

Fear and Anxiety Over Operation

by Lindsay Kenny, EFT Master

“Judy” was a phone-session client who contacted me with severe fear and anxiety about an operation she was about to undertake. She was stressed to the max about being in the hospital again, (after a previous mastectomy). Trusting her life to others, going “under the knife” and being out of control while anesthetized terrified her. Her intensity was a ten when we started, so we did a multi-part set-up with:

- “Even though I’m terrified of going under the knife tomorrow, I love, trust and accept myself.”
- “Even though I’m afraid to turn control of my life over to strangers, and even though I *want* to be able to trust their abilities, I just can’t right now. But I love and trust myself unconditionally.”
- “Even though I’m anxious about being put to sleep, I accept myself without judgment.”

Mentioning several items in the set-up works great with closely related aspects of the same, *current*, issue. We’re actually catching many feelings or emotions at once. Some are so intermingled it’s hard to separate them anyway. Anxiety and Stress, or Anger and Frustration, for instance are close enough to clump together (assuming they are about the same issue).

Judy and I then did one round of the tapping points just saying, “This fear and anxiety about the operation.” On the next round I had her say “stream of consciousness” phrases at each different tapping point such as, “I hate hospitals...it’s scary being out of control....I hate being under the knife....I don’t really know these people....I have to put my life in their hands....how scary is that?....this operation makes me very anxious....thousands die in hospitals every year,” etc.

I find that using these “stream of consciousness” phrases helps grab all the “wandering concerns” about an issue. Getting them all on the table and puts them in a pile to be swept away together. People often ask “What should I be saying?” Often the best phrases come right from my clients. You know yourself and your issues better than anyone, so say what’s true for you. By just letting all of your thoughts or worries about a problem come out as you tap, your body can start to relax and deal with them. In many cases I might have said, “I’m nervous about being out of control” and Judy would change it to, “I’m freaking terrified of being unconscious and under the knife!” There are no *wrong* words, only some that might work better than others. Let your instincts be your guide.

We then checked into Judy’s anxiety, which was down to a five. This time on the set-up point the statement became:

- “Even though I still have a lot of anxiety about the operation, I love and accept myself completely.
- “Even though I still don’t trust these doctors, I know that they are the best at what they do and I love and trust myself and my judgment in choosing these doctors.
- “Even though I hate being out of control and having my life in someone else’s hands, I want to relax and feel comfortable with this necessary process.”

On the tapping points we did one round on the reminder statement saying “remaining fear and anxiety” at each point. The second round we used different phrases at each point such as: “remaining anxiety....I want to let it go....remaining fear...I want to be relaxed and comfortable....I’m tired of being uptight about this operation....millions have this done successfully every year....I want to trust these docs....remaining fear....I want to trust myself....remaining fear of losing control...I want to release that fear,” etc.

So now Judy was at a two in her fear and anxiety. We then moved to the Choice Method (by Pat Carrington) and did a set-up statement of:

- “Even though a small part of me is still hanging on to this operation anxiety, a bigger part of me wants to let it go and be relaxed.
- “So Even though I’m still a little anxious, I choose to let the bigger part of me win.
- “Even though I still a little fearful about the operation, I choose to eliminate this fear and anxiety, and become calm and confident. I choose to trust these competent doctors and myself. I choose to help myself by remaining calm and relaxed.”

On the first round of tapping at the points Judy said, “Remaining fear and anxiety.”

On the second round, at each point she said a positive choice such as, “I chose to start letting go of this fear and anxiety.... I choose to be relaxed and comfortable.... I chose to eliminate this anxiety....I chose to be calm and comfortable....I close let go of any remaining fear...I ask my body to be calm, relaxed and comfortable in the operating room”, etc.

On the third round we alternated the negative statement on one point with a positive choice at the next point, such as, “remaining fear and anxiety” then at the next point, “I choose to let it go”....then, “remaining anxiety....I choose to be calm and collected;” then “all remaining fear....I choose to completely eliminate it. I choose to be completely calm and relaxed.”

We did this until Judy seemed truly calm and certain (which was just accomplished by the end of that third round). I then added a “positive force” round of different statements at each points, such as “I trust myself I know these doctors are intelligent and very experienced...I believe in their skills and abilities...I’m still in control...I’m relaxed, powerful and confident...I’m strong and brave. I’m committed to help the docs by remaining calm and relaxed...I will sleep peacefully and calmly through the night.”

By then she was good to go. I tested her by having her imagine being wheeled into the operating room and seeing the needles coming toward her. She was genuinely calm and relaxed with no anxiety. It’s important to get an issue to a zero so it’s truly over. Just having someone say, “I feel better now” isn’t good enough. Testing or prodding the client, or yourself, is a good way to make sure the issue has been dealt with completely. If the intensity comes up some when tested, then there’s more work to do.

After the session I asked Judy to e-mail after the operation, when she could to let me know how she did. She was nice enough to do that in detail and here is her response (edited for brevity).

Hello, Lindsay!

Thank you again for working with me the day before my surgery. It really helped me prepare in an energy/emotional way that no pill could have done! Between the lessening of the emotional burden and laparoscopic surgery, the event was not at all traumatic.

Here are a few events with which the EFT helped me:

1. Our session on the phone helped me to see myself as powerful and not a victim of this circumstance. And the affirmations put this event in the total picture - I am more than this surgery, I am loved and grateful for my life.

*2. I lost no sleep the night before, rose at four, was calm and collected during the urban freeway trip (**very unusual for me**), and went through waiting and check-in cheerfully.*

*3. In the surgery prep area, other patients were in close proximity, discussing their nausea, etc. and I knew it wasn't about me, nor did I need to take on anyone else's energy (**unusual for me**).*

4. During a long wait on the gurney, I tapped about "any remaining anxiety about surgery" and then focused on thinking the positive affirmations like the ones you used the day before... "these are highly skilled, competent helpers"..I'm confident about this excellent surgeon and his team."

*I was off the tubes and instruments, eating, and home the next afternoon. After two days, I was off the pain medications, eating normally, and energetic - YAHOO! EFT has been amazing to me because of its forgiving nature. I cannot put "numbers" to my examples above, or guess what my experience would have been without EFT, but I am **certain** there was a huge shift in my emotional state, attitude, and experience because of it. What an incredible tool*

Thank you, Lindsay, for knowing what affirmations would serve me best, and for identifying aspects (womanhood, victim, family roles) that were feeding the anxiety about surgery.

Blessings, "Judy"