



## WELCOME TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGY

*By Dr. Chance T. Eaton*

Several weeks ago one of my leadership development students asked me why the topic of stress wasn't a foundational topic in our studies. I pondered this for a moment and asked why he felt it should be. He said his ability to be a high performer was constantly dragged down by the myriad of life activities, some small but cumulative, some large and unchanging. Recently he had interviewed for a position in his company, and when the panel asked if he had any questions for them, which included several of the company's leaders, he asked what they did to manage stress. Not sure if I could see myself asking this question in an interview, but I was eager to hear how they responded. According to my student, one leader said they simply shut the stress off when they left the building, and another commented on their ability to manage the issues as they arose. Being very familiar with the interview panel, he told me that he knew these responses were not true; one of the leaders he said drank like a fish, another suffered from emotional exhaustion. His point was that stress is such a powerful reality to how we work, yet our leaders can't even admit that they struggle with stress and resort to responses that sound leadership-esque. He made me rethink why stress management isn't a core topic in leadership studies, and I must agree with him in that it needs to be.

Personally, I am never very satisfied with the numerous and generic stress management techniques we are taught in the workplace; eat well, affirmations, walk, socialize, rest – but none of them successfully to get to the heart of issues, they are simply coping mechanisms. As such, they have limited value in preparing leaders for the challenges they must face. I think it is an ideal time to introduce to the American workplace real solutions that go beyond coping, and get to the heart of the matter.

### Emotional Freedom Technique

One technique that has taken the field of psychology by storm is Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), with origins in modern psychology and the ancient science of acupuncture (Church, 2013). EFT is a self-administered talk + acupressure technique, which you can use to relieve negative emotions, physical pains and ailments, and more easily adjust to your dominate intentions.

One popular theory on how EFT works relates to natural biological mechanisms. It suggests that the acupoints found on the body have a high concentration of mechanoreceptors, which are partly responsible for sending signal directly to the stress centers of the mid-brain.

By accessing the mid-brain directly through the acupressure system, we are calming the fight/flight/freeze response. Essentially what is happening when a person uses EFT is they are verbally expressing a distress, and simultaneously tapping on acupressure points; which in turn signals to the mid-brain's stress centers that you are safe. As a result, the mind recontextualizes the distress into relief.

## Research

EFT has been researched by a number of institutions, including Harvard Medical School, Berkley, Walter Reed Military Medical Center, Texas A&M, and JFK University. There is a growing body of evidence around energy psychology. A critical review of 51 peer-reviewed clinical outcome reports and systematic studies of EFT led to the following statements in the American Psychological Association journal, *Review of General Psychology*:

"A literature search identified 51 peer-reviewed papers that report or investigate clinical outcomes following the tapping of acupuncture points to address psychological issues. The 18 randomized controlled trials in this sample were critically evaluated for design quality, leading to the conclusion that they consistently demonstrated strong effect sizes and other positive statistical results that far exceed chance after relatively few treatment sessions. Criteria for evidence-based treatments proposed by Division 12 of the American Psychological Association were also applied and found to be met for a number of conditions, including PTSD" (Feinstein, 2012). Although research in the field of energy psychology is in the early stages, according to Clinical Psychologist, David Feinstein (2008), the field has reached the minimum threshold for being designated as an evidence-based treatment, meeting the American Psychological Association Division 12 criteria.

## Use for Work

EFT is an amazing tool to use in the workplace. You simply identify the specific issue you are dealing with, assign a Subjective Unit of Distress (SUD), and begin tapping on the scripted acupressure points while verbally and emotionally getting in tune with the problem (see instructions below). Providing you follow the method correctly, and be very specific in your topics, I have found over the years that my clients have received significant reductions in stress regarding the particular issue. Following are some of the issues I've helped clients with over the years using EFT.

- Difficult working with supervisor or colleague
- Procrastination
- Overwhelm with work load
- Office politics
- Increased productivity demands
- Job insecurity

- Decision making
- Unstructured tasks
- Family-Work balance
- Meeting target deadlines
- Lack of control over day
- Others not pulling weight
- Testy clients

- Pressure from management
- Work interruptions
- Work bullying
- Lack of support from colleagues
- Lack of job satisfaction
- Feeling undervalued
- Toxic co-worker

To deal with such situations, I take the client through the protocol seen below. We identify very specific issues, score the distress level, tap through the points, and re-score. This nearly always leads to deeper issues found in the values, beliefs, and memories. Once the stress + memory response is identified and the mind recognizes that the threat no longer exists, relief and freedom become a reality.

### ***Step 1: Identify the problem***

Be it physical or emotional, identify the problem specifically.

### ***Step 2: Determine an Intensity Level***

Determine a Subjective Unit of Distress (SUD), using a scale of 1-10. 1 means that the pain is very minimal, and 10 means it is worthy of going to the ER. Remember to consider how it feels right now. If you don't really know what the score is, simply guess, and write down the number.

### Step 3: Setup

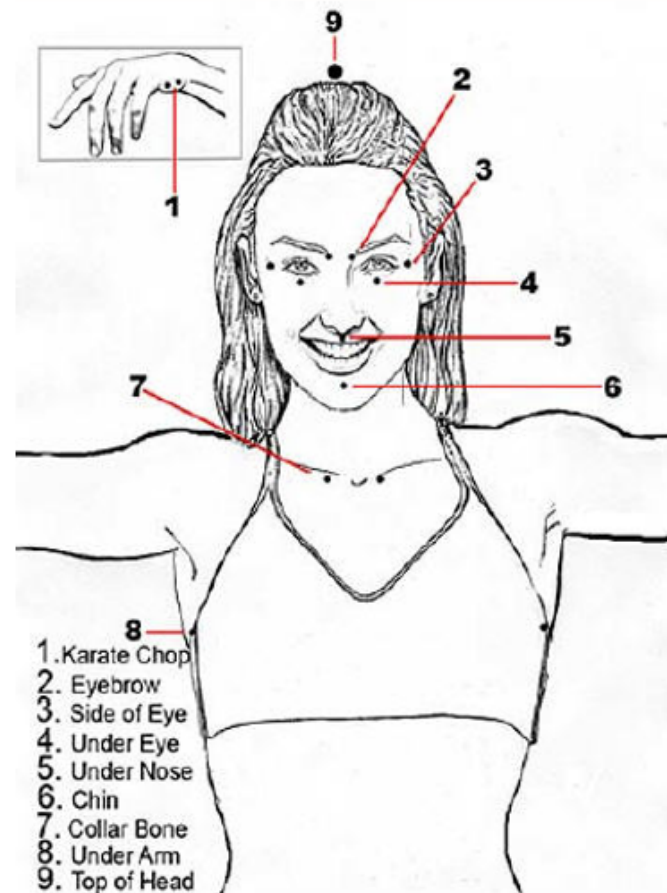
While tapping on the Karate Chop Point on the side of the hand, say the following statement: “Even though I have this (problem), I deeply and completely accept myself anyway.” You are stating the problem followed by a statement of acceptance or affirmation.

### Step 4: Reminder Phrase

While remaining highly focused and tuned into problem, state the problem out loud or in mind, while tapping on each point 6-8 times.

### Step 5: Re-score your intensity level

Finally, re-score your Subjective Unit of Distress (SUD) on the same scale of 1-10. How much does the problem bother you now? What new thoughts appears, what new emotions became noticeable, where do you feel it in your body? You can re-test by imagining or presenting the issue again.



\*Continue to tap until your emotion gets down to a 2. If this is taking more than a few rounds, I recommend you download the free EFT Mini-Manual, work with an EFT practitioner, or properly learn Clinical EFT at [www.EFTUniverse.com](http://www.EFTUniverse.com)

### Moving Forward

EFT is an amazing tool for effective leaders to learn. Whereas most stress management techniques only provide temporary relief because they are coping tools, EFT gets right to the heart of the issue. Though it may look untraditional, it is important to understand that the EFT is nothing more than a self-administered, physical, and cognitive technique that calms the mid-brain's stress center, allowing for greater awareness, resilience, and confidence. I strongly advise anyone reading this article to visit the resources site at [www.EFTUniverse.com](http://www.EFTUniverse.com) to learn more.

Highly effective people demonstrate resilience, self-efficacy, optimism, and hope. To do so, stress has to be understood, appreciated, and managed. People don't look to stressed people for influence – they look to those who are strong enough to move through life with confidence and fluidity; they look to leaders. As I learned from my student, stress management is most definitely a foundational and core leadership topic.

*Church, D. (2013). The EFT Manual. Fulton, CA: Energy Psychology Press.*

*Feinstein, D. (2012). Acupoint stimulation in treating psychological disorders: Evidence of efficacy. Review of General Psychology, 16, 4, 364-380.*



*Dr. Chance Eaton has over a decade's worth of experience working in the field of Education & Organizational Development. Due to his unique educational and work experiences in finance, psychology, leadership & management, education, noetic sciences, and agriculture, Dr. Eaton provides his clients with relevant business solutions grounded in theory and research. To learn more about Dr. Eaton's services, please visit [www.HRSolutionsInternational.com](http://www.HRSolutionsInternational.com).*