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This article first appeared on Gary Craigs Emofree site

This client had had one session of EFT with me which had happened as she started talking about her food difficulties. She wanted Kinesiology (muscle testing) for food sensitivities and made it clear she wanted no emotional work as she was seeing a therapist for suspected child abuse issues.

However, she soon relaxed into the experience - and our subsequent tapping session culminated with a lovely vision of her forgiving and accepting her inner child, who until now she had hated and despised. She also said she had more insights and releases from 1½ hours of EFT than in 14 months of regular psychotherapy. Although it was clear that the therapy had helped, she often felt traumatised for weeks after a conventional session and found them very, very hard.

However, she was receiving free psychotherapy on her health plan at this point, and felt a responsibility to continue. I told her that was fine, but if she felt she wanted more EFT sometime that I would be happy to help. She later phoned to say the psychotherapy sessions were now proving too traumatic, she was being asked to revisit a memory of what she believed was rape by her father. She was sure of the rape, not of the perpetrator, but her logic told her it could be no one else.

In conventional psychotherapy, the memory wasn't clearing at all and she was really suffering with negativity, self-loathing and flashbacks. I asked her if she had noted benefits from her last EFT session, and she reported a total absence of nightmares and if she woke up she was in a normal sleeping position, not curled in a tight fetal position which would have been normal previously. Since we had worked on an attack which had happened in the night, that was a reasonable result.

I started asking how she was feeling, ready to do some preparation about being nervous about the session. I did not want to lead her into the memory she was struggling with straight away - and to be honest I was really unsure where to start. She said that she had a headache, like a migraine, sore shoulders, sore neck, indicating a band round her upper body. I asked her to take a deep breath and it was hard for her.

I asked her to visualise what was happening in her chest, she saw a red colour but had no idea what it meant, or what she was feeling. She wanted the colour to be yellow not red.

*Even though I have this red colour when I want to be yellow, I don't know what it is, I don't know what it means...*

*This is a familiar feeling, it's a feeling I need to control to keep down, sometimes it's overwhelming and I force it down.*

I asked her if she could imagine life without the feeling. She said, "No, I have had it all my life, I cannot imagine life without this feeling, I wouldn't know who I am."

*Even though I can't let this feeling go, I won't know who I am...*

*Even though I can't let go of this feeling, it keeps me safe, without it I might be outrageous and angry, that would be terrible, I can't be angry... I asked her what might happen. Even though I am frightened I might be so angry I could kill someone...*

So far I had not checked her level of intensity on a scale of 0 to 10, as things were changing quickly and it didn't feel appropriate to check, but I checked here. I asked her to guess how high was this anger before we tapped - she said 10 out of 10, but now it was 4 out of 10.

On questioning she said she was angry with her mum, not her dad, and she didn't understand it and wanted to be angry with her dad. We tapped for that,

*Even though I am angry with my mum and that's confusing, why am I angry with her, I should be angry with him, he did the bad thing...*

She said she couldn't be angry as then it would be proof he did it and she really didn't want to know he had done it.

*Even though I can't be angry with him because if I am it would be true, he did do it, and it wouldn't be my fault. I would rather think it's my fault. I don't want to know he did it.*

When she said out loud, "It's my fault," it was 5 out of 10 for being true. I asked her what she would choose instead. She said she would choose to have control over whether she was angry or not, and to know it was not ... and could not be her fault. We tapped for that choice.

She was upset now and sobbed saying she knew he did something bad and she hated him for that but she loved him and needed him. *Even though I love dad and I hate this bad thing he did and hate that he did it to me... She started to feel like she was choking and had pain and pressure pushing down on her. Even though I have this choking feeling, this pressure feeling...*

The feeling lessened considerably and she became calmer but she said, "I can't take control, I can't express anger ... I may mess up ... and he will be right. If I mess up I will prove him right and I can't let that happen. He said I would screw everything up, I needed him, I wouldn't know what to do without him."

We tapped on that. *Even though I can't have choices, can't take control, I may make a wrong decision and mess up and then he would be right and I can't let him be right ... I can't take that risk...*

She now started laughing and said what a ridiculous thing to say. I asked her how she felt about expressing anger now and her intensity went up, she felt frightened. We tapped for this and again she came back to being frightened of being angry, as that would mean her dad really did do something and that would prove he didn't love her at all and she needed him to love her.

We tapped for that and she realised she was sad. We tapped on this sadness and I asked for whom she was sad, and she said "for him and me." We tapped,

*Even though dad was too messed up, he did a bad, bad thing to me, I wish he hadn't done it, I wish it wasn't true, I wish he could have loved me, I am sad for him, I am sad for me...*

*Even though dad did this bad thing to me and I don't know why ... why me ... I choose to know IT WASN'T MY FAULT.*

When she said out loud, "It's my fault," it was 0 out of 10 for being true. We tapped, *Even though I need dad to love me ... to know I am lovable ... and to love and to know I am acceptable...*

When she said out loud, "I can only know I am lovable if dad loves me," it was 0 out of 10 for being true. We tapped, *Even though dad was wrong, there was something wrong with him, that's why he couldn't love me, it was his problem not mine ... I don't have to have him love me ... my being able to love is not dependant on dad loving me...*

Her level of intensity on the phrase, "Dad didn't love me," was 0 out of 10. I asked her to recheck her chest and it was glowing ... breathing was easier, and her headache, and all back and shoulder pain was gone. She felt calm now and hoped to continue to process the trauma memory but reported that it was already feeling less intense. She also said it would be her last appointment with her regular psychotherapy, as she preferred the gentleness of EFT.

She could not believe she was coming away feeling better than when she came in. I felt sad for her that this had been her experience of therapy so far. She also told me she clearly saw she had been holding onto anger that her mum had not been there, had never protected her or made her feel safe that it would be OK to tell someone what was happening.

I showed her the missing mother syndrome website on my laptop and the list of feelings common to people who felt their mothers were emotionally unavailable. She recognised all the feelings and wept with relief that others have experienced the same feelings. She expressed readiness to begin dealing with the feelings and confident she could do so with EFT.

When she returned to her therapist he told her he felt unable to work on the issue and that he felt there must be something blocking her, which meant she was unwilling to process the memory. I think we proved that to be true. He suggested she write a letter to her father.

She found this interesting. She had done this before and her letters were, "Did you do this?" But this changed now to "Why did you do this?" She could also think, "Dad didn't love," me with no level of intensity.

She was aware that the original memory was not so disturbing - without having actually worked on it yet with EFT.