

Test, Rehearse, Reality

Article One

Traditionally it has been the expectation of therapy that it will be long drawn out and painful and that results will emerge slowly and delicately. Well EFT changes all of that: we soon learn to expect results in each session and results that are robust and lasting. So unlike conventional therapy, testing and verifying results is central to our use of EFT and key to developing our skill and craft.

Watching Gary at work on his excellent DVDs you see how he tests and tests and tests using anything he can find to check progress whether it be a thought, a pain, a movement or a memory. In this series I'd like to get under the skin of testing for you and share my three stage testing process: T then T-R-R or Tapping, Test, Rehearse, Reality.

Stage One: The "End at the Start" Test

Right from the start when someone is first describing the problem or their reasons for seeking help, I am looking for how we will test our success.

Sometimes we get a feeling that doesn't help us and doesn't want to go away. Susan came to me saying "I keep getting this feeling of dread in my stomach". Now she had already told me where she felt the feeling, otherwise that would have been my first question. The feeling was not present in the quiet comfort of my consulting room so I asked her "What would you have to think about to feel that feeling now?" She replied that thinking about her new boss at work would bring on the feeling. So I asked her to think about the boss and tell me how strong the feeling became – she reached a 7 easily. I ask her to save the picture and sound track of what she thought about as we would be coming back to it later.

Now what we have done here is to set up a ready made test that we can return to after doing EFT so that both of us can know that something has changed. We have these elements:

- What she has to think about
- The feeling that those thoughts generate
- Where she feels it
- And how strong it is before EFT

So we then get to tapping and our session uncovers various specific aspects which clear one by one; her boss's condescending tone; her intense eyes and habit of drumming her finger nails on the desk. After a few rounds of tapping I ask what the dread reminds her of and a core issue emerges of "Its got to be now" and a memory of demands made by an unkindly senior nurse who unfairly blamed her for a delay that cost a life when she was a teenage trainee. We used the Movie Technique on the events of that day and Susan found a more balanced perspective, realising that she herself was not at fault.

But this article is not about the use of the EFT techniques its about testing. So having outlined how we start I will skip to how we end which is by going back to where we started. We have a ready made test because we set it up at the beginning. I ask her to think about what she thought about when I first asked her to feel the dread, the exact pictures and sound track. As she does I point to her stomach and ask "what's happening there now when you think about that?" She smiles and tells me that her new boss has really useful and relevant experience in areas where she is keen to learn. Oh and yes her stomach is calm now, there is no dread, it's a zero and has been replaced by a keen curiosity.

I then get a little provocative by mentioning her boss's need for urgency and "Its got to be now!" trying to push the buttons of her old response but all I get is "I can do what I can do and if she's putting pressure on herself then that's her stuff." Susan has passed the "End at the Start" test with flying colours.

With a physical symptom tests are generally obvious: the intensity of pain; or the degree of physical movement; or the appearance of a symptom. The principle is the same though, find your test at the start and wherever your tapping session leads you, return to where you started and notice what has changed.

Article Two

Stage Two: Rehearsal

Very often when the "End at the Start" test gets the result we are looking for it's a great idea to follow with a thorough rehearsal to take the change into the future and ensure that we keep the change. We know that our application of EFT Techniques has cleared the obvious aspects and maybe even a core issue – so now its time to kick the tires. Rehearsal is a fantastic way to end a session because it gives the person an experience of feeling, thinking and behaving differently in the safety of their imagination

thus creating confidence. When we can do something in our imagination we are more prepared for doing it in reality. And, for the therapist, rehearsal is a further check for any un-cleared aspects and a verification of completeness.

With Susan (see article one) after establishing that her stomach was now calm in response to the thoughts that had previously provoked dread, I ask her to close her eyes and then offer her my rehearsal questions, slowly and with generous time between each.

"Now, let your mind wander into the future and give you experiences that let you know how you are different?"

"And what has changed?"

"And what can you do now that you couldn't do before?"

"And what don't you need to do now that you did do before?"

"And do you like yourself more?"

Some people will answer these questions aloud and others simply relax into their inner experience. It doesn't matter, you can just leave them to it unless the questions provoke some un-cleared aspect of the original problem, in which case its back to more tapping and then test and rehearse again.

After the first round of rehearsal questions I might say "And now let your mind wander even further into the future.." and then I simply ask the same questions again.

When the change has been about a specific situation or behaviour such as flying or riding in an elevator (a lift for those of us speaking European English) then I will take a more directive approach to rehearsal.

Tom, an otherwise well balanced and practical engineer had once been stuck in a lift. Since that time he had developed severe claustrophobia, particularly in relation to lifts. Our "End at the Start" test had been seeing the doors closing which had previously given rise to increased heart rate and sweaty hands. After clearing several aspects and using the Movie Technique on the memory of being stuck he could now think about the doors closing without reacting.

So now we rehearse and I ask him to close his eyes and see a screen and to see himself on the screen walking towards the lifts in

a local hotel. I ask him to watch himself, press the button to call the lift, step in, see the doors close, watch himself as the lift ascends, see the doors open, step out. As I guide him through first seeing himself in this rehearsal I am watching closely for any sign of his previous response – he remains calm and I ask, referring to the Tom on the screen “How is he doing?” and get “Fine, he’s doing fine”.

Next I ask him to float into the screen and to see though his own eyes and feel his own feelings as he presses the call button for the lift and I talk him through it again and ask “And how are you doing?” “Fine, just fine” he says and he looks more relaxed and more confident.

So to recap, set up your test at the start, apply EFT and let the session go wherever it needs to, return to the starting point to test and then take them into a rehearsal of future experience.

Article Three

Stage Three: Reality Testing

The “End at the Start” test checks our work with EFT and Rehearsals build confidence, so now having passed those tests its time for stage three which is Reality Testing. Stages one and two have prepared the way to now face the actual problem situation or person more resourcefully and we should also have flushed out any un-cleared aspects that would require further EFT.

We want EFT to be tearless and certainly our reality testing is not like exposure therapy where a person is taken to or beyond the limits of their fear. I don’t want anyone to try a reality test until they feel confident to do so without getting upset. We don’t want them simply to be able to cope with the problem: we want them to be completely free of the problem, able to think clearly and act resourcefully. Also I would like to be confident that we have found and cleared all aspects of the old problem. The reason for this is because the power of reality is twenty times the power of imagination when it comes to pressing an old button or triggering a fear. You will have seen on the DVDs how Gary persists on getting to zero and won’t just let it go at a one or two. Why? Well its simple maths: when reality multiplies one by twenty we get twenty whereas multiplying zero by twenty is still zero.

Sometimes the reality test is obvious and immediate:

- I have brought in a jam jar of spiders;
- or shut claustrophobics in the loo

- sent previous height phobics out onto the balcony
- handed the phone to previously tongue tied sales people to make a cold call
- and had a divorcing woman read the letters from her husband's lawyer aloud.

Sometimes the test is less obvious and we can be searching for a solution. The easy way out is to ask the person sitting in front of you "how could you test this so that you can really know that the problem is a thing of the past?" They will know and asking that question already has the person taking their attention into places they have previously avoided at all costs. To respond they have to imagine themselves doing the test. I have had some delightful responses:

- I can call my sister's answer phone and listen to her voice;
- I'm going to go to the pub and stand at the bar and speak to whoever is there;
- I can go to the rescue centre and give a puppy a home;
- I can smile at my boss and ask after his children;
- I can write a CV and place it on a recruitment site;
- I can walk down the road where I was mugged;
- When I get home I will knock on my neighbour's door and tell her I am truly sorry;
- I can sit and do nothing but listen to the birdsong;
- I can leave the washing up in the sink until my husband does it.

Then all I have to do is to make sure they have a plan for doing the test which has a commitment in time and not too much space for prevarication. If necessary I rehearse them in doing the reality test and if that brings up any doubt, anxiety or thoughts of avoidance then we tap for that. I ask them to e-mail me when they have done the test so that I can congratulate them.

So that is the three stage testing process and how do you remember? Well, that's simple its T-T-R-R or Tapping, Test, Rehearse, Reality.

Gwyneth Moss

www.emotional-health.co.uk
www.eftevents.com