

## EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUES AND MASSAGE

*By Catherine Strang*

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is a Meridian based therapy.

All who are familiar with acupuncture or shiatsu will know that this system of medicine, going back at least five thousand years, is based on the fact that good health is reliant on the free flow of energy through the body. EFT is, if you like, a form of emotional or psychological acupuncture - but without the needles!

EFT is based on the discovery that “All negative emotions arise from a disturbance in the body’s energy field”.

Conventional psychotherapeutic logic assumes that negative thought = negative emotion but what is happening between the thought and the emotion? If one person can think about snakes and feel nothing yet another will react with terror, what has occurred in the body? In this case a frightening episode with a snake has led to a disruption, or a block, in one or more of the meridians of the body, this occurs because it can be difficult to process the whole gamut of emotions that occur during a frightening experience, so we push a lot of them away to be stored in our energy systems (and often build upon them with similar experiences as we go through life). When reminded of snakes the fearful thought triggers off the energy blocks from which the emotions flow. When treating this with EFT certain points on the meridians are stimulated, usually by tapping on them, as the person is focussed on the problem and within minutes the feelings start to clear.

The same process can be applied to any distress you can possibly think of, no matter how severe as all we are dealing with is the *energy* behind the distress. The effectiveness of EFT has been demonstrated thousands of times, in clinical use, in comparative studies and on camera. Gary Craig, the founder of EFT, has produced several excellent DVD sets demonstrating over and over the near miraculous effect of EFT on hundreds of cases from cravings for chocolate to severe issues such as sexual abuse or Vietnam war trauma. From follow up conversations months or even a year or two later the results were usually permanent; the odd case where this was not so was because *all the different aspects* of the problem had not been dealt with, once this had been done the emotional trauma was clear.

I’m sure most massage therapists have had the experience of clients releasing feelings during or after the massage (I’ve even had clients release laughter during a massage!). This is usually because muscular tension can hold a lot of suppressed emotions but what about the clients that release very little of that tension, whose backs just never seem to release that *really* tight bit? They are obviously gaining a lot from the massage (otherwise they would not return!) but unless a specific uncomfortable feeling is focussed upon as certain points are being stimulated then the release will not occur; by feelings I include physical as well as emotional discomfort. Although it can be helpful to tract down the stress behind the tension it is not always necessary. For the majority of physical problems however the most effective way to use EFT is by doing a little gentle questioning as to what was happening in the persons life prior to the problem. As you build up a relationship with your client they should be quite open to new ways for the problems to be released, even if it is something as seemingly bizarre as EFT.

It needn’t take up too much of the session either; a few minutes of questions and you can start tapping, you can even tap on certain points to release stress as they begin to talk about the problem so energy is beginning to shift right from the start. As you resume the massage treatment you will likely find the muscular tension softening more easily than ever before.

A case study

I recently had the experience of clearing a migraine with a completely new client. She had come to me for Indian Head Massage to help with a migraine that had started the day before; her pain was a seven (one = no pain, ten = the most severe pain) and although she had used quite a few therapies before, including massage she found that they brought only partial relief. I instinctively wanted to try EFT as I felt in this case massage would aggravate the migraine (I usually always respect what the client requests and have had success with relieving migraines and normal headaches with massage – as I’m sure many therapists have). I spent just under half an hour applying EFT to all her symptoms until she was at a zero, one or two on them, then I did the Indian Head Massage for the remaining half hour. She left with no trace of the migraine. I should also mention that she was a few months pregnant and had found her migraines increasing as a result. In an email that night she reported that she was still symptom free and had never responded to anything so fast.

This kind of result is normal, even for complete beginners. It’s worth also taking into account that massage therapists have the odd client for whom traumatic memories begin to surface and as they have begun to trust you would rather deal with the memories with you than go to a new therapist who can treat emotional trauma. Wouldn’t it be good to know that not only do you have the power to relieve physical discomfort with your hands but also you could relieve mental distress with a few taps of your fingertips!

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