery that unfolded during a recent Focusing session for me.)

While some people are naturally able to tune in to this skill we call Focusing, most of us find a new depth with it when we learn with a Focusing teacher. Rather than being intellectual learning, I’ve found that Focusing is learnt through experiencing it, there seems to be something in the mutuality of reflecting for our Focusing Teacher as s/he Focuses and having them to do the same for us that helps us to truly tap the potential of this amazing skill. If you would like to learn Focusing Suzanne at www.innerwisdoms.com has a great package deal where you can have 8 sessions for the cost of 7 (and her rates are much lower than a lot of Focusing Teachers) via Skype. After the 8 sessions you are able to connect with another student of Focusing and have an ongoing supportive and cost-free healing relationship like the one I value so much with my Focusing Partner.

If you would like to read more about Focusing, you can see a list of articles [here](#).

Book Review: Embracing Your Inner Critic

<http://www.selfheal4me.com/Newsletter/July.php#EmbraceCritic>

As my [Focusing](#) and [EFT](#) unfold it has become more and more apparent to me that there is a voice in my head that nearly always has an opinion on everything and that can be quite nasty to me in my attempts to move through life. I've seen the same with those I support with EFT over time and so I've been reading a little and learning as much as I can about the concept that many call The Inner Critic.

One book I've recently come across that brilliantly explains the inner critic is Hal and Sidra Stones' "Embracing Your Inner Critic – Turning Self-Criticism into a Creative Asset". While I don't like some of the adversarial language in the book, I found the book aids in a lot of understanding about how the critical voice in my head developed, what it is trying to achieve, and how I can find ways to better communicate with it and assure it so that it can go a little easier on me. In the book there are several simple exercises that really help you to get in touch with this critical voice, and the parts of you that it criticises. The Stones also really help you to see that it's not just the Inner Critic who is responsible for the unkind words, it's also the responsibility of a whole lot of the writing on the walls that we have, as Gary Craig the founder of EFT terms it (beliefs that we have taken on as truths even though they are not absolute truths), because the Inner Critic simply ensures that we stay on track with the writing on our walls.

I've found this book to be an excellent resource with my own EFT practice – the results of both the understanding I have gained and the exercises that are in the book have flowed nicely into tapping sessions that have given me more ability to stop identifying with the voice in my head and also to change the writing on the walls that it refers to. I would have no hesitation in highly recommending this book to anyone who is on a healing path. Learning how to recognise and deal with this critical inner voice appears to be the key to healing over and over, and it goes really well with the foundational EFT statement "and I deeply and completely love and accept myself" (something the Inner Critic is oblivious of as a possibility!) The book is written in a simple and easy to read style and the Stones' have a wonderful way of using humour to keep what could be a difficult subject quite light.

If you are interested in finding out more about this, you can read a sample chapter from this excellent book at http://www.delos-inc.com/Reading_Room/Book_Chapters/EYIC/eyic.html

Best wishes everyone,

Jo

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