

## Creative EFT for a Relationship Difficulty

I'm sure we've all got some difficult relationships, families seem to be a breeding ground for them!. Maybe they're the ones we're trying hard to ignore, send them a card at Christmas and hope they never visit, or maybe we find ourselves thrust into them unwillingly through marriage or dependency. Whatever the reason, difficult relationships can really drag you down and make life hell, even resulting in illness or chronic pain if left untreated.

As a practitioner, I don't think it is my business to hand out advice or to know whether the relationship needs to be ended or whether it needs healing – either are possible and healthy options. I do hold an intention to honour the relationship at its highest level because I believe in the power of relationships to guide us in healing our past hurts, our past abandonment and rejections. Usually I find that when we can become clearer about our relationships, the decision about how the relationship should change, progress or end is easier to make anyway.

I was asked by Gail to help her with her relationship with her granddad who was, at that time, very ill and in hospital. Gail had been close to him most of her life, especially as a child growing up in a dysfunctional family. She described him as having always been her "safe" person. However, since Gail's mum had died a year ago, her granddad had changed and she was now feeling angry and upset about his behaviour towards her.

The hospital staff told her that when she wasn't there, he laughed and joked and was a lovely man. He just hadn't been showing any of that side of himself with her for many months and was also trying to manipulate her by threatening to not eat unless she was there. All she had been seeing was his anger and jealousy as their relationship became a proxy for all his past bitterness and regret. It is so often the case that only those who are closest to us are the ones whom we allow to see our darkest feelings. But somehow their relationship had become stuck at that level and Gail knew she didn't want him to die with all those angry feelings still there between them.

As a highly experienced EFT practitioner herself, Gail is one of those clients who likes to 'tap and rant' so we didn't need to focus on creating setups and tapping phrases. I just made sure that we were both tapping constantly throughout the session.

Gail was very distressed initially and the story behind the relationship was a complex one, so I couldn't get any clear sense of where we should start or, more importantly, how we would be able to measure the effectiveness of the tapping as the session progressed. So I asked Gail to visualize herself and her granddad in a space together, each surrounded by a circle of white light. Their two circles were to just touch each other but not overlap. I then asked her to tell me what she saw in her granddad's circle. She said it wasn't a circle of light, that there was so much darkness there she couldn't see through. When I asked her about this darkness she said it was anger.

We tapped for this anger and she came to realize that it wasn't all her anger, and that her granddad had had many reasons to feel angry about past relationships in his life too. I then asked her to go back to look at the two circles of light and she saw that his had changed to green light. She felt that this represented jealousy.

We tapped whilst Gail thought about the various aspects of her granddad's life that involved feelings of jealousy, in particular his own frustration that he had never had any children of his own, and that he had doted on Gail's mother, maybe even loved her inappropriately for the relationship (he was her step father). Gradually the light around him changed until it became a warm pink colour. She could, at this point of the session, see him relaxed and laughing, just as the hospital staff said he could be. She was no longer so distressed and felt that we had cleared a lot of emotional energy that had been disrupting their loving relationship.

A couple of days later Gail sent me an email telling me that she had been to visit her granddad and

*"I feel reborn. I had no idea how much this had been affecting me or even of its existence. A lot of things fell into place which made sense and I think I have some more tapping to do. What I particularly appreciate was the fact that you did not make me feel like I was being disrespectful, I felt like we managed to maintain his dignity somehow, as I do love him very much and can separate the essence of him and all his goodness from those terribly damaged parts."*

*But honestly, the difference was amazing. I saw him lying there and I love him but I am ready to let go."*

We know at heart that we can't change anyone else, but it takes courage to own our responsibility for the quality of our relationships in this way and I have the greatest of respect for the healing work Gail did in this session, not just for herself but for the granddad she loved so dearly.

Based on an idea by Phyllis Krystal *Cutting the Ties that Bind*

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**Marian Mills** is an EFT Practitioner specializing in healing for broken hearts so that they can shine with joy and passion. Her passions are self-development and creativity which she blends in her EFT practice, incorporating visualization, inner child healing, Human Design System and Law of Attraction. As a parent to Indigo children herself she is actively working with parents to help them to nurture their uniquely creative children. She writes articles and is a regular contributor to the emofree.com EFT forum.

Website: [www.EFT4Joy.co.uk](http://www.EFT4Joy.co.uk) Email: [marian@EFT4Joy.co.uk](mailto:marian@EFT4Joy.co.uk)