

We thought for those of you more interested in the story behind EFT that the following article by Dr. Patricia Carrington may make valuable reading. Here she helps the reader understand how this unusual intervention, which marries the principles of Chinese medicine with western psychology, evolved....

THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF EFT

The psychological self-help and treatment method known as Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT for short) has a venerable “family tree.” Its origins lie in ancient Chinese medicine and the development of acupuncture, a healing technique that uses needles on areas on the “energy meridians” or energy pathways, as recognized by practitioners of this method. These healing practitioners have refined their skills over many centuries and acupuncture is widely used today in the East. It is also becoming recognized by Western medicine, mainly for its use for anesthesia in hospital settings.

It is important to realize, however, that acupuncture was not developed to treat emotional problems, but physical ones. Although occasionally a practitioner will use it today to relax a patient or to relieve severe anxiety, acupuncture does not have a systematic way of applying this method for emotional problems; it is not viewed as a psychological treatment per se.

The development of “emotional acupuncture”, as it is sometimes referred to, was indirectly assisted by Dr. George Goodheart, a well known chiropractor in the United States who founded a branch of chiropractic based upon a precise method of testing the body for information about its own needs.

Goodheart had learned about acupuncture in 1962 from reading an interesting book written by the president of the Acupuncture Society in Britain. He was intrigued with the possibilities it promised for his own practice. He then studied acupuncture and soon introduced it into his own work as one of the bases of a new method he was developing called Applied Kinesiology (which uses muscle testing to determine the appropriateness of any form of treatment).

Substituting simple manual pressure for needles, he found that he could obtain the same beneficial results by simply applying manual pressure to the acupuncture points, or by “percussing” or “tapping” on them; an advance which made this acupuncture-derived method accessible to many more people, since it was non-invasive.

Building on the work of Goodheart, in the 1970's an Australian psychiatrist, John Diamond, M.D., took this discovery a step further by creating a variation of it which he called "Behavioral Kinesiology". This derivative of Goodheart's method added an interesting component. Diamond used affirmations (positive self-statements or thoughts) when the person was contacting selected acupuncture points, and did this specifically to treat emotional problems. His innovative departure in this respect foreshadowed the later development of the "meridian-based therapies" and Energy Psychology, in the forefront of which we find EFT today.

But before EFT could be invented, another step was necessary. The concept of using tapping of acupoints to treat psychological problems needed a structure to become widely applicable. This structure was supplied by an American psychologist, Dr. Roger Callahan, who specialized in anxiety disorders.

In the early 1980's, Dr. Callahan learned Applied Kinesiology and studied the meridian system of acupuncture in an effort to find better answers to some of the problems his patients faced, particularly those of anxiety and phobias. He then took the step that was necessary to bring the tapping procedures into a full fledged form of psychological treatment, by combining the use of "tapping" for emotional problems with simultaneous focusing on the problem at hand. Callahan had discovered that if a person is focusing on a specific fear of their own at the time they tap; this fear can be removed, often permanently.

Dr. Callahan's new treatment came into being after he studied the meridian system, but, it was an unexpected occurrence which led to the precise clinical discovery that foreshadowed the later development of EFT.

Callahan had been working for over two years with "Mary", a patient of his who had such an overwhelming fear of water that she could not even get into a bathtub without this precipitating an anxiety attack. Although he had tried many anxiety reduction techniques with her, the progress had been slow and discouraging. Mary couldn't even approach the swimming pool on the grounds of his office, or allow water to contact her body, without experiencing panic.

One day however, while they were working on this fear in his office, Mary told him for the first time that her fearful feeling was located in her stomach. As it happens, there is an acupuncture point located directly

beneath the eye which, according to traditional acupuncture, is linked to the stomach meridian.

Accordingly, Dr. Callahan asked her to tap on that point. He did this on the assumption that this maneuver might balance a possible disturbance in her “meridian energy system” and thereby lessen her stomach symptoms. He had no idea that it would have profound implications for the future of his practice and for psychology.

Mary agreed to tap under her eyes and when she did so a totally unexpected thing happened. Instead of merely experiencing relief from her stomach symptoms, she called out in surprise that her fear of water was suddenly gone! Callahan didn't take this too seriously at first because it seemed so unlikely, but when he watched her get up and run toward the swimming pool. When she reached it, she began splashing water on her face, he took notice. She was never been able to go near the pool before.

At this point he actually became somewhat alarmed because he knew Mary couldn't swim, so he ran after her to make sure she didn't fall into the pool. It turned out, however, that strange as it seemed, the process of tapping under her eyes while she was talking about her fear of water, had eliminated her fear on a permanent basis. Gary Craig, who later developed Callahan's surprising discovery into the tapping method known as EFT, has called this type of dramatic instance, a “one minute wonder”.

Consistent with, and probably influenced by the earlier discovery of psychiatrist John Diamond, M.D., that stimulation of certain acupuncture points can bring about changes in emotional states as well as physical conditions, Callahan decided to explore the possibility of using strategic tapping on certain meridian points to treat other phobias as well. While not all the phobias he tried this out on yielded to the tapping procedure as rapidly as Mary's had (although surprisingly, some did!) her experience marked an important turning point for this new era of psychology.

A new technology had been born, that of systematically tapping on strategic spots on the body while repeating key phrases out loud. This system seemed to bring about beneficial changes in a person's emotional state, and it could therefore be used to treat psychological problem not amenable to conventional therapies.

Roger Callahan pursued his new approach devotedly, and because his method built upon some of the clinical observations in Applied Kinesiology, he too employed muscle testing in his new treatment procedure.

Based on his subsequent experimentation, he hit upon the plan of using specific sequences of acupoints for different emotional problems. He decided that there was a correct tapping sequence for every emotional issue, and that this could be determined for a particular individual through the use of muscle testing. Later he was to outline a series of specific tapping sequences which he called “algorithms”. These were considered targeted treatments for various emotional problems. Using this method of treatment, which he originally called “The Callahan Techniques” (later it was renamed “Thought Field Therapy” or “TFT”) Callahan achieved some remarkable results in his clinical work over a period of years.

However, despite its startling effectiveness in many cases, his technique had certain drawbacks. Muscle testing for the appropriate points to tap on is not only cumbersome, it needs to be done by someone expert in muscle testing to be reliable, so his was by no means a self-help technique.

Besides, it was not clear that such precision, as he used, was really necessary. What would happen if a person were to tap on all twelve of the meridian end-points (or some other responsive points on the body) every single time they did a round of the treatment? Wouldn't they bypass the necessity for muscle testing altogether? The question was whether one could “cover the waterfront” each time they tapped on a problem, by tapping on ALL the acupuncture end-points, and therefore not need to muscle test at all.

It occurred to some people who had learned TFT that a single algorithm method might work just as well and be so easy that people could readily practice it on their own at home, a great advantage. Psychologist Dr. Patricia Carrington and Gary Craig, a Stanford trained engineer and personal performance coach, neither of whom knew each other at the time or had heard of the other's ideas on this subject until many years later, both arrived at the identical conclusion; that a single-algorithm method could be just as effective as the more elaborate procedures of TFT.

By 1987, Dr. Carrington had already developed and was using for her patients and in workshops, a “single algorithm” tapping method based on Roger Callahan's TFT, which she called “Acutap”. This method intentionally did not use any diagnostic procedure such as muscle testing. She simply asked people to tap on all of the acupuncture end-points each time they did a round of tapping. Using this method, Dr. Carrington was able to help her clients in ways that had never been possible before.

In the same manner, Gary Craig, who had studied TFT on all its levels with

Roger Callahan and was originally one of Callahan's star pupils, decided to separate his work from that of Callahan in order to be able to use his own single-algorithm approach. Callahan did not approve of his variation of the tapping.

Accordingly, Craig developed his individual single algorithm method which he called "Emotional Freedom Techniques" (EFT) to distinguish it from "The Callahan Techniques", and he has been teaching this shorter method since the early 1990's.

EFT is now the most influential and widely known Energy Psychology method in the world. Because it possesses some excellent features that Acutap did not, as soon as she tried it, Dr. Carrington preferred EFT to Acutap and began using Craig's EFT method exclusively.

As Craig continued his work with EFT, he found it to be every bit as effective as the more elaborate and time consuming tapping method of Callahan, and he proceeded to create what is presently the leading website in the Energy Psychology field and one of the major sites in the area of natural health; [The World Center for EFT](#). He is the acknowledged master of the technique he developed, and through his classic DVDs and manual he has brought EFT to the attention of hundreds of thousands of people in an impressive fashion.

Eventually, it is likely that EFT will radically change the psychological treatment protocols for traumas as well as for many other emotional problems previously considered treatable only by lengthy and usually only partially effective procedures.

In 2000, Carrington developed her EFT Choices Method, a variation endorsed by Gary Craig, which further expanded the scope of Craig's method. Today, most EFT practitioners use "Choices" in their clinical practice. It is the stand-by of thousands of non-professionals as well who use it to enhance their uses of EFT.

At present, EFT plays a leading role in a revolution in psychology that is only just beginning. The current journey of over 50 years from acupuncture to EFT has resulted in meridian-based approaches now being known around the world. Originally they traveled from East to West, and now, in a modified form, they are moving back from West to East as a new therapy. The prospects for the future of health care are exciting.

Dr. Patricia Carrington