

# ALLEVIATING ANXIETY

*Erasing uneasy, apprehensive feelings*

By Lindsay Kenny

*“Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.”*

*Marie Curie*

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## WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety has been experienced at one time or another by just about everyone on the planet. Anxiety can be a heart-pounding, stomach-churning, palm-sweating, or lump-in-the-throat event. More than any other emotion, anxiety is manifested in physical symptoms. For most of us anxiety is only a temporary feeling that passes once a situation is under control or the fear has been eliminated. For others, anxiety is a long-term, debilitating problem that often appears to have little or no cause, yet the physical symptoms persist. Anxiety is often the root cause of addictions, as well as a contributing factor for ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks, low self esteem, suicides and so much more.



## WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

Most anxiety is fear-based, particularly the fear of not being in control. Having little or no control over any issue, situation, or person, causes high anxiety in some people. Similarly, we can experience anxiety if we're afraid of losing something: love, respect, dignity, security, etc. Being uncertain about an outcome (not being in control of it) can also cause anxiety: “What if this plane is hijacked?” “Will people talk behind my back at the party?” “What if I make a fool of myself during

the concert?” These anxiety-driven thoughts are all founded in fear. It’s not abnormal to experience anxiety occasionally, especially about an unknown. It’s only when we obsess about it, or when anxiety interferes with living a normal life, that it becomes a serious problem.

Anxiety can also be caused by numerous other factors or nothing at all. We live in incredibly stressful times, especially those of us in the United States where terrorist warnings are a frequent occurrence. Worldwide, we have seen terrorist bombings in Spain, England, Bali and elsewhere, in otherwise peaceful nations. So the threat is always present that “it could happen at any time.”

In the nightly news we hear daily updates on the war in Iraq, plus other violence. Every day we see or hear hundreds of images and sounds that can induce anxiety in even the calmest soul. Add to that the natural, uncontrollable disasters like hurricanes, floods, wild fires, tornadoes, mudslides, earthquakes and Tsunamis that dominate the news and its no wonder we feel more anxious than ever. In our neighborhoods we hear of “Amber Alerts” for children snatched from their homes and sexual predators living down the street that can cause anxiety in any caring parent.

Additionally, there is much uncertainty about oil prices, the economy and our futures. Gone are the days we can leave our doors unlocked, even when we’re home. Gone are the days when we can let kids watch television unsupervised. No longer can we trust someone with our children just because he or she is a teacher, priest, doctor, coach or other authority figure. All of these things compounded foster the makings for anxiety.



**IF WE’RE ALL EXPOSED TO THE SAME BAD NEWS AND SIMILAR DAILY TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE INCAPACITATED WITH ANXIETY AND OTHERS SEEM TO LET IT ROLL OFF THEIR BACKS?**

By her own admission, Harriet was constantly anxious over “nothing and everything.” She was pretty dysfunctional in that she lost her job, had broken up her marriage and had alienated most of her friends and family over her extreme anxiety. Although she couldn’t remember any specific incidents in the past that might have started her anxiety, she did know it had been with her almost all of her life. I asked about her parents. She said her father, an alcoholic, was verbally and physically abusive to her and her mother.

As a result, they were always anxious about him coming home since they never knew what kind of mood he’d be in or what he’d do to them. They lived in an anxious state of terror 24 hours a day. Well, there was a clue! So we tapped on that core issue saying, “Even though I’ve always been anxious and sometimes it kept me safe, because I never knew what to expect from my dad.”

At first we weren’t getting any results so I suspected Harriet had a Psychological Reversal about getting over her anxiety. We did a Reversal neutralization saying three times, “Even though I don’t really want to let go of this anxiety... I’ve had it so long I won’t know how to function without it... It’s kept me safe sometimes... I love and accept myself anyway.” We then started the original setup again and went from a SUDS of 10 to a five, to a two and finally to a zero. Harriet came back for a couple of other sessions to work on some related issues. She has since reported that her life is working again,

After reading the reasons for all the anxiety-producing circumstances today, one might think everyone should be anxious. Yet millions of people function fine without letting anxiety get to them. Virtually everyone has experienced anxiety at one time or another in their lives. Whether it’s being anxious over making a good impression with the in-laws or giving an important speech to a critical audience, we’ve all felt the temporary discomfort of being out-of-control or anxious.

Some people just get over it while others turn into chronic anxiety sufferers. Like anything else, it’s not what happens to us that shapes

who we are, but rather how we deal with what happens to us. Whether genetics, chemical make-up or learned behavior, the fact is some people deal with anxiety easily and for others it becomes crippling, life-altering burden.

Some people try to ignore their symptoms and may eventually turn to illegal drugs or alcohol, while others seek professional help in the form of prescription drugs. Drugs may provide temporary relief from anxiety, but they only serve to mask the symptoms rather than dealing with the cause and elimination of this debilitating condition.

Those of us contributing to this book, as well as thousands of other EFT users around the world, know EFT can make a profound difference in the treatment of anxiety. Simply eliminating the negative emotion(s) fueling the anxiety -- trauma, fear, uncertainty, feeling out of control, etc. -- can often reduce or completely eliminate it. (More on how to do that is shown in the Question “How do I use EFT to alleviate anxiety?”)



### WHAT IS CHRONIC ANXIETY?

Chronic, as defined by Webster, is “being long-lasting and recurrent or characterized by long suffering.” Those that experience chronic anxiety know it can range from terribly uncomfortable to completely incapacitating. According to the Mental Health Intervention Research Center, five percent of the U.S. population (about 12,500,000 people) suffers from chronic anxiety and millions more deal with frequent anxiety.

Chronic anxiety sufferers are anxious almost all the time with a sense of “waiting for the next disaster to happen.” For some, their bodies actually develop a habit of feeling anxiety and so become “addicted” to it. That’s not to say anyone would consciously *choose* to be anxious, but rather their body can start feeling more *accustomed* to being anxious than being calm and relaxed. Chronic anxiety sufferers often admit to “being anxious over being anxious.” It’s a horribly debilitating state of being in which to exist.



### **WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF ANXIETY?**

Left untreated, chronic anxiety can lead to panic attacks, depression, high blood pressure, ulcers, insomnia, agoraphobia and more. Often anxiety greatly reduces a person's ability to function at work, in relationships and life in general. It's virtually impossible to be effective or enjoy life when you're suffering from chest pains, excessive sweating, a racing pulse and other symptoms of debilitating anxiety.

In severe cases people quit their jobs and live huddled in their homes experiencing their world through a constant veil of anxiety. Others manage to function only through the help of drugs. Neither option is ideal. Fortunately, EFT offers an excellent, safe and highly effective alternative.



### **HOW CAN EFT HELP ANXIETY SUFFERERS?**

EFT can be a Godsend for those suffering from mild to severe anxiety. When in the state of anxiety, our bodies are out-of-sync, out of balance and off-center. We feel out-of-control and out of alignment. So by rebalancing ourselves and our body's energy system we can drastically affect the hold that anxiety has on us. Think of anxiety as a powerful magnet that has locked onto our body's nervous system, causing an electrical storm in our brains and nervous system. By tapping on the selected energy meridians and changing the polarity of those "anxiety magnets," we are neutralizing and releasing anxiety's hold in our body.



### **SO HOW DO I USE EFT TO ALLEVIATE ANXIETY?**

First you need to determine, if possible, the cause of your anxiety. Are you worried about losing your job, anxious about your IRS audit, nervous about becoming a parent, taking a test, or performing in front of an audience? If you can identify a relatively simple source such as these then anxiety can often be resolved quickly and easily.

*Note: Since the inside of the wrists are stress and anxiety points, and because so many people have anxiety issues, I always add the wrist points to my tapping locations for all issues. These points are located at the base of the palm on the inside of your wrists where a nurse would take your pulse. Simply bump your wrists together at that location.*



### WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE SETUP PHRASES FOR SIMPLE ANXIETY ISSUES?

For simple anxiety issues (that is, ones where you pretty much know the reason for your anxiety) start with a simple setup statement like:



*Even though I'm anxious about [whatever the issue is], I deeply and completely accept myself.*

Other simple examples are:



*Even though I'm anxious about getting fired if they find out I went to the beach instead of staying home sick, I love and accept myself anyway.*

*Reminder: This anxiety about being found out*

*Even though I'm anxious that my boyfriend might find someone he likes better than me, I deeply and completely accept myself.*

*Reminder: This anxiety over my boyfriend leaving me*

*Even though my anxiety is over having to do a solo performance at the reunion, I love, accept and trust myself completely.*

*Reminder: This anxiety about performing on stage*

*Even though I'm anxious knowing I have to be in a closed-in room with lots of people at the dinner party and I might freak out, I completely accept who I am as a man.*

*Reminder: This anxiety about being in small spaces. (Or use -- my anxiety about freaking out.)*

Adam came to me with severe anxiety, panic attacks and nightmares that woke him up in a sweat. He had an alcoholic father whose abuse was verbal and emotional. His father never had anything good to say to Adam, nor could Adam do anything right. Even if Adam came home with straight “A”s, his father would say, “So, you think you’re too big for your britches now?” When his father was drunk, which was most of the time, Adam’s father would go into an uncontrollable rage, breaking and throwing things in the house, screaming at the kids, and taunting them with horrible threats.

When he was drunk, one of Adam’s dad’s favorite ways to terrorize the family was to sneak into the kids’ bedroom and blow a loud athletic horn in their ears. The kids would wake up in terror, screaming and crying for hours. If they fell back to sleep, good old dad would come in again, blow the horn and laugh himself into a stupor. Who wouldn’t be anxious with that kind of inexcusable behavior from someone who’s supposed to love and protect you? We tapped on Adam’s father being a “dooder-head” only we used more explicit words chosen by Adam, framing some of the incidents mentioned above.

Adam’s intensity dropped from a 10 to a two in two rounds of EFT and we got stuck. So we switched over to tapping on, “Even though my father was a brute to me and my sister growing up, I’m now willing to start forgiving him.” When that issue was collapsed, we checked in on his anxiety level and it was gone as well. It took additional tapping on Adam’s part to clear out other anxiety-causing behavior. He did an excellent job in being persistent until he was finished. Adam now reports that he has even less anxiety than “normal” folks.

*Even though I’m really anxious about having to go through airport security as an Arab-American, I totally accept myself as a good person and responsible citizen.*

*Reminder: My anxiety about being targeted as a terrorist*



### WHAT ABOUT MORE COMPLICATED ANXIETY? CAN EFT WORK ON THAT?

Anxiety can often be a complex issue, especially when it's rooted in the past, or you've been experiencing anxiety for years. If it's not clear why you're anxious or you feel nervous for no particular reason, try to discover what's at the root of the anxiety by asking yourself, "When did I first start to experience anxiety?" "What else was happening in my life at the time?" "What did that teach me?" In other words look for the core cause of the problem.

For instance, I have a client named Joe who has been anxious all of his life, but had no idea why. By probing I discovered that his parents were holocaust survivors who were constantly anxious about *everything*. Finding a parking spot or standing in line to buy movie tickets produced anxiety attacks.

His parents worried about losing their jobs, neighbors thinking they were snooty for buying a new car, Joe's pending grades in school, etc. So for Joe, anxiety was a learned or even inherited "habit." Tapping on his parents' anxiety and forgiving them helped Joe get over his own anxiety.

Another client, Sue, found that the root of her anxiety about driving was that when she was a little girl her mother was killed in an auto accident, leaving her and her brothers orphans. She had to quit school and raise her four brothers. She found herself constantly worried about paying the rent, feeding them all and trying to keep the family together. Tapping on those specific events created instant relief from her anxiety issues.



### HOW DO I PHRASE EFT SETUPS FOR MORE COMPLEX ANXIETY?

When the reason for anxiety is unknown or rooted in the past, it's often (though not always) a more complex issue. The basic formula with EFT is still the same. However, the setup statements may be a little longer for more complex issues. With complex issues it's important to find the original cause for the anxiety.



Once you discover the core reason issue, simply tap specifically on that issue or incident. Also, with complex or chronic anxiety, there may be several aspects to a problem. Complex anxiety frequently needs to be taken care of with the help of an experienced EFT practitioner.

Here are some examples of more complex anxiety setup statements:



*Even though my mother was anxious when my dad was late coming home on the night he was killed, so now I'm always anxious if my husband's late, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Reminder: My mother's anxiety over dad's death*

*Even though I inherited my dad's chronic anxiety over money and I'm always worried over not having enough, I accept who I am unconditionally.*

*Reminder: Inheriting my dad's money anxiety or Always worried about money, like dad.*

*Even though I grew up in a bad neighborhood with gunshots going off all night so now I'm anxious about loud noises, I love and accept who I am.*

*Reminder: This anxiety over loud noises*

*Even though I'm anxious about being able to provide for my wife and children should I die, the way my father died and left us destitute, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Reminder: My anxiety about supporting my family*

*Even though Frank was an alcoholic and beat me all the time and I could never predict his moods, so I lived in a constant state of fear and anxiety, I know I'm safe now and I want to love and accept the woman I can become.*

*Reminder: The anxiety and uncertainty from Frank*

Just remember that the setup phrase needs to couch the negative issue (the root of the anxiety) with a positive love and/or acceptance statement.



## WHAT DO I DO IF EFT ISN'T WORKING FOR MY ANXIETY?

This is one of my favorite questions, actually. There are several stumbling blocks that can keep an EFT procedure from working. It could be that you're not finding the *core issue*, you're not *being specific* enough about the issue, you're *shifting issues* and getting off course, you may be *dehydrated*, or something you've ingested or are wearing could be impeding your progress.

But in my opinion the biggest reason people don't get the expected results from EFT is because of a Reversal -- either Psychological or Polarity. Especially if someone is having a difficult time getting over a "chronic" condition of any kind, I always consider some type of Reversal.

If someone has carried around an issue for a long time, whether it be extra weight, trauma, chronic pain, or anxiety it can become a part of his or her personality. It can literally get imbedded in the cells and can become part of his or her identity. The subconscious actually gets attached to the issue and becomes "comfortable" with it. I call this the Secondary Benefit Syndrome or SBS. To the non-rational, subconscious mind the consequences of eliminating a problem such as anxiety, could be very threatening.

For instance the subconscious, non-rational mind might be thinking that if I get over this anxiety:

- I may not be safe.
- I won't have an excuse anymore for my life not working.
- I may not know who I am anymore.
- I won't know how to act as a functional, non-victim or non-anxious person.
- I won't get the attention (or sympathy) I get now.
- I don't deserve an anxiety free existence.

I want to be very clear here. No one who suffers from chronic anxiety, trauma, phobias and countless other problems *deliberately chooses*

### Case Story 3

Casey was a junior in high school when she came to me. She was always anxious about her schoolwork, achieving good grades, getting admitted to a good college, being accepted by others and just doing well in general. Casey had an older sister, Rita, who was “perfect” and set a high standard for Casey. Rita had graduated at the top of her class in high school and college, excelling in athletics, school politics, and school plays. Although Casey’s parents were supportive and never compared the two daughters, Casey always felt pressure to do as well as Rita or better. Casey’s issue was self-imposed anxiety about her own abilities and accomplishments compared to her sister.

We tapped on the setup phrase, “Even though my sister is an exceptional person, I recognize that I have my own unique talents and strengths, and I really want to love and accept who I am.” We tapped on that theme for a few minutes then switched to directly confronting Casey’s anxiety. “Even though I make myself crazy being anxious about everything, I acknowledge that I’m exceptional and excellent in my own way.” She had some resistance to this at first, so we worked around that until she was able to say without hesitation, “I am 100% free of anxiety about everything and I completely accept and love myself unconditionally.”

to remain in that uncomfortable or non-functional state. Yet their subconscious can throw up a roadblock, over which their conscious mind has little or no awareness or control. This becomes a powerful impediment toward eliminating the issue.

Our subconscious is so powerful that, often when I start to work with someone with anxiety, their subconscious resistance actually causes them to become more anxious. Some get sick to their stomach or even break out into hives, so severe is their fear of losing this long-time companion of anxiety. Physical manifestations like that are a sure sign of a Reversal. To read more about this phenomena visit Gary Craig’s web site <http://www.emofree.com> and enter the word “Reversals” into his search bar.



**HOW DO I OVERCOME A BARRIER LIKE REVERSALS OR SBS (SECONDARY BENEFIT SYNDROME) SO EFT WILL WORK FOR ME?**

The good news is, once a Reversal is discovered, it is fairly easy to overcome. To fix a Reversal simply tap on the karate chop point saying one or all of these Reversal phrases three times:

Always end the statement with a positive acceptance statement such as, "I deeply and completely accept myself."



*Even though I don't really want to get over this anxiety issue, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though it may not be safe to get over this anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I won't know how to act if I'm not anxious, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I won't have an excuse for my life not working if I let go of this anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I don't want to forgive the people that ruined my life, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I don't want to be normal, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I'm afraid this EFT won't work and I'll never get over this anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I don't deserve to get over this anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though I'm anxious about letting go of my anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

*Even though for whatever reason I don't want to let go of this anxiety, I love and accept myself completely.*

It's important to note that you *don't* need to determine whether or not you have a Reversal or even what it might be in order to effectively treat it. If you get stumped doing EFT, then doing a Reversal neutralization process, as discussed, can only help your progress and cannot hurt if

you're not reversed. Doing a Reversal neutralization only takes a few minutes and can be invaluable in your treatment.



### HOW SUCCESSFUL IS EFT IN OVERCOMING ANXIETY?

Each person and each issue is different. Even people's motivation and determination to eliminate anxiety is different, so there's no definitive answer here. That said, it's my experience that with a qualified, competent practitioner anxiety can be relieved or completely eliminated for 90 percent or more of the sufferers. For people trying to alleviate anxiety on their own, it's reasonable even then to expect a 70 percent or greater success at alleviating anxiety.

The success rate is very much contingent on the skill of the person administering EFT, as well as the level of persistence applied. But even the worst case using EFT is far better than the weeks or months you could spend in talk therapy, taking drugs, or other methods and still not have the issue resolved. If you just can't resolve an anxiety problem on your own using EFT, consider consulting a qualified EFT practitioner. Even telephone consultations can be highly effective with anxiety challenges.



### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT CAN HELP ME BE SUCCESSFUL IN DEALING WITH ANXIETY?

Like using EFT for any other issue it's important that the user:

- *Be persistent.* Work on each issue until it's resolved.
- *Be specific about the issue.* For instance, use a setup statement that specifically names your problem, such as, "Even though I'm anxious about marrying Paul because he has children and I'm not good with kids..."
- *Be vigilant about finding the core issue.* Keep looking until you're sure you're at the root cause.
- *Be aware of Reversals.* They can impede your progress until the Reversal is neutralized.

- *Be gentle with yourself*, even if you don't get the results you want right away. Not all EFT 'cures' are one-minute-wonders.
- *Read as many of the case studies on anxiety and other issues as you can* to learn from others at <http://www.emofree.com> or elsewhere. Obstacles and different aspects of anxiety are creatively dealt with in real case histories.

Be patient and relief will come. For some there's almost instant release of anxiety and for others it may take hours. If you don't get the results you want and it's just not moving, read Gary's article on his website titled "When EFT appears not to work." EFT is so predictable, that if you do two or three rounds and your intensity level hasn't changed, then stop and reassess your tactics and specifically look for a Reversal. EFT does work if applied correctly. But as mentioned above there are things that can impede its effectiveness. Be persistent until you get relief.

In my opinion EFT is the most powerful tool for self help and transformation that's available today. And never has the world needed such a tool the way it does today. The only downside is you have to *use* EFT to benefit from it. If you're anxious about using EFT or afraid it won't work for you, then tap on those issues.



*Even though I'm anxious about trying EFT for my anxiety, I accept myself completely and unconditionally.*

*Even though I'm afraid EFT won't work for me and it's my last resort, I accept myself completely and unconditionally.*

Good luck and keep tapping!

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