

Emotional Freedom From Stress

By CJ Puotinen

Most patients who visit urologists recite their symptoms, undergo lab tests, and receive a prescription or two. Those visiting Los Angeles urologist Eric Robins, M.D., often get something extra—a lesson in tapping key acupuncture points. To their surprise, this simple addition to conventional therapy clears up recurring infections, chronic pain, and other symptoms. The procedure is called Emotional Freedom Techniques, or EFT, and Dr. Robins says it strengthens his patients' immune systems, improves their overall health, and reduces stress and anxiety.

“Whenever someone has a chronic or recurring problem,” he explains, “I ask about anything, including emotional issues, that might affect the condition. Most physicians shy away from asking personal questions because it’s like opening a Pandora’s box—suddenly you have a dozen problems instead of just one. But I’m convinced that’s where the answers are.”

Not only do physicians avoid such personal conversations, he laments, but so do most psychiatrists. “Psychiatrists are primarily interested in psychopharmacology these days. Most don’t get involved with the patient’s past traumas. Instead, they treat abnormalities in the patient’s brain chemistry. I think that’s treating the effect, not the cause.”

In most medical practices, says Dr. Robins, the largest single expense is the cost of prescription drugs. “We’re not going to become a healthier nation by taking more drugs,” he says. “I’m convinced that more than 80 or 85 percent of our illnesses are simply the result of how we store and process stress. It’s a well-known fact that most patients going to a primary care physician’s office have functional medical problems, which means they have genuine symptoms, but their exams, lab tests, and x-rays can’t find anything wrong. These people aren’t crazy, they’re perfectly sane, but their symptoms are not the result of an external cause. They’re the result of how they hold stress in their bodies, and stored stress interferes with their energy flow. This contributes to everything from back pain and arthritis to bladder infections and susceptibility to colds and flu.”

Dr. Robins encourages patients to look beyond their lab test results. “The best advice I can give any patient,” he says, “is to go beyond the medical diagnosis and ask what stresses, traumas, and issues might be interfering with their health and well-being.”

He did this in January 2005 when a 53-year-old woman who underwent knee replacement surgery developed urinary retention requiring a Foley catheter. Despite numerous attempts to remove it in the three months that followed, the patient was unable to void urine on her own.

Because the catheter was beginning to erode her urethra, the patient was scheduled for surgery. But during her pre-op visit, Dr. Robins wondered if depression or other emotional factors might be interfering with the function of her bladder.

She answered that stress from the previous October, when her husband was hospitalized and almost died, might be a contributing factor. “Even though we were talking in a busy medical clinic with many distractions,” says Dr. Robins, “I taught her EFT and guided her through 10 minutes of tapping. We then filled the patient’s bladder with water, her catheter was removed, and she voided just fine. Five days later she was still doing well, making the surgery unnecessary. Her symptoms never returned.”

Dr. Robins is convinced that almost all functional and chronic disorders—including infections, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, migraine headaches, hypertension, and chronic fatigue syndrome—are caused by stress. “I’ve found EFT to be particularly effective in clearing the physical manifestations of stress and past traumas,” he says. “It’s the perfect complement to conventional medicine. Again and again I find that patients with chronic pain have unresolved emotional issues or anger that’s tied to past traumas. Stress and negative emotions aren’t just in our heads, they are stored in our bodies, often in skeletal or smooth muscles. It’s hard for blood to flow through chronically tensed muscles.”

This model, he explains, agrees with the theories of John Sarno, M.D., professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at New York University in New York City and author of the best-selling *Healing Back Pain: The Mind-Body Connection* and other books. Dr. Sarno treats patients not with drugs or surgery but with anger management.

“He sees some of the worse chronic pain patients in the world,” says Dr. Robins. “Most have been in pain for 10 to 30 years despite surgeries, epidural injections, and years of physical therapy. He shows them that, despite what they’ve been told, their herniated disc, degenerative disc disease, osteoarthritis, or old injury is not the cause of their pain. If you examine any cross-section of the public, you’ll find many people who have even worse conditions, yet they are completely free from pain. You can see herniated discs, osteoarthritis, and similar problems in their x-rays and other tests, but they don’t have pain. Dr. Sarno teaches his patients that the true cause of their pain is anger and that when they let go of the anger, their pain will disappear. He consistently produces a cure rate that’s close to 70 percent in terms of pain and function, and an additional 15 percent are much improved.”

Dr. Robins considers EFT the most effective, fastest-acting anger management technique available. “Like most doctors, I’m always in a hurry,” he says. “If I can teach EFT to a patient in just a few minutes and completely resolve not only chronic symptoms but their underlying cause, that’s terrific. In fact, it’s phenomenal. Nothing in the pharmaceutical world comes close.”

Because it’s new, EFT is not yet familiar to most doctors and patients, but word is slowly spreading. Over 250,000 have downloaded the free training manual published by EFT founder Gary Craig at the official EFT website, www.emofree.com, and another 5,000 to 10,000 download it each month. Craig’s free online newsletter started with 20 subscribers in 1997 and has spread by word of mouth to 200,000. There are EFT practitioners in most countries, especially the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia,

New Zealand, Japan, and South America. Many are health care practitioners. At least 35 books featuring EFT have been published in the last 10 years, and Craig's instruction manual has been translated by volunteer practitioners into nine languages. The emofree.com website is now the sixth most actively visited natural health site in the world.

According to Craig, the underlying cause of every physical symptom and every negative emotion, including anger, is a block along one or more of the body's energy meridians, the same electrical pathways mapped thousands of years ago by Chinese physicians as they developed acupuncture. "You can remove energy blocks by tapping," he explains, "and by thinking about corresponding symptoms or conditions at the same time, you can remove those, too."

Author David Feinstein describes EFT in *The Promise of Energy Psychology: Revolutionary Tools for Dramatic Personal Change*. "EFT is a new technique," he says, "but it's based on methods that are at least 4,500 years old. Specific points on the skin can be stimulated for distinct neurological effects, and this principle can be used for helping to overcome a range of psychological problems. While the research supporting this approach is still in its early stages, reports of effective treatment from hundreds of therapists representing the spectrum of clinical orientations are provocative."

In addition to relieving pain and improving health, EFT can be an effective tool for treating fears, phobias, and anxiety. It has helped people lose weight, stop smoking, and give up addictive cravings. Many have used it to improve their memory, reading comprehension, grades, and test results. Some have even improved their golf game or other sports performance with EFT.

Can tapping with your fingertips on your face and torso really make a difference in your health and happiness?

"Don't laugh," says Dr. Robins. "I've seen it happen hundreds of times, with lasting, permanent results." Δ

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CJ Puotinen is the author of *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains* (Keats/McGraw-Hill) and books about holistic pet care, such as *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care* (Keats/McGraw-Hill) and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats* (Gramercy/Random House). Email: pethealthwriter@aol.com.

Recommended Resources

To learn about EFT, visit Gary Craig's official EFT website, www.emofree.com. You'll find a free training manual, hundreds of reports from practitioners about how they used EFT for specific conditions, online tutorials, inexpensive training DVDs, and referrals to EFT practitioners and classes around the world.

Additional information about EFT is available at a growing number of websites, including www.carollook.com, www.eftcoach.com, www.eftdownunder.com, www.eftupdate.com, www.mercola.com, www.tapintoheaven.com, www.risingsunhealing.com, and www.thrivingnow.com.

Recommended Reading

The Promise of Energy Psychology: Revolutionary Tools for Dramatic Personal Change by David Feinstein, Donna Eden, and Gary Craig. Penguin Books, 2005

Attracting Abundance with EFT by Carol Look, LCSW, DCH. AuthorHouse, 2005

Getting Thru to Your Emotions with EFT: Tap into Your Hidden Potential with the Emotional Freedom Techniques by Phillip and Jane Mountrose. Holistic Communications, 2000

Energy Tapping: How to Rapidly Eliminate Anxiety, Depression, Cravings, and More Using Energy Psychology by Fred P. Gallo, Ph.D., and Harry Vincenzi, Ed.D. New Harbinger Publications, 2000