

# EFT/Tapping: A Powerful Technique for Every Counselor's Toolbox

Bob Schmidt, M.S., LPC, Adjunct Professor, Fairfield University

FCA Conference, October 14 & 15, 2016

E-mail: [counselor.bob@hotmail.com](mailto:counselor.bob@hotmail.com) Website: [www.BobSchmidt.LPC.com](http://www.BobSchmidt.LPC.com)

## What is EFT/Tapping?

- A form of energy psychology. It is an easy to learn, effective **somatic** technique.
- A combination of eastern medicine and western psychology
- The client taps on him/herself. You don't touch the client.
- EFT has been very successful treating trauma and grief in Sandy Hook
- EFT is recognized by APA for treating stress and trauma

## How and why Tapping works

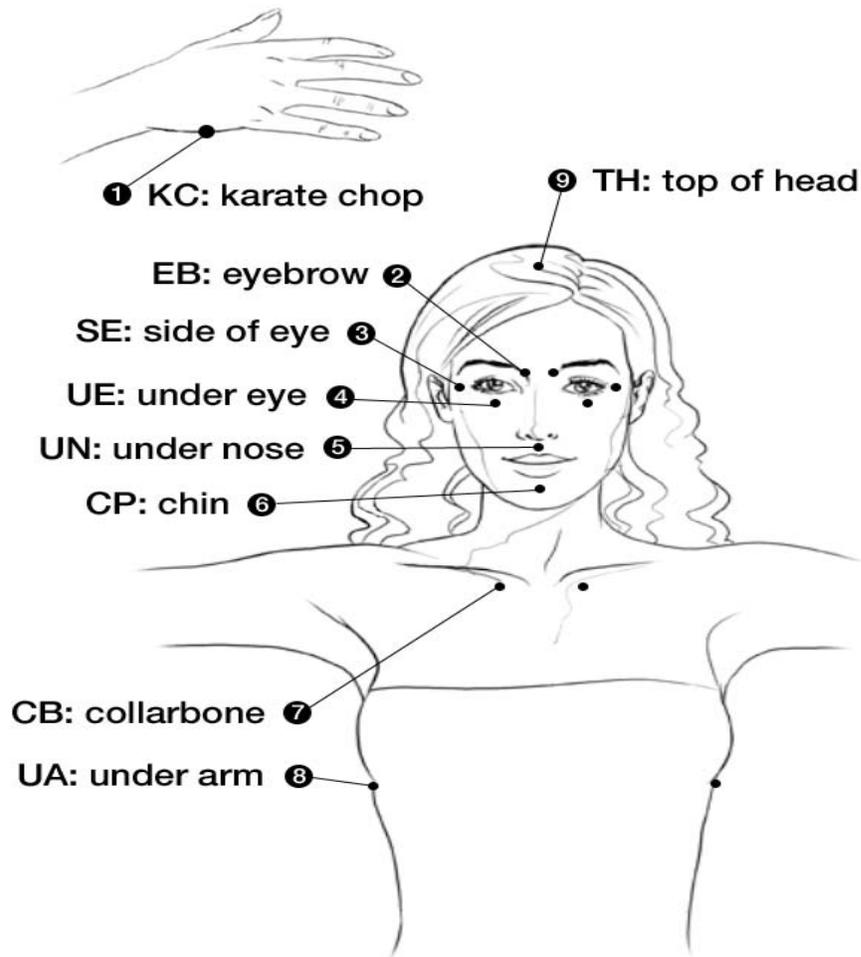
- Discovered over 30 years ago by Roger Callahan, a psychologist in California: He called the technique *Thought Field Therapy*
- Refined by Gary Craig about 15 years ago and re-named *Emotional Freedom Technique*, or Tapping
- The client taps on acupuncture points, or MERIDIANS and uses a COGNITIVE set up statement.

## Why it works and the mind-body connection:

- We have an emotional reaction to everything we experience. If the experience does not make a big impact, it goes to our old memory file and the emotions are stored without impact.
- If the experience is significant or traumatic, it does **not** go to the old memory file. The emotions and physical reactions that went with the event remain with us and can return immediately as if the event just happened with certain "triggers" such as sounds, smells, similar situations, etc.
- A person can be "flooded" with emotion and not consciously know that it is connected to a past event.
- Tapping can "clear" that event and calm the amygdala (fight or flight or freeze, reaction)
- Tapping can release negative emotions that overwhelm a person and make it difficult to move on function (panic attacks, bouts of anxiety, etc.)
- Tapping can release the physical symptoms that a person feels when they are anxious, angry, fearful, etc.

## The Advantages of using Tapping

- The client can tap at home as a coping skill or reinforce what was covered in a session.
- Tapping works with children as young as age 2.
- Children who are uncomfortable tapping on themselves can tap on a stuffed animal.
- Tapping can be used for someone in crisis and with a lot of training, for trauma.
- If you don't follow the exact tapping procedure, it still works. You can't hurt someone if you do it wrong.
- Secondary benefits. You tap with the client and that helps you remain calm and objective. After the session, you are not emotionally drained.



## TAPPING POINTS AND THE TAPPING PROCEDURE

1. **Identify** what is bothering the client. This is called the **MPI** (Most Pressing Issue)
2. **Rate** the intensity of the MPI using a scale of 1 to 10. (Ten being the most intense)
3. Say the **Set up Statement** 3 times while tapping on the **karate chop** area of the hand:  
Example: *“Even though I feel angry because my friend let me down, I deeply and completely accept myself.”*
4. Tap times on areas 2 through 9 (see diagram) and repeat the MPI each time. Example: *“I feel angry.”*
5. After finishing that round, stop and take a deep breath. Rate the intensity of the MPI now. If it is still high, continue to tap until the intensity is a 2 or lower.
6. If the client brings up other feelings or issues, finish tapping on the original MPI and then Tap on the new issue.
7. For a more effective experience, when doing the set up, describe how you experience the feeling in the body (my face is hot, like a weight on my chest, my stomach is tense, etc.).  
Example: *Even though I feel angry and my face is hot, I deeply and completely accept myself.*

### The balancing statement

- The last part of the Set up Statement is called the **Balancing Statement**. The one Nick Ortner uses is: *“I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”*
- Children and teens often feel are uncomfortable with those words. Others may not be able to love and accept themselves.

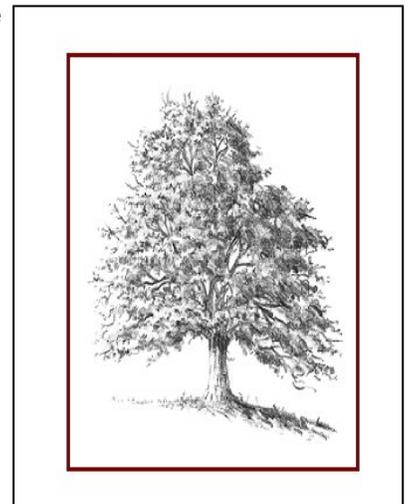
- Ask the client if the balancing statement is true for them. Here are other suggestions: “*I am a good person and I’m doing the best I can.*” Or “*I want to let go of the negative feelings and move on.*”

### **Tapping with young children**

- You can Tap with children as young as 2 or 3 years old.
- You need to use words appropriate for their age. “*I feel yucky.*”
- It may be easier to rate the intensity by using their arms to show how big it is.
- You can have the child Tap on a stuffed animal if they are more comfortable.
- You need to make the balancing statement age appropriate. “*I’m a good boy and my momma loves me.*” “*I’m doing the best that I can.*”
- There is an excellent book just for children. ***The Wizard’s Wish*** by Brad Yates.

### **Tapping Similarities to traditional Counseling Techniques**

- Tapping is Rogerian in approach. Gentle and with unconditional regard
- REBT uses the term “irrational beliefs”, EFT uses “limiting beliefs”
- We use the term un-block; EFT uses the term “clear”
- We sometimes re-frame for the client, EFT teaches you to help client to re-frame.
- The principals of “going deeper” with a client are the same as typical cognitive approaches. Nick Ortner uses a tree to demonstrate the relationship between the client’s symptoms, emotions, life events and his/her beliefs as the counselor probes deeper.



#### **Leaves (Symptoms or issues):**

This is your most pressing issue (MPI), the thing that is bothering you.

**Examples:** *I’m sad, my head aches, my back aches, I can’t sleep, I’m overweight, etc.*

#### **Branches (Emotions):**

These are the feelings that are behind your symptoms. As you tap on the symptoms, the feelings are often revealed.

**Examples:** *shame, guilt, remorse, rejection, anger, resentment, sadness, fear, etc.*

#### **Trunk (Events):**

These are important events that may have affected you

**Examples:** *Detached parents, bullied, abandoned, abused, unloved, unsupported, criticized,*

#### **Roots (Limiting Beliefs):**

These beliefs are usually not valid, and when revealed they need to be tapped on because they are holding you back. Tapping will help you see that they are invalid and no longer make sense.

**Examples:** *I can’t do anything right, I’m not safe, I’m not okay, I’m not lovable, I’m different, I’m not worthy, I’m not good enough.*

#### **Tapping is very effective with:**

PTSD and trauma work (With a great deal of training and mentoring). Also: anxiety & depression, anger issues, stress management, addiction, phobias and pain management

#### **Tapping with someone in crisis (Calm and Contain Technique).**

- The counselor does not use a set up statement. She/he allows the client to talk as they both tap on the nine acupoints. The counselor encourages the client to breathe, reassure them that they are safe and reflects the clients words

## Tapping with a traumatized client

- This should only be done with the proper training and mentoring.
- To avoid re-traumatizing the client the counselor has to go slowly and take small aspects of the event and tap each one down to an intensity of 2 or lower.
- **The Marquis technique:** First, in order to gauge the intensity of the event the counselor asks the client to create a title for the event and visualize it on a movie marquis. Ask the client how big the letters on the marquis are. Measure the intensity. Tap on just the title until it is a 2 or lower.
- **The Movie Technique:** Tell the client that you are watching a movie of the event and you are sitting beside them. They tell the story in the third person. As soon as they notice any intensity of emotions, the counselor stops and taps it down with them. After a short time the counselor asks the client to re-wind the movie and play it back again. The counselor checks to see if the intensity is still down. If it went up then the counselor taps it down with the client. The counselor proceeds slowly and makes sure the client feels safe.
- **The Story Technique:** If the client is comfortable they can tell the story in the first person. As in the movie technique, the counselor periodically asks the client to re-wind and tell the story over from the beginning to see if the intensity went up.
- **Boxing up the movie, story or title:** When time is running out on the session the counselor asks the client if they could put the movie (story, issue, etc.) into an imaginary box for another session. The counselor asks the client to describe the size, shape, color and material the box is made of. The client even says where they would like the box stored until the next session.

## Tapping set up statements for trauma:

- Even though I have this issue <name feeling, thought body sensation>, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.
- Even though I <describe the issue>, that's just the way it is right now.
- Even though I <describe the issue>, it's over and I'm safe now.
- Even though I <describe the issue>, I choose to release this pain now.

## Teaching Tapping to a Client

- Make sure you have plenty of practice before you try it on a client.
- Some clients may be put off with the idea of tapping. Accept that, but don't give up.
- If they think it's weird or silly, you can have them tap on that, "*Even though this Tapping seems weird, I really want to give it a chance.*"
- Explain how many of us instinctively use the acupoints to self soothe (Rub our chin, rub our temple, and touch our collarbone).

## Research

- Gary Craig Study 2009: Veterans suffering from PTSD. In 5 days they:
  - Demonstrated a highly significant decrease of PTSD symptoms
  - Were able to stop using medications
  - The results were long lasting
- Tapping has been very effective in treating trauma in Sandy Hook and Rwanda.
- Many schools are using successfully using tapping for test anxiety and academic focus.
- Many licensed counselors use tapping as part of their treatment

## To Learn more about Tapping

- Read *The Tapping Solution* by Nick Ortner
- Go to the website: [www.TheTappingSolution.com](http://www.TheTappingSolution.com)
- Read Gary Craig's book, *Tap Yourself Free*. Go to Gary's website: [www.tapping.com](http://www.tapping.com)
- Book for teaching Tapping to children: *The Wizard's Wish* by Brad Yates