



*the next wave of health,*  
where brains and energy converge

# The Emergence of Energy Psychology

CRAIG WEINER, DC AND ALINA FRANK

Since philosopher René Descartes created dualism and the "law" that the mind and body were separate, we have been at odds trying to explain how what we think and feel has a direct effect on what happens in our bodies. The world of emotions and thoughts were relegated to the spheres of philosophy and religion for centuries. Fortunately, this worldview of separation of thoughts, feelings and physical health has been modified by science, and paradigms have shifted. It is now commonly understood that thoughts can shape feelings (and vice versa) which, in turn, can stimulate chemicals in the brain and hormones in the body, causing changes in our heart, lungs, muscles, and other organs. The holistic idea that everything

interacts and has an influence on everything else is proving to be a powerful tenet of health. Mainstream medicine is exploring ways to incorporate meditation, prayer, music, and the creative arts into the world of health care. An important consideration in how this transformation of the body-mind approach occurs is the arena of psycho-physical-emotional health.

The study of the mind and our feelings, psychology, has gone through dramatic changes in the last century or two. Sigmund Freud informed us of the power of the unconscious that affects our thinking and our behaviors. Pavlov and Skinner enlightened us to reflexive habitual actions, behaviors and patterns. Maslow addressed the human hierarchy of needs and



*“Energy medicine includes a body-mind-spirit perspective utilizing electromagnetic forces, light, and subtle energies. It is one of five domains of complementary and alternative medicine identified and categorized by the US Center of Complementary Medicine.”*

our desire for self-actualization. The work of these seminal thinkers changed the way we view our internal state. The study of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors is now going through a revolution, one that incorporates an emerging field known as energy medicine, or more specifically, energy psychology.

Energy medicine includes a body-mind-spirit perspective utilizing electromagnetic forces, light, and subtle energies. It is one of five domains of complementary and alternative medicine identified and categorized by the US Center of Complementary Medicine. Many include within its parameters: homeopathy, acupuncture, therapeutic touch, chi gung, Reiki and many more approaches to healing. Mehmet Oz, MD, surgeon, author and “America’s doctor,” describes this wave of change as “...the next big frontier...in medicine, is energy medicine.” And C. Norman Shealy, MD, creator of the Soul Medicine Institute, says that “Energy medicine is the future of all medicine.”

There has emerged within energy medicine a sub-specialty that focuses on the use of energy balancing techniques, often using the energy meridian system as created in Chinese medicine and the field of acupuncture. Energy psychology, developing out of energy medicine, weaves the use of the meridian and vibrational systems of the body with psychology. What began with applied kinesiology as developed in the 1960s by George Goodheart, DC, (a form of muscle testing used to gather inside information from the body and correlated with organ systems and energy meridians) was then further applied by psychiatrist, John Diamond, MD in the 1970s to psychological issues, using the technique to treat emotional problems.

In the 1980s, a psychologist by the name of Francine Shapiro, PhD, discovered that specific rapid movements of

her eyes caused rapid reductions in negative emotional states through a neurological mechanism not understood at the time. This discovery led to her creation of a bold and innovative approach to treating people with traumatic memories, and she called it Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, also known as EMDR.

At about the same time, another psychologist, Roger Callahan, PhD, was interested in meridian energy diagnostics and healing. He had been in practice for nearly 40 years, working with psycho-emotional states like fear, anxiety, and phobias. He discovered that these states were able to be correlated with certain acupoints and found that by percussing or tapping on certain points, when combined with specific self-affirmation statements, he was able to achieve incredibly quick resolution and healing with many of his most challenging patients. His work became Thought Field Therapy, or TFT.

The most widely used of energy psychology approaches at this time is EFT, or the Emotional Freedom Techniques. It is an evolving modality that was developed by Gary Craig, an electrical engineer who studied TFT and worked to simplify and modify the method to make it more accessible for the average person to use as a self-help methodology. Some of the major branches currently within the EFT model include Gary Craig’s Official EFT, Clinical EFT as taught by Dawson Church and EFT Universe, and a complementary form of EFT known as Matrix Reimprinting, developed by Karl Dawson, which incorporates elements of hypnosis, quantum physics, and other fields of study.

Research that underlies the theories of how energy psychology may work has been laid down by scientists



Energy Psychology [continued from page 15]

and researchers who have now become household names. The science published by Candace Pert, PhD, in her book *Molecules of Emotion*, and *The Biology of Belief* by Bruce Lipton, PhD, explain how what you feel creates hormones and neurotransmitters throughout the body which have a direct affect on your health and well-being. It is important to notice that the reverse is also true. The state of your physical and mental health alters the chemistry of your body which creates feelings and emotions, which creates thoughts and beliefs that continue the cycle. This is a creative period of exploration in this field, and ongoing research into the underlying mechanisms

experiences (aka ACEs). In a large-scale study, over 17,000 Kaiser Permanente patients were studied for insights into what life experiences may have made it more difficult for some people to lose weight. What researchers found instead was a game-changer. They found that those individuals who had experienced difficult early life experiences such as physical or emotional abuse, an incarcerated family member, mental illness and even divorce (high ACE scores), had a significantly higher rate of adult risky behaviors and health problems. They had higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, cancer, obesity, smoking, drug use, and even suicide attempts. This study,

*“So many of our life choices  
and behaviors are based on habitual  
and unconscious directives that come  
from the neural networks laid down  
from emotionally charged  
events in our lives.”*

and efficacy of energy medicine techniques continues to appear in scientific journals such as *Explore, Journal of Energy Psychology and Theory, Research and Treatment*.

So, how does this information change and improve our lives—for example, how can we intervene and change incessant thoughts of worry about money, or jealous thoughts, or learn to love ourselves despite childhood patterns of feeling unworthy? So many of our life choices and behaviors are based on habitual and unconscious directives that come from the neural networks laid down from emotionally charged events in our lives. In our attempts to lead satisfying lives, we attempt to leave behind memories of painful childhoods and difficult past experiences. However, neuron networks in our brains were built on those memories and continue to exert a powerful influence on our adult thoughts and behaviors. Not only do these minor and major traumas affect the emotional and psychological aspects of who we become, they have a direct bearing on our physical health as well.

Never was this connection made more clear than in the explosive findings presented in the pioneering investigation into the physical long-term affects of adverse childhood

which is continuing to be re-performed around the world, continues to show that the seeds of many psychological and physical diseases are planted in childhood, manifesting decades afterwards. What are commonly diagnosed by the medical community as biological and physiological conditions can no longer be recognized as causes that are purely physical. This necessitates a new approach to evaluating and treating health and disease.

Some people try to resolve their childhood traumas by attempting to just “get over it” or “forget about it.” For others, their healing has been found in psychotherapeutic explorations, often utilizing various forms of talk therapy or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). For many, this option has been a godsend and has likely saved nations billions of dollars in disease treatment that was never needed as a result of removing the potential long-term physical manifestations of painful childhood memories. However, the field of energy psychology is showing that there may be a way to resolve past traumas with often significantly less time and expense.

This “new” discipline of energy psychology is a burgeoning field of clinical practice and research. EFT for example, is now



available in Veterans Administration Hospitals and Walter Reed Army Medical Center for the treatment of PTSD for returning war veterans. Studies continue to be published showing efficacy for such a wide variety of conditions such as phobias, fibromyalgia, psoriasis, general and specific anxiety disorders, panic attacks, and more. People are using the techniques in any arena of life where stressors may come into play, including relationship challenges, financial stress, and child rearing. Energy psychology techniques are being showcased in the popular media, with TFT showcased in the movie, *The Living Matrix*, and EFT recently highlighted on a CBS syndicate news program for its use to effectively reduce food cravings.

The emergence of energy psychology has, of course, encountered resistance from more traditional disciplines. The American Psychological Association (APA) has distanced itself and not endorsed energy psychology at the present time, though many of its members utilize such techniques in their practice. Despite numerous energy psychology techniques like EFT meeting their published standards for acceptance, the APA has refused to embrace the concept. The idea of working with the "energy system" still faces resistance in the medical profession, just as acupuncture had for many years. Perhaps the concept of "cognitive dissonance" may help to explain some of the resistance to clinical results. This is written about by psychologist, Fred Gallo, PhD, when he says that nothing in the training of most clinicians or researchers prepares them to understand how tapping on the skin can help overcome psychological disorders or account for the speed and effectiveness with which positive results are being achieved.

Just how can talking while tapping our fingers on our face

make a long-lasting change in our thinking or in our bodies? The question of how this works continues to be explored, and over 20 randomized, controlled studies have been published on the use of EFT in peer reviewed journals. Research papers by James R. Lane, PhD, Dawson Church, PhD, and others provide evidence indicating that the finger pressure stimulation of acupuncture points increases the release of pain relieving chemicals which reduce and regulate cortisol production, the primary stress hormone of the body. These changes can not only reduce pain, but can decrease anxiety, create calm in the body, and reduce the fight or flight response. When this is accomplished in conjunction with thinking and talking about a stressful memory or experience, the tapping creates a counter-conditioning effect. In the brain and body, a new wiring occurs where the emotionally distressing experience is now intimately connected in the brain to a more relaxed state. This creates the possibility of a new and more neutral response to thoughts of past painful events. A body that is less frequently living in a fight or flight stressed-out state is a healthier body.

The application of many of these techniques is often done by a skilled practitioner but can be readily learned for personal use. Major traumas, however, such as physical or emotional violence, abuse and certain psychological diagnoses, should be explored with a professional. Sometimes, even profoundly affecting experiences, like witnessing horrific events in war, can be resolved in a few sessions. Other conditions can resolve in what appear to be impossibly short periods of time. One study even showed effectiveness in reducing dental anxiety with as little as a four-minute explanation and six-minutes of treatment. Other studies have shown phobia elimination in

[continued on page 19]

*“Anxiety and fear reduction,  
phobia resolution, pain reduction or elimination  
are just some of the many ways that  
these methods can be self-applied to  
improve our thoughts, feelings and experiences,  
resulting in the possibility of true  
disease prevention from emotional  
and energetic causes.”*



*“The state of your physical and mental health alters the chemistry of your body which creates feelings and emotions, which creates thoughts and beliefs that continue the cycle.”*

### Energy Psychology [continued from page 17]

as little as one session and continued to show resolution up to six months after the session. Many people deal with minor stressors each day with potential long-lasting ill effects, yet that may well be helped by these techniques.

The re-wiring of the neurons in the brain occurring with this work can be explained by Hebb's Law, which states that neurons that fire together, wire together. That is relevant because—to use this example—say a child experienced being hit by his father. Then, after the event, the father felt remorseful and brought the child ice cream as an apology. The notion of ice cream could become associated with kindness and forgiveness, thereby creating a potential template for making unhealthy dietary choices, and could lead to food binging habits during times of stress.

Energy psychology techniques are being practiced currently in a wide variety of professions. Primarily, they are being used by professionals in mental health, but also by trained EP coaches and by a wide variety of health professionals including chiropractors, acupuncturists, and naturopaths. As a chiropractor, I use EFT with patients on issues like chronic back pain, migraines, stress, and anxiety. Anxiety and fear reduction, phobia resolution, pain reduction or elimination are just some of the many ways that these methods can be self-applied to improve our thoughts, feelings and experiences, resulting in the possibility of true disease prevention from emotional and energetic causes.

How soon will energy psychology become an accepted part of the mainstream public and professional arenas? The philosopher Schopenhauer said, “All truth goes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Then it is violently opposed. Finally it is accepted as self-evident.” We can see this process of moving from skepticism to acceptance within the world of health care all around us. Thanks to the work of researchers like David Eisenberg, MD and the Samueli Institute, we know that in the US, 42% of hospitals include CAM (complementary and

alternative medicine) as part of their services, that over 38% of Americans use CAM treatments and that more out-of-pocket dollars go to complementary medicine than to allopathic medical care. Changes in health care continue to happen that are being initiated by patients demanding more and better options than medications alone.

The idea that we can affect our future health and destiny is a powerful concept. Energy psychology is an emerging opportunity for that to happen. A discipline that recognizes the inter-relatedness of thoughts, emotions and physical sequelae is going to have a profound effect on how people see their role in their own health care and responsibility for it. The notion of energy as a key player in our health is showing signs of greater understanding and acceptance. When individuals fully understand that their pasts are strong determiners of their future and yet that they have the capacity to affect the contribution of that past, there will be a major shift in the distinction between health care and disease care in our society. 📌

#### SOURCES:

1. Church, D. (2011, May 1). The utilization of energy psychology in primary care: Clinical sites using energy psychology, *Energy Psychology Journal* (3), 9-10.
2. Lane, James. (2009, Nov.). The neurochemistry of counterconditioning: Acupressure desensitization in psychotherapy. *Energy Psychology Journal* 1:1, 31-44.
3. Feinstein, D. (2009, Nov.). Controversies in energy psychology. *Energy Psychology Journal*, 45-56.
4. Feinstein, D., Eden D., & Craig, G. (2005) *The promise of energy psychology: Revolutionary tools for dramatic personal change*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin.

#### Additional Resources:

[www.EnergyPsychologyJournal.org](http://www.EnergyPsychologyJournal.org)  
[www.EFTUniverse.com](http://www.EFTUniverse.com)

**CRAIG WEINER, DC**, is the director of The Chiropractic Zone, a Right Brain Aerobics Facilitator and coach, and is the founder of The Transformational Dialogues. [www.chirozone.net](http://www.chirozone.net). Alina Frank is an EFT Universe Trainer and Master Coach of EFT and Matrix ReImprinting EFT, [www.tapyourpower.net](http://www.tapyourpower.net). They live on magical Whidbey Island in Washington state.