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## EFT for Parkinson's – Solid progress on a difficult case

by Jennifer Davidson

Hi Everyone,

Jennifer Davidson from Switzerland writes this MUST READ, engaging article on how she overcame many hurdles with her inexpressive Parkinson's client. Note her ongoing creativity. Many lessons to be learned here.

Hugs, Gary

Dear Gary

Of the many clients I've worked with in Switzerland, I have particularly enjoyed the challenge presented by "Rene," a gentle and initially inexpressive 64-year-old gentleman with Parkinson's Disease. He has been quietly transformed, I believe, by the magic of EFT, and I'd like to share his story (with his permission; at his request, I've changed his name).

Rene came to me seeking to reverse, or at least contain, the symptoms of Parkinson's, with which he was diagnosed eight years ago: these included limited mobility in one arm, inhibited movements (i.e., difficulty reaching into a pocket), stiffness standing up, discomfort in his legs and back when sitting, and periodic difficulty controlling his fingers when typing.

At our initial session, I asked him (based on his demeanour) if he felt that he was slightly depressed, and he said yes. I then asked him for some background. Very unemotionally, indeed with a poker face and speaking almost inaudibly, in a low monotone (both known Parkinson's symptoms), Rene gave me the following facts:

### Childhood:

He was born the youngest of five children, to an authoritarian father who was abusive, both physically and verbally, and to a mother who suffered from severe depression; she died when Rene was 18. Rene himself had become depressed at the age of 15; the depression lasted some 20 years. Soon after his mother died, the brother he was closest to died in mysterious circumstances, while piloting a plane.

### Middle age:

Another brother died, prematurely, of a heart attack. Rene suffered a serious accident while in the army: he split his head open and required three hours of surgery, since when he has suffered from tinnitus. His wife died of cancer, leaving him to raise their two young sons on his own; his father died.

### The last decade:

His remaining brother died, of ALS. Rene remarried, but the marriage disintegrated within a couple of years, soon after which he was diagnosed with Parkinson's. His new companion had just been diagnosed with a terminal disease. Meanwhile, divorce proceedings from his second wife were underway.

Rene concluded this litany by stating that he was "a very lucky man." For a moment, I thought he was joking. When I raised an eyebrow, questioningly, he noted that he could have died, for example, in the army accident, but hadn't; he reiterated that he was a very lucky man.

After a short pause (me privately reeling from this list of misfortunes, and wondering where on earth to start), I enquired which of the events he'd mentioned produced the strongest emotion in him now. He said none of them. I looked at his face, which was inscrutable, entirely devoid of visible emotion, and wondered how we would ever find our way: he seemed very remote.

I asked if he'd rather tap on himself or be tapped on by me, and he opted for the latter. So, I took his hand, took a deep breath, and plunged in:

"Even though I'm a very lucky man, and it's important for me to see things that way...maybe... I have actually had quite a lot of bad luck in my life...."

We got no further than that. It was like a massive dam bursting: tears flowed and flowed, for several minutes. I tapped on him, mostly silently, until he composed himself. And so began our journey.

We did a lot of tapping, in subsequent sessions, on "presumed" emotions, as Rene continued not to be aware of feeling anything directly. My notes include entries like "did theoretical exorcism of theoretical anger at his father."

I developed a fine line in what I think of as surrogate swearing: "...and I'm f\*\*\*ing angry about it!" I'd say, as emphatically as possible, as Rene politely echoed me, with just the faintest glint of emotion in his eyes. Sometimes we tapped in French (though his English is near-perfect); slowly, little by little, he warmed to the theme. His voice and facial expressions became more animated. In tandem with the defusing of his (presumed) anger (and other emotions), his symptoms started to improve. He said he felt "lighter." At the end of one session, he stood up and said "did you see that? I just stood up in one go!" At the end of another session, I asked him (jokingly) if he thought he could now skip; he said "why not?" and when my back was half-turned I saw him do a little skip.

He started to smile more; he would cry, occasionally, when the tapping brought up sadness (especially over the death of his wife) but it was no longer like a dam bursting, more a gentle release. (Interestingly, though we hadn't solved the tinnitus, he noted he was unaware of it when tapping. Also interestingly, he nearly always chose to tap on feelings, rather than directly on physical symptoms.) He started one session by saying "I've had the realization that I don't allow myself to feel my emotions as I should;" he became curious, started being his own detective, looking for clues to his feelings. There was a sense of things thawing.

The lid that Rene had kept on a considerable amount of anger started to loosen; he was able to identify people, past and present, who made him angry. At the end of one session he said clearly and firmly: "I want to let go of the anger." He noted that his hands always felt better (typing more fluidly and accurately) after EFT. (We measured progress before and after, using a keyboard, and both witnessed what he defined as a 20% improvement on one occasion, following tapping purely on emotions.)

While a lot of anger had been cleared, there was one significant hurdle left: the hatred (now openly acknowledged) Rene felt towards his only surviving sibling, Marguerite. Tapping in search of an underlying event failed to reveal any specific childhood incidents. It did, however, produce the fact that he had, a few years ago, asked Marguerite to borrow some childhood photo albums (the only pictures that remain of their mother). She had refused, which had infuriated him: he said he felt "she'd stolen my childhood."

I didn't rate my chances very highly of helping him release his feelings towards Marguerite: he had stated, in so many words, that had NO desire to forgive her. But we jumped in anyway.

"Even though I hate Marguerite... would like to go to her nursing home and smack her on the nose... take her a glass of poison and force her to drink it...I deeply and completely accept myself..."

"Even though I'm carrying this anger... and it's poisoning me, not her... I don't want to even consider forgiving her... no way... and I'm not about to be tricked into it either, by someone a large number of years younger than me... I'm NOT willing to let go of the anger... because that would mean making her right, and she's NOT... so I'll hold onto the anger... that will show her... except, of course, that she's probably sleeping well at night... and I'm the one with the backache... but I WON'T let go of my anger, because it's useful: it serves me well! In so many ways! Here's how it's useful:...."

(pause, as Rene, looking thoughtful, couldn't come up with any reasons.)

We resumed.

“Even though I'm NOT willing to forgive her... I am (maybe) willing to look at what happened...”

At this point, while tapping on Rene, I found myself (to my surprise) painting a new picture, out of the blue: a portrait of his sister as a deeply troubled little girl, outnumbered by her four brothers, dominated by her angry father, unsupported by her depressed mother. I suggested it must have been quite hard for her, too, that she must have felt quite lonely, that probably what she really wanted was love and safety.... instead she had chosen to be bossy, tried to be controlling: that was her strategy, her best way, presumably, of coping. It was an irony, I added, since this strategy simply drove everyone away from her; still, perhaps she was just doing the best she could; overall, it was a very sad family picture, a hard situation for everyone, each person struggling, trying to find their way... maybe Marguerite had needed to hold onto the pictures, because, somehow, in some way, they were the only thing she had from her childhood that made her feel safe.

And suddenly it was gone. Somewhere during that round, the anger, hatred, and resentment simply flowed away. A tremendous, indescribable peace filled the room; it felt as if the room was flooded with invisible light. (A chorus of angels with harps would not have felt out of place!) We sat quite still and silent for a couple of minutes. Then, as if coming out of a reverie, Rene said:

“But could it (meaning the anger) come back?” I said “no, not in the same form.”

A little while later, I said: “it's almost as if when your defences are up, you invite attack.” Rene thought about this and said, “that's the opposite of the Latin proverb,” and quoted: “*Si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you wish for peace, prepare for war.” I wrote this down, and stared at it. Then I amended it and showed him a new version: *si vis pacem, para pacem*: if you wish for peace, prepare for peace). It seemed, at the time, like the wisest edict of all time.

Saying goodbye to him at the front door that day, I touched his hand and said “peace be with you.” He looked right into my eyes, and replied “Shalom.”

(The following week, having tapped on myself not to be too hopeful/have expectations, half-afraid I'd misread the power of the session, I asked Rene cautiously how he had been feeling since our last session. “A good week,” he said laconically (he is a man of few words). I asked him what accounted for it being a good week. He looked at me drily, and said, as if it was obvious, “last week: the peace.” He added: “things are changing: I feel it.”)

Subsequent sessions were on a new, lighter level; they revolved around Rene finding ways to have more fun, exploring his creativity (painting, sculpting, writing), no longer feeling chained to his desk, allowing himself to hope for a new relationship. We painted away metaphorical bars of cages, allowing the bird within the cage to fly free (a metaphor Rene came up with, from a favourite poem by Jacques Prévert). Whenever I asked what he'd like to tap on (“backache? finger motility?”) his answer was always the same: “peace; more peace.”

I wish I could conjure up a movie of Rene's journey: from a poker face, flat voice, and halting gait to a warm and expressive man with (at least some of the time) a definite spring in his step. (And he was right all along, of course: he IS a very lucky man!)

Once again, a million times over, hats off to EFT!

with warmest wishes to all,

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PS After talking with you, Gary, I called Rene, to get more exact information re the effect tapping had on his pains. In my phone call with him (on April 28th) he first noted that there was “most definitely” a correlation between tapping and an improvement in his symptoms. When pressed for specifics, he said he could quantify his “improved wellness” as “a 50% improvement.”

He then subdivided this 50% into “25% improvement physically and 25% improvement psychologically.” The quotes represent his exact words. When asked if he had any advice for others with Parkinson’s, Rene spoke of “the necessity of ongoing tapping” and, of “overcoming the ‘*innere Schweinhund*’” (inner lazy dog, i.e., inertia.)

once again, all the best. Jennifer