

WORKING WITH VETS

My Experience While Filming the Veterans PTSD Documentary

"Operation Emotional Freedom: The Answer"

by Lindsay Kenny, EFT Master

Part 1 of 2

Practitioners and Support Professionals



I'd like to express how honored I felt to be included in the making of "Operation Emotional Freedom: The Answer" an insightful documentary about war Veterans and their struggles with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I was part of a select group of EFT experts, organized by Gary Craig, EFT Founder. Additionally, there were valuable assistants, including my favorite Vet, and EFT Practitioner, Miguel Vasquez, plus a psychologist, psychiatrist and many others support team members. The film itself was managed, directed and produced by Eric Huurre at *his own expense* along with his cracker-jack film crew.

The key to the successful making of the film was the willingness of some very brave Veterans who agreed to put their fate and privacy in our hands.



THE MEET AND GREET

The first night, when they brought the Vets in to meet us, the energy in the room was so highly charged it was almost crackling. The hair was standing up on my arms and a prickling chill ran through my body. Everyone was nervous, but the Vets looked *angry*...

at us and the world.

Maybe they were afraid that what we were about to do with them, which they knew little about, wasn't going to work. Or, maybe they were afraid that it *would*. None of us really knew what was going to happen. I only know that during the first few moments of introductions I was a little bit afraid...and I'm generally fearless.

Fifteen minutes into the introduction I was downright *frightened*. Even though we had read their intake forms, I still wasn't ready for what I was hearing. I remember thinking "What in the world have I gotten myself in to?"

It was too late to turn back, however, and I was already committed to helping them get out of the painful place they were in at the moment. I'm so glad I didn't let the trepidation get to me, because it ended up being an incredibly fascinating and enlightening experience.

Each practitioner was assigned 3-5 Vets, or their family members, as our primary responsibilities. However, we all rotated our sessions so that we ended up working with all of the Vets, not just our own assignees. On the first morning the practitioners measured our Vets' intensity levels, from 10 to 1, on each of their symptoms (with 10 being highly charged or painful.) We then tapped with our assigned Vets, individually or in small groups, as well as with Vets not assigned to us. We did this for 8-9 hours a day, while being videoed. It was pretty intense.



SHARED ANGER AND BETRAYAL

There were several commonalities that I started noticing about these Vets as we began working with them the first day. Even though they had never met each other before, they had much more in common than their service to our country.

One of the many things the Vets had in common was their array of negative emotions. We witnessed a spectrum of anxiety, stress, frustration, resentment, guilt, shame and fear. The most commonly held feelings, however, seemed to be *anger and betrayal*.

Their anger, directed at different events, people or injustices, was deep and intense. It reflected the raw emotion that I had felt the first night and found so scary. As we worked with the Vets over the next few days, we heard many of the justifications for why they were so mad at the world. Most of their stories, however, were too horrific or personal to repeat.

Many were experiencing common symptoms, such as insomnia, nightmares, night sweats, headaches, depression, migraines, tinnitus and fear of heights or loud noises. Some were so afraid or paranoid that they *carried weapons with them at all times!*

3	Feeling others are to blame for it
5	Feeling afraid in open spaces or
4	Hearing voices that other people
5	Suddenly scared for no reason
5	Temper outbursts that you coul
5	Feeling afraid to go out of your
4	Feeling inferior to others
4	Difficulty making decisions
5	Your mind going blank

Perhaps it wasn't unexpected that many of the Vets experienced the same emotions or disorders, given their exposure to violent or traumatic events. That's to be expected with war and PTSD. The strange thing was that the *family members* of the Vets (spouses, parents or siblings,) with whom we also worked, experienced many of the same PTSD symptoms as the soldiers! No battlefield experience whatsoever, but similar emotions, issues and symptoms.

Most unexpectedly, however, was a shared sense of betrayal. Many of the Vets felt they had been let down by their commanding officers, comrades or by their government. While their reasons for feeling betrayed varied, their stories of betrayal held the commonality of being disturbing, sad and shocking.

THE EVOLUTION

At the end of each day we would all leave exhausted and drained. Each morning we would meet again with our personal assignees to see where they stood with their issues. We would ask them to measure their intensity again on each of their symptoms. It wasn't remarkable to the practitioners and assistants that the Vets were experiencing great results. However, *they* were genuinely surprised and pleased by how quickly their symptoms were dissipating. We could all feel the shift in the energy throughout the day and the next morning as our assignees checked back in with us.



By the end of the second day many of the Vets were pretty much over their PTSD issues. A few of them had deeper issues (many were non-war related,) that took an extra day or so to deal with. We actually tested them with sounds and graphic pictures, plus prodding of old memories to see if they were truly over their issues. And they were!

We started seeing changes in their faces as they talked and in their postures and movements. One soldier started swinging his cane as he walked down the hallway, where he had previously been limping like a 90-year-old man. Another Vet, whom I was a bit afraid of in the beginning, transformed into a sweet, gentle soul, sporting a constant smile and twinkle in his eyes. My favorite female Vet, Debi, unleashed her terrific sense of humor, which had long-been forgotten. What a joy!





THE METAMORPHOSIS

I remembered how on that first night of introductions the Vets didn't look at each other, or at us. It appeared that many of them could have bitten a nail in two. Yet at the end of our 5-day experience, the anger had completely dissipated and was replaced by joy. On the last night, some of us sat in awe in the hotel restaurant, watching these once-anxious, angry people, sitting together nearby laughing their heads off. They were talking animatedly and clowning around with each other like teenagers. We held our breaths as they were joking with the restaurant staff (and us) and behaving like a group of old friends.

To actually see that level of transformation in these Vets in a few days was truly remarkable and inspiring. And to witness them go from sad to happy, from angry to playful and from wounded to healed in a matter of days was an ethereal experience. Were these really the same angry people we had met a few nights before?

Here an e-mail I recently received from one of our Vets:

"Lindsay, Thank you and the other practitioners that worked with me during the Vets movie. You helped me get rid of horrible flashbacks, nightmares and anxiety that had haunted me since childhood. In less than a week you erased problems that 20 years of therapy and awful medications couldn't fix. I didn't realize it then, but I was working with some of the most experienced, gifted EFT Masters and practitioners, out there. It was an incredible opportunity and experience that no doubt saved my life. I learned tools that I can use forever to cope with life's challenges."
"Chip" Stanley, PFC, Medic Corp, US Army

This was a wonderful opportunity for me. Working with my friends, Carol Look, Sophia Cayer and the other highly gifted practitioners was a genuine blessing. I remember virtually every moment of it and will treasure it the rest of my life.

In the second part of this article, I'll tell a little bit more about how we all worked together to facilitate the growth of these brave and remarkable Vets and reveal another surprising and important commonality they shared.



Good Luck and Good Tapping,

Lindsay Kenny
www.LKcoaching.com

You can view the trailer of the Vets documentary or order the DVD at:
["Operation Emotional Freedom: The Answer"](#)