

My EFT Experience

My life was in shambles. I was in the middle of a disastrous divorce. My wife blamed the Army. My job was sitting in limbo. My youngest son was born and I was not allowed to be present. My diagnosis of PTSD only made things more difficult. I had angry outbursts, migraines, nightmares, flashbacks, and bouts of depression regularly. My mind and my body began suffering from the affects of the VA medicines (i.e. lack of sexual libido, weak and dizzy in the morning hours, and vertigo every time I blinked my eyes. I had no emotions or compassion anymore. I was falling apart with no hope to gaining control again. Thoughts of suicide entered my mind daily. All I had were my combat memories. I felt alone.

In a desperate attempt to save myself, I reached out to an article writer who specialized in holistic alternatives to the anti-depressants and other mood-controlling drugs I was taking. I pleaded my case to him in hopes to get help. His response to my request was the Veteran's Stress Project and he passed forward my appeal for help. This was the first sign of help I had received. Marilyn McWilliams contacted me shortly thereafter and we began the process.

I believe the mind is a very powerful tool; however, I was not prepared for what was defined to me as a therapy. Repeating words, pressure points, tapping...how could this help me? Skeptical is an understatement to what was going through my mind. It was this or the end of a rope...I chose life (a big step for me).

After a few short electronic communications from Marilyn, she began calling me. Each time she called me, she presented me more information as to what the project offers. I began to explore the thought of attempting this EFT psychobabble therapy. What did I have to lose? Besides, it was free, and I was rock bottom broke at the time anyway. She pleaded her case very well, and we began, together, to take the first steps to save my life.

I was in Texas, she was in Oregon, and our only forms of communication were electronic and telephonic. She explained to me the application of Skype and how to set up an account, how to navigate the site and, most importantly, how to communicate through this medium. We scheduled our first face-to-face appointment via Skype. I was dreading this meeting. I ignored Marilyn on how the process works, what will be asked of me, and how I may feel during this process. All I thought about was re-living horrible memories repeatedly.

I broke my neck in Iraq and had suffered from excruciating migraines, sometimes as many as three a day, ever since. On a scale from 1 to 10, and 10 being the most horrible pain imaginable, I had a 10-size migraine for our first session. Marilyn's first priority was to prove to a skeptic that the EFT works on everything...even migraines. "Whatever, let us get this over with so I can swallow a bottle of Excedrin Migraine and go to sleep!"

Within 10 minutes, I was a believer! For the first time in five and-a-half years, I was migraine-free! Amazing! Her Vulcan mind meld and voodoo witchcraft worked on me, and I wanted more. We began to work on one of my top five worst experiences.

I made the mistake in assuming I could wipe it from my memory, but Marilyn corrected me quickly and explained that the memory will always be there; however, my reaction to my combat experiences will never be the same. My fear did come true...I had to tell a story. Marilyn let me tell it at my pace. In some spots of the story, it was just a single statement before we would tap through the sentence using EFT. We stopped every time I began to feel an emotional or physical response to my story and tapped. The process was long, and it is hard to imagine the amount of energy I used. Closer toward the end, I could not control the yawning. Marilyn assured me that the yawning is expected as a positive reaction to the success of EFT.

The session was scheduled for 60 minutes, but she stayed with me as long as it took to meet the session's goals. I was drained. I fell asleep that night easily and stayed asleep for more than two hours, which was unheard of for me at the time. I felt a difference the next morning in my memory of the story I told. Funny thing, it was just a memory now, not a living nightmare. I felt free for the first time in years. I was already excited for the next week's session.

My homework assignment for the week was to continue practicing tapping. I tapped at every onset of a migraine. I have not experienced a severe migraine since. I used tapping to help me calm down when I got upset or became anxious. I used tapping to control my attitude. I used tapping every time I was depressed. It was a very busy week for me, but it was absolutely worth every success I gained.

Marilyn and I continued for five more sessions over the next several months. She taught me how to proceed with my EFT outside of our sessions. I took advantage of it, and I no longer considered it homework. As each session was completed, I felt more comfortable with EFT and got to where I could begin tapping on what I considered more life altering events. I started small and worked my way to the bigger, more emotionally charged memories. I was doing it! These emotions were just memories now. I remember how I used to feel when I recalled these events, but I do not feel them anymore.

The day arrived where I was going to tap on my worst memory yet. This was the memory that put me over the top. This event changed my life forever; it caused me to retreat into myself, it cost me my personality, my marriage, my job, and worse, my children. Again, I was dreading this day, but we did it. We removed my emotional response to the memory that had haunted me for over six years. That was the first time I ever spoke about what happened that horrible day in Iraq. Marilyn, again, allowed me to take charge. We tore the story apart and tapped every chance we could. We missed nothing that night...not even the smallest detail. We did it!

I have completed my six sessions with the Veteran Stress Project, but I still receive notes from Marilyn. I also send her updates about me. Because of the Veteran Stress Project and EFT, I can sleep at night without the aid of sleeping pills. I have only had two migraines of low intensity in the past eleven months. I am no longer on anti-depressants; I am engaged to a very beautiful young woman; My ex-wife allows my boys extended stays with me; I have a great job; I lost 40lbs; I have friends; and the best of all, I have my life back! For the first time since my combat days ended, I can share my stories with my loved ones without the fear of my own emotional responses. I now have the ability to face my past and my memories with confidence and security that I will be safe and comfortable.

I completed assessments at the beginning, after my third EFT session, and again after my final session. The results are listed below. Compare these numbers to the first assessment.

	Before 1 st Session	After 3 rd Session	After 6 th Session	% of Improvement within the range of possible scores
PCL-M (possible scores: 17 to 85)	80	62	28	83%
ISI (possible scores: 0 to 28)	28	28	2	93%
SA-45 (possible scores: 45 to 225)	153	123	59	87%

On the PCL-M (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist, Military) scores of over 49 indicate PTSD. Because of the Veteran Stress Project, I am not a victim of PTSD anymore. On the ISI (Insomnia Severity Index) a score of over 21 indicates “severe clinical insomnia.” I am no longer an insomniac. The proof exists in the numbers.

I continue to use EFT as a means to defuse stressful memories and other activities that may cause me discomfort or an emotional response. I do not hesitate to share my experiences with EFT to other veterans. I have spoken of the Veteran Stress Project in my VA PTSD group sessions and to the VA counselors as a means to end the pain and suffering of veterans everywhere. I wish to “pay it forward” about my experiences with EFT. I have discovered that the intent of the Veteran’s Stress Project is to continue to offer sessions at no cost to the veteran. I find this amazing; especially considering all of the project counselors are volunteering their personal time to help veterans in need. The more veterans to sign up for the project, the more evidence will be available to encourage the VA to incorporate the EFT tapping as a holistic healing process for the masses.

Thank you Veteran Stress Project. Thank you EFT. Moreover, most notably to me, thank you Marilyn, you saved my life! When asked how I feel, my only response is, “I’m free!”

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