

Healing Separation and Loss Through the Therapeutic Relationship

Although the use of EFT can substantially shorten treatment time, especially when compared with standard 'talk' therapies such as counseling or psychotherapy, some clients work with a practitioner over several months. When a client and therapist or coach work together for more than a few sessions, the relationship starts to become a more significant factor in the therapeutic or coaching process. Much is said about the process of creating rapport, little about maintaining it and then, eventually, ending the relationship.

Studies have shown that, no matter what form of therapy is engaged in, the therapeutic benefit of the relationship between therapist and client is a highly significant factor in all successful therapy. With EFT, the talking aspect is often very much reduced in comparison with psychotherapy or counseling. However, the relationship is still formed and may play a more significant part in the healing than many practitioners realize.

All clients come to a therapist or coach with their own individual expectations. Just as a doctor with his white coat is seemingly exuding professionalism and knowledge about the client's problem, the coach or therapist is similarly seen to be more competent than the client. Usually the client's ideals will be around what the client wants from the therapist or coach, and sometimes extends into ideas about their private life and their personality. For example, a client may choose a therapist or coach who feels like a go-getter because they themselves feel that they lack that aspect in their own personality or behaviour. Or they may choose someone who is like an idealized parent. As the relationship progresses – if therapy or coaching extends over several months – the client's expectations become a part of the healing. This can enhance as well as hinder their healing.

Consider the idea that the client might, for the first time in their life, have experienced a relationship in which they are treated with respect and listened to with compassion. As their healing progresses and their goals are achieved, the ending of the relationship comes into view. At this stage, the client may slow their healing progress, or find more issues that they want to deal with, in an unconscious attempt to prolong the relationship. However, at some stage, the relationship will need to be ended, and this should be something that the therapist/coach manages responsibly. Unless the issue of the relationship itself is addressed openly so that EFT can be used to release past issues that this brings up, the client may not progress and complete healing.

On such example is a client with whom I had been working for several months. We had had weekly sessions with only one short break. When I informed her that I was intending to take a break for almost a month, she became quite distressed, unable to see how she might cope alone for that time without the regular weekly session. We did some tapping with this quite severe disruption which revealed a past incident involving abandonment and fear.

With that memory reduced in emotional intensity, we discussed the way in which she saw me as fulfilling her need for an ideal mother figure to whom she wished to stay quite closely attached. Several deep issues came up for healing and within a further 6 sessions she was ready to metaphorically fly the nest.

It can be tempting for practitioners to keep some clients for longer than might be necessary, and therefore attachment issues may not be brought to the surface. The coach may also have attachment needs with their clients, and this is where mentoring or supervision is invaluable.

Managing the ending of any relationship between client and therapist/coach needs to be the responsibility of the practitioner. Most people have never had a good experience of an ending, because usually it has been out of their control, e.g. moving home when very young, someone's death, parents' or their own divorce. Many practitioners have experienced the sudden disappearance of a client with whom everything seemed to be progressing well. There is no apparent reason why they fail to return or complete the agreed session plan. What may in fact be happening here is that the relationship itself has brought issues to the surface, especially with regard to the envisioned ending. When the relationship itself is used to highlight traumas and unmet needs, much useful healing can result. By openly discussing and planning for the ending of the relationship, the client can safely explore his or her feelings about their relationship with the practitioner and bring to healing any past endings which still produce energetic disruptions.

If we as practitioners feel awkward about engaging with clients in this way, then perhaps we too have some unresolved issues around relationships and endings. As we engage with higher vibrations ourselves through energetic and emotional clearing work and seek to come more into alignment with Source, we will need to clear our old patterns of relationship if we are to fully appreciate we are all One. It is my belief that relationships have never been so important to us all, and on many different levels. EFT is what we can all use for ourselves and our clients to clear not only our own issues but also our ancestral patterns of separation, rejection, abandonment and unworthiness. I don't believe we should necessarily wait for them to be brought to us as part of the problem or issue that the client consciously wants to address; we can make them instead a fundamental part of all our work. By honouring our relationship with our clients and theirs with us, we can take the opportunity for even deeper healing.

Marian Mills

AAMET Level 3 EFT Practitioner GQHP (Hypnotherapy)

www.eft4joy.co.uk

marian@eft4joy.co.uk