

Exploring Underlying Issues

Every once in a while, someone tries the basic EFT formula and gets immediate, lasting results. The problem disappears in a single session and never comes back. One-minute wonders can and do happen, even with overwhelming cravings and an inability to lose weight. But in many cases, at some point after basic EFT reduces or eliminates a symptom or problem, it comes back. If this happens to you, don't assume that EFT didn't work. EFT worked fine for the problem you treated, but now a new aspect has presented itself, which just means there's more to do.

In this next example, Tam Llewellyn of the U.K. helps a woman lose weight when he discovers an aspect that she wasn't aware of.

Finding the Root of the Problem

by Tam Llewellyn

When we use EFT it is essential that we tap on the correct problem. This may seem obvious, but it is very easy to miss the major aspect of the problem—the one which is really driving the discomfort.

Finding the “correct” Setup Phrase is essential. I feel that when EFT fails to solve the issue, by far the most likely reason is that we have chosen the wrong aspect of the problem, or even the wrong problem altogether. Often the problem seems obvious, but in these cases we should be especially on our guard. If it is so obvious, why was it not identified and treated long ago?

In a case that illustrates this point, a middle-aged woman had a number of physical and emotional problems that all appeared to relate to her being grossly overweight. The cause of her excess weight was obvious—she ate too much and exercised too little.

We worked on various aspects of her over-eating and found that they were all related to incidents in her past. These were soon dealt with using EFT and her weight dropped a little. However, she eventually admitted to being “hooked” on Crunchie Bars (a chocolate bar available in U.K.). Her craving for them was removed using EFT to the extent that the smell and very idea of them revolted her. The job appeared to be done and I left a month’s gap until her next appointment, expecting her to lose a considerable

amount of weight by then and to be ready to work with me on other problems.

But a month later she returned, still overweight and still eating Crunchie Bars. She hated the smell and taste of the Crunchie Bars but was still eating four or five a day! We spent a long session exploring this aspect and I eventually discovered that many years ago the client had been in a “Weight Watchers’ Club” using a strict diet plan. Crunchie Bars were included in the diet as a reward if one complied with the diet. They had been associated in the client’s mind as a reward and she still felt happy and rewarded eating them—even though they tasted awful!

We could have tapped forever on her excessive weight and the problems it was causing, but we would likely have gotten little result. As soon as the link between Crunchie Bars and the feeling of reward was tapped away, her weight and related problems disappeared.

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While this next article by Janet Smith doesn’t go into specific EFT tapping details, it does an excellent job of getting behind the type of issues that cause people to carry extra weight. It also describes how EFT success stories can inspire students and practitioners alike in their use of EFT for problem solving.

Persistent EFT for Chubby Issues

by Janet Smith

I have always had a serious propensity for all foods sweet and creamy—and a reputation for having an unquenchable appetite for such things. Even when I was able to temporarily eliminate my sugar addiction through EFT last year, I always seemed to sabotage myself by indulging in ice cream or chocolate. So, when I read an article in the EFT newsletter about the core issue behind a woman's cookie craving (the fact that her mother had never nursed her), a big light bulb went off! My mother had tried to nurse me but wasn't able to. Unfortunately, she didn't realize this until I lost a lot of weight and became rather emaciated. I was horribly unhappy and colicky, and it wasn't until I was put on formula that I became a happier and (very) chubby baby.

As long as I can remember, I have struggled with my weight and my love of sweets. I decided to try EFT on my similar issue, linking it to the idea that I associate sweet and creamy foods with the comfort and security I never got as a baby because I was starving and denied the food I so desperately needed. However, that didn't seem to work. In fact, over the course of the two days after I applied EFT, I actually craved sweet flavors and creaminess even more than I had in the recent past! I couldn't figure out what was going on, but I went back to *The EFT Manual* and started to read about Psychological Reversal. It made sense as the reason for my stalled progress, but what could I do about it?

I suddenly realised that the sweet and creamy cravings were also connected to my ongoing body weight issue—I work out intensively at the gym five or six days a week and have significantly increased my muscle mass, but my metabolism has remained stubbornly sluggish, and I have lost very little fat regardless of my workouts. I became conscious that many people in my life—family, teachers, friends—had always called me smart, not athletic.

The message I received was that I could never be lean, strong, and beautiful. I started to tap on that, and feelings rose to the surface, one after the other. First, I started laughing about the silly people telling me these things. Then I started to feel really angry! What right did they have to pigeonhole me into not being the “athletic type”? To always remember me as being chubby (and comment on it when they saw me after a few years away), even when they’d seen me thin at other times in my life? Vivid memories about my mother telling me how beautiful I could have looked in my prom dress—“if you could just lose five more pounds, it would be perfect.” I started shouting as I tapped, and my eyes started to tear, thinking about all the hurt that those statements had done to me over the years. And then suddenly that started to fade, and I started to embrace the idea that I could be lean, strong, and beautiful.

I could erase those harmful words and forgive all the people who had contributed them. I started to smile and feel strong and confident in myself, and the best part was the overall sense of relief I was starting

to feel. While I had already embraced that I am very strong, I could finally imagine my body being lean, and I could imagine feeling beautiful because of it, which is an image I had never been able to tangibly visualize before.

By the time I finished, I was feeling lighter, I was smiling, and I was barely able to picture a piece of chocolate in my mind!

* * *

The Comfort Zone

The *comfort zone* is a critical concept within all performance pursuits. This is the mental range in which you subconsciously believe you belong. Your comfort zone is what keeps a behavior its current level and, without properly addressing it, any improvements you might achieve may not last.

Like a thermostat that keeps a room within a comfortable temperature range, our experience fluctuates within certain comfort zones. Ironically, most comfort zones aren't really comfortable, especially when we want to make changes. It's more accurate to call them *familiar* zones.

To properly enhance one's performance, condition, or situation, two factors should be addressed.

1. You must move the boundaries of your comfort zone, and
2. You must address the specific impediments to performance that need improvement.

Here are some examples of Setup Phrases that can help people involved in many different activities move beyond their present comfort zones. Please note that they all include a statement about the new or desired level of performance, whether it's an improved golf score, better grades, or the person's income. This is important in order to move mentally into a new vision of themselves.

Even though I'm not comfortable at the thought of golfing in the high 70s and may think I don't belong there, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I think I am capable of being an A student in math but have never been above a B yet...

Even though the violin doesn't dance in my hands like it does in my dreams...

Even though I have yet to earn \$200,000 per year...

Even though, as a speaker, I feel uptight and have yet to have fun with my audience...

Even though I just don't feel attractive and don't have the same outgoing charisma as [pick a role model]...

Even though I go "gulp" instead of flowing freely when I try to sing that high note in [name a song]...

Even though writer's block seems to be always with me instead of ideas flowing out of me like a fountain...

These go on endlessly and, of course, you must customize your approach to fit the situation. The idea is to move to a new mental image of yourself in which you see yourself as "belonging" at this new level.

Truly skilled EFT artists do a thorough job with their clients' comfort zones. They dig for the *specific events* underlying their clients' less-than-optimum performance levels and use EFT to obliterate these barriers.

When it comes to weight loss, your comfort zone is the weight range you usually maintain. It is easy for most people to lose a little weight, but when the weight loss goal is substantial, it's often outside the person's comfort zone. When that happens, self-sabotage enters the picture and the subconscious mind conspires with energy blocks, tail-enders, and negative self-talk to prevent the desired weight loss.

One way to use EFT to expand your weight-loss comfort zone is to choose a goal weight that is (as far as your mind is concerned) within the realm of possibility. Just as a golfer whose usual score is over 100 will find it hard to imagine shooting in the low 60s, someone who is 100 pounds overweight will find it hard to imagine easily reaching his or her goal weight.

But if the golfer sets a more modest goal, like shooting in the low 90s or high 80s, and if the overweight person decides to lose 20 or 30 pounds rather than 100 pounds, the subconscious mind is more likely to cooperate and less likely to generate self-sabotage. Many weight-loss success stories began with modest goals that, once achieved, led to revised and more ambitious goals. That's why I personally started with 40 pounds, knowing that I would probably need to lose more later.

EFT Setups that can help expand your weight-loss comfort zone include:

Even though I can't imagine ever being a size 12 again, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though it's been a long time since I weighed 150 pounds, I would like to love and forgive my body and my past food choices.

Even though I have yet to lose five pounds, let alone 25 or 50, I deeply and completely accept myself anyway.

Even though it will be easier for me to climb stairs and get the exercise I need if I lose weight, I can move forward in a new direction starting now.

Even though I haven't been in a swimsuit for years, and the thought of wearing one in public is a real stretch, I would love to start swimming again.

Even though I'm not used to thinking of weight-loss as effortless or enjoyable, I know that with EFT, just about anything is possible.

Whenever you incorporate a goal into your EFT Setup Phrases, be on the alert for tail-enders, the “yes, but” statements that interfere with your progress. As soon as they come to mind, follow them back to specific events and the core issues they created. Becoming an EFT detective will help you quickly and efficiently clear away the mental and energy blocks that can otherwise undermine your best-laid plans.

Detective Skills

Core issues behind weight gain and cravings are often clever about hiding, so being a good detective is an EFT

asset. Finding them can be as simple as asking yourself a few good questions:

What does this craving remind me of?

When was the first time I felt this way? And what was happening in my life at that time?

If there is a deeper emotion underlying this situation, what might it be?

Who or what is behind my weight gain?

If I could live my life over again, what person or event would I prefer to skip?

If there were a consequence for losing weight, what would it be?

If there were a benefit to keeping the weight, what would it be?

How do I feel just before I get the munchies? Exhausted, stressed, frustrated, sad, empty, angry, insecure, alone, disappointed...? And what does that feeling remind me of?

Once you have an answer to any of these questions, continue asking “Why?” or “What’s behind that?” until you find unresolved specific events.

If you can’t think of anything, you can try a few rounds of EFT on something global to remove a few emotional layers and see if anything new pops up.

Even though I have this weight issue and I don’t know what is causing it, I deeply and completely accept myself.

For Reminder Phrases try *“This weight issue”* or *“Whatever is causing my weight issue.”*

Even though food makes me feel better and I don’t understand why, I deeply and completely accept myself.

For Reminder Phrases try *“Food makes me feel better”* and/or *“I wonder why.”*

Even though I eat when I’m not hungry, and I know there is an emotional cause, I deeply and completely accept myself.

For Reminder Phrases try *“This emotional cause”* or *“I’m not even hungry.”*

If you’re still not able to come up with an event, memory, or connection, no problem. Just make something up. As I often say, a made-up example can work even better than an actual event or memory.

Tell yourself, *“If I had to imagine an event that could contribute to my weight problem, it would go something like this...”* Then use whatever event you create.

As soon as you have something, real or imaginary, that’s connected in any way to your cravings or weight gain, create a short or long Setup Phrase around it and begin tapping.

These specific events are the building blocks underneath the bigger global issues. By dealing with them one at a time, they are easier to manage, and you can monitor your progress along the way. In addition, by going all the way to the foundation of the issue, you can start releasing

these building blocks one by one until the global issue collapses.

Two points about this idea deserve special attention:

1. There can be hundreds or thousands of such specific events underlying a larger issue and thus, theoretically, addressing all of them can be a tedious process. Fortunately, you do not have to address every specific event to collapse the larger issue. You can usually do the job by collapsing somewhere between five and twenty of its table legs. This is because there is usually a commonality or “general theme” among those specific events. After EFT appropriately collapses a few of the table legs, a generalization effect occurs that serves to collapse the rest.

2. Remember that each specific event is likely to have an assortment of aspects, so address them separately and measure your progress on them one by one. Aspects can be the different emotions you felt during an event, the various emotional crescendos, or anything else that you would consider to be a “part” of your reaction to the event. The example given in Chapter One of the auto accident is a good illustration. Why? Because the event probably contains many aspects such as *the belief that it was all my fault; the smell of burning rubber; the sound of the crash; the smell of blood; the shock of the impact; my guilt at wrecking the car*, and so on. Each of those pieces is an aspect all by itself and should be addressed separately.

To be as thorough as possible with any specific event, use the Tell the Story Technique until you can tell the complete story without any emotional spikes.

In this insightful report by John Garrett, a woman taps through her tangled emotions toward her sister, thus freeing herself to lose weight. For your own practice, look for the Setup Phrases and identify which ones could be pursued as specific events and which ones represent global emotions.

Emotional Issues Had to Go First

by John R. Garrett

A client, I'll call her Tina, came to me frustrated by the lack of progress with her weight issue. She was morbidly obese and had been dieting and working out intensely for six weeks with nothing much to show for her efforts.

The day before she came to me, she experienced a confrontation with her older sister, Liz, who was a competitive body builder and personal trainer. She had asked Liz about what to do for sore knees from doing leg presses and got a lengthy lecture about her past eating habits. Liz chastised her for food choices as far back as when they were young children and criticized her for allowing her son to also become overweight. She prefaced these statements with, "I don't mean to hurt your feelings, but..."

My client was very hurt by Liz's unsolicited criticism and became defensive and angry at Liz's response. Liz also responded with anger and defensiveness, which created a huge, ugly confrontation.

By the time Tina expressed her feelings, she was ready to give up on the idea of ever being thin and fit, and she felt she just had to accept her sister's judgment. The fact that she could not remember what she had for breakfast while Liz claimed to remember what she had eaten as a child thirty-five years earlier made her incredibly self-conscious. She felt shame at being told to stop blaming genetics for her weight issues (they came from a long line of large people) and was hurt at being told that she and her son were fat simply because they ate too much.

My client was angry, but even more, she felt embarrassed and defeated. She carried intense guilt about her teenage son's weight issues and was horrified that he seemed to be following in her overweight footsteps. The confrontation with her sister confirmed her guilt, and it robbed her of energy and momentum to continue working out and following a diet program. In tears, she was ready to give up.

She decided to work with me not to resolve weight issues but to deal with the visions she had after the confrontation. She was so disturbed by these visions that she knew instinctively there was more going on than simple overeating.

Tina had thrown herself into her bed in tears after the confrontation with her sister. She dozed but didn't sleep. While in what she described as an Alpha or self-hypnotic state, she envisioned herself as an infant, with Liz, who was three years older, standing by her crib. Liz reached through the bars on

the crib and pinched Tina hard on her arms and legs, intentionally making Tina cry. Her sense was that Liz was intensely jealous of the new baby and wanted to hurt her for disrupting her life and her relationship with their mother. Tina then had repeated visions of her sister covering her mouth and nose with her hand, trying to suffocate her. Several visions surfaced of Liz placing a pillow over Tina's face, which caused Tina to struggle with panic.

These visions startled and terrified Tina and were the main reason she decided to seek my help. Tina has studied hypnotherapy and understands that these visions may or may not be real events. She agrees that it doesn't matter to the mind whether they actually happened or are simply a creation of the psyche to explain her feelings about her sister. The fact was, they felt very real to her, and that was what mattered.

Tina shared that a few years earlier her mother had told her that Liz had always been jealous of her. Liz continues to have jealousy issues to this day. Tina's mother told her that she was very cute and outgoing as a child, while the older sister was sullen and shy. This outgoing, happy attitude caused Tina to get most of the attention of guests and family members and earned her the nickname Bubbles. Tina also had beautiful long white-blonde hair that caught the attention of almost everyone who saw her. Her older sister, on the other hand, had thin, wispy hair and was nearly bald until she was ten years old. When Tina was about five, her mother, exasperated by the older

sister's jealousy, cut off Tina's beautiful hair, making it extremely short to match her sister's unattractive locks.

As they grew, Liz became obsessive about her body and her looks and was always dieting and exercising. Tina was involved in many other activities and paid little attention to her body until, as an older teen, she began gaining weight. As an adult, Tina admired and looked up to Liz and felt pride when cheering for her at her Liz's body building competitions. Tina, who was becoming more and more obese, also felt intense shame while attending these events, since they were so focused on looks and physique.

We began our EFT work with the statement:

Even though I am overweight, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.

In three rounds of tapping, her 0-to-10 intensity went from 10 to a 2. Tina yawned repeatedly during the tapping. We moved on.

Even though I have the memory of Liz pinching me...

Even though I have the memory of Liz smothering me with her hand...

Even though I have the memory of Liz smothering me with a pillow...

Even though Liz tried to kill me...

Even though my mother cut my hair to make Liz feel better about herself...

Even though Liz hates me...

Even though I hate Liz...

Even though I have to be diminished to make Liz feel okay...

Even though I have to be diminished or Liz will kill me...

Even though I have to stay fat to make Liz feel okay and not kill me...

Even though it is my fault that my son is fat...

The yawning continued, and Tina complained of being incredibly tired. She wanted to stop several times. However, we continued until there was no charge regarding thoughts of her sister.

Tina was obviously exhausted. She said she just couldn't do any more, then left and went straight to bed. She reported that she slept through the night and into the next day for a total of thirteen hours of sleep.

The next day, she was stunned to find herself feeling relaxed and content. She had little or no emotional reaction to thoughts of her sister and resumed her weight loss plan with optimism and vigor. She has agreed to tap daily for any discomfort that may arise from thoughts of her sister and to tap for accepting a new, thinner self. She has released a lifetime of fear and pain regarding her sister and now has the tools and confidence to achieve her weight-loss goals.

In this next report, Dr. Carol Solomon demonstrates how a core issue can affect us in more ways than one. This is a great illustration of not only how our emotional issues can be connected but also how while addressing one issue we can gain valuable insight into another. If you are ever stuck on an issue, you might try addressing another one for a while and see if any insights start to appear.

EFT for Panic Attacks and Overeating

by Dr. Carol Solomon

For ten years, my client Margie had panic attacks approximately twice a month in the middle of the night. She would wake up startled and feel “very, very scared...panicked...not knowing what to do.” She had tightness in her chest and difficulty breathing. She felt as though she was going to jump out of her skin.

Margie’s mother was depressed, very emotional, and easily overwhelmed. Everything was “hard” for her, and whenever something was hard, it threw her off. She couldn’t handle it and became even more depressed.

Margie grew up telling herself that nothing was going to be hard for her and that she wouldn’t make a big deal out of anything. Growing up, everything had been an issue, so Margie vowed not to let anything get to her. She thought that if she let anything get to her, it meant she was “weak,” like her mom.

Margie sought my help to learn EFT for weight loss and overeating. Her way of getting things done was to eat her way through it. “I eat three cookies, and then I do the laundry.”

Margie thought her panic attacks were triggered by feeling overwhelmed by problems. Even though she wanted everything to be easy, she was easily flustered and “thrown off” by unexpected events. She would overeat during the day to cope, but whenever she felt “too emotional,” she had a panic attack at night. It was a terrifying experience.

Margie used to have to take medication to get back to sleep. Now, she starts tapping right away and it relieves the panicky feeling.

Even though I feel really scared right now, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I feel alone and scared...

Even though I don't think I'll get through this...

Even though it feels like the morning will never come...

Even though I feel weak...

Even though I vowed that nothing would ever get to me, and I would always be strong...

Even though it's important to be stronger than my mother...

Then Reminder Phrases as she tapped around the body:

Feeling scared.

Feeling alone.

Can't breathe.

Feeling overwhelmed.

I don't know what to do.

It feels like the morning will never come.

I don't think I'll get through this.

I'm afraid I'll fall apart.

Since I had taught Margie EFT for weight loss, she included weight-related statements in her second round. Notice the similarity between feeling out of control and panicky with her life and feeling out of control with her food and weight-loss issues.

Even though I feel like my eating is out of control, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I'm feeling fat...

Even though I'm not strong enough to deal with my problems...

Even though I feel like I'll never be strong enough and I'll always be overweight...

Even though I shouldn't have any issues with my body...

Then around the body:

Feeling scared.

Feeling fat.

I can't control my eating.

I'm not strong enough.

It's not okay to be weak.

I have to be strong all the time.

I shouldn't be having this anxiety attack.

I feel like I'm not going to make it.

Margie views EFT as a “fool-proof method” to short-circuit her panic attacks. It only takes one or two rounds for her to stop the panic attack and get back to sleep. She has had only one attack in the past four months and has not needed any medication. She has also significantly reduced her overeating.

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Most of the Setup language above was directed at global material rather than specific events. However, if you take a look at the last set of Reminder Phrases, from “feeling scared” to “I feel like I’m not going to make it,” can you see how each one of those phrases could point to earlier events? What memories does she have that relate to feeling scared, being too weak, or being out of control?

If your issue is stubborn or you’re having trouble getting to the core, try asking yourself similar questions based on the information you have already discovered.

In this next report, Cathleen Campbell describes a successful businesswoman who gained weight when her work conditions changed.

Her Boss Was Making Her Fat

by Cathleen Campbell

Joan came to me to work on a crisis that was brought on by a change in her career. She was thrilled

to discover that in dealing with this issue we could also help her finally reach her health and fitness goals, too!

Joan is a lovely woman, full of enthusiasm and joy. She's had her ups and downs in life, but mostly she's lived a pretty wonderful life. Her career has always been a point of pride for her. She has worked in the same field for over two decades, accumulating an excellent salary and a wide assortment of awards and accolades.

One of the special joys Joan relied upon was the affectionate and supportive relationship she's always had with management, especially her immediate superior. She loved working with Beth because they not only had a tremendous respect for each other but they also just simply enjoyed each other's company.

Joan was both excited for her friend and nervous for herself when Beth accepted a new position, leaving the department and Joan behind. Joan wasn't sure she would be able to recreate the same relationship she cherished with another boss.

Weeks went by filled with trepidation and confusion. And then the bomb dropped. The new department manager was a woman who had been transferred many times, and rumor had it that she was both ineffective and disliked. Joan was about to live her worst nightmare.

Before long she was questioning her very career, let alone her job and her abilities. She was miserable. Each day was a horror. She would take sick days and find

other ways to be out of the office as much as possible. By the time Joan started to work with me the situation had become critical. She was fearing the loss of her job and feeling as though she had the weight of the world around her shoulders...and her waist and thighs, etc.

We spent the first session clearing the pain she felt this new manager had inflicted, using specific incidents and wording such as:

Even though my new boss is so mean to me, she yelled at me yesterday in front of the whole department and I felt so ashamed especially since she was right, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I'm nervous every time I talk to my new boss because she always seems so mad at me, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I not only don't have the connection I've always relied on with my new boss, but it's worse than that since she apparently doesn't like me at all, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Since she hadn't known the new boss long, clearing this pain wasn't too difficult and Joan realized she was actually breathing easier and beginning to feel relaxed with this line of clearing. So we rolled up our sleeves and began to dismantle all the pain she had accumulated from the negative thoughts she'd been unable to stop thinking for months.

As we continued to clear through her personal criticisms, the ones she was aware of and the ones that she became conscious of as she continued to

clear layer after layer, Joan began to sit up straighter and look more confidently assured. As if a light was slowly beginning to shine, dimly growing brighter with each layer lifted, Joan began to nod her head up and down. We finished a round and I asked her what she was nodding to, to which she replied, "I thought I was getting fat because of my age or the stress or my lack of exercise, but the truth is that I'm building a wall of protection around myself in every way I can!"

Joan's initial focus for her session work was her career, specifically clearing out the challenges with her new boss. She did this with very few tears and found it astonishingly easy. Now she was ready to face what was really getting her down: a load of added weight!

We began to tap for concepts such as:

Even though I have to protect myself from my boss in every way I can, which means I have to build myself up, I deeply and completely accept myself.

The look of relief on her face was a joy to behold, and her features began to appear calmer and younger. Joan left a bit exhausted but feeling terrific.

Over the next two weeks Joan kept in touch by email. Her final message said,

"I'm happy to report that I'm back to my usual habits—eating, drinking, exercise, sleeping, and performing at work. I feel happy and productive, and though my new boss is challenging, she's got some great ideas and we're started to get into a rhythm

with each other. And the best news is that I've already dropped 10 pounds! It's melted off just as we said in session. My boss is not longer making me fat, but you know what? If she's right, she just might make my bank account a bit fatter!"

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The words of parents, teachers, coaches, partners, friends, and even total strangers can have a profound impact on our beliefs about ourselves. In this next report by Kathleen Sales, hurtful words held their sting for decades—until EFT removed their emotional impact. Her story is a great example of addressing a specific event for solid results.

Kathleen refers to the Sore Spot, which can be used in place of the Karate Chop point during the Setup Phrase, and the 9 Gamut Procedure, both of which are used in EFT's original Basic Recipe. They are not part of the EFT shortcut described in Chapter One, but they can be added at any time. See Appendix A for details.

“God, You’re Fat!”

by Kathleen Sales

My client wanted to not only lose weight but also find a way to maintain that weight loss. She had tried many programs and had been successful at losing, but she always seemed to gain the weight back and then some.

I explained during our initial consultation that we could work on the issue of weight and maintenance

but that we would also need to focus on emotional issues affecting her life since in most cases the issue of excess weight is not about the food at all. She agreed to the commitment and we were on our way.

I asked the typical questions about weight: *How long have you had a weight problem? When did you first recognize that you had a weight problem? Do others in your family struggle with weight?* And so on.

All of a sudden her face began to tense up as she spoke of her godmother, who had emotionally tortured her when she was young. Every weekend her family would make a trip to visit her godmother and godfather, and whenever no one was watching, Claire, her godmother, would exclaim, "God you're fat!" Keep in mind, this was said to a girl between the ages of six and seven, and it went on for three years.

The words echoing in her head brought great sadness and anger to the surface, so this is where we began. I asked her what her intensity rating was regarding this issue and she said, "Ohhhh, it's a 10 definitely!" While she massaged her Sore Spot, I had her close her eyes and repeat after me:

Even though I hear these cruel words, "God, you're fat," I deeply and completely love and accept myself.

Even though Claire's cruel words echo loudly, "God, you're fat," I deeply and completely accept myself and my body.

Even though I hear Claire's hurtful, mean, and cruel words, "God, you're fat," I completely love and accept myself anyway.

We then tapped on the EFT points using these Reminder Phrases:

God, you're fat!

Those hateful cruel words, "God, you're fat."

Claire's voice echoing, "God, you're fat."

Those cruel hurtful words, "God, you're fat."

God, you're fat!

Claire's hateful, cruel voice saying, "God, you're fat."

Claire's hurtful words, "God, you're fat."

Those cruel, cruel words echoing inside of me, "God, you're fat."

We also did the 9 Gamut Procedure, since this started at such a high intensity, followed by Setup Phrases to which we added the words "*this remaining...*," and we did one last round of all the points while saying, "*I deeply and completely love and accept myself no matter what.*"

I asked my client to remain with her eyes closed and go inside to see what was there. She felt a sense of calm. Her face had definitely relaxed, lightened up, and showed the results of the tapping. I then asked her to repeat the words, "*God you're fat!*" to see what, if anything, came up. She did and smiled. She said, "They're just words. They have no affect on me whatsoever. Claire is gone!"

At our next session I asked her to again repeat the words "*God you're fat!*" and absolutely nothing occurred. Just a smile and a shake of the head.

During the course of our work together, we found another person who needed to be “let go of,” and when he surfaced my client said, “Oh goody, are we going to be able to make him disappear just like we did Claire?” We did, and it was another incredible result for EFT.

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Sneaking Up on the Core Issue

Sometimes the emotional reason for a craving or for overeating in general is an issue so overwhelming that it seems beyond help. It’s the “Big One” that the person doesn’t want to touch. It may be a major form of guilt that they don’t want to face or a trauma they don’t want to revisit. Whatever it is, they “don’t want to go there” and often won’t even mention it to their therapist for fear the therapist will try to drag them through it.

Often they learn to dull the pain or sweep it under the rug. But it seethes under the surface anyway, influencing their thoughts, their responses, and their everyday lives. It represents pain. It’s like walking on thorns. They would rather retain their less-than-truly-functional lives than come face to face with this issue. Their lives will get better, they hope, if they just address life’s minor irritations and leave the “Big One” alone.

Fortunately, we have a method with EFT whereby we can tip-toe up to the issue, circle around it, take the edge off, and gradually spiral in closer until that festering boil is skillfully lanced. All this with minimal pain. The

concept is simple but it may take some practice before the practitioner can claim mastery.

It starts with a very general approach. I suggest asking the client simply say

The Big One

and then rank his or her 0-to-10 intensity regarding the mere mention of the issue. This is also an appropriate time to rank the intensity of other physical symptoms, such as a pounding heart, sweating, constricted throat, etc. We then use EFT in a general way to help take the edge off.

Even though I have discomfort about this issue, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though this thing seems too big for me...

Even though just thinking about it bothers me...

Even though my heart is pounding...

Even though [other physical symptoms]...

The details of the issue are ignored for now because the main purpose here is to minimize pain by taking the edge off. We are purposely sneaking up on the problem with gentleness as our goal. Do several rounds of EFT in this more general way until you see or experience signs of relaxation. That tell-tale “sigh” that I point out in our videotaped seminars is a good clue. Then say again...

The Big One

and re-rank the 0-to-10 intensities that this statement generates. Chances are the emotional responses will be lower and the physical symptoms will likely be down as well. I

keep repeating this procedure until it seems appropriate to ask:

Is there any part of this issue that you could talk about comfortably?

This simple procedure often opens the door, making it possible for the person to acknowledge or describe at least part of the issue. From there, it is simply a matter of getting more and more detailed. Take some of the edge off, get more detailed. Take some of the edge off, get more detailed. Take some of the edge off, get more detailed.

The client may experience some emotional discomfort in the process. After all, this *is* the “Big One.” But, in my experience, it is much less than it might have been *and* this is probably the last time the person will have any such discomfort. Assuming our usual degree of success, they can now walk on velvet instead of thorns.

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In this next report, Carol Look draws on her extensive experience with weight loss and addiction to provide valuable insights into common emotional drivers. Please note that this article provides many “doors” that you can use to explore your own issues. Once you find a good “door,” you will still benefit from identifying the underlying specific events and releasing them with EFT.

A Compulsive Overeating and Weight-Loss Protocol

by Carol Look

Diets don't work because they cause people to feel deprived, which triggers emotional and behavioral "rebellion." Sooner or later, after feeling deprived, you will overeat to compensate for the feeling of deprivation. This means that if you are using a diet to curb your cravings, it will most likely backfire on you.

Diets don't work because starvation mode causes hormonal imbalances and when the body perceives the danger of starvation, it "hoards" calories and fat for safety. This is why so many people complain of gaining weight or staying at a plateau when they are certain that their caloric intake is insubstantial. They are right. Their caloric intake isn't enough for their bodies, yet they start to plateau or gain weight again.

Diets don't work because they focus on the wrong target—food—instead of the underlying emotions that cause people to overeat in the first place. If you are targeting food as the problem, you miss the underlying cause of overeating, which is emotional stress connected to your past, present, or future.

The Present

The first section of my EFT weight-loss protocol targets your current behavior or symptom. Obviously there are many layers under the symptom, but to attack these first is an easy way to get started. Also,

some of the layers don't begin to emerge until you target eating behavior.

The primary phrases that clients give to me about their "addiction" or weight problem include:

Even though I'm a food addict, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Even though I'm obsessed with food...

Even though I'm a sugar addict...

Even though I crave sweets at night...

Even though I have an enormous appetite... (We'll get to the underlying cause of this "appetite" later.)

Even though I'm a closet eater...

Even though I binge at night...

I ask clients to tap for themselves three times a day for whichever of the above phrases speak to them and their problem. I ask them to do it in the early morning and late evening when they are not in the middle of a struggle to NOT eat. Those who wait until they have a craving are less likely to complete the process, although one can do it then as well.

Two more interesting phrases that really seem to help some clients are:

Even though I have an urge to eat whenever I SMELL food..."

Even though I have a craving whenever I SEE food..."

These are very powerful anchors. Remember, advertising works.

Then I move on to the underlying feelings and anxieties that drive the behavior. Classic phrases that hit home with clients include:

Even though I eat when I'm bored...

Even though I eat when I'm angry...

Even though I eat when I'm lonely...

Even though I overeat to hurt myself...

Even though I eat to avoid my feelings...

Even though I use food to soothe myself...

Even though I overeat to hide myself...

Even though I binge because I think I'm worthless...

Even though I overeat because I don't love myself...

I recommend that you go fishing for whatever phrases ring true. If you are working with a client, you will usually see it in the person's face or you will recognize when it hits home.

Two other key points that I find essential pertain to guilt and self-hatred. These are not motivating factors for people who want to lose weight, so I help them drop the guilt about their eating disorder.

Even though I hate myself for overeating...

Even though I feel guilty when I overeat...

Even though I feel guilty about being overweight...

It's important to reduce these feelings so they don't backfire and cause even more overeating as a result of the anxiety. I use the tapping point on the

index finger and say, *“I forgive myself for overeating...or eating when I’m not hungry...or eating when I’m angry... etc....”* This helps people forgive themselves for compulsive behavior that seems to be out of their control.

I worked for eight years at Freedom Institute with alcoholics, addicts, and their family members. The population termed ACOA deserves special mention. They are Adult Children of Alcoholics and were raised by one or more addicted parents or caregivers. “ACOA’s” often suffer from free-floating guilt that would boggle your mind. They report feeling a gnawing sense of never being enough, never being a good enough child to help their parent stop drinking. *“If only I had been smart enough, good enough, clever enough, etc., mom would have stopped drinking for me.”* Of course this isn’t true, but eight-year-olds don’t understand addiction. I always try to dig deep with clients who were raised with excessive dysfunction in order to get rid of the guilt and improve the chances of long-term success. Many ACOA’s have sworn off alcohol because of their associations with an addicted parent but then turned to food as a more “acceptable” substance. Their underlying anxiety is often undiagnosed and untreated.

The Past

In this part of the treatment, I address basic self-esteem issues and incidents. I ask clients to write down or name three of the worst incidents that have hurt their self-esteem and tap for them. Often these incidents revolve around shame of their body or their

early eating habits. I ask which is the loudest memory? The stickiest? The worst? I ask them to picture the first time they discovered food as a pacifier and address the underlying feelings that were going on at the time.

I also ask about their family's attitude about food, what the atmosphere was around the dinner table at home, etc. This often brings up new material, which I help them tap for.

Even though I'm anxious when I sit down to eat...

Even though I associate food with fighting...

Even though I associate food with my mother's love...

Even though I feel unsafe without food...

Even though I eat to feel better...

I ask clients to remember the sharpest criticism they heard around their body image, peer problems, etc. I have them tap for shame or whatever the strongest feelings are. This section can uncover upsetting times that may need more work. Go slowly and respectfully and you will make tremendous headway.

The Future

Next, I test clients to see how they would feel in the future if they couldn't binge with freedom. I ask them the following questions and tap for their reaction:

Picture yourself not being able to eat sweets in the evening. How do you feel?

They often say anxious, angry, lonely, or irritable. We tap for the response.

Picture yourself as thin as you would like. What happens? How do you feel?

This often brings up many answers. Sometimes they say they don't deserve it, or they feel anxious, or they don't feel safe anymore without their shield, etc. Sometimes they say they don't want other people to be envious of them or to comment on their body or appearance. We tap for whatever fears and feelings arise.

Picture yourself addressing the underlying feelings that trigger the eating behavior. How do you feel?

They often feel anxious or just "resistant" to doing it and admit that they would rather suffer with the eating and weight problems. Tapping might go something like this:

Even though I'm afraid to face my childhood depression...

Even though I'm afraid to deal with my rage at my father...

Then I address specific sabotaging behaviors and ask them what their theories are about why they might sabotage their progress. I ask them to say the

following statements out loud and tap for whichever ones cause a reaction.

It's not safe for me to lose weight.

It's not safe for others if I lose weight.

I don't feel supported by my family members.

I have often heard about clients who are offered chocolate cake just as they are making progress in their weight-loss efforts.

I don't deserve to be happy with my body.

I ask them to say out loud, “I weigh 125 pounds” (or whatever their goal weight is) and see what emotions come up. As in some sports performance Setup Phrases that are highly effective, I have them tap say,

Even though I have a block about weighing less than 140 pounds...

Even though I sabotage myself whenever I weigh less than 150 pounds...

Even if I never get over this eating disorder...

Even if I never lose weight...

These last two seem to help the inevitable feelings of desperation that most people with binge-eating habits struggle with. The clients often say they don't want to say these phrases because they're not true. But I urge them to say them anyway. It seems to reduce unconscious energy blocks about losing weight and stopping out-of-control behavior.

Obviously there are many more phrases and issues you can tap for. It all depends on your particular patterns. The most universal problems that get in the way seem to be shame, guilt, self-hatred, and anxiety.

Extras

Apparently, restrictive eating, chronic dieting, yo-yo weight gain and loss, and basic binge eating disturb the balance of our endocrine system and thus the metabolism. This is particularly frustrating to clients who have thought that occasional starving in between bingeing can help them lose weight. The metabolism reacts by holding onto every last morsel of food, expecting to be starved again in the near future. This often slows down progress in the beginning for some people, as their metabolisms rebel by slowing down. This is why you often hear people say they don't eat enough food or calories to gain weight, yet they gain anyway. I ask my clients to read up on insulin production, the basics of nutrition, and how stress affects the hormonal system.

I know there is a lot of bad press about low-carbohydrate diets out there, but talk to a carbohydrate or sugar addict or someone who is hypoglycemic, and they will tell you that it does matter what kinds of foods they eat and when. They find that breads and sugars trigger a compulsion to eat more breads and sugars. This makes sense when you consider the basic principles of addiction. Alcoholics in Alcoholics

Anonymous (A.A.) know that “One drink is too many, and a million isn’t enough.” This is how a sugar addict feels about sugar. It can be effective to tap for:

Even though I’m out of control...

Even though I’m powerless over food...

Asking the Right Questions

It is essential to focus on the correct “target” for your EFT tapping session. I ask my clients key questions to uncover the emotions that are driving them to overeat.

What are you really starving for?

We know that once you have satisfied your bodily needs for food, the remaining “hunger” is not physiologically driven, but driven by underlying anxiety or emotional conflict. See if you can identify what you may be starving for in your life, other than food.

What comfort was missing from your childhood? Love, affection, warmth, attention? This “absence” may be why you’re overeating as an adult.

When do you experience cravings?

It’s important to identify the times of day when you feel vulnerable to giving in to your food cravings. Once you know your “weak” spots, you can apply EFT before these times, heading off your cravings before it’s too late.

You may use EFT before these time frames, or during them, when you are actually experiencing a craving.

If you didn't eat something, what emotion would you feel?

If you weren't using food as a form of anesthesia, what emotions might surface for you? Sometimes people don't know the answer to this question because they've never been "without" the food. They continually overeat so the emotions don't surface—that's the point of the behavior. See if you can guess or intuit what the emotion of conflict might be if you didn't satisfy the craving. Then you will have a specific target for EFT.

When you don't have "enough" food, what feelings are you aware of? Irritability? Frustration? Panic?

Guidelines for Your EFT Sessions

Set aside 10 minutes twice or three times a day to take care of yourself and address the feelings that cause you to crave unhealthy foods and overeat. Some people prefer putting aside a longer period of time once a day. It doesn't matter as long as you make the commitment to yourself.

Make sure you can accomplish this commitment. If you need to make the time shorter when you get started, do so.

I recommend using a special notebook to record your feelings and insights from the questions you have asked yourself and from the answers you get from your tapping mini-sessions with yourself. Make notes about what surfaces during each session, and return to emotional conflicts or patterns that don't feel completed during your tapping session.

Be clear about your targets. Do you know exactly what you are tapping on?

Make sure you are tapping on *specific emotions* (“the guilt about...” “my anger towards...” “my hurt as a result of...”) rather than global problems, such as “I have low self-esteem.”

Make sure you are totally *tuned in to your emotions*. Turn off the television and other distractions like radios, cell phones, and telephone answering machines, and make sure you have set aside a safe space for yourself.

Be clear about your “before and after” measurements on the 0-to-10 point intensity scale. If you have assessed how high the anxiety is before you start tapping, you have a good “before” measurement to compare after your tapping session. Record your results.

Write down any “AHAs” that you get from your EFT sessions. You may use these insights for later tapping sessions.

Good luck and be persistent. You will notice that you will soon begin to “forget” about eating binges and instead plan your food. And you will become

engaged in activities other than secretive eating or food shopping. The weight will begin to come off as the underlying issues are addressed and the basics of symptomatic behavior are tapped away.

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