



What to Do When Progress is Slow

Hints for Practitioners

Used skillfully, the Emotional Freedom Techniques work consistently and effectively. However, EFT doesn't always work every time we use it. An EFT practitioner needs to know what to do when a road block is encountered or when it is sluggish or stops working. The information and approaches outlined below can help overcome such situations. This article assumes a reasonable familiarity with EFT. <http://eft4powerpoint.com/LearnEFT/index.html> It is mostly written from a practitioner point of view but these ideas are also useful for those having difficulty using EFT on themselves.

Progress is slow

When there is little or no lessening of the intensity when tapping on a particular feeling, emotion or emotional issue, there are several simple approaches that often get things moving along quite quickly.

Increase awareness

Encourage the client to notice exactly *where* the feeling or emotion is manifesting *in his/her body right now* and to *observe* the relevant physical sensations, feelings, discomforts or energies that are currently being felt. Then, do another round or two of tapping on that same feeling. Often, the intensity notably lessens and the sensations have changed, shifted or vanished.

If needed, you can also have the person to *describe* the feeling(s) *exactly as they are in this moment* followed by another round or two of tapping. This helps to loosen things up and may reveal some more specific things that can also be tapped on.

Take this further by encouraging the client to stay tuned into that feeling or emotion and to *intentionally immerse* him/herself in that feeling while tapping at each point before moving on to the next point all the way through.

These actions help the client to tune into the feeling or energy that gives a better focus for the tapping and also makes it easier for the client to notice changes in intensity. This also helps the client to be more present with and accepting of the emotion or feeling. When the client ceases resisting the feeling or emotion, it vanishes as there is no longer any resistance holding it in place.



Be more specific

It is well known that progress can sometimes be slow or nonexistent if the focus of the tapping is too general. If so, be *specific* or *more specific*.

If it's a *feeling* or an *emotion* that is not reducing in intensity, the usual approach is to locate "*a specific time*" (or "*the first time*") when he/she had that particular emotion or feeling and tap on that. You may need to use the Movie Technique with any upset or trauma event that is identified.

If the client has experienced that exact same feeling or emotion many times, a more thorough approach is to ask for "*a specific time when you had that feeling*" and tap on that. Then, ask for "*an earlier time when you had that same feeling?*" and tap on that also. Continue going earlier down this series of linked events (tapping on each event) until the very first time is located and then work it over thoroughly.

When tapping on a *general problem*, like "*my money issue*" or "*depression*", tap on the general problem to start with to take the edge off it and see how it goes. Sometimes, it just falls apart. The other extreme is when it doesn't budge. To be more specific with a problem, get one aspect or part of the problem that is the most intense, or that is currently bothering him/her the most about that issue or that is grabbing his/her attention right now or similar (i.e. the recent phone call from the bill collector.) Tap on the specific identified event until the intensity is zero. Then return to the problem (or what's left of it) and locate another aspect, and so on.

The concept of *aspects* and the use of *daisy chains* are very important in EFT. When working on a problem, a daisy chain may spontaneously begin. If so, go with the flow and tap on each aspect in turn until each aspect goes to zero and no other aspects show up. This is routine for experienced EFT practitioners. If you suspect that there may be some remaining emotional charge on a particular aspect (that was tapped on earlier during the daisy chain and was heavy going), then check this with the client. It may be fine. But, sometimes, there is still some charge left on it and tapping on it may lead to another daisy chain from that point. In such an instance, an aspect in one daisy chain is also an aspect in another daisy chain. This doesn't happen a lot but does happen.

With some major issues, especially when there is denial or the issue is not being owned by the client, it is advisable to first explore and tap on how the person feels about having that problem and tap on them. This makes the problem more approachable. Additionally or alternatively, you may find it helpful to tap on something like "*I acknowledge that I have this problem*" or "*I accept that I am overweight*" and also tap on the negative emotions, feelings or thoughts that show up while doing this. This helps the client to finally own and be present with the problem - maybe for the first time and open other doors.

Client overwhelmed

When the client is overwhelmed, do the tapping for him or her, saying the setup and reminder phrase(s) for him/her if needed. This allows the client to give more attention to the overwhelming emotion or feeling. It is also useful when a client finds it difficult to stay tuned into the issue and also do the tapping at the same time or when his/her attention is generally or continuously scattered. If this is anticipated, it may be wise to get the client's permission to tap on him/her beforehand.

If not already using the 9-Gamut Procedure, include it as per the full "basic recipe" and, as a general rule, follow it with another round or two of tapping. It is useful when the client is having a really *tough time* (i.e. very emotional or overwhelmed), or when progress is generally *slow*, or when tapping on a *general issue* for the first time and you want to give it a thorough "work over". It's also appropriate when you *intuitively* sense that it may be useful at this point or simply feel that the client needs a boost. The 9-Gamut procedure often gets the intensity dropping more freely almost immediately. It is like doing "brain gym" and seems to *mobilize inner resources* as well as *balance* the right and left sides of brain. Some EFT practitioners don't use the 9-Gamut Procedure, but I do now and again and find it consistently useful.

No change at all

If nothing is changing, there is a high probability that the client is tapping on the wrong thing (at this point in time). You may need to check if the person is actually experiencing that particular feeling or emotional issue right now and find out if his/her attention is on something else. The feeling or emotion may not be *worded correctly* or expressed in such a way that the client can relate to it. In this situation, the exact wording that has an "emotional spike" or surge of energy connected with it is usually the most fruitful thing to tap on and changing that wording can sometimes lose the connection. Discuss this with the client and, if needed, find a wording to ensure that it accurately expresses or captures the actual current mood, feeling, belief or issue.

Another possibility is that the feeling or emotion that is being tapped on may actually be a cluster of "trees" that need to be separated out. It may not seem like this to start with. This separation allows a particular feeling/emotion with its own specific disruption in the energy system to be addressed. For example, the client may say he's "aggravated" but, if you explore this, you're likely to find that he's aggravated about a number of things or events. Ask for the most intense aggravation and tap on that, and then use the "be more specific" approach with it. If it becomes clear that his aggravations are all manifesting strongly as a bundle, it can sometimes be useful to first tap on "*all these aggravations*" (or similar) for awhile to acknowledge them and cool them down before separating them out by being more specific.

Another possibility is that there may be another feeling, emotion, issue or layer in the way that needs to be addressed first (like feeling embarrassed, anxious or uncomfortable in the current session) or his/her attention may be on something else entirely (such as a distraction or a pressing problem). This situation may be sequential such as when a person's anger and resentment need to be tapped on successfully before tapping on forgiveness. The

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following questions may be useful in this context: *“Is there something that you need to resolve first before opening up your heart?”* or *“Is there something in the way?”* or *“What would happen if you were to let go of this anger?”* or *“What problem is your anger a solution to?”* or similar. You may have to be creative in following up on the clues given to you by the client. If this situation is suspected, explain and explore this possibility and ask questions until you find what needs to be tapped on first/next and then work with that.

The ultimate challenge for EFT practitioners is to tap on the right thing in the right order and at the right time. And, to keep doing this as often as possible.

Reversal

No progress at all may be caused by *polarity reversal* where there is some or a lot of internal *subconscious opposition* to releasing or letting go of something or similar. The person may only be reversed with respect to a particular issue or it may be a generalized reversal (to lots of things or even to life itself).

Firstly, when doing the Setup, try tapping on the same emotional “release point” (such as the karate chop point) but do so more vigorously and say a self-acceptance affirmation out loud and with a LOT more ‘oomph’ (with clear intention and really breathing life into it), followed by another or several rounds of tapping. Assess how that went. If no change, use another release point such as the sore spot if you’ve already used the karate chop point. And, as with all of these, say the affirmation with lots of oomph. The acupoints under the nose and the chin point are also thought by some to be release points for reversal. Rubbing both collarbone points at the same time is also used for the same purpose in some other meridian techniques. And, the Collarbone Breathing Exercise (developed by Dr. Callahan) is mentioned in Gary Craig’s EFT manual as a correction for “a unique form of energy disorganization” that occasionally impedes progress. Note that the CBE exercise in Edition 6 of the manual is slightly different to the earlier versions. The tapping and rubbing directly address the body’s energy system while saying the self-acceptance affirmation with oomph addresses the stuckness from a different perspective (see the Self-acceptance section below).

If there appears to be a *generalized reversal* or lots of things are coming up quickly one after the other or all at the same time, tap on *“Even though I have all these emotions and issues, I accept myself anyway”* or *“Even though I have all these problems and limitations, I accept myself as I am”* or similar. Then, tap through the acupoints on this several or even many times, using the full EFT technique until you sense a positive shift in the person’s energy. Use a wording that closely fits the client you are working with. Thus, it could be *“all these problems and limitations”* or *“all these emotions and issues”* or *“all these self-judgements”* or *“all these feelings and emotions”*.

It may work better if the client taps on *“I acknowledge that I have all these emotions and issues”* for awhile (as long as needed) and then (when a noticeable reduction has occurred) change over to *“I accept that I have all these emotions and issues”*. If you think that your client is ready for this, you could then also use *“I accept ownership of all these emotions and issues”*.

There may be one or more (subconscious) *payoffs* connected with or *benefits* from having the issue or there may be some *unwanted consequences* if he/she were to lose the problem. If suspected, gently discuss these possibilities, give some examples if needed (such as, for some people, being over-weight may be protective in some way), and tap on

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what is found or on anything that is intense or holds attention. Questions like *“Is there something that you get out of having this problem?”* or *“What would happen if you didn’t have this issue any more?”* plus variations can be useful. It’s not uncommon for some clients to initially assert strongly that there is nothing at all that they get out of it. It can be useful to explain that such viewpoints are usually subconscious and that, from that viewpoint, it may seem to be “beneficial” in some way, in some context or at some level (such as for a wounded inner child). If we are holding onto something then there is some ‘benefit.’ If it’s not clear what it is, tapping intuitively on ‘maybe’s’ can help to reveal what is going on. Invite the client to also actively contribute to these possibilities. Examples: *“Maybe I need attention”* or *“Maybe it protects me in some way”* or *“Maybe it’s just a habit”* or similar. Watch closely for any “emotional spikes” and, if there is one, immediately tap on it.

If none of these work, trying again later often helps as the reversal may not be present all the time or in another location or on another day or even when facing in another direction. Removing metallic jewelry may help in some instances. Being near electromagnetic fields can mess with some people’s energy systems. Also, see the notes on “energy toxins” in Part Two.

Self acceptance

Negative self-judgement is a major source of reversal. Some of us have PhDs in self-criticism. The primary function of a self-acceptance affirmation in the Setup is *to neutralize or suspend self-judgement and self-rejection* which may be necessary before a person can make any real progress with an issue (or with all issues). The usual Setup works really well for most people, most of the time. However, some clients find a self-acceptance affirmation really hard to say or can’t connect with it as their self-judgements are heavily ingrained and thoroughly identified with. A person’s self-judgements contribute directly to that person’s self-image or concept of self.

In this circumstance, a small change in the Setup wording can sometimes make an amazing difference (but may still require persistence). Instead of saying (for example) *“Even though I have this feeling, I deeply and completely accept myself”*, change it to *“Even though a part of me has this feeling, I deeply and completely accept myself”* or *“Even though a part of me has this feeling, I completely accept myself including this part of me”* or similar.

Here’s another example. It’s good for procrastination. Start with *“Even though I don’t want to do it, I deeply and completely accept myself”*, and then change over to *“Even though a part of me doesn’t want to do it, I deeply and completely accept myself”* or *“Even though a part of me doesn’t want to do it, I accept myself including this part of me and I choose to get it done”* or similar.

This allows the person to wake up to fact that it’s *not all of him/her* that has that feeling, belief, issue or impulse. This opens the door for him/her to *disidentify* with that part of him/herself and to also accept this part of him/herself. This may be necessary before emotional healing can occur in the context of the issue being addressed.



Working with the subconscious mind

When what is currently being tapped on is going nowhere fast, it can be very useful to shift the focus by locating and tapping on a *currently manifesting emotion or feeling* or similar, and then tap on the next *right now* emotion, feeling or belief that is arising, and so forth. Using this approach often also provides access to productive daisy chains.

When a client's attention is directed towards an emotional issue, it often triggers something immediately but clients don't always consciously notice the thought, feeling or emotion that automatically happens. Ideally, it should be tapped on first as it is what the sub-conscious mind is bringing up right now. It is part of a natural healing process where the sub-conscious mind brings things up (into consciousness) that still remain in an unresolved state (so they can be processed and re-integrated).

Being able to identify what is arising now does not require being clever or thinking or analyzing. The opposite is true. It is simply observing "what is" in this moment. Some good questions to ask a client (or yourself if self-applying EFT) are: "*What are you observing now?*" or "*What are you aware of now?*" or "*What are you experiencing right now?*" and tap on whatever is identified. When a daisy chain occurs, it's the subconscious mind that brings up one thing after another.

There are huge advantages for working *with* the subconscious mind and tapping on what is now being presented (rather than ignoring it and tapping on something else). Doing this, and continuing to do it, often results in a daisy chain of "aspects" coming up in the right order for the resolution of the problem or a part thereof. Then, the same can be done again and something new emerges to tap on, and so on. Work with and listen to the sub-conscious mind, it doesn't like being ignored.

This is part one of a two part series. Part Two will discuss: Presenting and core issues, generally slow progress, helping clients to be more effective, working with negative beliefs, when there's zero intensity on everything, when EFT ceases working, when the intensity goes up (not down), the intensity appears to be less intense but the client says otherwise, when EFT doesn't work when self-applied, and energy toxins.

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