

Some Useful Tapping Phrases and Approaches

There are many ways to tap. This list is an introduction to give you some ideas about the breadth and depth of EFT.

Parts Tapping, Choice Tapping:

Even though part of me is feeling ____ (really embarrassed right now), the rest of me knows ____ (I don't really deserve to be judged this harshly), and right now I am choosing ____ (to be a little nicer to myself, to remember that everybody makes mistakes, and I am still a good person).

Aspects to tap on:

Tap on feelings
Tap on sensations
Tap on beliefs
Tap on self-talk
Tap on the worst that could happen
Tap on alternative possibilities

Allow for the opposite:

This experience tells me that (I am a lazy person).....or not

Exaggeration, Doubling Down

Rather than fighting against a pattern or a thought, we can exaggerate it to explore its natural extreme, let it complete, or give ourselves some perspective or humor by highlighting its improbability.

I'm terrible and incompetent, and I have evidence to prove it.
There is no hope for me at all, and I know I'm right.

Alternation

You can alternate between positive and negative, or alternate between contradictory pressures. Doing this in a rapid-fire way can be very helpful when we feel like we are stuck in a bind, or when our own defenses are so strong that tiring them can help us perceive more possibility.

This is also a technique you can use while making figure 8s (horizontal or vertical) with your eye movements. If it helps to follow your or another person's finger while you do it, feel free to do so. You can also vary the figure eights by making them large or small, close or far.

I'm afraid, but I'm safe, I'm afraid, but I'm safe.

I have to do the laundry, I am too tired to do the laundry.
I want to get this job, I'm afraid to get this job.
Damned if I do, damned if I don't.

Focused Tapping and Expansive Tapping

Sometimes you might want to work on just one aspect (even though the smell of a dog sparks my fear of dogs), and sometimes you might want to tap for a long session that weaves together many related pieces of an issue without a limited focus (everything you can think of related to dogs, or risk, or dogs and risk). Both approaches have value.

Borrowing benefits

You can tap with someone else on their issue, and in the process you may find yourself releasing related issues.

Think of something you want to tap on, rate it, then set it aside (it could be in a box on a shelf, or some other way that feels nicely contained and out of the way). Tap with the other person and focus on their issue, then check back in with your own afterward and see what number you are at.

Repeating a Word or Phrase

If a phrase carries a strong association or trigger, it can be helpful to do some rounds just on that one phrase. Often this is something that was said to us that stung and we carried with us, or it might be a kind of self-talk that loops through our mind.

Why can't you get it together?
Normal people don't do that.
This rage, this rage, this rage.

What if...? (These two questions from Victor Lee Lewis)

E.g. What if this can heal?

This opens us to possibility.

How can I...?

This helps us find traction in what we want to embody and experience.

Tapping on not knowing

With tapping we always start where you are. If you have a pattern that is causing you distress and you don't know why or where it comes from, you can open a very powerful door by tapping on that. For example:

Even though I don't know why I can't get out of (this pattern), I'm in distress and I want to change it, because the truth is I really want some relief.

Even though I don't know why I have this pattern, right now I'm tapping, and I'm curious about what insight I might touch into if I make room for this inquiry right now.

Even though I am completely bewildered and I don't know what the cause of this pattern is, so I don't know how to fix it, and part of me is sure that what I need to do is fix it, right now I'm open to the possibility that something could shift even if I don't know everything about this pattern.

Rant and Tap

Sometimes we just need to blow off steam. Recounting a story without structure or intentionality on its own can actually bring us further into our patterns, but the truth is, sometimes we are not in a frame of mind where we can access anything but venting. In these cases, adding in tapping without asking anything else of ourselves in that moment can really help us land and reorganize while we tend to whatever agitation, self-questioning, deficit of witness, exhaustion, sense of desperation or injustice, or anything else that is fueling the rant.

Personal Peace Procedure

This is a classic EFT technique, where you make a list of all of the memories you can think of that bother you in some way, and you go through them one by one and tap until the charge is gone. This can bring up potentially triggering material, so use your judgment about whether you need the support of a friend or professional for some of the items.

The Movie Technique

This is a technique to give yourself some space from stressful memories. You imagine the scene playing out on a screen - you are not reliving it - and you tap on any places in the "movie" which feel activating. Take your time with this. As above, notice whether it makes sense to tap by yourself or with some support.

The Tell a Story Technique

This is another technique to give yourself some space from a stressful memory. You tap as you tell a story of what happened, stopping at any points which feel like they have any charge for you, and tap until you come to neutral. It's okay if you only get through a little bit of the story before you need to pause. You may not need to go through the whole story - see Table Top v. Table Legs below.

Table Top v. Table Legs

This concept highlights the importance of specifics with tapping. The idea is that if you tap on a broad issue, or table top, you might make some progress, but if you tap on specifics, or table legs, you can focus on a few of them but you don't have to tap on every single one for the table top to collapse and lose its power in your life. For example, tapping on "procrastination" might not bring you palpable relief, but if you tap on "the time I didn't get a paper in on time and I failed Spanish and I still feel anxious thinking about it" or "I feel resentful of deadlines because I feel like they are controlling me," you will make much more headway.

Positive Tapping

After clearing charge, you can also tap to increase positive feelings. In practice you can also mix them together, as in the parts tapping, or just meander between the two.

Post-Tapping Movement

If you would like, you can shake out your body. Start from the pelvis maybe, or wherever you are comfortable, and shake out your chest and extremities, too.

How do you feel after a good shake-out?

This can help discharge extra energy from our nervous systems and feel more settled.

Try It On Everything! And, Know Your Limits

I personally find great freedom in the fact that anything can generate tapping - it means that it's possible for us to be present to what is bothering us and have another tool to take care of and attend to the issue and ourselves.

As far as I know, there is no issue that cannot be used as a jumping-off point for tapping, as long as we are ready to explore it. And if we're not ready, we can still tap with our knowledge that we are not ready to go there, and settle ourselves with that boundary. For example: "Even though this is causing me distress, and even though I am not ready to work with it right now, I am willing to honor its importance, and I trust that I will feel more ready to heal this issue when I feel sufficiently safe and supported to explore it."

It's hard to overestimate the value of just giving ourselves that degree of acknowledgment and compassion. So many of our patterns are held in place because of how we judge ourselves about them, or work against the limits our body and being are trying to communicate to us. It's

okay to let ourselves off the hook from that judgment and pressure and offer ourselves care (and also let ourselves off the hook from our possible judgment and pressure about our judgment and pressure).

In my experience, our beings are so oriented toward healing that our reflexes for healing come online as soon as we perceive that we have the support, energy, or capacity to do so. Sometimes that readiness comes online when we realize the importance of an issue and stop pushing ourselves, or when we do something to nourish our own capacities (such as familiarizing ourselves with a tool like tapping), or getting creative about who or what could help us have more of a sense of security, witness, or curiosity.

Feel free to share this list with anyone you think would be interested.

If you have questions or would like more information on EFT, please contact me at

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Happy tapping!