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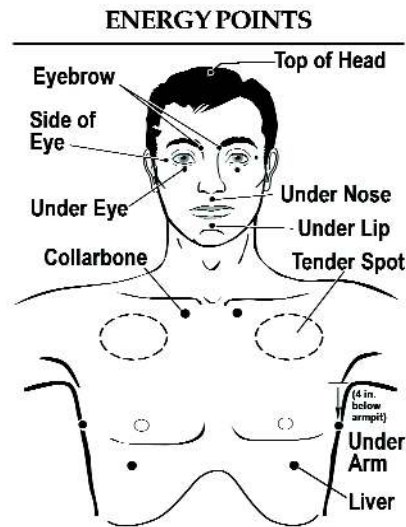
January 2011

£3.50



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Turning On The Tap

By Sean Gray

I really enjoyed Neil Snow's feature 'Test Nerves' in September's issue of adiNEWS. After all, it is an area of life that affects our industry perhaps more than others, whether as trainee instructors trying to qualify, or for our pupils. Neil covered many important points and interesting areas of why we get nervous and how we can deal with it. However, one area he didn't mention is a therapy called Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), which can be used alongside conventional ways of dealing with stress and, I feel, is ideal for helping learner drivers and trainee driving instructors deal with the emotional pressure of taking a test, as well as being a potential remedy for many other conditions.

EFT can erase negative thinking (self-doubt and anxiety) change limiting beliefs and help you be calm, focused and trust yourself under pressure. However, there is a catch - it can look a bit odd. But if you are open to new ideas and want to be a qualified driver, I honestly believe it can help.

I know many people reading this will probably think it is yet another airy fairy new age idea a bit like the power of crystals or rearranging your furniture in a particular way. After all, there is no clear scientific explanation of how the EFT procedure works. But read on – I am not trying to convert you, I am just suggesting something that I believe is definitely worth trying, and is dead simple to use. Skeptics acknowledge that EFT appears to be effective, but point out that as the procedure involves some psychological techniques akin to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), it might be that those approaches produce the results. But in surveys of professional and lay users of EFT, experienced CBT therapists who introduced 'tapping' into their work

stated that the addition of EFT significantly enhanced the effectiveness of their therapeutic interventions. The common explanation of how EFT works, adopted by many holistic practitioners, relies on the belief in our body's 'energy system' originating in traditional Chinese medicine. It is thought that the energy – known across various cultures as chi, prana, life force, etc – runs through meridians or channels through our body. When we are not well, cannot cope with everyday problems, over-react to situations or self-sabotage, it is said that the energy is out of balance in our body. EFT is said to restore the balance in the meridian system in relation to a specific problem or issue. Argentinean Dr Andrade conducted EFT trials with thousands of anxiety patients. He proposed a neurological explanation of how EFT and related techniques could work. The tapping, or other types of pressure, on acupuncture points stimulates mechanoreceptors in our skin. These points have been shown to have a high concentration of mechanoreceptors and free nerve

endings. The signal generated when tapping eventually reaches specific locations in the brain, such as the amygdala, hippocampus, and other structures where the emotional problem is thought to 'reside', and the signal seemingly disrupts established patterns. Enhanced secretion of serotonin, one of the 'feel-good' hormones, also correlates with tapping specific points, a well researched aspect of acupuncture (Feinstein 2005). Russian psychotherapist Oksana Korsunova suggests another explanation of the efficacy of EFT. She proposes that tapping on the points combined with the mental focus on the issue helps to balance the activity of sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, with the former involved with the 'fight or flight' response, and the latter linked with rest, calm and relaxation. One of the most valuable features of EFT is that, after just a brief introduction, people can use the technique on their own.

Learning By Experience

Just before Christmas five years ago I sat on the stairs of my house talking to my sister on the phone. I

was feeling sorry for myself as I had just injured my back coaching tennis and was going to be unable to work for a week or so. She suggested I try this new tapping technique to lessen the pain. I have always been open minded to alternative ways of healing, however talking on the phone to my sister who lives over 200 miles away, at the same time as tapping various points on my head and body, whilst focusing on the intense pain in my back, seemed bizarre to say the least! But three days later, with my back healed, I was able to coach again. Surprised and inspired by the speed of my recovery, I trained as an EFT practitioner.

Can It Really Make A Difference?

When a learner driver is about to take their test often their biggest challenge is dealing with the emotional pressure of the occasion, fear of failure, letting themselves down, self doubt etc. These negative emotions are often stored in our sub-conscious, outside of our awareness, until pressure triggers the fight or flight response in our body - feeling sick, dry mouth, muddled thinking,

tense tight muscles, shaking. It is the same for a golfer standing over an important putt and worried about missing, or the musician about to play a solo but haunted by the memory of the last time they played it and missed some notes. Conventional ways of dealing with performance anxiety - deep breathing, positive thinking, visualisation, more practice etc - often struggle to deal with the body's physical response. The problem is, especially taking your driving test, what happens when you have tried all of these methods and the nerves are still jangling? Well this is where I believe EFT has the potential to help, because it addresses the missing piece in the positive thinking psychology; the power of the sub-conscious mind. Positive thinking comes from the conscious mind, but it is the sub-conscious programming that frequently runs our life. So unless we address the subconsciously held beliefs, positive thinking cannot yield the lasting results we desire. EFT is a simple and highly effective tool to identify and release unconsciously held beliefs.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Tapping on acupressure points

EFT or 'tapping' is a form of acupuncture. Instead of using needles we tap on well established meridian points on the body, whilst focusing on the problem – the negative emotion – in order to clear it. The technique is simple, safe, and powerful, and can be used subtly just when a learner driver/performer needs it. What's more, you don't actually have to believe in it for it to work!

Seven Easy Steps EFT Tapping points - Shortcut Method*

1. Identify a negative issue, for example, think of how you feel on the day of your driving test. What are the strongest emotions, e.g. the fear of failure?
2. Measure how intense the issue feels now on a scale of 0-10 (0 feel fine, 10 high level of intensity).
3. Tap on the body's acupressure points.
4. Take a deep breath.
5. Rate the intensity level again, you should experience a drop in intensity, sometimes it can go straight to a zero after one round of tapping.
- 6) Perform additional rounds of tapping (if needed).
- 7) When you feel the level of negative emotion has lowered and

you feel calmer, focus on the positive: how you would like to drive on your test, calm, confident. Tap through again, focusing on those feelings.

Once the negative emotion and limiting belief have been cleared, positive affirmations can take hold more effectively, and with the competition eliminated, it is easier for the mind to accept.

It doesn't matter how long ago the negative experience happened, how many other experiences are stored in your subconscious or how intense the negative emotion is, incredibly, using EFT, we are able to focus on each specific event, scale the amount of negative emotion the driver /performer attaches to it, tap on the body's energy meridian points and clear it. Whilst the memory remains, its destructive negative charge has gone, leaving the mind free to focus on how you want to perform/drive.

OK, this might seem a little 'New Age', but initial concerns are soon forgotten when the nerves fade. Any limiting belief for past bad experience that has been holding you back can be eliminated, increasing your performance in everything from professional sports and exams, to driving tests.

Taking My Part Three ADI Test

I qualified as a driving instructor about nine years ago. I passed my original driving test on my first attempt, but I have experienced the stress of taking a test and failing - it took me five attempts to pass my Part 3! After failing a couple of times, the pressure to support a young family was riding on me passing my third and final attempt. I tried the conventional ways of coping with stress, but as the day of the test arrived I could feel myself panicking, the fear of failure was strong, self doubt was beginning to creep in, I found it difficult to focus, stay in the moment and couldn't stop my leg from shaking. Still, I felt the test went reasonably well considering how I felt, but I sensed I was in trouble as we arrived back in the test centre and the examiner said: 'Let's put the kettle on.'

As you can imagine, it wasn't easy to tell my wife the bad news, especially as she had come to the test centre with my children to 'celebrate'. Ironically, the name of my examiner was Peter Pass. I decided to apply and do the whole thing again, sought more training, practised hard, yet failed

again! I began to feel I might never pass (I am sure this is how a number of learner drivers feel if they keep on failing), but fortunately I passed on my fifth attempt after a great deal of expense, time and hardship. I am positive, from what I know now, that EFT would have helped me pass my Part 3 exam much sooner by:

- Dealing with pre-test nerves, feeling sick, fearful, releasing the tension from my muscles.
- Freeing me from any limiting beliefs.
- Eliminating from my sub-conscious the negative effect of past bad experiences
- Helping me to stay focused; trusting myself to be calm, confident and take control.
- Allowing that subconscious side of me that knew what to do to get on with it.

Your Pupils

The biggest challenge for a learner driver is dealing with the emotional pressure and the resulting physical effect this has on their body. I have found EFT can help in three crucial areas by assisting pupils to deal with:

- **The past**-any negative experiences, failed tests, not feeling good enough, bad experiences, any limiting beliefs.
- **The present** - to help your pupils achieve their goals, by helping pupils develop the habit of staying in the moment, trusting themselves and keeping calm if they make mistakes.
- **The future** - helping pupils deal with the fear of taking their test, what examiner they might get, the fear of the unknown, the worry of nerves getting the better of them.

Having a simple technique that can consistently address fears and negative emotion, drivers will be able to accelerate the rate at which they learn, enjoy the learning process more because they will feel more relaxed and confident, and spend less money on lessons. This then leads to a higher pass rate for instructors.

Mumbo Jumbo

I know many, if not all, of you reading this will be thinking I live two stops on from Barking. I would probably have felt the same way before I experienced its success for myself, as I have described above. But if you do a little research, there are so many success stories, from professional stage artists and sportsmen, to soldiers returning

from war zones with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This morning I received this from someone learning to drive who'd seen my video on the internet, tried it, couldn't believe the success and felt she had to email me: 'Thanks for your help Sean...at the ripe old age of 43 I've managed to pass my driving test using your EFT video as a tool to eliminate my fear and nerves of the test situation. I wasn't scared or anxious at all, in fact my friends were all surprised as they said that they would be scared if they had to sit their tests again!! I was confident, calm and positive. Thanks again Sean - your video was exactly what I needed, now I'm looking for another challenge to tap on.'

I can't guarantee it will work for everyone, but it seems to have a high success rate for those willing to bury prejudices and try it.

Let Me Prove It

I would be happy to work with a select number of learners whose instructors feel they are more than capable of passing their test but often get paralysed by nerves. Or perhaps you are about to take your Part 3, and maybe you've already failed once because of nerves and stress. Location is no problem because I can hold EFT sessions over the phone or on Skype.

Think of it as an experiment, and we can look at the results in another issue of adiNEWS to see how you or your pupils got on. As they say, the proof of the pudding is in the tapping. If you are interested in taking part, please send your details to the usual addresses on page 3 with the heading 'Tapping', and I will select a random sample to contact – you've got nothing to lose, but everything to gain. As Neil Snow's feature 'Test Nerves' stated: 'there is no magic cure for nerves'. However, here is a simple technique that can lessen, often erase, the destructive power of negative emotion and change limiting beliefs.

Sean Grey is a practicing ADI and trained performance coach. You can find out more by going to www.stagefrightfreedom.com

***There is a video of the EFT Tapping points on Sean's website [adi](#)**