

Finding and Dealing with the Core Issue

by Lindsay Kenny, EFT Master

Finding the core issue of a problem is one of the most important tenements to EFT. Finding the core issue is like finding the root of a weed and pulling it out. If you just cut off the part of the weed above ground, then you haven't killed it at all. You've only temporarily and seemingly removed it. Cut the top off of a weed and it will grow back. Destroy the root and it will wither and die.

The same is true for finding and eradicating core issues, and it's why traditional talk therapy is often ineffective. Frequently only the symptoms or the top of the weed are dealt with. Venting about a subject might be cathartic and temporarily bring relief, but it doesn't ultimately solve the problem.

In order to find the core issue (or cause) of a problem, you need to do some detective work. Asking questions of yourself (or client,) is important in discovering the underlying cause of any issue. Here are some basic questions you should explore:

- When did the problem (or the symptom) start?
- What was going on about that time or just before then? (Often someone's pain, disease or other symptoms will have begun about the same time as a divorce, death, or traumatic event.)
- What do you think caused you to feel (or be) this way?
- If you had your life to live over, what person or event would you just as soon skip? This simple but poignant question, often posed by Gary, can prove very powerful in getting to the "root of the weed".
- What else does this issue remind you of? (Sometimes your overreaction to a boss's criticism may be a response to how your mom always corrected you.)
- What was your relationship like with your parents?
- When did you start feeling bad about yourself?
- Who really hurt you?
- What (or whom) are you afraid of?

When you have answers to some of these questions, then you'll have something tangible to tap on. The answers might lead to your core issue, or *be* the core issue.

Finding the Core of Emotional Problems

Discovering the cause of emotional issues can be slightly different from discovering the reason for physical issues. With physical issues we want to discover what was going on during or just before the symptom, pain or disease began. Physical problems are often the result of a singular trauma or event.

With many emotional issues, such as depression, low self-esteem, chronic anger, we want to uncover the first time the emotion manifested itself. When did you *first* start feeling sad, worthless, angry, ashamed or whatever? Emotional issues are often caused by repetitive, negative events. Keep in mind that this is not always the case, but rather a rule of thumb.

Emotions can also be triggered by singular events or traumas, of course. You get mad at your boss for yelling at you. You're sad because a loved one died. You feel ashamed because you had to ask for a loan. That's absolutely normal. But when find yourself being overly sensitive to a particular emotion, that's when you want to consider deeper roots as the cause. Look for the first time you felt shamed, abandoned, betrayed, hurt or unloved. That may be the cause of the over-sensitivity to your current problem.

As an example, "Glenda" came to me with low self-esteem, and said she'd been tapping on it for weeks, without success. When I asked her what exactly she had been saying when tapping, she said, her set-up statement had been "Even though I have low self-esteem, I love and accept myself completely."

Besides the fact that the last part of her sentence didn't ring true for her, her phrase of "I have low self-esteem" was *far too general*. Being too general or vague is one of the main reasons people get stuck

when doing EFT. (By the way, if you can't say "I love and accept myself" and mean it, then say "I *want* to love and accept myself.")

The real challenge for Glenda was what actually caused her low self-esteem. I started asking her questions about when she first started feeling badly about herself. I found out she had married a man while in college who was very controlling and emotionally abusive. He criticized every move she made and constantly put her down.

Every day she felt worse about herself as her self-esteem plummeted. She desperately wanted out of the marriage, but was so emotionally beaten down, she couldn't even see how she could leave. Then, after 10 years of abuse, "Clarence" told her he wanted a divorce because he had found a younger, prettier woman. Instead of feeling relieved, Glenda was crushed.

She believed that if she had just been a more obedient wife and tried harder to please him, Clarence wouldn't have left her for an 18 year-old girl. She felt lost, hopeless, and was certain no one would ever love her again. Well, there was plenty to tap on there (the emotional trauma, her limiting beliefs about herself, the betrayal, guilt, shame, etc.!) However, I felt we still weren't at the true core issue. Her experiences with Clarence were all certainly contributing factors, or what I call "piling on", but not the fundamental cause.

Note: Besides the core issue, there may often be many "piling-on" incidences throughout your life that replicate the original problem. The easily made mistake is thinking the most current problem is the core issue.

I then asked Glenda who her ex-husband reminded her of. "Oh, he was just like my daddy!" she said without hesitation. This wasn't a surprise at all, since we often repeat the behavior of our parents, or attract people into our lives (like bosses, friends or spouses) that are just like one of our parents.

Glenda's father was always sternly correcting her and belittling her, making her believe she could never do anything right. This made her feel like she wasn't smart enough or good enough. **That** was the core issue of her low self-esteem. Since there were multiple events and traumas created by dad, with similar results, (feeling shamed, guilty, sad, angry, hurt,) I used my [Bundling Baggage Technique](#) to eliminate these traumas and feelings all at once.

Once the "daddy-issues" were cleared, we worked on the issues with Clarence. We tapped on several traumas and events about his abuses toward her. When we were at a zero charge on anything Clarence-related, and tested the results, it was clear we had finally neutralized the causes of Glenda's low self-esteem. (I had asked if there were any other "piling on" events, but there were none.) However, we weren't done yet. She felt better about herself, but not great.

To wrap up her session I gave her positive attributes about herself to repeat as she tapped at each point. I used phrases I knew to be true about her, such as: I'm smart, I'm a gifted musician, I'm creative, I'm funny, I'm loveable, I have a great personality, I'm a good friend, I'm a loving, attentive, mother, etc. On the second and third rounds I had her contribute more positive statements about herself at each point. She was genuinely surprised to acknowledge and own all of her skills, talents and attributes.

Glenda left feeling great about herself and optimistic about her life. Had we just tapped on her low self-esteem, or just on the issues with her ex-husband, or even just on her dad-issues, I think Glenda would still be suffering with esteem issues today. Now, however, six months later, she's totally happy with herself, confident, self-assured and in a thriving relationship.

Finding Core Issues for Physical Conditions

It is not a coincidence when someone gets ill, or develops a pain or disease around the time of a traumatic event. In fact it's likely! Many physicians say that 85% or more of our physical maladies are

the result of unresolved emotional issues. Furthermore traumatic events can cause physical ailments without us being aware of any connection.

For instance, I had a client who developed migraines shortly after her twin died from serious injuries incurred in a car accident; yet she hadn't seen the correlation. Another client stuttered severely since his father disappeared one night and never returned home. Initially, he didn't remember that his stuttering had started at that time.

A more obvious correlation between cause and affect happened in a case with "Nicky's" severe food sensitivity. She would get nauseous and break out into hives whenever she ate chicken noodle soup (but not other chicken products.) The core issue there was that her mother had killed her pet chickens, "Cheepy and Peepy", and made chicken noodle soup out of them. Her mother and maliciously told Nicky about it just as she was eating the soup. Ewww! Thank God she didn't have a pony.

Also, many people subconsciously avoid remembering what was going on during a particularly difficult time in their lives. Maybe it's too painful, maybe they're afraid of where it might take them, or maybe they're afraid they just can't handle what they'll find.

I had a client named "Ellen", who had a severe memory problem. Both her long-term and short-term memories were virtually non-existent. She couldn't remember her wedding day, her son's and daughter's childhood, or what was discussed in an office meeting 10 minutes ago. Not surprisingly, she couldn't recall when her memory problem began.

So we simply tapped on the general statement of "Even though I can't remember when I lost my memory... or why..." and "Maybe there's something I'm afraid of remembering..." In less than two rounds Ellen had an inspiration. She recalled an event she had completely suppressed for over 25 years. She had gotten an abortion when she was 19 and it was very traumatic for her, both physically and emotionally. She was very upset and ashamed over it, and became very ill as a result of it.

We eliminated the shame, embarrassment and guilt of the abortion ("Even though I have this shame, embarrassment and guilt over the abortion, I want to love and accept myself.") We then tapped on the physical trauma of her abortion and her fear of remembering it. ("Even though I've been afraid of remembering this traumatic time...")

Almost immediately her memory began to return. She started recalling events from her children's youth, and even an assignment she was supposed to complete for work. Her lack of memory was just the symptom. The core issue was the trauma of the abortion.

I'm often asked, "What if I can't remember any traumatic events or when my problem started?" Then just do what Ellen and I did. Tap on "Even though I don't remember when or why this began, I love and accept myself anyway." You can eradicate an issue even if you never remember it. Your problem could even be pre-memory. Your energy body knows the reason for the issue, and you don't always have to be conscious of it yourself. Nonetheless do the detective work until all avenues are exhausted or until you find the core.

Once you discover the core or cause of your problems or symptoms, you will be well on the way to eradicating them. Often people need help in getting to the root of their problem. Another person's perspective can be crucial in uncovering core issues. Even the best surgeon in the world can't effectively give himself or herself an appendectomy. So try EFT yourself, but if you stumble, ask for help. ☺ EFT works!

Good Luck and Good Tapping,
Lindsay