

Points for Emotions

from Trauma Healing and Transformation, Chapter 3, p. 56-61
—Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D.

Thought Field Therapy (TFT) is a highly effective body-mind-spirit tool developed by clinical psychologist Roger Callahan, Ph.D., for use with trauma and addictive behaviors. Thought Field Therapy combines the meridian system of energy with field theory based on the work of Rupert Sheldrake. Thought fields are the complex of forces affecting our human behavior. According to Callahan, our problems and negative emotions are not fundamentally in the brain or nervous system, but in the thought field. Recalling images and memories of events that happened long ago has the capacity to trigger upset or negative emotions in the present moment. With traumatic stress, a person often continues to live caught in the past and in the memories of the trauma. Callahan calls these thoughts “perturbations” because they can perturb or cause upset. Callahan’s protocol, using acupressure points and eye movements, “collapses” or changes the “perturbation”, so that the thought no longer upsets.

The protocol has been used with thousands of people internationally as a simple fast means to help people suffering from trauma. I have used the protocol with many people in Central America and in different parts of the U.S. The protocol may be used on oneself or may be used with another person who has strong feelings or memories from traumatic experience. The protocol does not change the reality in which the person lives, but it does change the way the person reacts to or views their reality. The result is that the person can remember difficult moments of the past, but without the emotional charge. With permission from Dr. Callahan the protocol is offered here.

Thought Field Therapy Protocol

The TFT protocol can be used on oneself, can be facilitated one-on-one with another person, or can be used with an entire group. The protocol is unusual, so it is helpful to give an introduction to the theory behind the practice to help people feel confident in the process. The following is a simple way to explain the concept of “perturbation” in the thought field that refers to participants’ human experience.

Simple Explanation for Groups

Often we are plagued with overwhelming thoughts, fears and worries that feel like something is buzzing around our head. This feels kind of like the flies buzzing around “Pigpen” the character in the comic strip “Peanuts”. When we think of these problems and worries we are often filled with fear and anxiety. The TFT protocol consists of holding the thought of a problem or “perturbation” while tapping acupressure points connected with negative emotions to get the energy flowing. To see if there is any change in how the thought is affecting you, I will ask you to measure the level of anxiety you feel when thinking about the problem. We will use a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means the worst you can feel, and 1 means there is no trace of the problem. At different times after doing the protocol, I will again have you measure how you are feeling. We will repeat the protocol a number of times until the anxiety is gone or almost gone. Often when you reach a level of 1 (no trace of a problem) it

will stay that way and you will no longer be bothered with the thought. You will be able to remember the problem, but without the negative emotion and anxiety. With time if the anxiety returns, it is often much less. You can repeat the protocol whenever you need to again work with the thought.

In practicing with the protocol, suggest that participants work with a simple problem, a fear or an anxiety, rather than the problem of their life, so that they can more readily learn the process. They can work with larger problems once they have mastered the process. Demonstrate each part of the protocol for participants showing the location of each of the acupressure points, as well as modeling the eye movements. After all of the parts of the protocol have been well explained and demonstrated, lead the protocol a number of times with the participants working on a problem of their own. After participants have worked on their own problem, you can invite them to practice with one other person so that they have the opportunity of guiding the process with another. As they are working in pairs circulate among the group to answer any questions that might arise in the practice.

It is important to explain to participants that the protocol does not involve a counseling session with the other person. When the person thinks of their problem or concern, they need not share what is disturbing them. All that is necessary is to guide the person in measuring the level of anxiety or negative emotion connected with the thought. The person can write down or tell the number they associate with the level of anxiety, so that their process can be monitored. Repeat the process a number of times until the level of anxiety has reached 1 or 2. Ask the person if they feel finished when they have reached that number, or if there is any other concern that they want to address.

Thought Field Therapy Protocol

Part 1—Measure the Level of Discomfort Connected with a Problem

Think of a problem that you currently have and measure on a scale of 1 to 10 how strongly thinking of the problem affects you. 10 means the worst you can feel; 1 means there is no trace of the problem. Write down the number so you can remember what you felt like.

Part 2—Tapping Acupressure points

You will now tap four sets of acupressure points that are connected with moving the energy of negative emotions. Tap firmly with your fingers each set of points 5 to 7 times to stimulate the energy flow, but not to hurt or bruise yourself.

Points:

- 1) At the beginning of the eyebrow above the bridge of the nose.
- 2) Under the eye about an inch below the eyeball on the bone of the orbit high on the cheek.
- 3) Under the arm, about 4 inches below the armpit. Tap with the knuckles of the index fingers.
- 4) Below the throat, about an inch under collar bone on either side of the sternum.

After tapping the 4 sets of acupressure points, again think about the problem and measure the level of distress using the scale of 1 to 10 to see if there is any change.

Part 3—The Nine Gamut Treatments with the Gamut Point

Find the “gamut point” on the top back of your non-dominant hand. Make a fist with this hand. Place your index finger of the dominant hand in the valley between the knuckles of the little finger and ring finger. Move your index finger about an inch back toward the wrist to find the “gamut point”. Tap this point about 3 to 5 times per second. Continue tapping while going through the nine procedures that follow. Tap about 5 to 6 times for each of the steps. It is crucial to tap the gamut point throughout the nine steps.

- Open your eyes.
- Close your eyes.
- Open your eyes and look down to the left.
- Look down to the right.
- Whirl your eyes in a circle in one direction.
- Whirl your eyes in the opposite direction and then rest your eyes.
- Hum a few bars of a tune (more than one note).
- Count from one to five.
- Hum a few bars again.

Measure again the level of anxiety on the scale from 1 to 10.

Often at this point the number has decreased to 2 or 3 with a much lower level of upset. Repeat the entire protocol, Parts 2 and 3 (pp. 58-59), until the level of disturbance measures 1 or 2.

Part 4—Floor to Ceiling Eye Roll

The floor to ceiling eye roll is performed at the end of a successful series of movements. The person usually reports that the level of disturbance is down to a 1 or 2. This movement solidifies the work. Tap the gamut point on the back of the hand while the head is held level. Look down at the floor and slowly raise the eyes all the way toward the ceiling (taking about 6 or 7 seconds). The gamut point must be tapped during the moving of the eyes.

Part 5—Polarity Reversal with the PR Spot

At times when the disturbance level does not go down any farther, but stays at a 5 or 6, there appears to be a psychological reversal or block preventing further improvement. Roger Callahan believes that this is connected with a reversal in the polarity of the meridians or energy field. To work with this block and to change the polarity reversal, tap the PR spot located on the outside edge of the hand about mid-way between the wrist and the base of the little finger. While tapping the pr spot say three times: “I accept myself even though I have this problem.” Other similar self-messages appropriate to the person or culture can be used, “Even though I have this problem, I’m OK.” Check out with the group the appropriate vocabulary to

convey this idea. This movement usually reverses the block. Without the block the entire TFT protocol, Parts 2 and 3 (pp. 56-57), may then be repeated several times to successfully lower the level of disturbance to 1.

Resources for Further Study

Books

Callahan, R. & Callahan, J. Thought Field Therapy (TFT) and Trauma. Indian Wells, CA: Thought Field Therapy Training Center, 1996.

Mountrose, Phillip & Jane Mountrose. Getting Through to Your Emotions with EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques). Sacramento, CA: Holistic Communications, 2000.

Flint, G. Emotional Freedom: Techniques for dealing with psychological, emotional and physical distress. NeoSolTerric Enterprises: Vernon, British Columbia, 1999.

Quarterly Newsletter: The Thought Field.

Contact:

Guided Tapes and Workshops on TFT by Dr. Roger Callahan

The Callahan Techniques Ltd., 78-816 Via Carmel, La Quinta, CA 92253 1-800-359-2873