

# Antidote for the Psychological Effects of Terrorism: A Rapid, Biological Technique for Clearing Trauma from Mind and Body

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Since September 11, 2001, have you noticed any of the following symptoms:

- When you think of the terrorist attacks you can't believe it; it seems like a bad movie
- You can't bear to think about it or you can't stop watching the news on TV
- You can't believe that anybody could do such evil (particularly in the name of God) and you've lost your faith mankind
- You feel betrayed by God, the President, or the US government for not protecting us
- You feel guilty that we were attacked for something we did or did not do · The world seems
- dark and sinister even on sunny days
- You feel that life will never be the same again; the world as we know it has come to an end
- You are scared about anthrax or what might come next
- You have trouble sleeping or you have nightmares
- You feel numb
- You cry more easily or you cry all the time
- You feel like crying when you hear the national anthem or other patriotic songs
- You feel crabbiier than usual or you feel extraordinarily angry
- You are afraid to fly
- You are frightened by airplanes flying overhead
- You don't want to leave home
- You don't want to go anywhere on vacation
- You don't want your relatives and friends to go out of town

- You don't want to go out to restaurants or other entertainment
- You are afraid to spend money
- You feel lethargic. Your life feels meaningless, put on hold, or derailed
- You find it more difficult to deal with your already stressful life
- You feel isolated
- Previous loss or violence traumas now feel worse or reactivated
- You find yourself worrying about a disaster plan for your family

If you have any of these symptoms then you have been traumatized to some degree by the terrorist attack on our country. In addition to the direct attack on our country, many people have been traumatized by additional shocks caused by the ripple effect on our economy such as the loss of jobs and investment money or continued terrorist activity such as the anthrax scare. In one way or another this attack has affected most of us personally.

Osama bin Laden, in the second sentence of his videotaped message of Oct. 7, 2001 (after the obligatory salute to God and Mohammed) said, "There is America full of fear from its north to its south, from its west to its east. Thank God for that."

His clear and conscious intent was to terrorize us and do psychological damage. That is why they are called terrorists. More people were psychologically affected by this attack than were actually killed or financially harmed.

I say, we can individually counteract the psychological effects of terrorism, not by pretending we aren't traumatized, not by telling ourselves the upset will just go away in time, but by treating ourselves for trauma and clearing it from the mind and body in minutes.

To that end, I am sharing a 15 minute natural bio-destressing technique modified from the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) (1) that removes traumatic reactions from the mind and body and allows us to regain our sense of optimism, strength and enthusiasm for life. I say, our lives need not be undermined by psychological warfare!

Natural bio-destressing.

Have you noticed that when people are stressed they often:

- Rub the bridge of their nose by the eye socket
- Rub the temples by side of their eyes
- Hold their whole hand on their cheek
- Put their hand over their mouth, or hold their index finger under the nose, the middle finger under the mouth, and their chin with the rest of their hand
- Pound or grab their chest under the collarbone
- Hug themselves
- Stand with their arms folded, palm of left hand over right ribcage
- Chew on the edge of their fingers

- Drum their fingertips on a desk or table
- Wring their hands
- Hold their hands with fingers folded together
- Hold the outside edge of one hand within the palm of the other hand?

Why do people do that?

Everyone I've asked said it was calming, soothing, comforting, grounding.

Why is that?

It is because stimulating these areas of the body activates the calming reflex (also known as the stress relaxation response).

This calming reflex directly inhibits the fight/flight/freeze reflex (also known as the sympathetic alarm response) that is active when we are stressed (2-4).

What happens during a traumatic shock?

A traumatic shock triggers the fight/flight/freeze reflex, and anything that was in the environment at the time (sights, sounds, sensations) becomes associated with the traumatic reaction.

Later exposure to the environmental stimuli present during the original reaction can retrigger subsequent phobic/traumatic reactions (i.e. a flashback).

How do we clear traumatic reactions from the mind and body in minutes?

People automatically and unconsciously stimulate their calming reflex by touching the areas of the body that I described above.

In the EFT technique, a person focuses consciously on the traumatic reaction and systematically stimulates all of these natural bio-destressing points thus inducing the calming reflex and neutralizing the traumatic reaction.

From that time forward, the memory of that event is associated with the relaxed state, and the person no longer reacts phobically.

It is my feeling that the genius of this technique is not so much the technique itself which we do naturally and unconsciously all the time.

I feel that the genius of this technique is that we can consciously focus on a traumatic memory and clear the upset intentionally. Hence, we have choice about how we feel and react. This probably

accounts for the naming of these sorts of techniques such as Emotional Freedom Technique (1) or Thought Field Therapy (5,6).

Here is the Natural Bio-destressing technique that we developed from EFT. Try it. Share it with everyone you know.

Start by concentrating on the shock and fear that you felt the moment you first knew something was wrong (the initial shock).

Sometimes, anger or shame feels stronger, and if so start with that. Step into the memory as if it were happening now and notice where the negative emotion is located in your body. Note that your head is part of your body, and numb counts as a feeling that indicates shock. Rate the degree of discomfort on the discomfort scale below.

Do a round of Natural Bio-destressing, Then check for other symptoms of trauma and treat them. It may take several rounds with a different emotional or belief focus to clear all the symptoms stored in a trauma. At the very least, clear the initial shock and fear.

#### Discomfort Scale

10+ I am numb, frozen; I feel nothing.

10 The Discomfort is the worst it can possibly be. I can't tolerate it. It puts me in a panic.

9 Discomfort is very close to intolerable.

8 Fear is very severe.

7 Fear is severe.

6 Fear is very uncomfortable.

5 Fear is uncomfortable, but I can tolerate it.

4 Fear is noticeable and bothersome, but I can deal with it.

3 I feel a slight degree of fear, but I am totally in control.

2 I'm rather calm, quite relaxed, with no fear.

1 I am perfectly calm ? totally relaxed.

#### Natural Bio-destressing (modified EFT process)

A. Concentrate on a specific feeling and notice its location in your body. On a scale of 1-10 rate how severe is the feeling.

B. Tap the Karate Chop Point, #15, while saying three times: "I totally and completely accept myself, even though I have this (problem, feeling of fear, guilt, anger, etc.)"

C. Stimulate nerve endings 1-15 by tapping with fingertips for a few seconds.\* If you feel a lot of energy moving, or the scene is changing, stay on that point till the activity plateaus. If nothing happens on a specific point, move to the next one. Use your intuition about how long to stay on a point.

D. Do the 9-Gamut Tap the Gamut Point, #16, on back of hand through the following steps:

1. Close eyes
2. Open eyes
3. Look down to one side
4. Look down to the other side
5. Roll eyes around in a circle in one direction
6. Roll eyes around in the other directions
7. Hum a tune
8. Count to 40 by 2's
9. Hum a tune

E. Repeat Step C

F. After every round, recheck how severe is the feeling. It should be gone altogether or very low on the scale. Think about what you learned and what feels or seems different about the situation to you now. If the level of that emotion still seems high, notice what else about the situation makes you feel frightened, angry, sad, etc. Focus on that subject and repeat the process.

\*At any point, feel free to add deep breathing, pacing back and forth, gently stamping your feet, or massaging or shaking the tension out of your body.

1. Bridge of nose by eyebrow
2. Outside edge of eyebrow
3. Side of eye 11. Side of thumb
4. Under eye 12. Side of index finger
5. Under nose 13. Side of middle finger
6. Under mouth 14. Side of little finger
7. Under collar bone 15. Karate chop spot
8. Sore spot on chest (rub gently)
9. Under arm on rib (ouchy spot)
10. Bottom rib below nipple

What else do I do to clear an entire trauma?

Terrorism is an act of violence and codes as a violence trauma. If you lost a loved one, a job, money, opportunity, freedom, etc. you may also have loss trauma. In my research on loss and violence trauma, I found that people had very predictable reactions that consisted of a series of exaggerated emotions, painful feelings, and irrational beliefs (for a more detailed explanation see 7,8).

In both a loss and a violence trauma people usually feel:

- shock,
- fear,
- anger or rage,
- sadness,
- hurt, and pain

- irrational feelings of guilt, shame, and blame i.e., what happened is my fault; it is people other than the perpetrator's fault;
- it is God's fault.
- I am helpless and have no control over the situation.
- I (we, our country) am bad/unlovable/unwanted/undeserving?unworthy.
- Anticipatory phobias, the dread that the something bad will happen again

In violence trauma people often feel:

- My boundaries have been violated or breached.
- Feeling of pollution: I (we, our country, our environment) feels contaminated by the evil that was done.
- I don't feel safe; I feel vulnerable. I am a victim; I am a target.
- People/men/women are dangerous and/or crazy so, I don't trust or I can't receive from anyone.
- Power is bad; I am afraid of power (mine and or other people's).

In loss trauma people often feel:

- anxiety about who will take care of me
- People leave me. I can't trust them.
- Feeling of emptiness/loss
- Other possible trauma reactions:
- Other emotions such as bitterness, hate, disgust
- Other limiting beliefs or irrational thoughts (such as "this is the end of the world.")
- Feelings of lethargy or inner deadness
- Earlier wounding that got reactivated

We recommend that you do at least one round of Natural Bio-destressing for each negative emotion, feeling, or belief in each line.

Also treat any symptoms you recognized from page one. In the following weeks if you notice additional triggers from the original trauma, or other events occur that shock you again, treat that.

Use Natural bio-destressing for the rest of your life to treat any trauma that might occur. If you would like personal tutoring with this process or private, professional help to clear up this and other issues, contact our office or other recommended providers to find someone in your area (9).

What do I do if this doesn't work for me?

It implies that there is a deeper issue that needs to be treated. We recommend you get help from a mental health professional trained in Healing from the Body Level Up™ methodology or other energy psychology methods (9).

Personal experiences of the September 11 tragedy. top

My associates, Sandra, Marcia, and David were the first to know.

David stormed into the office with his client and ran to the TV, saying, “A plane has just crashed into the World Trade Center.”

Sandra immediately felt as though she just stepped out of reality. She lost her breath, began to hyperventilate and felt as though she were going to faint. She stood, bent over, trying to catch her breath, shivering and cold. She considered taking a sedative.

Instead, she says, “as we continued to watch the horrors unfold, the second plane crashing, the Pentagon attack and the towers falling, I began to tap using the EFT process.

Within minutes, I regained my composure. I was still very saddened and concerned, but now I was experiencing the events on a more rational level. I was able to go back to work, and show others how to tap to help them de-traumatize.

The real miracle is that in the weeks since the attack, I have been really okay. While others I know have been experiencing depression, crying, increased anxiety, feeling immobilized, etc., I have been able to continue with my life, focusing on the positive and the future, while still acknowledging the tragedy of September 11. I have been able to be strong for my family and clear-headed and motivated at work. Tapping took care of it right then and there.”

I finished with my first client, a phone client, and walked out into the central room of my office to find out who turned on the television.

Didn't my staff know that I was working and that television noise was distracting?

I looked toward the TV in time to see the world trade towers fall down. I could feel my body shock.

The world instantly turned black and white, the sky turned dark, and my body went numb and horrified all over.

There was a terrible dizziness in the back of my head, and I started to go into a state of unbelief. I was afraid of what might happen if I let trauma freeze in my body, so I started doing the EFT process immediately.

I told myself very firmly ” this is real, this is very bad, this is war.”

I cried and tapped, and felt the pain flow through my body. My staff of Marcia and Sandra, and my clinical associate David were all there, and together we stood in front of the TV and tapped.

A business associate of David's who is unfamiliar with this work walked into the office at the same time. He said something like, “what the heck, I'll try it”, and tapped with us. He was surprised at how

much better he felt afterward. My staff also felt well enough after tapping to stay at work and keep the office going.

Marcia said they tried to keep the day as normal as possible because “you never knew who would call in and need us.”

Our warm and caring David who fancies himself a macho man told us, “if I weren’t a man I would have cried.” News flash to David: a lot of men cried about this tragedy.

My next client, John, told me his retired father lived in New York City, and he couldn’t reach him by phone. He was sure that his father was OK because he lived in upper Manhattan and wouldn’t have gotten up that early in the morning.

He also said that he expected something like this to happen, so it didn’t shock him. I told him that expecting something does not protect against shock. Look at how many people traumatize when someone dies of a serious illness even when they have plenty of warning. We spent that session worrying, fantasizing worst case scenarios, feeling intense emotions, and doing EFT.

We finished at noon. The sky was blue, the sun was shining again, and I no longer felt that I was living in a sinister world. I cleared my feeling that it was my colleagues’ and my fault this happened because we hadn’t been active enough in healing and bringing out the best in humanity. I repaired my feeling that our country was vulnerable and couldn’t protect itself.

I cleared the grief that our beautiful innocent country had been contaminated by evil. I reinstalled boundaries with other people’s trauma and grief so that I could be present to help people without feeling overwhelmed myself.

Thus, I was able to be present for my other clients such as Jane who had emigrated from a country full of political violence and terrorism. She felt engulfed in a nightmare in which there was no safe place in the whole world. We actually had to combine a prayer intervention with tapping to clear the nightmare feeling. I also treated people for:

- trauma from domestic violence that escalated after the terrorist attack feelings of isolation, loneliness,
- or homesickness from being single, widowed, divorced, or far from home inability to concentrate at work
- trauma from trying to resurrect family connections with toxic people

Sadly, my New York clients were the most severely traumatized. One client told me that her fear that the end of the world had come was real, not phobic. Fortunately, that fear cleared with tapping.

That week, I also showed as many people as I could personally reach the EFT technique. I detraumatized my chiropractor and his assistant, all the patients in his waiting room, some of the parents at my daughter’s bus stop and at birthday parties, and some members of the choir I sing with.



I also set up an ongoing series of in-person or phone bridge detraumatization clinics (for schedule information see ref. 7). I asked everyone I knew to share this technique with everyone they knew so that we could reach as many people as possible. (I am happy to say that they have been doing this and the people we've reached are grateful).

The after effects.

I thought I had cleared all the trauma from the bombing, but I noticed over the next week that I needed to treat some additional triggers such as:

- the sight of a demolished building a block from my office
- the sight of 3 pages of obituaries in the Boston Globe
- fear of flying out of Logan Airport, being on the airplane and getting hijacked, and being away from home
- the sight of intact twin towers in a TV show that I had previously recorded.

On September 11, my husband did EFT at work, so he was cleared by the time he got home. Two weeks later we traumatized when my husband's employer warned that they would not meet expected earnings for this quarter, they would lay off 25% of the company, and the stock price dove. We treated ourselves for loss trauma, and thankfully my husband did not lose his job.

My 7 year old daughter did not traumatize when the school told the children, and we did not allow her to watch the news on TV. Two weeks later, my daughter started having bad dreams. I found that she traumatized when she saw the twin towers going up in flames on the large screen TV at our nanny's house. She also traumatized when a classmate told her that she had a girlfriend who had a girlfriend who died in the airplane. I treated her, and the nightmares disappeared.

Where does that leave us?

The EFT technique clears traumatic reactions, but not normal reactions. After treatment many of us still felt sad and angry, but these were balanced levels of emotion, not exaggerated, stuck levels of emotion.

I also felt that the CIA/FBI should have had some warning about a plot this large and complex. I feel proud of the rescue workers and other people who have stepped up to offer assistance and make the world better in any way they can and tend to cry when I think about it.

Many people came together in the detraumatization clinics where we explored our own biology and cleared trauma from mind and body. Together we modified the EFT technique into the form we call Natural Bio-destressing. We would like to contribute to making the world better by teaching everybody this technique as an antidote to the psychological effects of terrorism and other forms of trauma.

More about the neurochemistry.

For every on system in the body there is an off system.

The on system:

Physical pain and strong emotional reactions, particularly anger and fear, activate the sympathetic alarm response (the fight/flight/freeze reflex). This massive discharge of the sympathetic nervous system triggers the adrenal glands to release epinephrine which stimulates the heart and muscles. Simultaneously, the hypothalamus releases CRH which stimulates the pituitary gland to release ACTH and beta-endorphin. ACTH stimulates the adrenal glands to release cortisol which stimulates the liver to release glucose. Beta-endorphin, inhibits pain (possibly accounting for the numbness associated with shock). The overall biological intention of this reflex is to save a person's life when he is in danger by increasing the ability of the body to perform vigorous muscle activity without being overwhelmed by pain.

The off system:

The body's feedback mechanism for inhibiting the sympathetic alarm response is called the stress relaxation response (the calming reflex) (2,4). High levels of cortisol inhibit release of CRH from the hypothalamus and of ACTH from the pituitary glands. Opioid peptides (endorphins, enkephalins and dynorphins) inhibit pain stimuli transmitted through the spinal cord and brainstem thus inhibiting the sympathetic nerve response. Endorphins also directly downregulate the high cardiac output associated with the alarm response. This response can be elicited in many ways. Interestingly, the natural stress relieving sites that I listed above correspond to points at the ends of acupuncture meridians in the Chinese model of the body's energy field.

Studies of how acupuncture works demonstrated that acupuncture treatments cause the release of cortisol and endorphins (3). It thus seems reasonable to conclude that what we are doing when we touch, hold, rub, or tap on these points is stimulating the stress relaxation response. The net outcome of stimulating the stress relaxation response is to inhibit the alarm response and reestablish homeostasis.

Who originated and developed these acupuncture meridian-based energy psychology techniques?

A clinical psychologist named Roger Callahan first researched and developed Thought Field Therapy for clearing phobias, anxiety, trauma, and addictions (5,6). A student of his named Gary Craig simplified this method into a single easy-to-use technique that he called Emotional Freedom Technique (1).

Fred Gallo, another pioneer in the field, who coined the term energy psychology techniques, gives an excellent review of the history and development of these techniques (10). In recent years many people have researched, used, tested, and expanded upon this pioneering work (11-13). In addition to

written materials on the subject, we and others have made videotapes and even an interactive CD on how to use these methods (see reference 9).

Why don't more people know about and use this technique?

These techniques have been publicly available for 15-20 years. I believe that some people have trouble relating to these new methods because the people who developed these techniques used the acupuncture meridian system of oriental medicine to understand and explain this biological reality.

This oriental medical model until recently has been foreign to Western scientific thought and experience. Just as acupuncture was considered strange for many years until more Western medical research was done to identify the physiological mechanisms and confirm the medical results (3), many people are waiting for more western style research on these techniques to confirm the psychological results. That research is just beginning to arrive (14). It takes time to introduce new methods into general use.

Happily, each year hundreds of mental health professionals are discovering and using these methods with their clients to their and their client's delight. For more information about training in Healing from the Body Level UpSM methodology or other energy psychology techniques see ref. 9. The technique in this paper is so simple and powerful that you can verify its effectiveness for you. Feel free to experiment.

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Swack, Judith A., Ph.D. "Healing From the Body Level Up" in Energy Psychology in Psychotherapy. Gallo, Fred, Ph.D., ed New York: W.W. Norton, 2001.

. If you are interested in our detraumatization clinics, videotapes, in-depth training in these techniques, or private sessions, please contact our office at:

Dr. Judith A. Swack's website: [www.jaswack.com](http://www.jaswack.com) or office: Judith A. Swack, and Associates, 56 Pickering St. Needham, MA 02492, ph: 781-444-6940, e-mail [jaswack@msn.com](mailto:jaswack@msn.com).

Other sources of information, training, and professional help:

Dr. Roger Callahan's website: [www.tftrx.com](http://www.tftrx.com) or ph: 760-564-1008

Gary Craig's website: [www.emofree.com](http://www.emofree.com)

Dr. Fred Gallo's website: [www.energypsych.com](http://www.energypsych.com) or ph: 724-346-3838

Drs. Lambrou and Pratt's website: [www.gem-systems.com](http://www.gem-systems.com) or ph: 858-457-3900

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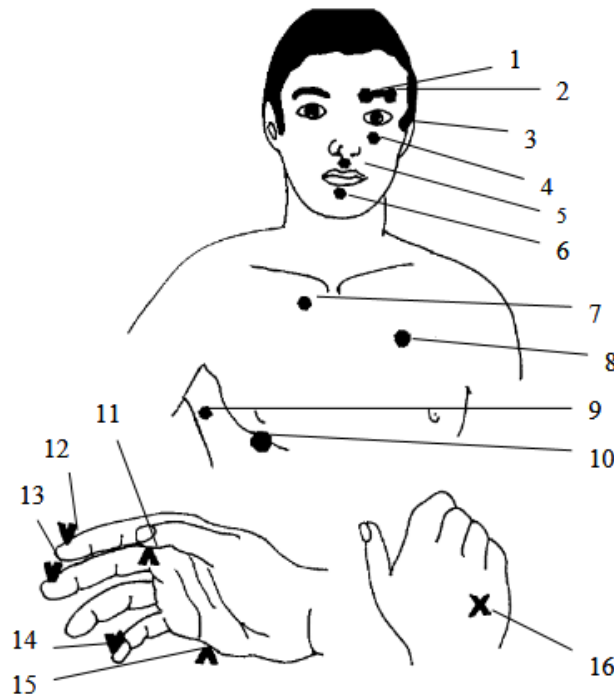
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## Picture of Natural Bio-Destressing Points and Description of Technique

### Natural Bio-Destressing



#### Natural Bio-destressing (modified EFT process)

- A. **Concentrate on a specific feeling and notice its location in your body.** On a scale of 1-10+ rate how severe is the feeling.
- B. **Tap the Karate Chop Point, #15,** while saying three times: "I totally and completely accept myself, even though I have this (problem, feeling of fear, guilt, anger, etc.)"
- C. **Stimulate nerve endings 1-15 by tapping** with fingertips for a few seconds.\* If you feel a lot of energy moving, or the scene is changing, stay on that point till the activity plateaus. If nothing happens on a specific point, move to the next one. Use your intuition about how long to stay on a point.

1-4 Tap around the entire eye socket starting at the bridge of nose by eyebrow

5. Under nose

6. Under mouth

7. Under collar bone

8. Sore spot on chest (rub gently)

9. Under arm on rib (ouchy spot)

10. Bottom rib below nipple

11. Side of thumb

12. Side of index finger

13. Side of middle finger

14. Side of little finger

15. Karate chop spot

#### D. Do the 9-Gamut

Tap the Gamut Point, #16, on back of hand through the following steps:

1. Close eyes
2. Open eyes
3. Look down to one side
4. Look down to the other side
5. Roll eyes around in a circle in one direction
6. Roll eyes around in the other direction
7. Hum a tune
8. Count to 40 by 2's
9. Hum a tune

#### E. Repeat Step C

- F. **After every round, recheck how severe is the feeling.** It should be gone altogether or very low on the scale. Think about what you learned and what feels or seems different about the situation to you now. If the level of that emotion still seems high, notice what *else* about the situation makes you feel frightened, angry, sad, etc. Focus on that subject and repeat the process.

\*At any point, feel free to add deep breathing, pacing back and forth, gently stamping your feet, or massaging or shaking the tension out of your body.