



Tap for Breathing and Change Your Life

Rue Hass details the connection between how we breathe and our level of pain. She ends with a Tap Along for improving your breathing – and thereby decreasing your pain.

Take a moment to think of some difficulty in your life. A really stressful situation, something that makes you feel anxious or nervous or scared. Or remember how it feels when someone asks you a question directly (like the teacher used to...).

Now notice how you are breathing. You might even take a deep breath and rate it 0-10, with 10 being all the way down to your toes, and 0 meaning...well, you wouldn't be reading this and be at a 0!

Maybe you have already noticed that when you are stressed or scared you stop breathing, or breathe really shallowly. People in the healing professions who are open to expanding and deepening their thinking are noticing that stress, tension, pain and illness are deeply related.

John E. Sarno, MD, is the controversial author of 3 books that propose the theory that most pain is triggered by psychological origins instead of by a physiological defect.

Sarno says:

What has been clear right from the beginning is that people [in pain] were responding to stressful situations in their lives. Even more interesting, people were responding to the pressures and the stresses that they put on themselves. I came to realize that people who tend to be perfectionists —that is, hard-working, conscientious, ambitious, success-oriented, driven, and so on—that this type of personality was highly susceptible to TMS. [TMS is Sarno's term for pain caused by tension, stress, and shallow breathing]

Later, I realized that there is another kind of self-induced pressure, and that is the need to be a good person. This is the need to please people, to want to be liked, to want to be approved of. This, too, like the pressure to excel or to be a perfectionist, is a pressure and seemed to play a big role...

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/478840>

“A reduction in local blood supply resulted in reduced oxygen to the muscles and nerves, which appeared to be the direct cause of muscle and nerve pain.”

--Dr. John

Sarno, *Mind Over Back Pain*

EFT Founding Masters

Multiplying the Power of EFT



"...You hate your job and your back hurts. You think the pain comes from an old sports injury. According to Sarno, the problem probably is psychological. The back heals quickly. It is resilient. Your pain, especially if you are a perfectionist or Type A Personality, might be the physical manifestation of job hatred."

--Blogger Joe Donatelli, describing how reading Sarno's books healed his back pain.

Tapping for breathing can be a profound way to begin to change how we hold a difficult situation and even how we hold our very lives. Sometimes tapping for breathing is the best way to begin an EFT session when there is a lot going on and you don't know where to start.

I worked with Cindy recently. Cindy described herself as having shut down in most areas of her life, just to survive. She was feeling like doing this EFT work was her last resort.

She had some pretty consistent negative self-talk going on inside.

Her constant refrain was, "You're an idiot. You can't do anything right."

She thought it was her own voice.

But when I asked her about her family, Cindy had said, "Very dysfunctional family. My mother was bent on destroying everyone she came into contact with and she pretty much succeeded."

Hmm...I wonder if there was any connection...

I asked how it made her feel to repeat these statements. "I feel a heavy weight on my shoulders, I am all hunched over, my breathing is shallow - in fact I am hardly breathing, I close in on myself, I curl up.

There is no place for my breath to go to."

Cindy had been experiencing many physical ailments. Again...any connection?

When we began to tap together, at first it made her breathing worse, shallower and painful. She realized that opening up, even with breathing, was feeling way too scary, and even the thought made her close down even further. I realized that just the idea of opening her breathing had triggered the "fight-flight-freeze" part of her brain (in the amygdale, a part of the limbic system).

We "lowered the bar," so to speak, to find the lowest level of change that would fly below the radar of those inner, unconscious guards, established in her dangerous childhood, who stood ready to close down Cindy's system—even kill it, in order to protect her.

Approaching our tapping very gently and slowly worked for Cindy. She began to say things like: "I feel funny in myself. In my lungs. Excited... but fighting it at the same time."



We worked with this profound conflict in her, honoring the part of her that wanted to breathe, to survive, as well as the part of her that thought the only way to survive was to shut down and *not* breathe - not take up space - not be noticed - not feel anything.

We will continue this slow gentle approach to opening up in our future sessions. I am imagining that as she is able to open her chest, and uncurl, and breathe deeply, much will change in her life before we even get into the actual emotional issues and negative self talk that have plagued her.

Another client, Joan, has a diagnosis of “social anxiety.” This is an actual medical diagnosis. One [medical website](#) describes it this way:

...an intense and persistent fear of being scrutinized by others or of doing something embarrassing. Even though they may find their own anxiety unreasonable, they can't overcome it by themselves.

Forcing themselves to enter social situations can go something like this: anxiety before the encounter, intense discomfort during it, and worry afterward about how they were judged.

In Joan’s case, she also has had many physical issues. She said her parents were Scandinavian “stoic” when it came to emotions, although her mother seemed constantly angry, judgmental, depressed and, “somewhat rude to me.”

In our previous session Joan had talked about an incident when she was humiliated and shamed in a classroom situation, and how she thought that had been the beginning of her subsequent panic attacks/social anxiety. Breathing exercises had been recommended for her.

“But breathing deeply was a sign of weakness in my family,” she said.

“No one ever said, ‘Oh, relax and take a deep breath—it will be OK.’ You were not supposed to ask for help or even to need any help. You were just supposed to *know*. In fact, body issues altogether were a non-subject. Like it was bad, and disgusting, and kind of disgraceful to have a body. Breathing was a physical issue, therefore to be ignored.”

When I talked with Joan about breathing and oxygen and pain and health, she said, “Oh! I need to apologize to my cells!” I liked that!

We tapped for that shaming incident, using phrases around breathing to amplify the second half of the EFT set-up. Many insights and connections came to her mind as Joan tapped for how her body froze and her breathing had stopped in this incident of being humiliated in school.

Here is some breathing-tapping for you.

- Choose one or two of the ‘even though’ phrases in the first section for each round of tapping. (Selections are taken from the two case examples above.)
- Pair your chosen phrase with “I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”

EFT Founding Masters

Multiplying the Power of EFT



- Add one of the phrases in the second section.
- OR create your own relevant phrases to tap on

Even though...

*...I have always been told that I was "thin-skinned" and as a young child that I was shy
...I have tried to compensate for this by toughening up
...I tried to be accepted and "fit" into the world
...I got reinforcement for this through "she has finally come out of her shell"...
...I interpreted that as a good thing
...there have been many times that I felt that I was missing the essence of myself
...I ignored these feelings because they weren't safe in my world.
...I know that the person that I have been portraying is not me...
...I am not sure who I really can be
...I fear for myself if I continue to portray who my friends and family want me to be
...I fear that if I become who I believe I really am, I will lose the respect and love of my family and friends
... they subtly let me know that I'm "weird"
...I feel all this in my body as weighted down shoulders, hunching over, closing in on my self, curling up, there is no place for my breath to be...*

I deeply and completely love and accept myself, and...

*I apologize to my cells!
I want to change this old story.
In my case breathing deeply is a sign of strength!
I am relying on myself.
I support my body.
I really appreciate my lungs.
I am sending oxygen to all those parts of me that never got enough. They deserve this!
I have the right to breathe.
I want to be me. I want to fit into myself!
I am coming out of my shell and emerging into the butterfly of myself!*

Now tap 7 to 10 times on each tapping point. Forgotten the process?

<http://eft4powerpoint.com/LearnEFT/index.html>

Let this be the beginning of breathing life into who you really are!

I will be exploring other new ways to apply spiritual principles to healing old beliefs at the next Tapping at Sunrise retreat in Colorado August 2010.

Learn more: <http://eftevents.com/colorado.htm>

[Visit Rue's website](#) and receive a free ebook , "Stuffed Feelings: Tapping for What You Couldn't Say"