

05 May, 2010 Dharma Talk at Buddha Center, Second Life
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On EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique)

(DoK led the group through the ABC Mindfulness exercise)

Are we present? Una says she's nearly asleep now. Is anybody else beside Una sleepy? Yes, it was relaxing. The whole point of this exercise for those of you who have not done it before is not to put you to sleep, but actually to wake you up. The reason why many people when they first do this exercise become sleepy is because most of us have been habituated through all the training we've undergone from infancy to think and believe that the only time that we can allow ourselves to relax is when we're ready to fall asleep. And we have lost, maybe not completely lost, but we've become separated from the capacity to be relaxed and yet fully alert, fully awake and fully functional. So if you did feel sleepy, as result of this exercise, take heart. Because that's just a sign that you're like all the rest of us. And that you believe that when you awake you also have to be tense and concentrated, not focused in terms of the attentiveness that I'm talking about, but like hypervigilant, on your guard.

That's the wonderful realization to come to. Because it means now you know how you can learn how to relax so just by practicing this exercise or any meditative exercise you can learn so as to be relaxed and still be fully awake, be fully alert and be fully functional. You can realize the kind of action that the Taoist masters talk about when they use the phrase Wu Wei, which literally means *not-doing*. And that not-doing does not mean you're sitting around, not doing anything, it means that you are doing, acting without effort. You are functioning effortlessly, but effectively in whatever it is, that your full attention is on the task at this moment. There is a unity between you and what you are doing. There is no doer, there is no deed. There is just the doing. It's just a question of practice and reminding yourself.

The last time I did a dharma talk, I mentioned that this time I will do an E.F.T. (Emotional Freedom Technique) tutorial. E.F.T. is an emotional releasing technique that is based in acupuncture, except that instead of using needles to stimulate the acupuncture meridian points we use a tapping procedure. We tap with our fingers about 8 – 10 times on each one of those points. It is a technique that I use in my psychotherapeutic practice as well as when I teach people meditation or other spiritual techniques because as many of you here as aware I am teaching, what's called an “integrative transformational practice” and I teach techniques that address all of the four core quadrants of human existence and human consciousness, those being techniques to help to improve the body, techniques to help to improve and expand the mind, techniques to address emotional blocks that are keeping us from realizing our true nature. And then the spiritual techniques like meditation and prayer and chanting that are designed to open us up to spirit. I advocate in any spiritual practice, if you want to accelerate your spiritual practice, if you want to make the most progress that you can in a least possible amount of time it's

better to address not just one of those areas, but to address all four. So that you would set up a program for yourself in which you would consistently do exercises for the body, exercises for your mind, exercises to release emotional blocks and exercises for spiritual development. They don't have to be very extensive. The important thing is that you include all four of the quadrants. And that you include techniques and practices that are meaningful to you, practices that resonate with you, that you enjoy doing. For the body it can be something as simple as walking, or something as complicated as the martial art that I practice, Aikido. For the mind it could be reading any philosophical, psychological spiritual tradition that seems to make sense and resonates to you. For the emotional clearing I like this E.F.T. And for the spirit I do Zen meditation and I also do the A B C mindfulness meditation. And that's my integrative transformational practice.

Let's address the emotional quadrant today and talk about E.F.T. I've given a dharma talk at the Buddhist temple where I attend here in titled "Is Zen enough?" The question you have to ask when you hear that question is enough for what, and for whom? And the point of my talk was that a lot of times meditation is a wonderful tool to help us achieve a spiritual state of life. But when we leave the meditation cushion and we go out into the "real world" and we encounter the normal daily challenges, issues, concerns and problems. Sometimes we have a hard time letting go of situations and negative emotional reactions to certain issues. It's very difficult for us to get back to that wonderful, peaceful meditative state that, just a short while ago we were experiencing blissfully sitting on our cushion. Red asks the question - does meditation not help at real life problems? Yes, meditation does help. Meditation is what we in a stress management business call a protective technique. There are two types, two styles of techniques that are used to respond to stress. One style is called protective techniques; the other style is called responsive techniques. Protective techniques are techniques that you practice in the privacy and a comfort of your own home, not while you are in a stressful situation. And they kind of give you a key to achieving that sense of peace of mind that then you are hoping that you going to be able to take with you into the normal activities of your daily life. But meditation does not always work as well as we would like it to. As I mentioned before, you go out into your day and you've got a big business meeting coming up, you get in your car and you get on the interstate and you get stuck in a traffic jam. And the time is ticking away and you're just not getting to where you want to be and you're getting more and more and more stressed. What are you to do? You realize if you're a good meditator and you're aware, you've trained your attention to be aware that this negativity is coming up, you know that you should just let go of it. And just be here now. Sometimes we can't do that. That's when we use the responsive techniques, which are part of the emotional quadrant. One of the best, if not the best, responsive techniques that I know of is E.F.T., because it's a technique that rapidly, very simply dissolves negative emotional reactions whether they're happening right in front of you or if you are just recalling a memory of some stressful or traumatic situation that you were involved in. But it does not matter; it rapidly dissolves that negative emotional reaction so that you can then get back to center. Fox asks, is the state of mindfulness the same as a waking meditation. It's not only a waking meditation, but it's a walking or doing meditation. Mindfulness is bringing the meditative mind, the true nature mind or the Zen mind that you cultivate on the cushion to your real life day to day activities and being. As I

mentioned before, fully awake, fully alert, fully functional but also fully relaxed and fully centered, no matter what's going on. It's being centered even while the proverbial shit is hitting the fan. Red says maybe if you are a veteran Zen practitioner, you will never have stressful situations. Good question. Yes, a Zen master is someone who has mastered that response, who has been able to achieve or enter that state of centered mind with such mastery that they can maintain that centeredness, regardless of what's going on around them in their normal daily waking life. That's the whole point of meditation. But most Zen masters have spent years and years cultivating that level of mastery. So what are we to do when we are in the situation and just the fact that we have practiced meditation, the fact that we're aware that we're in a negative situation and we should be letting it go just like we let go of thoughts in our meditations. What do we do when we realize, I just can't let this issue go? That's why we have techniques like E.F.T. Red says, practice and practice and practice Zen. Yes, that's true. But that's all in the future. What do you do right now? Remember, right now is the only moment that we have. And every moment is a choice. We choose whether we're going to be in a separate mind and in a negative emotional state or whether we're going to be in a Zen mind and a positive emotional state.

It's based on physical effect, on the acupuncture meridian system, on the energy system. Not on the physiological nervous system although it does have an effect on the physiological nervous system and it has been demonstrated to do so. But it is based in acupuncture theory which is based in the idea of having these energy meridians. E.F.T.'s effectiveness is based on what's called the discovery premise. The discovery premise says that all emotional upsets are based in a disruption in the body's energy system. That's a very important statement and a foundational premise. The implication is – if you can somehow discharge those disruptions or ease the blocks and balance or re-balance the energy system then you will not be emotionally upset anymore. The way it works is that you tap while holding in mind whatever problem or issue it is that's creating the emotional reaction, on these acupuncture meridian points and after you do through this specific sequence which I'm going to teach you now, the level of upset either is reduced or is eliminated completely. And then if it's not eliminated completely, if you continue to tap, while holding this particular issue, in mind, you will rebalance ultimately the body's energy system and that issue will be resolved and will not come back to haunt you anymore. One round of E.F.T. treatment consists of four phases. Those phases are the Setup, the sequence, the nine gamut and then the sequence which is repeated. Phases two and four are identical.

The Setup is designed to address a condition called psychological reversal. It is simply what we call in a therapy business resistance. For example, someone you know wants to quit smoking. They really know that smoking is bad, it's affecting their health, they really know that they should quit. And yet, no matter how hard they try, all of their efforts are somehow subconsciously sabotaged. And they just keep smoking. That's resistance. Resistance is simply the part of the ego saying, I'm not ready to give this up, because it gives me too much pleasure and I'm deathly afraid that if I don't have it, I'm going to be empty, lost, abandoned, unloved and miserable. That's what resistance does. It is that voice that sabotages any of our attempts to improve ourselves. Before you start doing E.F.T. you rate the level of intensity of whatever negative emotion you're experiencing on

something what's called the SUDs scale, meaning Subjective Units of Discomfort. It's a scale from zero to ten where zero means – I have no problem with this at all and ten means – I have a huge problem. So you would rate whatever issue you're dealing with on that SUDs scale. Then you go through the Setup. The Setup is designed to counter any psychological resistance. You press with your fingertips in a spot just under the shoulder in a soft spot, just on the inside or below your bony bump on the top of the shoulder. It's about maybe three or four inches out from your sternum. And you press in there and massage that spot. As you massage you say to yourself the Setup phrase. It goes like this: Even though I have this *blank*, I deeply and completely love and accept myself. And you say that three times. The *blank* is whatever that issue is that you're working now. Let's say you have a headache. Or let say you had a fight with your wife the night before and you still upset about it. You're angry or you're sad. You put that in the *blank*. And so you robe that sore spot and say: Even though I have this headache I deeply and completely love and accept myself. You do that three times. That takes care of Phase One. Then you go to Phase Two which is the sequence. Phase Two is tapping on the acupressure points while you say the reminder phrase. The reminder phrase is whatever was in that blank. So if it's a headache, you would say headache. The acupressure points that you tap: The first one is on the inner tip of the eyebrow and you would tap there 8 – 10 times while you say to yourself or say out loud – this headache. Then you tap on the side of the eye, right on the orbit of the eye, on the edge of the bone and you again say – this headache. And then you tap on the eye orbit on the edge of the bone directly underneath of the middle of the eye and you say – this headache. Then you tap the point midway between the bottom of the nose and the upper lip and you say – this headache. Then you tap between lower lip and chin and you say – this headache. Then you tap the point where the collarbone and the first rib diverge, just about an inch to the right or left of your sternum and you say – this headache. The next point is about four inches down from your armpit on the side of your body between your ribs. You tap on it and you say – this headache. Then you tap at the side of your thumb by the nail bed, the outer side of the thumb. Then tap on the thumb side of the index finger, right by the nail bed, then on the thumb side of the middle finger, skip the ring finger and tap on the thumb side of the pinky at the same spot. And then you tap on what's called the karate chop point which is midway between your pinky knuckle and your wrist and you say – this headache. And then at the very top of the head, where the crown chakra is, the soft spot, you tap that point and say – this headache. That's the sequence. Then you do the Nine Gamut. That's Part Three. It is tapping on the gamut point continuously and doing nine actions. The Gamut Point is located between your last two knuckles and back about half an inch on the back side of your hand. You would tap this spot continuously and perform the following nine actions. Keeping your head steady and looking straight ahead, you close your eyes for about five seconds, eight to ten taps, and you say this headache, then you open your eyes and look straight ahead and say this headache. Just keep tapping. Then, without moving your head, bring your eyes hard down to look to your lower right and tap and say this headache. Then look down to your lower left, tap and say this headache. Circle your eyes around going one way, as widely as you possibly can, again saying this headache and then reverse the direction and go to the other way, saying this headache. Then you hum the first bar of any tune you want. For example “Happy birthday”. After that you count to five, then hum again, while you're still tapping. That's the end of Phase Three. Then Phase Four, as I

said is the Sequence repeated. So you go through those thirteen acupuncture points just as you did in part two, tapping eight to ten times each point and saying the reminder phrase. That comprises one round of treatment. When you get to learn that whole treatment, when you get to memorize all of those points and the proper sequence, it usually takes a minute and a half or less to go through an entire round. After you go through that, you ask yourself, has the level of your intensity, has your level of upset or distress come down, gone up or stayed the same? Typically it goes down. So you give it a new number. Sometimes it goes down to zero. More often than not, it goes down, but it does not go down all the way, but it comes down one, two, three, four points. And if that happens then you simply do another round in the same way, except that when you say the Setup Phrase, you add the word "Remaining". For example, while rubbing that sore spot, you'd say "Even though I have this remaining headache, I deeply and completely love and accept myself, Three times. And as you tap all of the sequence and gamut points you'd say "remaining headache. You use the word "remaining" because that acknowledges to your unconscious mind that at least part of the problem had been resolved. It's not at the same level. Now you want to get rid of whatever is left over.

I've been using it now for over three years and I find that in almost forty years of practice it is the best and fastest and most effective releasing technique that I've found. And it works on very serious, long standing issues as well as very simple and current issues. Many people think that if they believe that it works, it will work. I found that it works whether or not somebody believes in it. I've worked with people who say to me "That's ridiculous" and I say – well, humor me, just try it anyway. I also agree with the idea that our mind is all it is and it is what is doing the curing or healing or whatever you want to call it. And that all these techniques like little red pills or E.F.T. are just like Dumbo's feather. Remember that cartoon about an elephant who could fly and he believed that he could fly only because he had that magic feather? And then one day he lost the feather and his friend, a little mouse said to him "It was not the feather at all, you can really do it on your own. In one sense every therapeutic technique, no matter what it is, is Dumbo's feather. Because we have that power within us all the time. But because we are not willing to give up our ego, our sense of separation all at once, we need to use these feathers sometimes. To get an impressive result with E.F.T. is pretty typical for a lot of the issues that we deal with. Understand, that when the intensity of some issue does not come down it's usually because of aspects involved. Aspects are other underlying problems that feed into whatever issue you are tapping on. It's like you have to go to the root of the problem eventually to get rid of it totally. But using E.F.T. you can do it all. It's just like doing detective work. You start with what the evidence is right at the crime scene and then you work your reasoning backward and just keep tapping on the issues until you reduce them all to zero. And you can make major life changes in some issues that may have been troubling for many years or perhaps all your life. It's a wonderful tool, and I am very happy and grateful that I found this. Before I was using E.F.T. I was doing verbal psychotherapy which takes a long time and a lot of intricate processing to do. And also I was using E.E.G. Biofeedback with people to work on some more intractable problems. It worked wonderfully, but it was a really high tech intervention. The system itself cost over \$8000 and the person who was being treated could not treat themselves. The beauty of E.F.T. is that you can do it yourself. I give it to my clients as

homework, and their progress in therapy and their progress in spiritual practice is accelerated immeasurably.