

Working With the Blank or 'Freeze' Response

Hi Everyone,

Gratitude to Marian Mills from the UK for her impressive EFT work with a client whose mind would go blank under social and speaking situations. Note how Marian discovers the core issue as a conflict between the demands at home and the demands at school.

Hugs, Gary

I have recently worked with a couple of people who had the same tendency to 'go blank' or freeze whenever I asked them to imagine or explain something. Over the years, they have become quite upset and ashamed of this response, especially because it frequently came up at school. They were made to feel stupid because the words wouldn't come, or they couldn't seem to grasp the concept of what they were being asked to imagine.

Corinne (not her real name) had a very strong belief that she just couldn't use words. Either she would use the same words again and again, or use 'little words', and this felt shameful to her. She felt as though she should be using longer words, more clever words, and felt especially flattened when in the company of anyone who seemed educated and spoke more eloquently.

I asked her what had been the rules at home when she was growing up about speaking out. She described a very Victorian-style upbringing where she could be punished for speaking out of place or misbehaving myself. She still described this as a normal, happy childhood, and could see nothing really wrong with this. I explained that those rules that are given to us with love often have far more power - get written in bigger letters on our mental walls - than those we might pick up from anyone else. They are often the rules that become so huge we cannot see past them.

So we began tapping for those rules

Even though I was told not to answer back ... not to speak out of turn ... to be seen and not heard ... speaking at the wrong time or the wrong way ... was misbehaving...

She had difficulty repeating my words and I could see the fear was right there in her face. She is not someone I check intensity levels with because she gets a similar blank feeling and can't give me a number. We moved on to the effects that these rules had had on her.

Even though I could never say what I wanted ... my parents controlled what I could say ... I was terrified to speak to them ... nobody wanted to hear what I had to say ... I was expected to keep quiet...

Arriving at school then seemed to have presented her with a new set of rules, from teachers this time, who were also authoritarian figures like her parents. They expected her to speak out, answer questions, and communicate her ideas and knowledge in front of the

whole class. We tapped for the confusion that might arise in such a situation, although she had no real memory of this.

Even though I didn't know which rules to follow any more ... I can't make sense of this conflict ... nothing is clear any more ... I don't know what is expected of me ... I seem to keep doing it wrong ... I can't get it right...

Even though going blank is a safer option than getting the words wrong, I deeply and completely love and accept myself and forgive myself for making up my own rule to protect myself.

Even though going blank felt stupid, it was safer than saying the wrong thing.

Even though I had nowhere to go with these conflicting rules, I choose to accept myself now for devising this cunning plan of going blank.

Even though I was very young and had a huge conflict between the rules of my family and the rules of school, I made a good choice in going blank and it's kept me safe.

I then asked her what might happen if the belief she held, that she can't find the right words and is no good with words, was simply not true. She asked me to repeat this several times, and I could see from her face and body language that a new connection was forming in her mind.

So we tapped for this new idea, and I used a kind of argument technique, allowing her to feel both sides of the argument for and against the proposition that this long-held belief simply had no validity.

Even though this belief might not be true ... is it safe for it to be false? ... it has to be true ... maybe it's wrong ... I want it to be right ... what if it's wrong? ... no, it's got to be right ... what if it's wrong that it's false? (adding some confusion here deliberately to throw her mind out of its usual habitual mode) ... it could be true that it's right ... I may be right that it's wrong ... it could be false that it's true.

This degenerated into laughter when I stumbled over the words and lost track of what was right, wrong, true or false! When it subsided, I asked her to tell me the belief again, but she couldn't recall it at all now! Since this session, she has managed to join in several group conversations - and was surprised at how easily she did so!

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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 Email: marian@EFT4Joy.co.uk