Using Tapping in the Medical Office

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Disclosures

- Neither Janice Gomersall nor Jan Scher has any disclosures

Learning Goals

1. Understand the origins of and research behind the "Tapping" method to treat medical and psychological conditions

2. Learn the specific types of issues that have been treated with "Tapping"

3. Learn through experience the treatment points for "Tapping" methods

What is "Tapping"?

- Tapping certain points on the body while thinking about a condition you wish to treat, while using certain affirming statements
- The points mostly correspond to acupressure points and meridians
- After tapping, reassessing the condition for improvement (level of distress)
- Additional tapping on certain points, or add additional points to further improvement
- Helpful to be done in the context of a therapeutic relationship with physician and or therapist

Based on Acupuncture points/meridians

- 5000 years ago individuals in China discovered the body has an energy system that follows meridians
- 7000 years ago similar bioenergy system discussed in teachings in India
- Other civilizations show similar teachings – Egypt, Brazil, Bantu people of Africa, indigenous tribes of North America
- Chang 1976, Walther 1988

Chinese system of Acupuncture (Brief)

- 12 primary bilateral meridians
- Each passes through specific organ in the body (lungs, heart, stomach, and liver)
- Also "collector" meridians which intersect the front and the back of the body and enter the brain
- There are also a number of collateral pathways that interconnect with the primary meridians
- Entire system is interconnected with a flow of energy called qi or Chi ("chee") – which appears to be electromagnetic and subtle energy

Methods

- Acupuncture is done with needles
- Acupoints can be stimulated in several ways – so more like meridian therapy
  - Pressure
  - Rubbing
  - running one's hands in the direction of meridians
  - Suction cups
  - Herbs, vitamins, minerals glandular extracts
  - Specialized exercises
  - Manipulation of specific muscles
  - Burning 'moxa' (moxibustion)
  - Tapping
- Tapping – on specific defined acupressure points and meridians, with additional treatments used in combination

What has it been used to treat?

- Dissipate unwanted emotional reactions AKA Emotional Regulation
- Change core beliefs
- Relieve physical pain
- Treat PTSD and other forms of Trauma
- As a precursor for EMDR – bring into the present
- Relieve anxiety, phobias and depression
- Treat cravings of addiction
- Enhance peak performance
- Multiple recent uses in the medical literature
- Self Help if the distress level is 4-5/10 or less

Possible Applications of Tapping in Medical Office***

- Patient arrives anxious or otherwise upset
- Patient is disturbed in anticipation of procedure
- Patient feels disturbed after procedure
- Patient is overwhelmed/disturbed by information
  - Remember: Nervous system dysregulation decreases frontal lobe activity!
- Clinician SELF-CARE/self-regulation before/after office visits
- Other ideas?

Tapping Alphabet Soup, etc***

- Acupressure tapping
  - TFT = Thought Field Therapy. Complex tapping algorithms & "causal diagnosis" using muscle testing, developed by Roger Callahan
  - EFT = Emotional Freedom Techniques. Compilation of 48 different techniques including acupressure tapping, developed by Gary Craig.
  - TTT = Trauma Tapping Technique. Variation of EFT originally developed for use in Rwanda, (where some aspects of EFT were not culturally appropriate), by Gunilla Hamne and Ulf Sandstrom.
- "MLT" Midline Technique, "EP" Energy Psychology, Energy tapping, Meridian tapping are other terms

Tapping Alphabet Soup, etc.***

- NOTE: Patients/clients/clinicians may refer to "tapping" techniques that are not acupressure tapping
  - Most commonly bilateral stimulation (e.g., "butterfly tapping" or "butterfly hug"), which may be incorporated into EMDR
  - "AIT" – Advanced Integrative Therapy is also energy therapy and has some common ideas, but different than tapping in that it uses chakra centers and combined with 'unburdening'
- ***ADDITIONAL NOTE: Emotionally Focused Therapy (for couples) is also referred to as EFT, and has nothing to do with tapping!***

Tapping

- Involves tapping on specific meridian or acupressure sites
- May or may not use confirmatory statements, affirmations, and reminder statements while tapping (EFT vs TTT)
- Adding additional treatments such as correcting for "Reversal," "9-Gamut" treatments (pressing a specific point on the back of your hand, using eye movements, humming, etc), more exaggerated eye movements, or breathing patterns while tapping (more to come about these techniques)
- Challenging results (test) with bringing back thoughts, or predicting stress in future after treatment (outcome projection)

EFT treatment research published in 2025

- Menstrual dysphoria, PMS
- COVID stress in nurses with brief 2 week TFT treatment
- Preventive for PTSD for intimate partner violence
- Post op pain for total knee replacement
- Job stress
- Insomnia and sleeplessness
- Stress of cancer diagnosis (breast cancer, melanoma, cervical)
- Post mastectomy stress, sexual satisfaction
- Caregiver stress for Alzheimer, Chronic disease patients
- Fear of childbirth

EFT treatment research published in 2024

- Anxiety studies with wives of alcoholics,
- Nausea/vomiting and anxiety of early pregnancy
- Caregiver burden
- Pain and anxiety post chemo for cancer patients
- Burnout and Anxiety in healthcare workers
- Meta-analysis of EFT and depression, anxiety, PTSD
- EFT and menstrual pain
- Infertility stress in women

EFT Research published in 2023

- Depression in Postmenopausal women
- PTSD after COVID in Iran females comparing EMDR, CBT, and EFT – EMDR best, then EFT
- Burnout in healthcare professionals and students post COVID with short EFT
- Seed germination after being held while subject had EFT vs 2hr conventional therapy
- EFT virtually vs in person as effective
- Emotional distress in addiction clinic using TFT
- ACEs and childhood trauma and EFT
- Chronic pain, PTSD, Postpartum depression
- PTSD and Conflict resolution in war and genocide regions

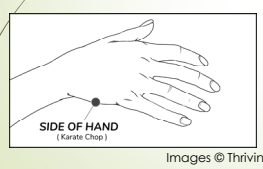
Additional Research

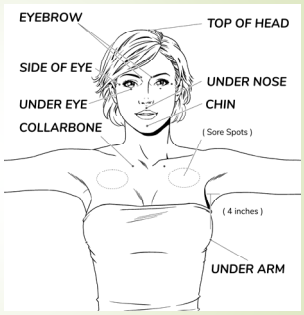
Websites in credits keep up to date on research studies, and include abstracts

Tapping Points***

Common Tapping Points

(overview--more to come)





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Foundations of TFT (Thought Field Therapy) and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique)

- Roger Callahan found that tapping on certain acupoints is beneficial in treating a wide range of psychological problems
- Having the client tap on specific acupoints while tuning into their emotional issue, physical pain, or limiting beliefs brought some regulation during sessions

Early Orthopedic research on acupuncture

- Dr Robert Becker orthopedic surgeon researched the effectiveness of acupuncture
- NIH in 1970's supported research into acupuncture after President Nixon's visit to China
- Dr Becker discussed "current of injury" at injury sites, figured meridians were electrical conductors that carried messages back and forth between the brain and injury sites, promoting healing while producing a pain message.
- He detected differences in electrical resistance at the acupoints compared to the surrounding skin, as well as variations on the surface of the skin in the locations of meridians that were distinct from non-meridian skin.
- He used his measurements to aid in healing

Becker and Selden, 1985; Reichmanis et al, 1975

Early Kinesiology Research on Tapping

- George Goodheart, the founder of applied kinesiology, explored the effectiveness of tapping or percussing at specific acupoints to alleviate physical pain
- To determine the location of points, he used muscle testing and therapy localization
- His method involved having the patients touch specific locations on their body while the practitioner tests the relative strength of an isolated muscle (indicator muscle)

Status Quo vs Energy Therapy

- Usual way of treating psychological and emotional problems is by changing environmental and life circumstances, changing thoughts, or altering neurochemistry
- Not intuitive that tapping while thinking about a problem would cause a dramatic improvement.
- Not just distraction or placebo however, as research shows more lasting and significant improvement.
- The theory is that tapping specifically addresses the energy system that governs emotional responses.

continued

- Still often need treatment of the circumstances, thoughts, neurons, and chemistry.
- Often need to use tapping along with counseling and sometimes medications.
- But treating at the energy level, you are turning off the switch that stimulates the cascade leading to the negative emotions that hold the problem in place

Palliative vs. Processing Techniques in Tapping***

- Distinction can be techniques themselves and/or how applied
- Palliative = immediate relief = emotion regulation
  - Can be clinician lead or used by client for self-care
  - Examples: EFT basic and/or full recipe, 9-Gamut, TTT, etc.
- Trauma/memory processing techniques
  - Used to "resolve" or "reprocess" specific disturbing memories
  - Require specific training by clinician
  - Examples: Tearless Trauma Technique, Movie technique, Tell The Story technique, etc.

Take a breath

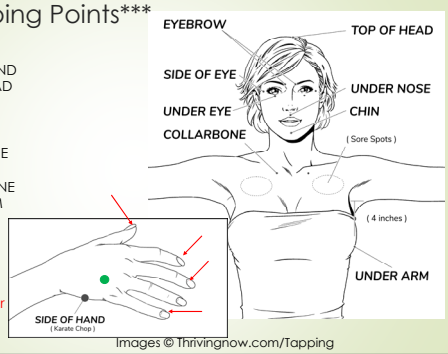
- We will move on to experience the tapping methods, then return to slides on specific clinical applications of tapping

Illustration of Tapping

EFT Tapping Points***

"BASIC RECIPE"
1. SIDE OF HAND
2. TOP OF HEAD
3. EYEBROW
4. SIDE OF EYE
5. UNDER EYE
6. UNDER NOSE
7. CHIN
8. COLLARBONE
9. UNDER ARM

"Full Recipe"
- Finger Points
- Thumb
- Index finger
- Middle finger
- Little finger
- **Gamut point**



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TAPPING POINT	MERIDIAN	EXAMPLES OF SIGNIFICANCE PER TCM
SIDE OF HAND	Small intestine	Shoulder/neck pain, tongue sores, sadness, vulnerability
EYEBROW	Bladder	Elimination, back pain, sleep, irritability, trauma, jealousy
SIDE OF EYE	Gall bladder	Digestion, headaches, jaw tension, anger/rage, decisions
UNDER EYE	Stomach	Indigestion/reflux/nausea, fear/anxiety, greed, disgust
UNDER NOSE	Governing Vessel	Pain, mobility, self-esteem, future self
CHIN	Central Vessel	Sexuality/sex organs/reproduction, shame, initiation
COLLARBONE	Kidney	Anxiety/fear, urination, night sweats, dry mouth, memory
UNDER ARM	Spleen	Immunity, bleeding/bruising, digestion, fatigue, rumination
LITTLE FINGER	Heart	Blood pressure, palpitations, hatred, insomnia, anxiety
RING FINGER & GAMUT	Thyroid / Triple Warmer	Pain/swelling, urination, hearing/tinnitus, depression,stress
MIDDLE FINGER	Pericardium	Chest flutter/pain, sexuality, life energy, mood swings
INDEX FINGER	Large intestine	Constipation, diarrhea, abdominal pain, guilt, sad/grief
THUMB	Lung	Respiratory issues, vocalization, sadness/grief

Source: https://www.energypsych.org/blog/foundations-introduction-to-the-meridians-and-acupoints

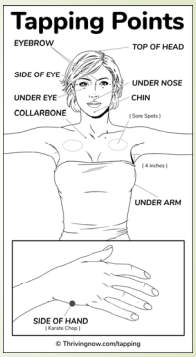
EFT exercise***

EFT experience***

- "Constricted Breathing" / "Borrowing Benefits"
  - All check in and identify 0-10
  - Volunteer?
  - Tap together
- Observations/questions?
- Anyone experience increased disturbance?

EFT Procedure: "BASIC RECIPE"***

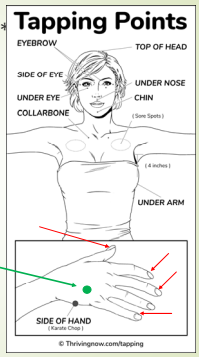
1. Preparation: identify issue, intensity (0-10), descriptors
2. Tap SIDE OF HAND point while repeating setup phrase 3 times:
   - "Even though I have this (problem, intensity, descriptors), I deeply and completely (love and) accept myself."
3. Tap through HEAD/FACE/TORSO points while repeating reminder phrases (e.g., "this anxiety at a 7, this tension in my chest, this flutter in my stomach")
   - TOP OF HEAD / EYEBROW / SIDE OF EYE / UNDER EYE / UNDER NOSE / CHIN / COLLARBONE / UNDER ARM
4. Check intensity and repeat/revise as needed until SUD = 0 (or close)



EFT Procedure: "FULL RECIPE"***

PRIOR SLIDE STEPS 1-3, THEN…

4. Tap through FINGER points while repeating reminder phrases
   - **THUMB / INDEX / MIDDLE / LITTLE**
5. 9-Gamut treatment: Hold your head level, not stiff—this is an eye exercise not head exercise. Now, while continuing to tap the **GAMUT point**:
   - Close your eyes / then open them and look straight ahead / without moving your head, look down hard to the right / now look down hard to the left / roll your eyes in a big circle in one direction / now the other direction / hum a little tune (3-5 sec.) / count out loud to 5 / hum a little tune (3-5 sec. again)
6. Check intensity and repeat/revise as needed until SUD = 0 (or close)



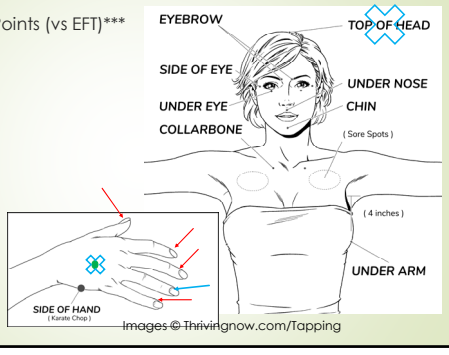
Questions?***

TTT Exercise***

- Individually identify issue (SUD max 5)
- Identify emotion, body sensation
- VOLUNTEER?
- Tap together

TTT Tapping Points (vs EFT)***

1. SIDE OF HAND
2. ~~TOP OF HEAD~~
3. EYEBROW
4. SIDE OF EYE
5. UNDER EYE
6. UNDER NOSE
7. CHIN
8. COLLARBONE
9. UNDER ARM
10. LITTLE FINGER
11. RING FINGER
12. MIDDLE FINGER
13. INDEX FINGER
14. THUMB
15. COLLARBONE
16. ~~GAMUT POINT~~



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TTT Tapping Points***

1. SIDE OF HAND
2. EYEBROW
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6. CHIN
7. COLLARBONE
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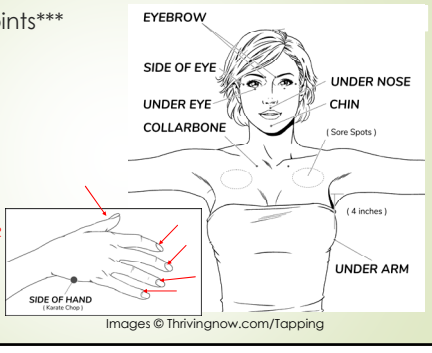
10. RING FINGER
11. MIDDLE FINGER
12. INDEX FINGER
13. THUMB
14. COLLARBONE



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TTT experience***

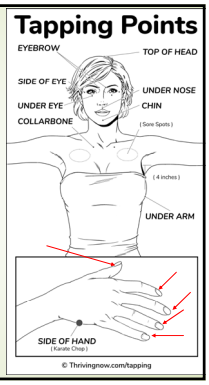
Individually: Identify disturbing issue (SUD 4-5 max); note emotion and/or body sensation; note SUD on 1-10 scale

Tap together

Observations/questions? Anyone's SUD increase?

TTT Procedure***

1. Preparation: identify issue, intensity (0-10), descriptors
2. Tap SIDE OF HAND point 15-20 times
3. Tap FACE/TORSO points 15-20 times each:
   EYEBROWSIDE OF EYE / UNDER EYE / UNDER NOSE / CHIN / all along COLLARBONE / UNDER ARM
4. Tap FINGER points 15-20 times each:
   LITTLE / RING / MIDDLE / INDEX / THUMB
5. Tap all across COLLARBONE again
6. Take 2 deep breaths
7. Repeat steps 2—6 on other side (where relevant)
8. Check intensity and repeat/revise as needed until SUD = 0 (or close



Questions?***

Specific Clinical indications

Trauma and PTSD

Types of Trauma

- Type I trauma – single event trauma, sometimes lead to continued emotional distress, (PTSD)
- Type IIA trauma – multiple events rather than single, usually can be compartmentalized, often fairly stable background with resources in life
- Chronic Trauma – ongoing traumatic experiences– difficulty with emotional regulation
- Type IIB trauma – chronic events, cannot be separated by the individual so bleed into each other (usually need a skilled therapist to treat)
- Type IIB (R) chronic trauma that is so overwhelming strips them of resources they previously had to compartmentalize/separate

Terr 1994

Types of Trauma (continued)

- Type IIB (nR) – often early trauma, individual never developed resources for resilience – treatment first has to develop those resources, eventually learn to separate trauma, compartmentalize
- Need intact therapist relationship to begin
- Schore, 1994

Treatment of Trauma

- Type I trauma – single trauma, categorized by severity and individual's resilience and developmental history, (PTSD for example), often with nightmares, intrusive memories or dreams, exaggerated startle response
- Type IIA trauma – multiple events but stable background and resources so can compartmentalize and separate events
- Treatment such as tapping, EMDR, cognitive therapies, visual kinetic disassociation (VKD)

Treatment of Trauma (continued)

- Chronic Trauma - (child abuse, sexual assault, bullying, domestic violence, combat experiences) , often bodily and emotional sensations related to the trauma are triggered without associated cognitive awareness, impaired memories, avoidance of thought and situations that remind them of event
- Type IIB Trauma – chronic trauma, cannot separate the events so run into each other
- *Both of these need the help of a skilled therapist using tapping (EFT, TFT), reversals, etc to avoid distress and dissociation*

Treatment of Trauma (continued)

- Type IIB (R) – chronic trauma in someone with a stable background experiences trauma so overwhelming that it strips them of resources they previously had to compartmentalize/separate; treatment needs to rebuild the resources before using trauma-focused techniques – can use visualization and tapping to solidify those resources (for example, hobby, sport, activity)
- Type IIB (nR) – trauma that happened so early in life they never developed resources for resilience, (we often refer to ACE Adverse Childhood Experience and PCE Positive childhood Experiences in determining resilience); treatment first has to develop those resources, eventually learn to separate trauma, compartmentalize
- *Need intact therapist relationship to begin*

Triphasic Trauma Treatment***

Many trauma treatment models can be conceptualized in three general phases:

1. Stabilization / Resourcing—ALWAYS DO THIS FIRST!
   resourcing/emotion regulation, symptom reduction, as well as address environmental factors like basic needs, safety, social supports, etc.
2. Reprocessing—RETURN TO PHASE 1 AS NEEDED
   directly addressing the disturbance, often a specific memory
3. Integration—RETURN TO PHASE 1 AND/OR 2 AS NEEDED
   making sense of how the changes affect/apply to the person's life history and present experience, and where to go next with treatment/life

EMOTION REGULATION *IS* TRAUMA TREATMENT

Pain

Treatment of Pain

- Pain is complex- involves peripheral nerves, spinal cord and brain
- Gate control theory of pain – physical, emotions, thoughts (including anticipation, anger, bracing, etc)
- Value of Pain is recognized but treatment of aspects of pain helps tolerability, intensity, and perhaps acceptability of chronicity
- Hypnosis, Visualization, Biofeedback, Aroma therapy, acupuncture
- Energy treatment – electrical stimulation, movement (Tai Chi, Qi dong, etc), massage
- Melzack & Wall, Pain Mechanisms: A New Theory, Science 150 (3699), 971, 1965, 1982

Tapping for pain

- Combines acupressure points with emotional regulation and energy psychology
- Mindfully observe the pain features and the emotional sensations while tapping at specific acupoints
- Focusing on the pain, relaxing into sensations, letting go of bracing against the pain all while tapping
- Also may need to treat the emotions/thoughts/beliefs about the pain as well (for example anger, hate, embarrassment, shame, guilt, hopelessness)

Depression

Depression

- Complex factors involved – genetic vulnerability, family history, hereditary, brain structure, social contexts
- Thoughts, memories, amygdala, thalamus, neurochemicals in the brain
- Events can trigger – traumatic events, real or anticipated loss, death of loved one, unemployment, health problems, financial problems – but event does not cause the depression, our perception or interpretation of the event is the main factor
- Negative thoughts about the event causes the emotional reaction

Recipe for depression

- Genetic predisposition in the family
- Loss or stressful event
- Frequent unsettling thoughts about the event
- Thoughts unsettling since perturbations in normal body energy and chemistry – as well as in sleep
- Areas in the brain involved in emotion activated producing negative emotions
- Neurochemicals are out of balance (due to poor sleep, thoughts)
- Behaviors and social interaction reinforce – moping, isolating, slow movements, avoiding activities

Tapping and depression

- Idea is that when you are depressed your energy system is out of balance, and returning it to balance resolves the depression (flashlight example)
- Tapping can remove the negative features in the thoughts, you return to balance, and the depression is relieved
- You have to recognize the thoughts associated with the depression, and let them go with the help of the tapping
- Eventually you no longer need to tap, you are aware of the connection of thoughts and feelings, and you develop the ability to shift from a state of distress to one of security and serenity

Depression (continued)

- Letting go of of depressing thoughts does not mean suppressing them
  - Suppressing just pushes the thought out of the mind, you are still holding it as true and that it still has power over you
- Allowing the depressive thoughts to evaporate makes you realize that they were not 'truths' but a distorted way of thinking (example of photo of foot at wedding)
- It does not mean bad things aren't happening to you or didn't happen to you – you are just controlling the negative thoughts that cause the depression

Tapping research on depression

- Meta-analysis 20 quality scientific studies showing tapping was effective in reducing depression in a variety of populations and settings, with tapping being equal or superior to treatment as usual with other active treatment controls.
- These effects remained large whether the treatment was delivered in groups or individually, and these gains were maintained over time
- Nelms and Castel, 2016.

Anxiety and Phobias

Anxiety, Phobias, and Panic

- GAD –persistent, uncontrollable and chronic worry about everyday life events
- Symptoms such as restlessness, edginess, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, blanking out, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep issues.
- Untreated, rarely resolves.
- Treatment usually involves CBT and medication, sometimes meditation
- When using tapping, you tune into sensations of anxiety, calm the nervous system with tapping, and target worries or memories associated with anxiety

Treatment of anxiety with tapping

- Andrade and Feinstein, 2004 study
- 5000 patients
- 90% positive response, 76% elimination with energy treatment (tapping)
- Compared to 63% positive response, 51% elimination with CBT and medication

Treatment of Phobias with tapping (early research)

- Wells, et al, 2003, focused on phobias of small animals.
  - Compared EFT to diaphragmatic breathing
  - Those treated with EFT showed greater improvement, and improvement maintained for up to nine months after treatment
- Baker & Siegel, 2010
- Lambrou et al, 2005

Treatment of Other Anxiety Disorders

- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- The tapping reduces the disruption in the energy from the symptoms of anxiety, leaving you with more energy to do higher thinking – i.e in frontal lobes. Basically giving you the chance for emotional regulation.
- The next step is often CBT, once the emotional regulation is in place

References/Resources

Websites for international trauma treatment examples

- Rwanda – intense trauma in mass genocide in 1994 of over 800,000 population, many children witnessed their entire family massacred, many females were raped, then lived in poverty on the street. This project since 2008 worked with a remote residential high school orphanage, with a train the trainers project, helping the girls become self sufficient.
  - ProjectLightRwanda.com
- Indonesia – after Pangandaran earthquake 2006 disaster recovery phase where the quake and the floods took out huge communities, and rebuilding brought back trauma again. The TREST team treated hundreds of thousands of PTSD sufferers with EFT (Trauma Relief and emotional Support Techniques) over 30 day period.
  - TRESTAid.com
- Mexico – Oaxaca Children's Cancer ward, helping the children, families, and staff lowering suffering and providing peace of mind.
  - OaxacaProject.com

Further Resources – Websites***

- Association for Comprehensive Energy psychology (ACEP) energypsych.org
- Canadian Association for Integrative and Energy Therapies (CAIET) caiet.org
- EFT International (EFTI), formerly AAMET eftinternational.org
- TFT Foundation tftfoundation.org
- EFT Tapping Training efttappingtraining.com
- Peaceful Heart Network peacefulheart.se
- Evidencebasedeft.com

Further Resources - Books

- Banks, S (1998) The missing link: Reflections on philosophy and spirit. Lone Pine
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Further resources - Articles

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Further resources – Articles (continued)

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Questions/Comments???