

Introducing the Tapping Process

Therapist: After you tell me the story of what happened to you, we will focus in on a specific incident that is still upsetting to you. While we are doing that, I ask you a few questions to help you bring back the memory of the incident.

Client: OK.

Therapist: I write down the key words that you use. Then I will take you through a tapping process where I tap on myself, and you tap on yourself, and I repeat some of the words that you told me.

Client: OK.

Therapist: The memory you have right now has a story to it, and it also has a strong emotional component. You will find that your brain has trouble holding onto both parts of that memory while it is busy trying to follow the tapping sequence. It is just too much to do. And so what happens is that your brain lets go of the upsetting component of the memory. And when it does that the memory is no longer a traumatic memory. It becomes an ordinary memory. You will still have the story of what happened to you but no longer have the disturbing feelings that go with it. It doesn't work for everybody, but it does work for most people. And when it works, it works very fast, so it is really worthwhile to see if it works for you.

Client: It does sound kind of strange but I don't want to feel this way anymore.

Therapist: Are you OK to go ahead then?

Client: Yes.

Therapist: OK. So let's start with you telling me the story of what happened.

(Client tells the story of the incident and therapist listens attentively. The therapist does not take note at this stage.)

Therapist: Let's just imagine that this memory was a movie and you press fast forward and you take it to the most disturbing scene in the movie, and you press pause. Tell me what you see on screen.

Client: I guess, I see him looking up at me when I walk in. With that look on his face. Then I knew I was in trouble.

Therapist: Do you see yourself in that picture?

Client: Yes I see me. The look on my face. Like I am anticipating, "what is he going to say? What is he going to do?" Waiting for his reaction, so I know what to do next.

Therapist: Okay, what happens inside your body right now as you bring back this back?

Client: It's like I'm holding my breath just waiting.

Therapist: Is there any other feeling anywhere else?

Client: Like tensing everything up. Especially in my shoulders. Like I am just anticipating his anger.

Therapist: What is the negative thought about yourself that goes with this right now? I am...

Client: What have I done wrong this time?

Therapist: So you think, "what have I done wrong this time?" What does it say about you that there you are in this situation. I am....

Client: I am powerless. I just feel like I'm so controlled. He just has all this power over me.

Therapist: As you bring that back now sitting here with me today now, out of 10 how disturbing is that? Say 10 out of 10 is the most disturbing.

Client: It's 10. It's very disturbing.

Therapist: 10 out of 10. Okay so let's just go through the tapping process and see if that number comes down, okay? So you just copy me. I tap on myself, and you tap on yourself. You say anything I say and tap on yourself where you see me tap. And after we've gone around twice, I will say "what comes up?" Then, I just want you to report whatever you notice. There's no right or wrong. I'm not going to take you anywhere or teach anything. You just report whatever you notice. We just see if we can trigger a kind of self-healing process. We can't force it, we just watch it.

Client: Okay.

Therapist: (Starts tapping) Starting here. Even though my shoulders are tense and I am holding my breath.....