

*The quick and easy guide to...*

*Boosting Your Studies*

*and Your Morale*

*with*

*Emotional Freedom Techniques*

*(EFT)*

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Eileen Tracy

“I have gotten on with the essay better than before, but I couldn't put my finger on what has changed. Perhaps there is more freedom in what I allow myself to say and less hesitation. It's all less tight.” – Student after EFT session.

DISCLAIMER: While EFT has produced remarkable clinical results, it must still be considered to be in the experimental stage and you must take complete responsibility for your use of it. Further, Eileen Tracy is not a health professional and offers EFT as a study skills tutor. Do not use EFT to diagnose or treat medical or mental conditions of any kind. Consult your doctor or a licensed therapist with any concern you may have regarding your health or mental state.

# 1 Red Pen Trauma

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In my twenty-odd years of confidential conversations with school pupils and university students, one little-advertised fact about education has become clear to me:

## **Studying is an emotional experience.**

In theory, studying is first and foremost an intellectual activity, involving going to classes and lectures, reading books on your booklist and then simply reproducing what you've learnt in your essays and exams.

Nice theory. So then why do so many people fail in these tasks despite being clever enough to carry them out to perfection? Here are some guilty secrets that I've had whispered in my ear:

- Yesterday I sat at my desk from 2pm to 9pm last night and then again from 10pm till 1am. I just ended up doodling. I don't know what I did with all those hours in fact. I've been too ashamed to tell anyone.
- I've given up my social life. I can't bear to sit in the pub feeling guilty about not working while my friends talk about their work and what topics they've revised so far.
- The minute I'm in the lecture hall I lose concentration and can't take much in. I see all those other students taking notes and I feel discouraged. I don't know how they do it.
- I just blanked out in the exam. I'd revised so much and yet in the exam, I panicked and couldn't remember anything useful. I managed to write one paragraph before time ran out.
- I can't make progress in my essay. I end up hating everything I write, crossing it out and starting again all the time.
- I've got heaps of notes that I've got to fit into my essay somehow. Last night I just sat and cried for three hours.

- I felt gutted when I heard I'd got a 2.1. I was supposed to be the best in my year. I'd worked hard all year while other people sat in the park for the same result. I can't see the point of working now.
- I shudder when I see my reading list. Other people read books for fun. I don't understand how they can curl up on the sofa with a book.
- I can't stop working. I feel too bad when I'm not at my desk.

These confessions all came from first-class, hugely capable school pupils and university students. You too may be academically gifted and have perfectly good study skills yet still find it hard to face a tutor, work effectively, meet deadlines, get organised, read books, make useful notes, plan your essays, stick to timetables, stay the course or keep cool in an exam. And you would be one of many.

## **STUDY SKILLS**

Of course, you should check first whether you do indeed have good study skills as these can make a huge difference to the way you study. My *Quick and Easy Guide to How to Stop Panicking and Start Learning at School and University* offers some really useful learning theory which can help you boost your learning and your recall. And my website describes other memory-boosting, note-taking, essay-planning and revision strategies to relieve your workload and take the pressure off you quickly and easily.

However, study skills alone are no panacea. That's because people who feel as if they are drowning in their work are usually wrestling with powerful emotions: guilt, shame, self-loathing and fear, to name but a few.

So in theory, learning is an intellectual pursuit. But in practice, it involves all kinds of feelings past and present – some born of your childhood experiences of schooling, others to do with your parents' and teachers' attitudes towards your learning; feelings generated by peer and sibling rivalries, and of course, very strong feelings about other people's opinions of your work. Emotions, not intellect, are what drives academic ability.

## THE SWOT AND THE RABBIT

These emotions are extremely powerful. Fear, anger and despair can make you swot pointlessly, or conversely, freeze irrationally, like a rabbit caught in the headlights of an oncoming car. These behaviours may seem opposite, but in fact they're just two sides of the same emotional coin.

The roots of your own emotional responses to your studies may be buried deep in your schooling history or in childhood events. Certain key events leading to your current study blocks may be long forgotten. This means that now, neither you nor anyone else may have the slightest clue why you're not managing when, to all extents and purposes, you should be. So then you get blamed, or you start blaming yourself. Which just compounds the anxiety that hits you when you sit at your desk... or the guilt when you don't.

I call this phenomenon Red Pen Trauma, or RPT for short. In order for you to understand how this term may apply to you, we need to rewind the clock.

### *IMAGINARY MEMORY*

*Imagine yourself as a small child. Your teacher hands you back a maths test. You seize the paper and scour it for a good result. Each answer has a neat red cross against it. The mark at the bottom says 0/10.*

If this vision makes you feel even slightly sick with anxiety, you have RPT. How badly you have it depends on how sick you feel.

RPT tells you that you distort academic achievement into a matter of life or death. It's a curious thing to do, because there is plentiful evidence that, in the long term, attitude matters more than grades. My *Quick and Easy Guide to How to Stop Panicking and Start Learning at School and at University* explains in detail how millions of people, some of them extremely high-profile, have thrived despite undistinguished academic careers. (Carol Vorderman and ex-Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd got Third Class Degrees. Ex-Prime Minister John Major ruled the country on three O-levels. Channel 4 newsreader Jon

Snow was kicked out in his second year at Liverpool University.) Nevertheless, when you were at school you probably heard that you had to do well *or else*. Well, if you believed that, you sure are in a state now.

The greater your panic, the more your academic performance will suffer. For, as Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* puts it, “Stress makes people stupid”. And students with RPT don’t easily discriminate. Instead, they try to read about everything, write about everything and revise everything. Or feel they ought to.

So when you find yourself swotting or freezing, you know that RPT is getting in the way.

What can you do? If you’re really having a hard time, I recommend that you talk to someone who will listen to the problem without condemning you, and give you some useful insights into the particular emotions that are pulling your strings.

But however rational you may be, there may be times when your feelings get the better of you. Fortunately, there is one very powerful technique you can use to gain emotional freedom in your studies, and that is what I want to show you right now.

#### ***EFT SHORT FORM (TOUCH AND BREATHE)***

*Re-read the ‘Imaginary Memory’ described on page 4. Notice the fear that it triggers in you and focus on where in your body you may feel this emotion.*

*Now, using the illustration on page 13 to guide you, dig around your left upper chest area with three fingers until you hit an area that feels quite tender. This is the ‘Sore Spot’, an area of lymphatic congestion.*

*Massage it and say, out loud if possible: ‘Even though I have this memory of failure, and part of me fears it makes me a failure, I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.’ Say this three times, even if you don’t believe it or it makes you tearful.*

*Now touch the top of your head with three fingers (see again the illustration on page 13). As you hold this point, focus on your fear and breathe in once and out once. Now touch the beginning of either eyebrow and breathe again, still focusing on the fear. Ditto the corner of either eye (on the bone). Under either eye (on the bone). Under your nose. In the cleft of your chin. Under your neck (touching with your palm to hit the spot). On either side of your body, 4 inches below your armpit. Repeat everything, from the top of your head downwards. Then stop.*

*You've just completed a Short Form of EFT.*

*Calmer now? Is the physical discomfort a little reduced?*

*Read the 'Imaginary Memory' once more. Does it seem a little more remote now?*

## 2 EFT: the theory

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Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is one of the most effective ways to stay calm in times of upheaval. It is a relatively young technique, born in the mid 1990s, one of a clutch of new remarkably powerful 'energy' therapies like Thought Field Therapy (TFT), Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT) and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Energy therapies heal emotional conflict by stimulating the body and the brain in their own different ways.

EFT is the simplest and easiest of all to learn and apply: it's quick (one round takes less than five minutes) and works well as a self-help method, with people of all ages and abilities. With a success rate estimated at 85%, it is also supremely effective.

There is a mass of anecdotal evidence about the benefits of EFT, backed up by a few small but significant studies. I can certainly add to this body of evidence: I am consistently finding that, with EFT, my students seem to change from being upset to feeling joyful and liberated... in minutes.

### **WHAT EFT CAN DO FOR YOU**

After one or two sessions of EFT, people who feel oppressed by a current problem, or traumatised by a past event, discover that they are no longer agitated. Instead, they feel calm, happy and clear-headed. They may start to laugh. More often than not, they forget all about their problem and need to be reminded that it was ever an issue. Physical symptoms can also vanish.

They say things like,

- It's curious but I'm no longer preoccupied by that memory.
- For the first time in ages, I slept properly last night.
- What was it again that I was bothered about?

- Now I do see the funny side.
- I feel a bit bored by this problem now – I'd like to move on.
- Now I understand why I was so upset.
- When we were talking about exams I had a crick in my neck and a headache. They've gone.

Results are usually quick and permanent... unless some other aspect of the problem needs tackling, as you will see later.

EFT should do the same for you, giving your studies a boost and making you feel happier in your work. You can use it to:

1. Take the sting out of past memories inhibiting your performance.
2. Take the sting out of existing problems inhibiting your performance.
3. Stop panicking.
4. Overcome phobias without needing courage.
5. Overcome bad habits without needing willpower.
6. Clear your head so you can concentrate better.
7. Clarify what's really bothering you when you're confused.
8. Clear away physical ailments triggered by stress.
9. Progress intellectually – because you are no longer resistant to new ideas that were previous emotionally too challenging.

If all this sounds like it might take months of work, let me reiterate: EFT is quick. Even stubborn issues take minutes or hours to resolve, not months or years. Let me give you one classic example.

### **DAVID AND TERROR OF SUCCESS**

*David kept procrastinating and was worried that he wouldn't be able to complete his Doctorate – despite being passionate about his subject. I hadn't yet discovered EFT at the time, but our discussions revealed that his*

*procrastination was a defence mechanism to protect himself from intense family envy. None of his family members had completed their university courses.*

*A year in, after about 30 hour-long discussions, I suggested EFT, a technique that was still new to me. He agreed. As a starting point, I asked him to visualise his family's reaction as they watched him get his Doctorate. He couldn't bear to picture the scene: 'They would hate it.' He was too choked up to say more.*

*After five minutes of EFT I asked him to imagine again standing with his family as he got his Doctorate. His rather astonished response was:*

*'I don't feel any sadness now. I just feel happy about becoming a Doctor.'*

## **WAYS OF DOING EFT**

This book is designed to get you started on your own. However, one reason to contact an EFT practitioner is that they may quickly spot issues for you.

A second reason to do EFT with someone trained in the technique is if you have a background of severe trauma or abuse. In that case, it's better not to be alone with the problem, and a very traumatic memory can, in very rare cases, cause what therapists call an 'abreaction' – when the person relives the bad experience. Having said that, EFT is usually trauma-free, allowing you to tackle problems from a safe distance, as you will see.

Generally, EFT works very well as a self-help technique. Then you can do it whenever you feel stressed, as often and for as long as you wish. You may make substantial headway on your own as the technique often draws out issues quite spontaneously – as you practise EFT, thoughts and revelations may pop into your head.

By now you may feel you've done enough reading and just want to get started. Feel free to skip the next section and go straight to Chapter 3.

## HOW EFT WORKS

EFT works a bit like acupuncture without needles. Instead, you just use your hands to stimulate fifteen specific points on the body. Research has shown that many acupuncture or acupressure points are areas of your body that are unique in manifesting dramatically decreased electrical resistance (there may be only 10 kilo-ohms of electrical resistance at the centre of an acupuncture point, in contrast to as much as 3 mega-ohms in surrounding areas of skin). According to Chinese medicine, acupressure points demarcate channels through which energy flows in your body. These channels are called meridians. (There are twelve such meridians in your body.)

The discovery behind EFT is that the cause of all negative emotion is a disturbance in one or more of the body's meridians. This disturbance acts rather like the energetic equivalent of an electric short-circuit. EFT makes no attempt, however, to diagnose which particular meridian or meridians might be compromised: the acupressure points that you stimulate in EFT mark the beginnings and endings of every meridian in your body (and there are a few extra points just to be on the safe side). By stimulating these points with your fingers, you stimulate every meridian, thus every possible source of blocked energy, and so without needing a professional diagnosis, you can restore energy flow on your own.

How do you stimulate the points? Usually, by tapping: this restores flow by stimulating energy – although earlier, I took you through a Touch and Breathe variation of EFT which works just as well. This is because the resonance in your body created by the motion and sound of your breath also stimulates energy flow. (This is the principle on which many breathing meditations are based.)

Let's say that you find studying generally stressful. An EFT practitioner would state that you have a disturbance in your energy field, undoubtedly caused by an earlier bad experience associated with your studies. You may not consciously connect that trauma to your current stress, but the energy

blockage that it produced now makes you jittery whenever you try and do some work.

Talking about the problem may help. Study skills may also help. But if the energy is quite blocked, that may not be enough. Even meditation and relaxation exercises may not calm you. But EFT can (literally) hit the spot.

## **SPECIFIC EVENTS**

EFT requires that, wherever possible, you hone in on a specific event that is causing your stress. A specific event, such as a bad exam experience, is usually much more likely to produce a blockage in your energy field than a generalisation like “I’m not good at exams”. This is important because only once the blockage has been produced can it be tapped away.

There may be many specific events that lead to one generalisation (e.g. many experiences of underperformance lead to a general disquiet about sitting exams). Therefore, getting rid of the general feeling of discomfort may require working on a number of these specifics.

If this sounds a bit traumatic, rest assured that EFT is a very gentle technique. In fact, unlike most conventional therapies, EFT never requires the use of will-power or courage. This issue is explained more fully on page 20, the Tearless Trauma Technique. As you will see, there are indirect ways to remind yourself of specific events if these memories are too painful to tackle head-on. The difficulties need only to be dealt with once you feel ready to face them.

## **DREAMS**

Dreams make excellent subjects for EFT because they are specific events that ‘happened’ in your sleep. If you wake up in a sweat after a nightmare – start tapping. This will help to clear the general anxiety which provoked the dream in the first place.

## 3 EFT: the preparation

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Here are some tapping guidelines.

### HOW TO TAP

- Tap quickly – about 2-4 taps per second.
- Tap with two fingers of your dominant hand for your own comfort.
- Tap each point about seven times, solidly but comfortably.
- Tap from the top of your head down to your hands as an *aide-memoire*.

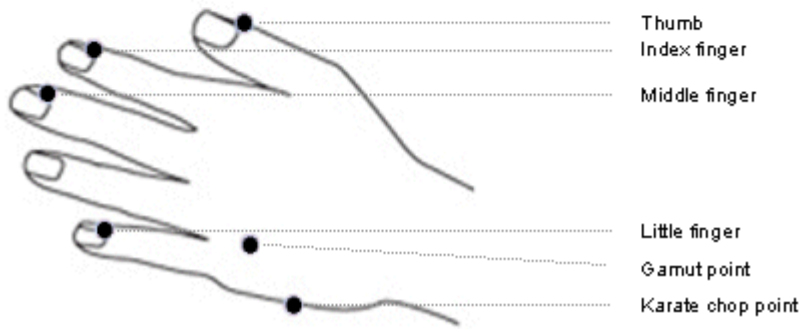
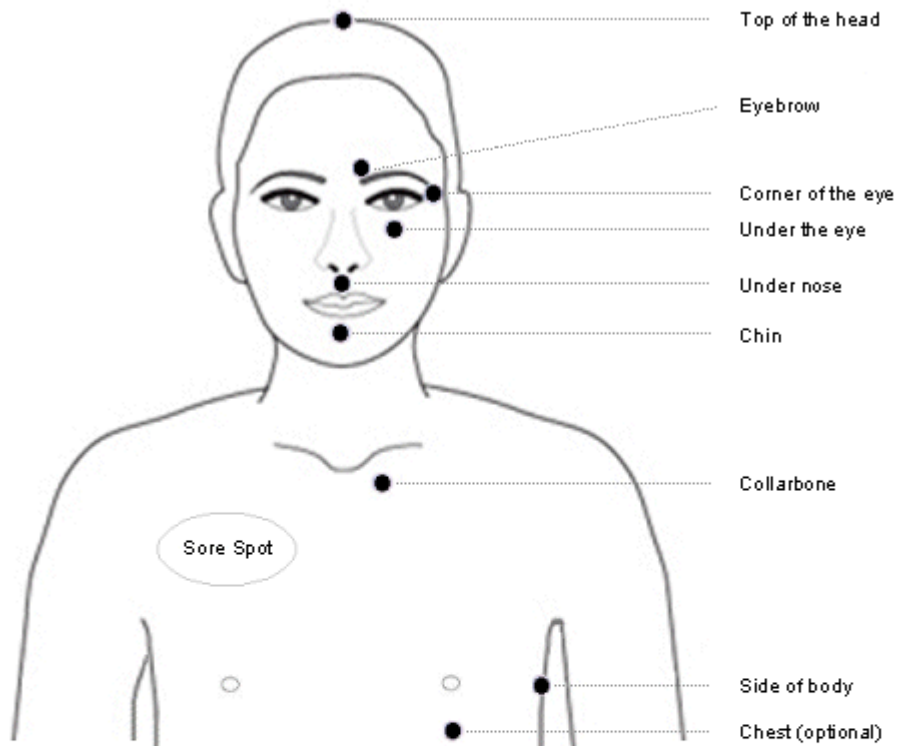
But these are just guidelines. EFT is a very forgiving process. In fact it works better if you don't focus too much on getting it right. Keep your mind on the problem, not on the technique. So don't worry if you:

- Tap slightly less or slightly more than seven times.
- Tap with more or less than two fingers.
- Tap either side of your body and switch sides during the routine.
- Tap with either hand.
- Tap two or more points simultaneously to save time.
- Tap with the palm of your hand on points that you find hard to pinpoint.
- Change the order in which you tap points.
- Forget a point or two (if you notice it, you can catch yourself up later).

### TEARS

EFT may make you feel emotional. This is normal. It's actually good news, because it shows that your blockage is present and can be tapped away. Therefore, continue tapping. Take it as a good sign that the technique is working. Keep going and you'll feel better in seconds.

## THE EFT POINTS



### ***Sore Spot***

An area of lymphatic congestion (called the 'Neurolymphatic Reflex Area') located in your upper left chest. Find the U-shaped notch at the top of your breastbone (where a man would knot his tie). From the bottom of the U, move about 3 inches downwards and 2 inches leftwards. Dig your fingers quite firmly around that area. You'll hit a spot that feels tender.

The Sore Spot is the only point that you do not tap. You massage it firmly with your fingers.

### ***Top of the head***

The uppermost point on your head.

### ***Eyebrow***

At the beginning of either eyebrow, just above and to one side of the nose.

### ***Corner of the eye***

On the bone bordering the outside corner of either eye.

### ***Under the eye***

On the bone under either eye.

### ***Under the nose***

Between your nose and your upper lip.

### ***Chin***

In the cleft of your chin.

### ***Collarbone***

The junction where the breastbone, collarbone and first rib meet. To locate it precisely, find the U-shaped notch at the top of your breastbone (where a man would knot his tie). From the bottom of the U, move 1 inch downwards and 1 inch across either side. Or pat the general area with the flat of your hand.

### ***Side of body***

On either side of your body about 4 inches below your armpit, level with the nipple. For women, it is where the side of the body is covered by the bra strap.

### ***Chest (optional)***

One inch below the nipple. This point is rarely publicly used in EFT as it is too socially awkward for women to tap under the breast.

### ***Thumb***

On the outside edge of either thumb (that's the edge that faces in to your body), at a point even with the base of the nail.

### ***Index finger***

On the side of either index finger, the side that faces your thumb, at a point even with the base of the nail.

### ***Middle finger***

On the side of either middle finger, the side that faces your thumb, at a point even with the base of the nail.

### ***Little finger***

On the side of either little finger, the side that faces your thumb, at a point even with the base of the nail.

### ***Gamut point***

On the back of either hand,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch behind the midpoint between the knuckles at the base of the ring finger and the little finger.

### ***Karate Chop point***

In the middle of the fleshy part of the outside of either hand, between the top of the wrist and the base of the little finger. It's the side of the hand that a Karate Master uses to chop through a plank of wood.

## 4 EFT: the practice

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You've already practised the Short Form of EFT, a form in which you leave out hand points. (In fact Chapter 1 took you through an abbreviated version of the Short Form as it left out Step 2 – see below). It is standard form to include hand points but you can leave them out if you are getting results without them.

Now I shall show you step by step how to do use EFT in full. Each step is explained in more detail in the 'Notes' that follow.

Why not tap with me? Use the illustration on page 13 to remind you where the points are. The problem I suggest that we tap on is a fear of reading a difficult textbook. If you share this fear, pick up a book and we can work our way through the EFT steps together. Otherwise, substitute another study problem, as my [square brackets] invite you to do.

### **Step 1:        *Locate the problem***

The problem is [our fear of reading this book].

### **Step 2:        *Take a level***

My fear is medium to high. I would say it is about 6/10 (10/10 being extreme fear). I know this because when I look at the book I hold my breath. And you?

### **Step 3:        *The Set-Up***

Massage the Sore Spot with two or more fingers while affirming ***at least three times:***

***Even though I have [a fear of reading this book], I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.***

### **Step 4:        *Tap down your body***

Now we're ready to tap point by point, reminding ourselves of the problem in order to surface the energy blockage connected to it (as explained in Chapter 1). The tapping should clear this blockage.

So put your hand over the top of your head, start tapping, and remind yourself (out loud if possible) that you have: [This fear].

Now tap the eyebrow point and remind yourself again: [This fear].

Corner of the eye: [This fear].

Under the eye: [This fear].

Under the nose: [This fear].

Chin: [This fear].

Collarbone: [This fear].

Side of the body: [This fear].

Thumb: [This fear].

Index finger: [This fear].

Middle finger: [This fear].

Little finger: [This fear].

Gamut point: [This fear].

Karate Chop point: [This fear].

Now repeat.

**Step 5:        *Check your level***

My discomfort is down to 0/10. I'm checking this by looking at the book. My breathing isn't restricted any more. In fact I can look at the book and feel comfortable. If your discomfort is also down to 0/10, you too have finished.

If however your discomfort has gone up, stayed the same, or has gone down but remains above 2/10, repeat Step 4.

If not, repeat Steps 2-5.

If you still have no result, repeat the entire procedure until you have a result. If you still have no result, turn to Chapter 6.

## 5 Notes

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### **STEP 1 (LOCATE THE PROBLEM)**

As I explained in Chapter 1, EFT works best if you can be specific about your problem. It's easy to focus on a current specific event. If for instance you're having problems writing an essay because you feel frightened of getting a bad mark for it, then you are in the middle of a specific event.

It's also quite easy to focus on future specific events. Many people do this all the time by constantly picturing bad things happening to them, like failing an exam, being criticised by a tutor, or going to pieces during a presentation. The philosopher Michel de Montaigne pointed out this phenomenon when he complained: "My life has been full of terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened." EFT can collapse these misfortunes very efficiently.

#### ***Use imagination***

However, the past can be a little more challenging as after many years have elapsed, it can be hard to remember events, or the details of specific events. In that case, EFT gives you permission to invent them. In Chapter 1, you imagined getting zero marks in a maths test. Did this invented scenario bring up anxious feelings? If so, then it did the trick. You too can invent or reconstruct where memory fails you. And if you remember an event but have forgotten some of the detail, again, you can use your imagination to fill in the gaps. This is because in EFT, factual truths are not as important as emotional truths. Whatever specific events and specific details spring to mind will bear the hallmark of emotional truth. For the purposes of EFT, you are not trying to write an autobiography. All you are doing is surfacing emotions by honing in on specific events and then tapping them away.

There are various other ways to elicit the specific.

### ***Look at the problem***

Some problems are rooted in visual or other sensory associations – you can see them, hear them, smell them or touch them. As we saw, a general problem with reading can be made very specific by putting on your lap a particular book that triggers negative emotion. Tap on this. Once you can look at this trigger without feeling negative emotion, your EFT is done. Of course you must only use this method if the trigger brings up emotion that you can bear. If not, apply the Tearless Trauma described overleaf.

### ***Find a memory***

Ask yourself, 'When did I first feel like this?'. For instance, if you have a general anxiety about reading, ask yourself when you first felt bad about reading. This might bring back a memory of being six, reading out loud in the kitchen, and getting criticised for reading too slowly. This is the specific event that you must tap on. Tapping on this and other related specifics will help to dislodge the general anxiety about reading.

### ***Use the Movie Method on your problem***

Turn your problem into a film. It's very hard to make a film out of a generality like a fear of reading books so you'll be forced to be specific. You can make a movie out of a past, present or future problem, and give it a title, as follows:

- Past: "My dad shouts at my slow reading".
- Present: "I'm scared of reading this critical analysis of Milton."
- Future: "I'm scared of having to read Milton next term."

## **STEP 2 (TAKE A LEVEL)**

Before you start tapping it's useful to rate the distress that you feel **now** about the problem. This gives you a useful point of reference for later, when you will want to check whether you have made progress. The 0-10 scale that we used is called the 'SUDS' (Subjective Units of Distress Scale) – 0 being low and 10 being high.

However, you can rate your distress more loosely as High, Medium and Low. Or don't rate it at all and just observe your progress. For instance, physical symptoms may change. As your anxiety decreases, your breathing may ease, and the butterflies in your stomach may go.

If you're very stressed, don't think about your problem too closely. Here are a few approaches that will enable you to carry out EFT without pain:

### ***Tearless Trauma Technique***

If a problem feels traumatic and causes you severe discomfort, you can make it 'one step removed' using the 'Tearless Trauma Technique'. This involves rating how you feel about the **prospect** of thinking about the problem.

So for instance, if reading brings you out in a sweat, just tap on the prospect of reading a book.

Once you have dispelled this initial fear, you are ready to face the book. Do not use willpower or courage. Only face your traumas head on once you have tapped away the initial apprehension.

### ***Creep up on the problem***

Once you're ready to face your problem, it may still be helpful to 'manage' it in such a way as to make it less distressing. To do this you can break the problem up into small parts and to do EFT on the least distressing part first until your SUDS on that bit is low. Then move on to the next least distressing part. Keep creeping up on the problem in this way until you've conquered it all.

### ***Focus on current symptoms***

You can also side-step the problem and focus instead on physical symptoms associated with it. Perhaps when you think about reading a book, you feel breathless. If you're getting that symptom right now, substitute 'this breathlessness' in place of your reading problem. After a few rounds of EFT you should feel better able to face the book.

### STEP 3 (THE SET-UP)

Before tapping, you need to set up the right conditions for EFT to work. This is usually done by rubbing the Sore Spot. If you can't find this point, tap the Karate Chop point instead. The Karate Chop point is occasionally less effective but you may find it easier to locate and more discreet when in public.

As you rub the Sore Spot or tap the Karate Chop point, you repeat, preferably out loud, three times, an affirmation connected with your problem. To do this:

- Start with the words “**Even though I...**”,
- Describe how you **feel** about the problem
- End with the words “**...I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself**”.

For instance:

**Even though I feel utterly irritated with my bad essay plan, I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.**

**Even though I hate myself for having failed my French A level, I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.**

**Even though I feel terrified that my tutor will accuse me of not having done the reading, I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.**

**Even though I have this anger towards my teacher for the way he humiliated me last time and this has put me off his subject, I deeply and completely love, accept and forgive myself.**

The words you use to affirm accepting, loving and forgiving yourself are not important in themselves and can be changed. What matters is **stating your problem with self-acceptance**. In about 40% of cases, EFT will not work (nor indeed any other therapy) unless you take this particular step towards unconditional self-love. This is for a very particular reason, which is worth explaining in some detail.

### ***Psychological Reversal***

Energy therapists specialising in Thought Field Therapy (the basis of EFT) have discovered, from muscle-testing their clients, that in about 40% of cases, a person's ability to heal can be blocked by an unconscious psychological resistance which they call 'Psychological Reversal' (PR). Under the influence of PR, a client's muscles test weak and the healing technique, be it EFT or any other technique, does not work properly. PR is most commonly present in clients suffering from phobias, addictions and degenerative diseases; it is also possible to be psychologically reversed with respect to one problem but not another.

PR simply means that something in you is sabotaging the healing process, usually at a very unconscious level. Extraordinarily, love is the way out: by repeating the positive affirmations while rubbing the Sore Spot or tapping the Karate Chop point, it has been found, again through muscle testing, that PR vanishes, leaving the healing technique free to work. So it is to clear away possible PR that EFT routine always starts with a Set-Up affirmation.

The words of love in the affirmation are very simple but for many people, quite hard to say. If so, try mixing and matching some variations on the same theme:

***Even though I have [this anger with myself for failing maths], and I don't love, accept or forgive myself, I love, accept and forgive myself.***

***Even though I have [this anger], I understand.***

***Even though I'm not ready to get over [my anger], I love myself.***

***Even though it doesn't feel safe to get rid of [this anger], I forgive myself.***

***Even though I don't deserve to get over [my anger], I accept myself.***

***Even though I may never overcome [this anger], I forgive myself.***

***With or without [this anger], I accept, love and forgive myself.***

If you're really struggling with this step, you can be fairly sure that your problem today is caused at least in part by suffering in your childhood.

Children instinctively blame themselves when they feel unloved, and the chances are that this happened to you. Lack of self-love can cause study problems because self-image is often mixed up with academic performance. So keep working on this step: after a few efforts, it will get easier; meanwhile, say the affirmations even if you don't mean them as that will be good enough for now.

#### **STEP 4 (TAP DOWN YOUR BODY)**

Keeping your problem in mind, tap each point about seven times down your body (using the illustration on page 13) to guide you. If you're in a hurry, or getting good results without using hand points, you can tap the Short Form of EFT.

As a rule, tap two rounds down your body before checking progress.

#### **STEP 5 (CHECK YOUR LEVEL)**

After these two rounds, your level of discomfort may already have subsided. If it remains above 2/10, repeat Steps 3-5. Once your SUDS is below 2/10, you can stop, because the problem has become manageable. Of course, most people like to keep tapping until the discomfort is completely gone.

It can be hard to spot a discomfort that's gone away! If you're not sure of any improvement, check your physical symptoms. Perhaps, if you had them to start with, the butterflies in your stomach have now gone.

#### **KEEP FOCUSED**

As I mentioned earlier, EFT can make people emotional. If this happens to you as you start tapping, you're focused: no need to talk.

For milder emotion, there are two main ways of keeping your problem in mind as you tap.

### ***Repetition***

This is the method we've used so far: as you tap down your body, you repeat [This fear] (or whatever your problem is), out loud if possible. This is to tune you into the emotion, so that it can be tapped away.

This approach is quick and easy. However some people find that they say the words parrot-fashion, without connecting to the feelings behind the words. In this case you can adopt a stream of consciousness approach.

### ***Stream of consciousness***

This lively variation involves talking to yourself about the problem as you tap. I illustrate the process using an example based on a fear of an oncoming essay.

Sore Spot	<b>Even though I have this fear of my essay exam, I deeply and completely accept, love and forgive myself. (Three times)</b>
Eyebrow	I'm frightened of this exam
Corner of the eye	I'm scared of writing 3 essays
Under the eye	In such a short time
Under the nose	I only have 45 minutes per question!
Chin	That's not long
Collarbone	To write an essay
Side of body	I'll really need to concentrate
Thumb	I could lose concentration
Index finger	So I'm not feeling confident
Middle finger	Perhaps I need more practice
Little finger	I don't feel I have the skills
Gamut point	Not like other people do
Karate Chop point	I'm scared

Improvise in this way through the rounds.

This method may take you off topic, of course. You may wander onto related issues, such as the fear of not having prepared enough, of other people being better than you, or the fear of what might come up in the exam. But since you'll be drawn to the issues that are most bothering you, off topic subjects may in fact be very relevant. For every significant change of topic, however, do start over from Step 2 (Take a level) or at the very least, Step 3 (The Set-Up). This is because PR can come creeping back in the middle of a long round of tapping, so it's well worth going back over your affirmations.

### ***From negativity to positivity***

EFT works by restoring disturbed energy flow. Tapping on acupuncture points, **while focusing on what's upsetting you**, is part of the healing process. Don't be put off saying negative things as you tap: the process is positive.

You can certainly add some positive thoughts to round off your tapping and some of the Protocols at the end of this book show you how. But only do this when you have tapped enough rounds to feel calmer about the problem.

There's no point in forcing yourself to be optimistic: EFT works best when you express your true feelings.

Remember that if a problem is too traumatic to face head-on, you can use the Tearless Trauma Technique described on page 20.

## 6 Has EFT worked?

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EFT often works so well that problems simply disappear without you noticing. Be vigilant!

As you tap, you may catch yourself yawning and sighing. These are signs of emotional release. If you find yourself losing concentration repeatedly, or start feeling bored with the problem, you can also take it that the EFT is working.

Once you can think about the problem without emotional or physical discomfort, your SUDS is down to zero, and you are done (see Step 5).

### **TESTING, TESTING, TESTING!**

Your SUDS check is a built-in test of the technique's efficacy. But do test it some more even after you think your SUDS is down to zero. EFT practitioners make it a point of honour to test their results with their clients, dangling cigarettes in front of the smokers, shutting the claustrophobics in dark cupboards and simulating rattling noises for those with snake phobias (I'm serious)! You may have to use some imagination in setting up your own tests – perhaps a past exam paper, your syllabus or a photo of your supervisor will give you some answers! In these 'live' conditions, an unexpected aspect of the problem may then manifest itself, which you can tackle again with EFT until you are completely calm.

Remember that EFT does not require the use of willpower or courage. If you feel that putting yourself through some kind of test requires that you grit your teeth or put on a brave face, then you must stop immediately. Identify the aspect of the problem that is bothering you and collapse this with EFT before proceeding any further.

### **IF IT LOOKS LIKE HASN'T WORKED**

There are two ways in which EFT can work but give the impression of having failed.

### ***It worked – you just didn't notice***

The first, as I've mentioned, is if your problem vanishes so discreetly that you don't notice. For instance, you may be so terrified of exams that you can't go into the exam room; after half an hour's EFT, you go in – but later consider it a failure, because you felt terrified throughout the exam. If the EFT was merely geared at getting you into the room, then it worked. It would take more EFT to calm your nerves as you sat the paper.

This takes us to the second reason why EFT may appear not to have worked.

### ***More dragons have surfaced***

Because problems are often multi-faceted, you may find that you resolve one aspect of a problem only for another aspect to pop up.

Let's say you've just assuaged your fear of running out of time in your essay exam. At this point you may find that another fear arises immediately about what topics could come up. Go back to the Sore Spot with this issue in mind. You can use EFT systematically to deal with every new facet of the problem, until you have worked your way through it and no more fear surfaces.

Think of it as a tall tower. The tower represents the problem that you would like to conquer – in the example I just gave you, that was the essay exam. It may be guarded by many dragons. Each dragon represents one particular bad feeling associated with this exam. You may not be able to see all the dragons at once: some may be hiding behind others. With your EFT sword, you can slay these dragons each in turn. Once they're all down, you can climb your tower.

### ***Give it 24 hours***

Sometimes EFT needs a little time to show results. Take a break, or wait till the following day, and check again to see if your SUDS has improved.

## **IF IT REALLY HASN'T WORKED**

If you're quite sure you're not getting a result, here are some possible reasons why.

### ***You need to accept yourself more fully***

As I mentioned on page 21, in about 40% of cases EFT will not work until you establish a greater degree of self-acceptance. Take plenty of time over Step 3 (Set-Up). It's been found that some people need to say the affirmations ten times or more before they are released from the clutches of Psychological Reversal. So repeat your affirmations over and over and put **strong emphasis** on loving, accepting and forgiving yourself. It even helps to shout it.

### ***You're getting in the way of the process***

Sometimes EFT doesn't work if a person is so busy trying to perform the technique to perfection that their mind is no longer focused on the problem. Don't worry if you make mistakes as you tap. EFT is a very forgiving process that has built-in systems to give you plenty of second chances.

### ***Reinstate the Chest Point***

If you have missed out the chest point, reinstate it. This point is often skipped because it's socially awkward for women.

### ***Insert the Gamut Procedure***

This is also called Brain Balancing, because it stimulates both your left and right brain. You will look odd when you do it, and it will feel weird, because it involves tapping while performing eye movements, humming (a right-brained activity) and counting (a left-brained activity).

Although it may seem complicated, the process only takes 10 seconds.

Keep your problem in mind as well as you can. Now start tapping the Gamut Point continuously. This point, if you recall, is on the back of either hand, \_

inch behind the midpoint between the knuckles at the base of the ring finger and the little finger.

**As you tap this point continuously**, perform the following 9 actions in quick succession:

- 1 Close your eyes**
- 2 Open your eyes**
- 3 Holding your head steady, look hard down right**
- 4 Holding your head steady, look hard down left**
- 5 Holding your head steady, do a clockwise or anti-clockwise eye roll (as if your nose was at the centre of a clock and you were trying to see all the numbers in order)**
- 6 Holding your head steady, roll your eyes the other way**
- 7 Hum a tune for 2 seconds**
- 8 Count quickly to 5**
- 9 Hum a tune for 2 seconds**

You can change the order of this sequence as long as you perform 7, 8 and 9 as a unit.

This procedure is usually inserted between a first and a second round of tapping. However, you can place it anywhere in the routine that you prefer.

### ***You're dehydrated***

Dehydration can make EFT less effective. You can be dehydrated without realising it because dehydrated people have no thirst! Drink 6-8 glasses of water (not juice) a day and add an extra glass of water for every tea or coffee that you drink. Drink also as you tap.

### ***Try collarbone breathing***

Collarbone Breathing is one very useful exercise when you get stuck in EFT, but beyond the scope of this book... it is easy to look up on:

[www.emofree.com](http://www.emofree.com).

### ***Your last resort***

Some people have a toxic reaction to something, which stops EFT from working for them.

This 'energy toxin' may be external – fumes, perfume, washing powder on you or near you. Try doing EFT in a different room and wearing different clothes.

Or it may be something you've absorbed such as a medicine or a grooming product (cream, shampoo, even toothpaste).

At the top of the endless list of foods that can cause bad reactions are dairy products, wheat, corn, soya and chocolate. The food may be a healthy one: even lettuce can be problematic for some!

If you suspect that you have a bad reaction to something but you're not sure what, a health kinesiologist can muscle-test you to find out.

It's rare for toxicity to be a problem, so make the search for energy toxins your last resort if EFT isn't working for you.

### ***A final word***

Hopefully however, EFT will work very well indeed, and I wish you good luck with the technique. To help you get started quickly, the Appendix that follows offers you some examples of EFT applied to typical study problems. Good luck!

## Appendix: EFT Protocols

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The following pages contain 'Protocols' to help you get started with EFT in your studies. "Protocol" is EFT jargon for a one-size-fits-all tapping example. The protocols here are largely geared towards assessments and exams and inspired from my conversations with pupils and students so they won't provide a perfect fit. They're just typical examples of study problems for you to adapt in any way you wish.

Each example also introduces a different 'form' or 'method' of EFT. You've already been introduced to the Touch and Breathe form, and the Movie Method in which you create a film clip out of your problem. See which other forms and methods you'd like to use in different situations.

I also suggest more 'Aspects' for additional tapping. This is to encourage you to look for root causes. Again, these are based on my experiences with students, so adapt them as you see fit.

Where you see square brackets, you should also substitute your own words and phrases.

Remember that EFT works best on **specific** events and memories.

### SET-UP SHORTHAND

In all cases, where you see an affirmation followed by three dots, like this:

***Even though I'm haunted by this 'Bad Exam' memory...***

this is conventional EFT shorthand for:

***Even though I'm haunted by this 'Bad Exam' memory, I deeply and completely accept, love and forgive myself***

or a variation on that theme. Remember to massage the Sore Spot or tap the Karate Chop point.

## **I'M FRIGHTENED OF FAILING (STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS)**

'Failing' is a subjective term and may mean getting less than a target grade.

This protocol tackles the irrational fears students often have about 'failure', often connected to a fear of death. Note that in EFT you do not censor or rationalise irrational anxieties: you voice them freely. Let the tapping do the rest.

<b><i>Even though I have this fear of failing...</i></b>	
Top of the head	I've got to succeed
Eyebrow	Or else
Corner of the eye	Exams have such power
Under the eye	They determine who lives
Under the nose	And who dies
Chin	The examiner is my grim reaper
Collarbone	Out to get me
Side of body	However much I work
Thumb	I'm still scared
Index finger	I'd have no future if I failed
Middle finger	No second chances
Little finger	No possible resits (though there may well be)
Gamut point	I feel inadequate
Karate Chop point	I have to perform

Aspects:

***Even though I feel worthless without good grades and I first felt worthless when [my teacher marked me bottom of the class]...***

***Even though I fear failing to [get to the university of my choice]...***

***Even though I'm frightened of disappointing [my father]...***

***Even though [my maths teacher] scared the life out of me when [I was ten]...***

Tap also on any past academic failures that upset you as these will contribute to your existing panic. You'll do better exam preparation if you're not crippled by terror, and you'll enjoy your studies more.

## **I'M HAUNTED BY A PAST EXAM FAILURE (MOVIE METHOD)**

The 'Movie Method' is a safe way to deal with trauma. Turn your memory into a small film. This one is entitled 'Bad Exam'. It contains two upsetting scenes: first, walking in to the exam room feeling unprepared, then, horror of all horrors, opening the paper and realising you can't answer any questions.

First, do EFT on the film title only. Do not go beyond this stage as it may be too upsetting. For the purposes of economy I shall demonstrate this with the Short Form (ie. minus hand points):

<b><i>Even though I'm haunted by this 'Bad Exam' memory...</i></b>	
Top of the head	This fear
Eyebrow	This fear
Corner of the eye	This fear
Under the eye	This fear
Under the nose	This fear
Chin	This fear
Collarbone	This fear
Side of body	This fear

Do as many rounds as you need to feel calm. Remember that you must not proceed using willpower or courage; only proceed when you have no anxiety.

When you feel ready, start the film. Your anxiety may rise again as soon as you get to the first scene in which you enter the exam room. Stop the film immediately:

<b><i>Even though I have this 'walking in' guilt...</i></b>	
Top of the head	This guilt
Eyebrow	This guilt

Corner of the eye	This guilt
Under the eye	This guilt
Under the nose	This guilt
Chin	This guilt
Collarbone	This guilt
Side of body	This guilt

Again, continue in this way for as many rounds as you need to feel calm. Then continue with the film until your anxiety rises again:

<b><i>Even though I have this shock upon opening the exam paper...</i></b>	
Top of the head	This shock
Eyebrow	This shock
Corner of the eye	This shock
Under the eye	This shock
Under the nose	This shock
Chin	This shock
Collarbone	This shock
Side of body	This shock

Keep going as long as necessary until the memory of your bad exam no longer upsets you.

Use the Movie Method on all your traumas and nightmares – past, present and future.

## **I KEEP PROCRASTINATING (FEEL THE FEELING)**

Define a place in your room that represents your goal. Start three metres away and move slowly towards it so that you experience how it feels to get closer to it. Whenever you feel uncomfortable, stop immediately and start tapping.

Your feelings may alternate between fear and excitement: you can reflect that contrast as you go through the points.

<b><i>Even though I have this fear of reaching my goal, I also feel excited and I deeply and completely accept, love and forgive myself.</i></b>	
Top of the head	I'm scared
Eyebrow	But excited
Corner of the eye	I'm frightened
Under the eye	But exhilarated
Under the nose	Getting what I want
Chin	Is scary
Collarbone	But joyful
Side of body	And thrilling

Aspects:

***Even though [my friends might reject me] if I achieve...***

***Even though I'm on the wrong course but anxious about [changing courses]...***

***Even though I'm sabotaging my work because [I'm scared of success which will entail more hard work]...***

## I'M IN THE EXAM AND I'M PANICKING (TOUCHE AND BREATHE)

'Touch and Breathe' (TAB) is a discreet form of EFT with no tapping. It works just as well. Just breathe in and out, once, as you hold each point in turn. The motion and sound of your breath will create resonance in your body, stimulating energy flow. It's important to remind yourself to breathe in an exam anyway!

One round of TAB might be enough as it's slower than tapping. This protocol suggests some positive thoughts.

<i>Think: <b>Even though I have this panic, I deeply and completely accept, love and forgive myself.</b> (Rub the Sore Spot as usual)</i>	
Top of the head	I'm panicking
Eyebrow	It's normal to panic and this will pass
Corner of the eye	My mind's gone blank
Under the eye	It's normal to go blank and will pass
Under the nose	Other people can do this, not me
Chin	It's normal to worry like this
Collarbone	The page is swimming before my eyes
Side of body	I'll feel better soon

Aspects worth considering well before the exam:

***Even though I feel less capable than others and I first felt like this when I realised I couldn't run as fast as my brother]...***

***Even though I'm frightened of the examiner because I project [my old geography teacher who always tried to catch me out]...***

***Even though I feel I have to surpass myself [and getting A in my last exam means I must get at least A or A\* in the next one]...***

***Even though I've never done well in exams, for instance [I failed GCSE physics]***

***Even though I've been frightened of authority ever since [my step-father hit me]...***

Consider specific incidents in your life which may have caused these thought patterns, and take the sting out of each incident using EFT.

## I CAN'T SLEEP (MIND-TAPPING)

In the dead of night you may be too tired to move your hand. So just visualise the tapping points instead: this can be very effective. I suggest simple, repetitive sentences, as you won't be feeling creative! Visualisation can be so fast that might not want to use a phrase on every point – so here's how you could proceed.

<b><i>Even though I'm going to risk stopping thinking about my work now, I deeply and completely accept, love and forgive myself.</i></b>	
Top of the head	Stopping thinking about my work
Eyebrow	
Corner of the eye	
Under the eye	Loving sleep
Under the nose	
Chin	Resisting sleep
Collarbone	
Side of body	

Keep repeating this protocol, even if you lose track, until you fall asleep.

Aspects:

**Even though I'm frightened of letting go because [once I was slack in my revision and I failed my chemistry test]...**

**Even though I've used work as an escape ever since [my divorce]...**

**Even though when I was young [my boarding school] made me work overtime...**

Addressing your study worries during the day with EFT will help you sleep better at night.

## **HANDLING CRISIS (HAND POINTS)**

There are times on your course when people may challenge you in ways that you find upsetting. Perhaps you feel a teacher is tearing your work to pieces. Maybe you're in a difficult tutorial and your emotions are getting the better of you. With EFT, you can think more clearly.

You can do discreet emergency EFT even face to face with that person. You already know about Touch and Breathe (TAB). Another discreet way is to apply regular pressure to the points with one thumb or one index finger rather than doing outright tapping.

If your hands are concealed, you can tap, TAB or press your hand points. You should get a result. Here's how:

Hold your hands loosely together and 'tap', TAB or press the Karate Chop point and think:

### ***Even though I'm getting upset...***

If you're in a 'live' situation, you don't need to say any more than the affirmation of love, since you are totally tuned in to the problem. So just keep 'tapping' all your hand points, until you're calm.

### ***Add four wrist points***

To compensate for missing out body points, you can add two wrist points on both arms – four in total.

The **first point** is located on the inside of your wrist. It's where a woman would apply perfume, three finger widths below the crease separating your wrist from your hand. You can tap it with the flat of two fingers, or more discreetly, use the whole thumb of your other hand to apply pressure.

The **second point** is on the same area but on the upperside, where your watch face presses on your wrist.

Do this on **both** wrists.

Aspects that you may wish to address later:

***Even though I feel scared of confronting [my supervisor]...***

***Even though I feel envious of the attention s/he gives others such as [when s/he praised John's presentation but not mine]...***

***Even though I feel trapped, like when [my mother shouted at me on my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday]...***

***Even though I feel guilty despite being innocent, and I've felt that way ever since [my parents divorced and I thought it was all my fault]***

## I FEAR PUBLIC SPEAKING (CHOICES METHOD)

This protocol describes fearing taking part in seminars, but you can also adapt it for an oral exam.

It uses the 'Choices' form of EFT. This form adapts well to any phobia or internal conflict that you want to resolve. 'Choices' balances a negative with a positive over three rounds of tapping. It involves three stages, so for the sake of economy you may wish to combine it with the Short Form EFT which leaves out hand points.

***Even though I have this fear of public speaking, I choose to contribute and trust I'll be ok.***

Round one focuses on the first, negative aspects:

Top of the head	I'm frightened
Eyebrow	I don't have anything interesting to say
Corner of the eye	Other people speak so eloquently
Under the eye	Not me
Under the nose	I fluff my words
Chin	I make a fool of myself
Collarbone	I try and think of things to say
Side of body	But others beat me to it

Your second round now can focus on the positive choice:

Top of the head	I choose to trust
Eyebrow	I prefer to take a risk
Corner of the eye	I choose to give it a go
Under the eye	I trust I'll be OK

Under the nose	I choose to trust in my skill
Chin	I trust that I have the ability
Collarbone	I choose to take part
Side of body	I choose to speak out

Your third, last round alternates the positive with the negative, always ending on a positive:

Top of the head	I'm frightened
Eyebrow	I choose to trust
Corner of the eye	I have nothing to say
Under the eye	I prefer to try
Under the nose	I'll look stupid
Chin	I choose to take the risk
Collarbone	They've all beaten me to it
Side of body	I choose to give myself a chance

Aspects:

***Even though I feel awkward in this group because I'm the only [mature student]***

***Even though I was [bullied in 6<sup>th</sup> Form]...***

***Even though I feel pressured to impress people and one example that springs to mind is when [I felt awkward at a party when I was young and overcompensated by boring everyone with magic tricks]...***

***Even though I feel let down by the other members of this group and this is because [last time they showed no interest in my contribution]...***

## **I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ESSAY CRISIS (TRAUMA ALGORITHM)**

Essays often produce high anxiety. Maybe today you don't want to look at your essay because yesterday you tried unsuccessfully to get it started. Maybe you spent the whole day trying to plan it, and the plan just fell apart, leaving you totally discouraged. The trauma of yesterday is putting you off working today.

When people are in a negative frame of mind, they don't always feel like tapping. This protocol allows you to skip the tapping and read a 'code' instead. A code is just a short-cut: instead of tapping, you read the names of points following a particular sequence, or 'algorithm'. Many people find that they get a result this way, benefiting as if the points had been physically tapped.

You can still tap the algorithm out if you prefer to stay 'hands-on'. But if you'd like to try 'encoding' your body, simply touch each point on your body while saying the name of each point below. The algorithm ends with the Gamut Procedure, so familiarise yourself with this too before you start (see page 28).

When you've done that, you can start:

**Even though I feel discouraged today, because yesterday was so traumatic and I still haven't got any further in my essay...**

Now tap or read the following Trauma algorithm:

**Under the eye, Little finger, Eyebrow, Middle finger, Eyebrow, Index finger, Under the eye, Karate Chop point, Side of body, Chest, Gamut Procedure.**

Repeat as often as necessary.

If you find this algorithm successful, you can run it through all past academic traumas in order to dissolve their current impact on your studies.

## For more information

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**www.emofree.com:** this generous website is run by Gary Craig, the founder of EFT. I recommend subscribing to his free newsletter.

**www.youtube.com:** Type in a search for 'EFT' to see video demonstrations of the technique by EFT enthusiasts.

## About Eileen Tracy

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Eileen Tracy ([www.eileentracy.co.uk](http://www.eileentracy.co.uk)) works with students, in the UK and internationally, in person or by telephone and email. She offers EFT and teaches study skills developed in her own exam preparation at Oxford University. She writes for the national press on education and parenting, and appears regularly on radio and television.

## Other works by the author

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- **The Student's Guide to Exam Success (Open University Press)**
- **The Quick and Easy Guide to How to Stop Panicking and Start Learning at School and at University**
- **The Quick and Easy Guide to Surviving Revision and Exams at School**
- **The Quick and Easy Guide to a Better University Brain**
- **The Quick and Easy Guide to Understanding Question Instructions in Assignments and Exams**

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