

Tapping for Kids

by Shelley Malka

When we tap on ourselves with the intention to benefit someone else, this is called Surrogate Tapping. I recently took Gwyneth's workshop on Tapping for Animals, and it struck me how similar this process could be for work with little kids. Gwyneth's point was that animals are much simpler than people, with much less built-in resistance to change. They are just waiting to receive our love without fighting it, as we adults often do. It struck me that children are pretty much the same and I decided to adopt for tapping for kids the 3 part structure Gwyneth has developed: Talk About, Talk To, Talk As and that she uses for animals.

The way I understand it, surrogate tapping is less about somehow magically helping the child (although that might happen too), and more about EFT helping us discover what's going on in the child's primary relationships that either causes or exacerbates the child's problem. Surrogate tapping may work also because the surrogate herself shifts, which allows the child to shift, too.

Lucy called me because she wanted to help her 8 year old granddaughter, Michelle who had a problem with hitting and screaming at her brothers and sisters, and this was causing a lot of disruption in the family. Michelle's mother, Sarah was overwhelmed by household and work responsibilities and Lucy felt she'd like to help the family by giving surrogate tapping a go.

I didn't ask Lucy for any further details, but immediately started tapping with Stage One: **Talk About**, allowing Lucy to tell me all about her granddaughter via the tapping. This was a phone session and at this point we both tapped on ourselves. I guided her with my language, checking all the time if my statements "landed" with her. You will notice how simple, almost child-like the language is in this session.

"Even though Michelle does a lot of hitting a shouting, I, her grandma, deeply and profoundly accept myself." I wanted to balance Michelle's problem with some positive statement that Lucy could relate to, so I suggested, "Even though Michelle hits and shouts a lot, she's a lovely little girl anyway." Lucy repeated the statement: "Even though Michelle hits and shouts a lot, I love that little girl anyway." Lucy had heard something different! This is never coincidental, and we now had a positive affirmation that came straight from Lucy's heart.

We begin tapping around the points on the various Aspects, still in **Talk About:**

"Michelle can't express her emotions"
"she has a hard time with words"
"She's very unpredictable"
"At times she can be so sweet and nice"
"And then suddenly she just lashes out"
"And I have no idea why....nobody has any idea why"

I ask Lucy what emotion she's feeling about all of this, and she says it makes her "nervous." This is a 9 on the scale, so we say, "Even though Michelle's behavior makes me nervous, I'd like to help her and I love that little girl anyway."

More Aspects emerge as reminder phrases during the Sequence:

"I'm a little scared of Michelle...she makes me so nervous"
"We can't let her hold the baby because we never know what she's going to do from one moment to the next."
"We just don't know how she's going to react"
"She has lots of issues and disrupts the family"

Then Lucy says, "When Michelle's mother "believes in her" Michelle is "better". So we tap a round on this. I want to "imprint" the notion that she came up with: kids often "do better," automatically, when the significant adults in their lives are more positive towards them. You may notice that I am still not asking for specifics. Our tapping sequences are still quite general; still in **Talk About**.

Then I ask when all of this started with Michelle.
"I'm not sure," Lucy says, "but it seems to me, 5 years ago when the baby, Daniel, was born. Maybe she needed love or attention, I don't know, but she was very contrary around the time after he was born".

So now we have a specific event or core issue. I feel Lucy is ready for stage two: **Talk To**. I introduce a tapping bear – a stuffed toy to represent Michelle. (Thanks to Pat Carrington and Linda Wood who first popularized this idea). I look at the bear and start tapping on *him*, using Lucy's words – as if talking to Michelle:

"Michelle, even though it seems to me that all this started after Daniel, your brother, was born, I really love you, little girl."

"Even though you started hitting and screaming when Daniel was born, and I don't know, but maybe you needed love or attention, I really love you, little girl, anyway."

I can hear tears in Lucy's voice as we tap the sequence, allowing Lucy to bring up all the Aspects about that time, as she "talks to" Michelle. When she gets stuck, I allow my intuition to flow, adding to the picture, as long as that 'lands' with Lucy:

"Michelle, since Daniel was born you've been having a really hard time"

"You didn't know how to express your emotions"

"You were only 3 years old and Daniel came along and things got hard for you"

"Maybe you needed love or attention"

"And maybe you felt you weren't getting it."

"And you didn't know how to say how sad that made you"

"And maybe that made you mad"

"And you didn't know how to say it."

"You wanted to be a good little girl"

"But sometimes it all got too much for you and you started hitting and screaming"

"And you made everybody nervous, especially me"

"And all of this started when Daniel was born"

"And nobody knew"

"And you didn't have the words to tell anybody"

"And you still don't"

I can hear how emotional Lucy has become on the other side of the telephone. **Talk To** is more personal and direct than **Talk About**, offering a window into the child's world. We simply keep tapping, allowing stream of consciousness to flow, because I sense that this is what she - and Michelle - and perhaps the whole family need.

I say, "Maybe, Michelle, you felt Daniel took the love you were getting." We tap a whole lot on this because these words are highly charged for Lucy. "You needed love and attention, and maybe you didn't get it, and your feelings built up. You so much wanted the love back, and you didn't know how to express it. You had no words, you were never good with words, you started hitting and screaming, and that got you attention....it was negative attention... but negative attention ...is better than nothing."

We pause for a bit, and Grandma is very sad because it's clear to her now that Michelle is feeling all of this. She didn't know that

before, but it "seems right." And now she realizes other family dynamics: "So that is why Daniel is always irritated around Michelle," she says. "He's a very good child, but she makes him so tense with her screaming. He fears her next move because it can end up in his direction. Now I understand why all of this happens."

We tap this "in" for a while and then I say, "And what I really want to say to you, Michelle, is....." I let her finish the sentence. She repeats, crying, "I really love you, little girl, no matter what." This message of unconditional love clearly needs to be reiterated.

I feel now that Lucy is ready for Stage 3: **Talk As**. I keep tapping on the bear, leading her through the process "as Michelle," repeating all we now "know" about this little girl that we didn't know before.

"I'm Michelle and I hit and scream"
"I don't like doing this but I can't help myself"
"It started when Daniel was born"
"He got all the love I used to get"
"The baby became more important than me"
"I needed to know I was still ok"
"I needed to know I was still loved"
"And I didn't know how to say all that"
"I wasn't good with words"
"I didn't know how to get attention"
"So I started screaming and hitting"
"That got me attention"
"Hitting and screaming worked"
"So I kept on hitting and screaming"
"But now no one is happy "
"And it's all my fault"
"But I know that Grandma loves me anyway no matter what!"

Grandma feels much calmer after this process, more relaxed altogether, more understanding of Michelle. **Talk As** has allowed her to experience Michelle's world from the inside, as it were. Lucy feels as if she truly "knows" Michelle now and understands her problem at a deeper level.

We tap and say, "All this love for Michelle that I'm feeling right now....I want to share it with her....to give it to her..."

I ask her to imagine being with Michelle and to notice how Michelle is taking all of this.

"Better," she says.

I hear hesitation in her voice so I ask if Michelle can receive Grandma's love now. She says, a little bit.

So we do more tapping for Michelle: "... you can only take a little of my love, not too much, because you're not used to it...you're used to feeling alone and unloved...so I'm going to give you little bits of my love, just enough that you can take comfortably....not too much, just enough..."

Now, I ask her to imagine being with Michelle again and she says Michelle is more comfortable and is taking those bits of her love, slowly. And she will continue giving Michelle her love, bit by bit, until Michelle is all filled up with her love, piece by little piece. So that Michelle can feel loved again and doesn't have to hit and scream anymore to get attention.

I suggest to Lucy to share the events of this session with Sarah, Michelle's mom. She agrees to tap with Sarah in much the same way so that Sarah, too, can better understand her own daughter and can pass on this love that Grandma has begun to communicate today.

Did the surrogate tapping "work"? I don't know the answer to this yet. But I do know that if expressing love is hard for this family, because Grandma can make this shift from "nervousness" and separation from her grandchild to connection and love, and since she intends to share this with her own daughter, the healing process has begun.