

TAPPING IN
A Step-by-Step Guide to Activating Your Healing Resources Through Bilateral Stimulation

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Paperback
5 1/4" x 8"
290 pages
ISBN
978-1-59179-788-3
\$18.95

RESOURCE TAPPING

The name of the technique that uses imagination to activate inner resources which is then paired with alternating bilateral stimulation or tapping to strengthen and integrate the resource.

BILATERAL STIMULATION

The use of alternating right, left stimulation such as tapping on the knees, legs or shoulders. Bilateral stimulation is used to activate and integrate information from the brain's two hemispheres.

Tapping In What Is Resource Tapping?

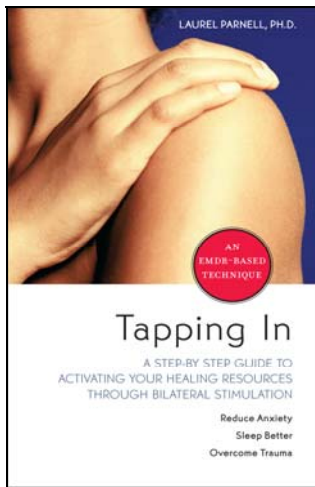
Resource Tapping evolved out of a therapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, or EMDR. EMDR, which was developed by psychologist Francine Shapiro in the late 1980s, is a powerful, well-researched treatment for trauma that incorporates alternating bilateral stimulation into a structured therapy. Shapiro found that people could process a trauma memory at an accelerated rate when it was paired with bilateral stimulation. People who had been suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder would find their symptoms relieved after only a few sessions. In the early days of EMDR, we used eye movements exclusively for bilateral stimulation.

Clients were instructed to follow the therapist's fingers with their eyes, moving them to the far right and then far left. The eye-movements used in EMDR were found to activate an accelerated processing effect. Clients would experience a mind-body free associative processing during which emotions, body sensations, images, memories and thoughts moved rapidly through their systems, very much like what we experience during REM or dream sleep. Some well-regarded brain researchers believe that the bilateral stimulation used in EMDR may be activating both hemispheres of the brain much in the same way that REM sleep does. During REM sleep, our eyes move rapidly back and forth and we process and integrate information.

But many people were not able to use the eye movements in EMDR. Some had eye injuries, were blind, or just found it too physically uncomfortable. Over time we discovered that other forms of bilateral stimulation also worked just as well if not better than eye movements to elicit the accelerated processing effect. We began to tap on clients' knees and hands, or to use alternating sounds, stimulating each side alternately—right, left, right, left. In this way we would activate each side of the person's brain, which seems to be the key to the rapid processing effect we see in EMDR.

When clients activate a disturbing memory, by evoking the emotions, body sensations, and thoughts associated with it and then adding bilateral stimulation, they begin an extraordinary free associative process between mind and body. Clients can have thoughts, feelings, old memories, or dream-like fantasies that move rapidly through their awareness. As this information is processed, they often have new insights and new ways of viewing themselves and their lives. By the end of an EMDR session the old memories no longer feel disturbing. Clients naturally arrive at a place of health and wholeness.

Experience with thousands of people led to the foundational EMDR theory that within each person is a natural ability to heal that is disrupted after a traumatic experience. In theory our body-mind has a natural information processing system that works to process and assimilate new information. We have experiences all the time that are stored for later use. However, trauma memories are processed in a different way. When we have a trauma our information processing system is disrupted. The information is left in fragmented form, unprocessed and not stored in long-term memory. The unintegrated fragments often cause symptoms that disrupt our lives. A sound or even a smell that reminds you of the trauma can elicit a full-blown panic response. Unprocessed traumas can cause us to feel anxious, depressed, have nightmares and trouble sleeping. Instead of the trauma feeling like it happened in the past, it feels like it



RESOURCE

Include inherent qualities such as love, wisdom, and joy, memories, experiences, and images that arise from our imaginations, or people to whom we can connect. Resources reside within us.

TAPPING

The use of alternating bilateral stimulation (right, left) tapping on the knees, legs, shoulders etc.

TAPPING IN RESOURCES

The pairing of an activated resource and tapping. The tapping serves to strengthen and integrate the feeling of the resource so that it becomes more easily available.

ACTIVATION

Bringing the resource into consciousness through your imagination, so that all of your senses are alive and its qualities are available to you.

is alive in the present. When you have a wound, your body cannot heal until the wound has been cleaned of debris. In the same way that debris inhibits our body's ability to heal, when we experience a serious trauma it disrupts our natural healing system. The bilateral stimulation we use in EMDR activates our inherent information processing system and allows our minds and bodies to find their way back to wholeness.

In the early days of EMDR we discovered that bilateral stimulation could also be used in a focused way to activate and strengthen certain resources within our clients. The first resource to be tapped in was the safe place. Guiding people to imagine a place where they feel safe and comfortable had been used for many years by psychotherapists to help people reduce anxiety. We found that directing clients to focus on a safe place and then adding short sets of bilateral stimulation worked even better than the imagery alone to calm them down and provide them with a sense of control over their distress.

This practice, called "installing a safe place," helped traumatized people feel safer and was used by therapists prior to beginning EMDR sessions. Later we found that we could tap in many different kinds of resources—such as images of nurturing figures, protector figures, and inner wisdom figures—to help strengthen and stabilize clients who had been severely traumatized in childhood. "Resource tapping" became an important tool in helping to prepare clients for the difficult EMDR trauma processing work.

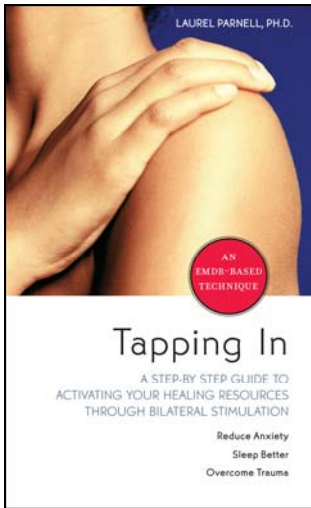
Over the years resource tapping has expanded and developed considerably. There are many positive resources that can be tapped in that comfort us, lift our spirits, or empower us, including inherent qualities such as love, wisdom, and joy, memories, experiences, images that arise from our imaginations, or people to whom we can connect. Moreover, tapping in has expanded beyond EMDR and trauma work

Resource Tapping is now done as a stand-alone technique, independent of EMDR, and new applications for resource tapping are being discovered every day. Resource tapping is used to reduce anxiety and depression, help with sleep, increase creativity and performance, aid in healing, and decrease distress after a traumatic incident. Colleagues of mine in Germany are using it to help cancer patients cope with their illness. By focusing our attention on these resources and adding short sets of simple bilateral tapping, we can strengthen these resources, making them more present and accessible to us.

Resource Tapping is related to EMDR but is essentially a different model. With EMDR we focus on the trauma memory, add bilateral stimulation, and follow a protocol that allows the unfolding of a free-associative processing. By contrast, when we tap in resources we focus on the positive resource and only allow a short amount of bilateral stimulation. We keep the work focused exclusively on the positive, healing resources, and do not allow a free-flow of processing.

The idea with tapping in resources is that we want to select the resources according to the situation. We are using the resources as specific tools for specific applications. For example, if I am feeling anxious, I want to tap in resources that will help me to relax. I might choose a calming image such as a verdant meadow covered with bright yellow flowers, a bubbling brook and gentle grazing deer. As I bring my imagination to bear, and really see, smell, and hear this meadow, I tap right-left, right-left to increase the experience of relaxation this resource evokes in me. I do not allow myself to tap for too long. If I do, I risk beginning to activate anxiety-producing information.

Resource Tapping has been very helpful for many people. It has become a wonderful tool that people are able to use to help reduce anxiety, cope with



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trauma and illnesses, sleep better, and have increased confidence, among other things. Over time, a wealth of applications for tapping in resources has been developed, many of which I will share in this book. Resource tapping is something that can easily be done on your own, without a therapist. When I refer to “tapping” here, I mean tapping alternately right-left, right-left, like softly drumming on your knees, thighs or the sides of your legs. You can also cross your arms across your chest and tap either shoulder—as though hugging yourself—in what is called the “butterfly hug.” You can also alternately tap your toes, or feet.

Throughout this book I will use the terms *tapping into* and *tapping in* resources. We *tap into* our resources by locating the best ones and then using our imaginations to activate these resources. “Tapping in” means that the resource is activated, and we are using *tapping* (bilateral stimulation) to strengthen and integrate the resource more fully into our systems. It is important to understand that we are not taking something from outside ourselves and putting it in; rather, we are using tapping to enhance resources that are already within us.

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