

EFFECTIVENESS OF EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE (EFT) IN SPITE OF A LANGUAGE BARRIER

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Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is rapidly becoming the self-help method of choice to effectively treat all negative emotions, including stress, anxiety, depression, fears, phobias, addictions, etc. For a concise illustrated introduction to EFT please see the book [*It is in Your Hands: Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\). Second Edition, Completely Revised.*](#) (Salomon, 2011). As a psychotherapist, I regularly apply EFT with my clients. Recently, I had the opportunity to successfully apply the technique under an unusual circumstance where the normal steps of distress measurement, investigation of the root of the problem, setup phrase, and reminder phrase could not be incorporated into the treatment because of a language barrier. However, maintaining the client focused on her distress feelings while tapping on the points achieved a desired result. I wanted to share this experience with everyone, since it suggests EFT can be effective in cases when language and cultural barriers are present.

Last August, while we were renting a rural home in France, my spouse and I became friends with the property owner, “Marie Antoinette.” She spoke some Spanish and few words of English. We managed to communicate with her because we could understand and speak some French, but we are fluent in English and Spanish. We put all of our language abilities to an everyday test and we were able to get along well.

One day, Marie Antoinette was very concerned and visibly stressed out. Her daughter, who was 26, moved back into her house. She was engaged to get married at the end of August and was under a severe depression after her fiancée broke the engagement of six years. I explained to Marie Antoinette that I was a psychotherapist and that I knew of a new technique that could help her daughter overcome her grief. Her daughter was eager to try anything that could alleviate the emotional pain she felt. Since we had a limited verbal interaction, I could not ask for a number to measure the distress level, but observing her unconsolable crying, it could have been 9. With her approval, I tapped on her through all the EFT points. We did several rounds of tapping, without any particular phrase because I felt that the use of affirmations or reminder phrases was irrelevant at that time. After each subsequent round, she looked better, visibly showing more control over her emotions. Due to the language barrier, I could not get to the root of the problem, as I would have done under different circumstances, but the technique indeed brought her back to the present time. She stopped crying, her body looked more relaxed, and her eyes looked different, brighter.

I attempted to explain the theory behind EFT to Marie Antoinette, who was very eager to learn about it, I gave her a diagram with the different points, and promised to mail her some information in French. This case has motivated me to make EFT available to Spanish-speaking immigrants, who cannot read in their own language or afford a psychotherapist, but are open to any new development that can help them manage the traumatic experience they usually face when living behind all that is dear and familiar to them in search of a better future.

I sincerely hope that by reporting this experience I can motivate other EFT practitioners to

do their best to help others, independently of the language they speak. The truth is that there are no barriers for what you can accomplish with EFT!

Dr. Sobeida Salomon is a sociologist, psychotherapist, and a counselor with emphasis in gender and cultural issues. She is the author of [*It is in Your Hands: Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\)*](#). *SpiralPress*, Ambler, PA, 2011.