

Addressing the Emotional Aspect of Addiction

Using Emotional Freedom Techniques

By Fraeda Scholz and Bruce Hinson

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a relatively new treatment that combines ancient Chinese knowledge of the acupuncture/energy meridian system and modern psychology. EFT launches off the discovery statement, "All negative emotion is caused by a disruption in the body's energy system." EFT has often been called an emotional form of acupuncture without needles. The process has a person tap on acupuncture/stress points on the body. This tapping sends energy down the "meridians" or energy flows and clears the "disruption" or negative emotional energy. When disruptions in this system are cleared the person returns to emotional balance, even when talking and thinking about the beliefs or traumatic events that used to upset them. Even better than that, this shift tends to be permanent, meaning years later they are still free of the negative emotion from the memories or beliefs that used to upset them. This includes severe trauma such as childhood abuse, accident trauma and war trauma. Also, beliefs such as, "I am unworthy", "I'm unlovable" or "people aren't safe" can be released using this treatment.

Many people these days are aware of the chemistry of emotion. Someone experiences a trauma and chemicals called neuropeptides are released by the brain into the bloodstream. The person then feels strong emotions like anger, anxiety or shame. Oftentimes even after the trauma is over the person continues to have these emotions and the memory becomes a trigger for them or can even create a constant disruption in their lives. Traditionally emotions such as persistent anxiety have been medicated either by a professional or the person self medicates with legal or illegal substances. However, if the person stops taking the medication the anxiety comes back or if the person stops using their drug of choice the emotion returns, which is one of the reasons people continue to use. This is because chemistry is not the root cause of the emotion. The emotion first arrives as a disruption in the body's energy system. This triggers the brain (which itself is electrical) to dump the chemistry of emotion, neuropeptides, into the body. Therefore in many cases it is more effective to address emotions at their source through the energy system rather than through chemistry, whether that be pharmaceuticals, alcohol or illicit drugs. Not only does the person have to keep taking the drug to keep the emotions at bay but drugs may have very significant side effects and often are an ongoing cost to the person over many years. Furthermore, if they stop taking the drug the anxiety or other emotions return as if no progress had been made towards deep healing. This is a clear sign that the drug has not gotten at the root cause of the emotions. On the other hand when EFT is administered thoroughly and addresses the aspects of the emotional triggers over time the emotional freedom people report tends to be permanent and clear from the source.

As you know addiction has a very strong emotional component. Often people start abusing substances after a trauma or series of traumas, or because of ongoing stress of some kind. EFT is a very effective tool in clearing negative emotion from the energy system and the subconscious mind for good. As a result the person no longer needs to abuse drugs and alcohol to self medicate for their emotional pain. This does not mean that EFT can cure someone of an addiction by itself or in one treatment. There are often many emotional aspects contributing to a person's need to medicate with substances. It is best if EFT is used in conjunction with practical interventions such as detox programs, support with lifestyle changes and ongoing support and observation by well trained professionals. Also the person needs to be willing to go through the work and time it takes to do this and really change their lives. However, EFT provides permanent relief from trauma and emotions of the past and there are very few treatments that offer this kind of success in this area. EFT can be an invaluable tool for this aspect of healing from addiction. EFT works very quickly and deeply compared to anything else we have seen. One traumatic event is usually cleared of its emotional triggers for good in less than a half an hour, sometimes in

minutes.

Recently I (Fraeda) worked with a woman who had been molested by a neighbor 4 times as a child. She is now in her early 50's and before our session she reported that she often thinks about what happened and feels anxious and angry and overwhelmed even though she has had several years of talk therapy. She and I then had one ninety minute session using EFT for these memories. I talked with her weeks later and she said that the memory of these events no longer bothers her and it "almost feels like it happened to someone else." Though she knows it was not OK that she was treated that way she can now leave it in the past. More of her energy is spent in the present where she feels much more empowered and safe now as an adult.

Another feature of EFT is that you can teach it to clients and they can do some of the clearing work on their own. They will need to work with a practitioner, therapist or other health provider who knows the process for the deeper and more complex issues but most people can do some of their own work. This can be very empowering for the client and starts to give them some control and engagement in their own healing which is key for long term success for complex issues.

EFT can also be used by mental and physical health care providers for themselves. You can use it for your own stress, trauma from working with patients, anxiety and other emotional issues that keep you unhappy, uncomfortable and unable to do your best in your life.

Often people feel this technique is too good to be true. To this we say, if a person can be traumatized in 10 seconds why can't they be healed in a minute, a few hours or days? If you are healing at the source, that is in the energy system, deep and rapid healing becomes completely possible. We have to say we weren't convinced until becoming involved in receiving and administering this ourselves. Try it with yourself and you will know whether it is for real or not. No amount of words can or even should convince you that EFT is real and possible. Try it yourself. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain for yourself and the people you work with.

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