

Emotional Freedom Technique – Is It Right for You?

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is an energy-based healing system that has helped many people overcome a wide variety of emotional and physical challenges for the past 20 years. EFT is considered to be one of the more prominent models within the relatively new field of energy psychology. It is based on the discovery that imbalances in the body's energy system have profound effects on one's own personal psychology.

History of EFT

EFT was developed by Gary Craig, an engineer and human development coach. However, it has its roots in an earlier technique called Thought Field Therapy (TFT), which was developed by Roger Callahan, an American psychologist, in the 1970s.

The most significant thing that Craig did was to refine and slightly augment TFT. The result was EFT, a technique that produced results by tapping on 12 of the body's acupuncture points. These specific points are located on the face, chest and arms. In response to an often asked question, it should be noted that EFT can be done without removing any article of clothing.

Energy psychology has its roots in traditional Chinese medicine. The primary healing mode that energy psychology has adopted from this ancient healing art is the balancing of the body's subtle energies. These energies manifest as meridians (lines of energy) that run throughout the body. They have beginning and end points at different locations on the body. The use of these energies to affect and promote healing within the body is best known in the West as acupuncture. Thus, one could say that EFT is an emotional form of acupuncture that does not use needles.

How It Works

EFT is about the simplest and most elegant technique available for overcoming a wide variety of emotional and physical challenges. The basic way it works is that the client is taught to tap certain acupuncture (energy meridian) points on their face and body with their fingers/hand while "being aware" of their problem. Additionally, the client is helped to "reframe" their negative thinking about themselves and/or the issue in the space of a single sentence. These "reframes", which are always positive in nature, are then spoken by the client during the tapping process. That's about all there is to it.

Researchers are still trying to pinpoint the exact physiological mechanisms that allow EFT to work so well. As mentioned earlier, it centers around the profound effects of the body's subtle energies and is based on the theory that "the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system."

Oriental Medicine and energy psychology have both found that energy disruptions connected to emotional issues manifest in the body as energy blockages. It has been shown countless times, in both EFT and Oriental Medicine, that once an energy blockage is removed and the disrupted energy system is rebalanced, emotional problems almost seem to vanish before the clients' eyes.

Experienced professionals who use EFT also claim that it provides relief for a wide range of physical symptoms. In their eyes, this provides unmistakable evidence of the link between our physical ailments and our emotional issues. This fits in well with the mind/body healing concepts that are currently on the forefront of health care in the 21st Century. Nevertheless, it should be made clear that I do not treat physical symptoms that are only related to physical problems.

How I Use EFT with Clients

I use EFT to treat a number of emotional/psychological problems such as: addictions, anxiety and phobias, mood disorders and self-esteem issues. Learning problems, performance anxiety and sports challenges have also been found to respond well to the technology. EFT lends itself especially well to the treatment of trauma victims. This is because a lot of times people who suffer from trauma don't want to have to think about or focus on their pain anymore than they have to. EFT does not require long, drawn out conversations and/or the re-experiencing of traumatic feelings. In other words, it is largely non-verbal and offers an effective way to address the sometimes overwhelming feelings and thoughts associated with trauma.

As mentioned above, EFT can be a major help to anxiety/phobia sufferers. This was born out in an interesting study published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology in 2003 (Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, Western Australia). In this study Dr. Steven Wells demonstrated that people with phobias around small animals – such as spiders, rats, mice and cockroaches – could reduce their fears by a measurable degree using EFT.

Participants in the study who were using EFT started by repeating the phrase, “Even though I have this fear of spiders, I deeply and completely accept myself.” They then proceeded to do the EFT tapping for 30 minutes. At the end of this time period these individuals were able to walk nearer to a transparent box containing spiders than people in the control group who just did deep breathing. Remarkably, these results remained active in a follow-up test 6 months later.

As EFT becomes more popular and reaches a broader range of people, studies of its effectiveness will start to appear more frequently in a broad range of peer reviewed publications

Compared to other techniques, EFT is usually quite gentle. Substantial relief is often achieved with little or no emotional upset. When individuals require a rapid change of mind and/or want to lessen difficult emotions that have developed as a result of a trauma, EFT fits the bill.

EFT and Children

Since EFT does not require extensive verbal skills, emotional expressiveness or experience of psychotherapeutic processes, it is ideally suited for use with children. Because EFT works on a physiological level it has been found to be useful in the treatment of neurological issues as well as emotional conditions. EFT is very safe – it

either works or it doesn't – and it does not make conditions worse. The technique allows children to better manage their own emotions. With adequate training and practice it can also give children, as well as adults, more freedom, autonomy and self-control.

Benefits of Using EFT

There are many benefits of EFT. As compared to other forms of therapy, there is no long, drawn out, “tell me your life story” feature to EFT. Also, you will find that there are no pills to take; no painful reliving of past traumatic events and it doesn't take months or years to achieve results. In fact, it only takes several minutes to do and can easily be learned by anyone in less than 15 minutes. This allows people to treat themselves outside of the therapy office and further reinforce the work they've done in session.

How to Learn EFT

You can find out more about EFT and how it can benefit you by calling me at 505-720-9394.