

The science and research behind EFT - David Feinstein

“...the brain gets stuck in an ON position so that the person is continually experiencing the chemistry of being in mortal danger. EFT Tapping turns it OFF!”

How do you explain how EFT Tapping works?

According to a Harvard medical school study (a series of studies over 10 years) that looked at what happens in the brain when you stimulate certain acupuncture points. What they found using functional MRI when looking at the blood flow in the brain:

What happens?

EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) tapping decreases the arousal in the amygdala (a-mig-da-la).

What does that mean?

The amygdala is the threat detection part of the brain. In any anxiety disorders, including PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), what happens is the brain gets stuck in an ON position so that the person is continually experiencing the chemistry of being in mortal danger. When triggered, it forces you to concentrate all of your attention on it. You are unable to think of anything else when your body thinks it's in mortal danger. If a person has been in a trauma and hears a car backfire, an explosion or sees bright lights flash, it's as if it's happening all over again. It's NOT just a memory, according to your body, you are actually RELIVING it. It's called a “flashback.” (NOTE: What is emotional & psychological trauma? It is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless and vulnerable in a dangerous world. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed & alone can be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized. ~Helpguide.org).

With EFT Tapping you mentally recreate the trauma/ memory or trigger and that has the affect of putting the amygdala into the threat response mode – even if it's only slightly – it kicks the switch so that the brain chemistry instantly puts you approximately in the same state it was in during the situation, but many degrees less. When the threat response has gone up then you send signals by tapping on the acupuncture points that decrease the threat response so now the brain is getting opposing messages. On one hand, the memory or image of the trigger or thought is increasing the amygdala threat response. On the other hand, the tapping is decreasing it. Almost instantly by holding these opposing messages the messages that decreases arousal begins to predominate. Now the person is holding the image, having the memory and the threat response is not reoccurring. That becomes the new normal. The next time something triggers the amygdala, it no longer has the biological or physical reaction. The person now is able to have the memory (it still might be a terrible memory, maybe something that will always be haunting, but they aren't going into the psychological response so they are able to process the memory so that they can find meaning in it or come to terms with it).

You can't think yourself out of PTSD for the most part. It is a psychological response that willpower, good intentions or talk therapy often cannot touch that level of response. With EFT tapping you can very rapidly intervene at that brain level. So you're really changing the wiring and that speaks to the medical community. It actually changes the neural pathways very quickly, partially because the broader field of neurophysiology has become enamored in the past 4-5 years with the idea of neuroplasticity. (The brain can change in ways that we didn't realize even a decade ago). It's now

much more possible for simple interventions without medications and without surgery, simple interventions that can actually change the brain.

There's a race on now to find the best ones. EFT is one of the forerunners in that race. Once the charge has been removed from the thought, it isn't necessary to revisit it. We have a mechanism in our psyche that wants us to heal. We are programmed to become more evolved, happier and to become healthier. There's a force to heal whatever has been injured. The wounds of the past do tend to repeat. There's also a tendency for the psyche to repress them [according to YSL Emotional Freedom coaching "emotional beach balls." When you try to hold a beach ball under the water, what happens? They try to pop up again], in dreams, in flashbacks, and they also come up again in the way we create our lives. If we had an abusive parent we will tend to sniff out a crowded room at a party exactly the person that is going to recreate that kind of abuse for us & that's who we'll marry. We have a chance to work through this unhealed wound from the past. We have radar that is quite extraordinary. People recreate what they experienced in childhood & haven't processed fully in their current life. Once that is really healed the tendency to have it come back spontaneously in our images or dreams or experiences or the tendency to construct our lives around the same theme then is no longer there. It loses its energy, loses its power. If we continuously have something coming up, we are getting triggered, our brain is bringing it up in our awareness with the intention that we are going to address it & let it go so it's no longer subconsciously ruling us.

DAVID FEINSTEIN, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist, has served on the faculties of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Antioch College, & the California School of Professional Psychology. He has contributed more than 50 articles to the professional literature and 5 of his 8 books have won national awards, including the 2007 USA Book News Book of the Year in the Psychology/Mental Health Category (for Personal Mythology).

He and his wife, Donna Eden, direct Innersource, a service organization that has been a pioneering force in energy medicine, energy psychology, and consciousness studies.

Interviewed by Jessica Ortner, The Tapping Solution, during the 2012 Tapping World Summit.