

The Brick Wall Technique

In the first week of January 2006 I received a call from Jackie (not her real name) wanting an appointment as soon as possible. She had to be taken to hospital on New Year's day suffering from acute chest pains. She said it was an angina attack because of the stress she was under from entertaining her family at their traditional New Year's gathering.

At the beginning of the session I asked Jackie to tell me what had lead up to the angina attack ([information gathering](#)). She recounted that the whole family was at her place and she felt under immense stress having to produce a big festive meal. The stress built up as she felt she couldn't cope and resulted in chest pains. The ambulance whisked her away to hospital. The doctor who examined her said there was nothing the matter with her heart and there was no physical reason for her chest pain.

I asked Jackie if there were other times in her life she had felt under stress ([getting the client to do a chronological search of events that are related - at this point I introduced the BRICK WALL exercise - see below](#)). Yes, she said that she had felt unduly stressed ALL HER LIFE ([generalized state](#)). I asked her if there was any emotional reason for her feeling that way ([identify the feelings](#)).

"No," she replied, "I always felt stressed and it is a feeling of **NOT GOOD ENOUGH**. So I asked if there were any special circumstances she felt stressed under ([looking for triggers, imprints and SPECIFIC EVENTS](#)). "No," she replied, "I always feel **NGE** and this is the prevailing feeling in my relationships, first marriage, second marriage, and third marriage! AND with my parents!" ([getting closer to the core - going back into childhood events](#)).

"What about her parents," I asked ([steering in the direction of an early trauma](#)). That's when she vehemently spat it out and surprised both of us. "I've never felt good enough since I was four years old and I'll never forgive my parents for that!" ([we had the SPECIFIC EVENT](#)).

"Do you want to tell me about it Jackie (*doing the movie technique*), as it seems quite significant? What would you rate it at out of 10?" (*get the client to rate the intensity of feelings about the event*) "10!" she replied.

Jackie said that when she was 4, she fell out of her Grandmother's apple tree and broke her arm. The hospital was a 2-hour drive away and since her parents didn't have a car, the neighbors drove them all to the hospital. At the hospital Jackie's parents told her that they would return in a few hours and take her home with them. Her parents never showed up that day and to add insult to injury, sent another friend to pick her up from the hospital the following day. She had cried when the nurses told her that her parents were not coming to get her that day. Jackie was very upset and angry with her parents for '**lying**' to her. She never forgave them for it and since then always felt that she was **NEVER GOOD ENOUGH**.

She was **NEVER GOOD ENOUGH** because she compared herself to her sister who had a life threatening disease and was hospitalized frequently. Her parents would **ALWAYS** stay at the hospital with her sister and never leave her there on her own. From Jackie's 4-year-old perspective she was obviously not good enough if her parents could abandon her at the hospital with her broken arm.

Jackie was so surprised at the intensity of her feelings as she remembered this event so vividly. However, after EFT was applied to that incident, she was amazed at how she now saw the incident with a new perspective and non-judgmental attitude towards her parents, sister and self.

The session ended with a round of tapping:

"Even though my feelings were bruised and broken I forgive my parents for not being able to keep their promise and leaving me at the hospital but they were doing the best they could under the circumstances and I didn't die because of my broken arm!"

Brick Wall Technique

Do you have clients who cannot find specific events to work on? They come in with a generalized feeling and can't seem to find any connection with

actual events. No matter how hard they try, their specific experiences are not available to them or they cannot make the connection between how they feel and early traumatic events.

I use this very simple technique which provides a structure for the client to get involved in and follow through. I call it the Brick Wall.

Let's imagine that a client complains of a general state of feeling '**Not-Good-Enough**' (**NGE**). I ask them to imagine their presenting state as if it was a big brick wall. They are invited to view this wall and notice what feelings arise from it.

Next I draw a simple illustration of a brick wall. There are a number of rows and each row has a number of bricks (like a spreadsheet). I ask them to imagine that some bricks are representations of negative events in their lives that has contributed to their generalized negative state of **NGE**. The bottom row in the wall is year one of life and the second row is year two and so on.

I ask them to label the bricks. The bricks at the bottom of the wall are obviously from earlier in life. Not all the bricks need to be labeled. I also ask the client to notice how some bricks from the lower rows are related to others in higher rows. It may be a chain of events going up the brick wall, starting from core events or early imprints from conditioning and upbringing.

What does the client need to knock down this **NGE** wall? The wall can be high, solid and unmovable. I explain the logic of removing a couple of bricks from the bottom rows thereby weakening the wall considerably.

Each brick the client treats with EFT weakens the structure of the mental schema and uncouples learned responses. The client gets to reprogram the brain by changing the biochemistry associated with the learned pattern of **NGE**.

I ask the client to imagine the bricks as events, the wall as the generalized state and EFT as the pneumatic drill, which is going to knock out the bricks, thereby weakening the wall and collapsing it. This is usually done quite effortlessly!

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