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This article first appeared on Gary Craigs Emofree site

In the course of my EFT training and workshop experiences I often come across people who have been plugging away at their own traumas alone, never thinking about spending some time working with an EFT coach or therapist, believing they should do it alone. I have always found it invaluable to work with other therapists as I cannot often get to the places I need to go to alone. This example highlights to me how powerful and effective it can be to spend a little time with someone you feel comfortable with when you get stuck in a painful place.

I got an email from an woman who had read some of my articles on this site. She has a complex childhood history which holds similarities to mine and although she was not aware of this, she had some sense instinctively that I was the right person to work with.

She told me she had been deeply distressed by events that week and had developed a very sore throat. She is very experienced with using EFT for herself but in this case tapping had brought little relief apart from the insight that this may be related somehow to a tonsillectomy when she was seven. She felt stuck and desperate and had spent two days crying like a small child with no real idea why.

She told me some of the events that had upset her. A close friend who was an artist had invited her to an exhibition of his as a guest. She was really looking forward to it and when she arrived she was met by someone asking her what it felt like to be on canvas. She had no idea what this meant, but as her friend had used her as a model in the past was intrigued to see what he had done. She was horrified to discover he had painted a picture in a style similar to ‘The Scream’ by Munch and below it was her name. Everyone who knew her assumed it was her but when she tackled him about it he told her it wasn’t her. She knew he was lying and was furious with him and wanted to end their friendship, although it had been a valued and supportive relationship. She realized her response was over the top but her feelings ran deep.

As she talked she remembered that during a conversation with the artist’s wife, she had felt like she had been ‘had’ by the throat.

I asked her about the memories of the tonsillectomy since she already had made the connection. She remembered feeling she had been forced to have her tonsils out, it was the fashion at the time and even then she felt she had a sense of outrage about it. There was a nurse who was nasty to her and told her she was very spoiled and there had been little sympathy or support. At this point it felt like she was relating the facts to me, as can often happen at first, we can tell the story but are not connecting with the emotion at all.

I asked her to describe her sore throat to me. She said it was very sore, but just talking about what had happened had brought it from an 8 to a 5. She saw a cave with two boulders. The boulders were her tonsils; there was a blue one which was ok and a red one, the missing tonsil which was not ok. I remarked that this was like a ‘phantom’ tonsil pain and she agreed. We tapped.

Even though my throat feels like a cave with a blue boulder and a red boulder and the red boulder is really not ok and I am not sure why...

Even though there is steam or energy coming from the red boulder...

Even though the boulder is smaller now, I am looking down on it, I feel in control now, its over, I survived whatever this boulder means...

Even though it looks like a small bump on a 3d map...

I now asked her to name the hospital experience as a movie. She called it the “nasty nurse horror movie.”

Even though I have this nasty nurse horror show... It proved to be difficult now to think about looking at the movie, she had now accessed the emotions. She had an intensity of about 7 on a scale of 0 to 10. After tapping it became easier to look at and to access the details and memories and emotion.

Even though I am so angry, this just wasn't necessary...

Even though they said I had to be a good girl, go along with it, do as you are told...

Even though they turned me over and stuck the needle in and they lied to me, they said it wouldn't hurt and it did...

Even though a nurse caught me out of bed and said 'Get back to bed you spoiled girl'...

Even though mum called me a spoiled girl and the nurse said it too so it must be true, I am bad, I am spoiled, it's my fault...

She realised at this point there had always been a connection between continually being told she was ‘spoiled’ (overindulged) and being a spoiled or ‘ruined’ person. I asked her to recheck the movie and it had changed. The nurse was laughing, kind and playful, she knew the little girl was afraid and was putting her at ease. All the intensity of emotion was gone round this incident and her throat was feeling much easier. I tested by rechecking all the statements and feelings and everything was resolved

I asked her now to think about what had happened during the week and we tapped on some specific feelings. We called the whole incident “Judy and Jim’s stupid behaviour” and did an initial round of tapping on this.

Even though I want to knock his block of, he is so stupid he didn't see how much it would hurt me, and he lied to me...

Even though I don't want to talk to her, I feeling ambushed. I don't like her, I am not clear where my life is going and she keeps asking me Why don't you do this, or this or this...

Even though I was feeling like a 7 year old with no control, crying endlessly, afraid, vulnerable, attacked, that was then and this is now, I am not seven years old anymore, I have better resources now...

All the intensity had come right down and we spent some time constructing a choice that had meaning for her and it represents the journey she is on at the moment.

Even though I felt desperately hurt and unsafe last week I choose to know that I can become inspired from a safe and courageous space.

She reported that her throat felt much better and that she could now resume her relationship with her friend and could imagine being with him. She later reported that her sore throat was completely better and this was her comment.

“Just to say a big thank you for being willing to fit me in at short notice, I really really appreciated that, and of course the actual session itself was very helpful and very revealing ... as well as giving me more access to how my child self perceives things I also felt very safe working with you. Having a safe pair of hands to 'hold the space' one works with traumatic memories is powerful medicine.”