

Tapping Tale

From Julie Perry

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'Marie' aged 50 had come for counselling to help with her depression. She told me how she had had an accident at work three years ago and had seriously injured her back and consequently had to leave work as an ambulance driver. She had had loved the job, the daily challenges and pleasure in being part of a team, and it had been terribly hard to adjust to the shock of the accident, the fight for compensation and the huge loss of her role. A year later she had a further blow when she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

When I first saw her she looked so unhappy. She told me how low in mood she felt, how it was really hard to concentrate, talking to others was difficult and walking was painful, She didn't want to meet people, and just spent her days sitting in the house with nothing to do, Her partner was supportive but she didn't know how long this would last as she knew she was often really grumpy and irritable.

In the first two counselling sessions she told me her story, and I listened feeling so sad for how her busy life and her hopes for the future had been so cruelly taken away. I also demonstrated how EFT worked and explained how it might help to give her more control over all the many negative emotions she was feeling.

At the start of the third session she arrived in terrible pain in legs, explaining that Parkinson's often had this effect on her. She could barely get upstairs to the counselling room and once she had sat down she looked in agony so I knew I needed to tap on her leg pain before we could begin talking about anything else. In truth, I wasn't feeling very confident about tapping on pain that was linked to Parkinson's as it was something I didn't know much about. But I knew I had shown a lot of clients how to use EFT to tap away their pains and I knew it wouldn't make things worse.

I used the 'colour of pain' ideas developed by Paul Lynch as I have used this successfully on a number of occasions.

I asked Marie to describe her leg pain in detail and then scale its intensity. She unhesitatingly scored it at a 10 We tapped as follows:

'Even though I have this shooting, red, agonizing pain in my legs bigger than a football, a pain of frustration, I am still a good person worthy of respect.'

First tapping round: 'this fiery, stinging red pain, this pain of frustration, big as a football, solid red pain, stinging pain....

Second round : I'm a good person worthy of respect and I choose to feel more at ease

This took about three minutes and then she scaled the pain at a level of 6. She was surprised it already felt better and she wanted to test it by standing up. She was amazed: 'I can stand up without it killing me' 'its definitely eased' 'its smaller'

We tapped the next round:

Even though I still have some of this stinging red pain etc etc
After one round she rated the pain at a 3. She was thrilled and I could see she felt so much more comfortable, the lines of pain in her face had gone. I encouraged her to continue tapping on

'This remaining pain' It had changed colour now and reduced in size so we tapped on this remaining yellow pain, size of a tennis ball..'

After two more rounds where I checked on the pains colour, its size and texture and the emotions attached to it she said:

'I can't believe its gone! its been agony for a week, I hate taking pain killers but I needed them and they didn't really help. Now its gone, that's amazing'.

This tapping was really a preliminary to the session! I wanted her to feel comfortable so could she focus on the issues that had been troubling her that week. She said 'well its so hard to concentrate on anything, I'm so fed up, I feel Parkinson's has taken me over and I have no control.' I said it sounds a bit like a monster. She agreed so readily that I asked her to describe the monster in some detail. 'Well its got cruel eyes and claws and a weird shape like a cartoon..' I then asked 'if you could put the monster in something to stop it hurting you where would you put it? She said 'in a box' 'a wooden box where I couldn't see it' . I asked her if the box had a lid, how big it was, what colour etc, I then asked where she would like to put the box and she said 'oh its ok here (in my counselling room) it can't get me.

We then tapped on 'even though the Parkinson' monster is trying to control me I choose to put it in a wooden box so I can't see it and it can't hurt me'. After one round she said 'well its in the box, it can't get out, it won't control me anymore'.

She visibly brightened, she laughed and remembered a quote from someone on the Parkinson's website: 'I've got Parkinson's but it hasn't got me.' She said she was delighted to feel in control. She added 'I'm gobsmacked' I didn't think I'd get rid of the pain or feel I could control things in my life. I'm just gobsmacked! I thought I'd be coming to see you for ages and I didn't think it would help anyway.'

I told her I was amazed that things had shifted so quickly too. She laughed ' I am going to run down the road when I leave here!' This wasn't quite true she still walked carefully with the use of a stick but it was lovely to see her so excited and positive so different from the hunched, sad person who had arrived an hour ago.

I saw her again a week later. I was really hoping the improvement had stayed with her but I was wondering if there was so much distress and negative emotion that a load of new painful symptoms may have emerged.

She came in smiling cheerfully and had no problem with the stairs. She told me 'I just can't believe it. I expected the pain to return but it hasn't. When I think I might be stopped by Parkinson's from doing something I just say to myself that the monster is in a box at Julie's house and its going to stay there! I asked her if she wanted to do something with the box and she said no it was fine to leave it with me. She then told me ' I have been feeling happy for the first time in ages. I'd forgotten what that felt like. Also I can talk to people again. I saw the man who helps me with gardening this morning. I usually can't think of anything to talk about but I chatted away to him. I've been cooking and reading, things I thought I would never do again. I just can't believe it. In fact I couldn't think why I was coming today, I've got nothing I want or need to talk about!

I told her I was amazed and thrilled too. We agreed to leave things and she could come back when/if the next issue arose.

She hasn't needed further appointments. I talked to her on the phone a month later and she said she was still doing well.

Julie Perry