

Emotional distressed? Feeling Angry, Afraid, Hurt, Anxious, Unforgiving, Unworthy?

Become Free, Release Stress, Serve Others, Love!

This is a self-help tool for you

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[A] Three main needs of the “Ego” or ordinary self.

To simplify a lot of psychology, we can say that the ego’s 3 main **needs** are: - **security, affection-respect, and control.**

From these three needs come the stories and repetitious thoughts with negative emotions stuck to them. **Stories:** I am better than those! I am worse! I am the victim! The martyr! Poor me! I am worthless! It’s all my fault! It’s all his fault! I can never change! Punish me!

Since the ego often exaggerates or goes on emotional binges, be always aware!

Basic Needs of the Ego

- N1. To have **security**: a safe body and a strong ego.
- N2. To receive **affection and respect**
- N3. To have **control** (over my life and other people)

[B] Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental!

These are two pillars on which are based the methods of the next Section below. On them is also based emotional health, and even spiritual growth! **Be watchful**; be aware, but if possible not from inside the stormy, troubled river of feelings. Go to a place in your consciousness where you *can look at* the stormy river of feelings. If you do this, you are **taking a step back** from the stormy river of feelings. You do this if possible by going to a place (in your mind) that is free from thought, from commentaries, and from judgement or condemnation – the place of the observer. If you can, make it a habit to visit this place regularly, often.

Be aware of what the ego is doing and saying: stories, difficult sentiments, tendencies, and so on. Jesus said “be watchful!” Be mindful; be aware; be present now, this moment. Perhaps you may also be open to the mysterious deep levels of yourself (which some people call the “breath of God”, or the “genuine self always in the divine presence.”). **Taking a step back** means: do not take yourself (=ego) too seriously. Do not be attached too closely to things and ideas. It is easier to observe your own anger (or fear, etc.) if you put a little distance between yourself and the anger.

You may find it helpful to imagine your distress and your frequent thoughts to be like a stormy

landscape; now go to the Belvedere, which is a viewing platform protected with glass walls, that enables you to observe the stormy landscape from a place of calmness. Above all, **do not judge or condemn** what you are observing (or anything else inside you or outside you) which you are in the Belvedere, otherwise you are no longer in the belvedere, but again out there in the ego-storm.

Your ego or ordinary self is trying to meet its 3 needs (security, affection, and control) by

creating those stories that you are telling yourself, and by playing various tricks such as seeing the world or yourself through distorted glasses. These stories and tricks are not the real "you". You have them, and they are yours, but they are at most only a small part of you. The real (non-ordinary) "you" is deeper (or higher) and much more beautiful and mysterious and valuable.

Are you a Christian? If so, you may know that you are the breath of God, God who dwells in you; In your deep (or higher) self, you are a child of God, and you share in God's life in you – so trust and let God love you, and with great humility let God love other people through you.

If you belong to a different major faith or spiritual tradition, find a mature outlook within it which gives you similar inspiration.

If you have no faith, try and find a perspective from which you can look at your ordinary self, rather than (as usual) looking out through it, through its filters.

[C] METHODS: How to manage distress & avoid being "carried away" by it.

These Methods will help you recover from emotional distress such as hurt, anger, fear, anxiety, feeling worthless, feeling incapable, excessive grieving, phobias, etc.

USE REGULARLY! Use one or more of these Methods regularly. After using any of these Methods a few times (maybe 4 or 5 times?) it will get much more powerful. Why? One reason is: because the initial **awareness** will switch on **earlier and earlier**, when the emotional distress is still a baby, and will thus be easier to manage. These Methods are great tools for **self-empowerment** because they create a process in yourself that sucks the energy out of your usual process of emotional distress, but without any internal fighting or tension! Using these methods will make you calmer, happier, and more free to love and forgive yourself and others, and maybe so free that you are able to love unconditionally, and to serve other people. It's a wonderful journey. If you are not already on it, what are you waiting for?

METHOD 1 – The Welcome Method:

1. Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental! (see Section [B]). Be aware of the distressing emotion, feeling, sentiment etc.
2. Treat the distressing feeling as a friend, not an enemy. It is trying to help you, though not very intelligently, and it wants to be felt and acknowledged.
3. Greet it: "Hello fear/anger/hurt/etc. Welcome! Thank you for trying to help me. I am inviting you to my house so that I can feel your pain.
4. Feel it for a few moments, without talking to it or bargaining with it. Just feel the pain of it! [Warning – if you have serious mental illness, speak to your doctor first]
5. Afterwards, thank it and release it: "Thank you for coming to my house so that I can feel your pain. Thank you for trying to help me. Now it's time for you to go. Goodbye!".

METHOD 2 – The Method of the Commentary:

1. Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental! (see Section [B]). Be aware of the distressing emotion, feeling, sentiment etc.
2. Be aware (carefully) separately of the mental **commentary**! These are the words that your mind is telling itself. Often these words are justifying the emotion; sometimes they may be fighting it.
3. Remember that the emotion makes the commentary stronger, and the commentary makes the emotion stronger – this is called a vicious circle, which must be cut.
4. You cut the vicious circle by **fasting** from the commentary for a while, but remaining aware of the emotion and the mind's commentary (which should be stopped for a while). In this way, you will see the emotional distress calm down a little or a lot, because the commentary has stopped and thus cannot feed the emotion.

METHOD 3 – Method of Awareness with Understanding:

1. Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental! (see Section [B]). Be aware of the distressing emotion, feeling, sentiment etc.
2. Remember the three needs of the ego (security, affection-respect, and control – see Section [A])
3. Try to **understand** which one (or more) of these 3 needs are responsible for your distressing feeling, or for the commentary your mind is making about it.

Note: The stories that you tell yourself (see Section [B]) and the negative emotions that are stuck to them, often contain half-truths and hidden origins. This Method shines the searchlight of consciousness and lights up the hidden parts, so that you can see why you are repeating the story “I am a victim” or “I am better than him” or “I am worse than her”, and so on. Like a stage magician's trick has no power any more when the trick is revealed, your stories lose their power to make you distressed.

METHOD 4 – Method of the Diary:

1. Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental! (see Section [B]). Be aware of the distressing emotion, feeling, sentiment etc.
2. You probably identify yourself with the distress, e.g. you tend to say “I am angry” rather than “There is this anger, these symptoms, here”. For as long as you continue to do that, it remains a bit difficult to calm or remove the distress, since the “I” (ego) tends to resist change because of its security need. Thus, take a **step back** from identifying automatically with the distress (e.g. fear, anger, etc.) by giving it a *personal name* (e.g. name the fear Matilda). Now you can look at Matilda more clearly! Now Matilda is no longer something that I **am**, but rather something that I **have**; thus, there is now no strong tendency to defend “yourself” against any change in the anger, fear etc. Matilda is much easier to observe and manage now, and she will not resist change so much.
3. Awareness and understanding of Matilda may be enough to get her to behave properly! Thus, sharpen your **awareness** of it and your **understanding** of it by making a **diary** of Matilda's appearances (where and when does Matilda appear in your day or week? what brought her out or triggered her? how long did Matilda stay? how intense was she? etc.).

METHOD 5 – Method of Acupressure (Tapping)

1. BE AWARE OF YOUR DISTRESS. Take a step back; and be watchful and non-judgmental! (see Section [B]). Be aware of the distressing emotion, feeling, sentiment etc. If you have more than one, choose the most basic one.

Example: suppose somebody did something bad to you and you "cannot forgive" them. You may be feeling, at the same time, Hurt, Anger, and an angry Blaming voice (= non-forgiveness). Of these, the Hurt is the most basic, because it gives rise to the Anger, which then gives rise to the angry blaming voice of non-forgiveness. So, in this example, you would choose the Hurt as the target of the Tapping method. After you have melted away the hurt, you will be pleasantly surprised how easy it is (e.g. with Tapping and prayer) to melt away the other two painful feelings. This will result in you being calmer, happier, and more clear-headed.

2. CHOOSE SPECIFIC INCIDENT. Choose a specific incident that gave rise to that distress (don't worry if there are many such incidents – just choose the worst one or the one that is uppermost in your mind or heart).
3. VISUALISE WHAT HAPPENED. Visualise what happened (what you had seen, heard, felt, etc.) in detail, and after a few moments check an imaginary "thermometer" to see what is the intensity-number of your distress right now, at the present moment. The "thermometer" has 0 for when you feel no distress (you're OK) and 1,2,3... up to 10 for maximum distress (e.g. the strongest anger/fear/etc. that you have ever experienced). Without much thinking, feel your distress right now (after the visualisation), and check or guess what your number is, and write it down.
4. DO TAPPING. Do the Basic Method of tapping once, or preferably twice, while keeping in touch with your distress feelings. If your intensity number was 5 or more, we recommend that you use the 9-Gamut Method, if you know it, in this sequence: Basic Method & 9-Gamut Method & Basic Method again. You will find both methods described below.
5. REPEAT UNTIL ZERO INTENSITY. Repeat the previous two Steps (3. Visualising and 4. Tapping) until the intensity number is zero (0) or you run out of time. After that, if you want, you can work on some other distress. If you get zero intensity on a specific distress, check it again one or two days afterwards (it will almost certainly be zero or very small); and do more tapping until you get zero.

Note: If you have trouble with this whole tapping process, please approach a certified EFT practitioner. If you need a medical professional at any time, please contact a medical professional. If you have mental illness, you should seek professional help. If you are concerned about the relation between EFT Tapping and Christianity, or the relation between EFT Tapping and scientific research, consult our website at www.antidemalta.org.

[D] Details of an Acupressure Method – EFT Tapping

EFT stands for Emotional Freedom Techniques. It is an increasingly scientific research-based, simple, and effective method combining ancient acupressure with some modern psychological insights. It was developed by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a Stanford engineer Gary Craig. There is a world-wide professional certification, supervision, and standards-keeping system to regulate it. Technically it's an experimental method; please consult a medical, psychiatric or psychological professional or counsellor if you need one. Here we are showing its use for liberating yourself from emotional distress (*not for curing mental illness*), and sometimes for recovering from physical (psychosomatic) pains and symptoms coming from your emotional distress. Research suggests that the method is not a placebo, but even if it were, why should you care? Its effectiveness does not depend on believing in it (or in anything else) – so you can give it a try. Use it with common sense. Below are only two of many basic techniques of EFT, but they are very effective in most cases. See Method 5 in the previous Section for indications of how to use these EFT techniques to melt away emotional distress.

EFT - The Basic Method

While putting your attention on the distress, or a specific distressing event, do this:

[Number] [Setup] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 [Setup] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 [Relax]

Repeat as long as necessary until [Number] = 0 .

KEY to the above: [Setup] = Tap on middle of edge of one hand (opposite side to where the thumb is): see the [Setup] point in the picture. At the same time, say the Setup Phrase: = "**Even though <mention the emotional distress>, I still [or: I still want to] accept and love myself deeply and completely.**

[Number] = a number from 0 (no distress) to 10 (extreme distress)

[Relax] Take deep abdominal breath, release it quickly; Take another, release it slowly

EFT - 9-Gamut Procedure

This boosts the effectiveness of the Basic Method. While being aware of the distress, and tapping on the Gamut Point (see picture 2) do the following:

- 1. Close your eyes for a second or two.
- 2. Open your eyes.
- 3. Eyes down hard right, while holding your head steady.
- 4. Eyes down hard left, while holding your head steady.
- 5. Roll your eyes in a clockwise circle.
- 6. Roll your eyes in an anti-clockwise circle.
- 7. Hum about 4 seconds of a song, ie. happy birthday.
- 8. Count rapidly from one to five.
- 9. Hum 4 seconds of the song again.



[E] Methods of Relaxation

Mindful Breathing Sit in a relaxed posture, not one that encourages sleep, and not one that is stiff or uncomfortable. Relax. Take 2,3, or a few breaths mindfully. This means breathe normally, with full attention given only to the incoming breath and to the outgoing breath. If some thought comes, then gently, very gently, tell it to come back later, "not just yet".

Body Awareness Scanning: Place attention of each part of the body in turn. Start with attending to the sole of your right foot. This means that if there are any sensations such as hot, cold, heaviness, the pressure of the weight of your leg on the foot, or any other sensation, you should notice that you are feeling these sensations, while if you find no such sensations you should put your mind there anyway. You can proceed, fairly quickly, in this way: sole of right foot, up to the ankle, thigh, navel area and below, where you sit, lower back, etc. Do not delay on one body part; the rapid progression of attention to body parts is partly intended to avoid being caught up in thinking.. Rest in total-body awareness. Near the end of this process you will be aware of your head as a whole, and then of your entire body as a whole. Enjoy the sensation of attention in your whole body in the present moment. This exercise may be one of the few moments in your day when you enjoy the present moment attentively. You owe it to yourself! The usual result is a refreshing relaxed peacefulness.

Hollow Body Meditation: Sit comfortably. Visualise body as hollow. With each in-breath visualise a pure, spiritual, friendly, loving, smiling while light filling a new part of the hollow body; On each out-breath, let anything negative, heavy etc. go out through the soles of your feet. Rest, enjoying your whole body

full of light, for some time. This exercise serves as a method of deep and cleansing relaxation. It can also serve as an intimate wordless prayer. Doing this frequently will make you into a fresh new person.

Contemplative Practice

If you feel called towards contemplative practice without words or mental images, within the Christian tradition, then you may wish to check out Centering Prayer (also called the prayer of consent), as taught by Contemplative Outreach, a worldwide network of groups using this practice. Centering Prayer is practiced by thousands of Christians of all denominations and some persons of other faiths as well. It is promoted by a group of Catholic Trappist Benedictine monks, with their lay colleagues. You can get more information from www.contemplativeoutreach.org, or www.easterspirit.com. From these two websites you may download a leaflet in your language about the simple method of Centering Prayer. For practice group in Malta, please write to imagnetony@gmail.com. Video-clips, leaflet, and guidelines on this method may be obtained from www.easterspirit.com/CenteringPrayer.htm