

Being Un-loving to Yourself and How to Stop Beating Yourself Up

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“Love your neighbour as you love yourself.” If we really did this most of us would have no friends!

How are we so un-loving to ourselves (why, is another question for another article!)?

There are many different ways:

Self-critical

This means having the attitude of, “I’m not perfect (O.K. none of us are) but I should be perfect!” Do we expect others, especially our friends and loved ones, to be perfect? Well yes, occasionally! However we do understand that that is unrealistic and are content to love them as they are; and of course we want them to love and accept us as we are. Why then can we not accept ourselves as we are, warts and all, whilst still acknowledging the fact that we are a ‘work-in-progress’? We find this very difficult; there is always that little voice in our head that says, “Ah! But you are different, you must be better!” We need to be aware of that voice and reply, “Why?”

This is where EFT is so helpful. Its basic set-up phrase containing the affirmation, ‘I deeply and completely love and accept myself’, or similar words, drowns out the little critical voice with love, at least for the moment, thus restoring our mind to peace and sanity. Not everyone can say those words at the beginning. I remember when I first started EFT I refused to say them, simply because I knew they were not true for me. My therapist (Ranjana Appoo) suggested a “I look forward to the time when...” formula which I was happy with. Later, when watching a Gary Craig video containing the original set-up words I asked her, “Why didn’t you use those words with me?” She replied “You couldn’t say them, don’t you remember?” I had totally forgotten! Such is the power of EFT that my new experience of love and acceptance of myself had completely erased the old.

Self-hatred – Either of our mind, body or spirit.

We are most aware of this in the body area. Especially females, as women’s magazines are always reminding us, have a love-hate relationship with our bodies, with more hate than love. A high percentage of us are unhappy with at least a part of our body, “I hate my nose, bottom, legs...” The list is endless. We are encouraged to diet, try new clothes/hairstyles/make-up, plastic surgery, wrinkle cream etc. to improve our bodies or to make them more acceptable to us. On enquiry we will find most of the important people in our lives don’t see us as overweight, too short or too tall, too grey or wrinkly etc... Here again EFT can be helpful by bringing out into the open our real feelings about our bodies and then by reinforcing our acceptance of ourselves as we are. Even if at the end of the session we still intend to shed a few pounds or visit the hairdresser or beauty parlour, it won’t have the importance for us that it had before. Having a “bad hair day” will not be so devastating.

Body consciousness is a way of focussing on our form and outward image which helps us to avoid the more scary activity of looking at our inner being. EFT can help us to move on to these areas by providing the safe environment for us to do so. Self-hatred runs very deep, often having roots in early baby and childhood, so it is a question of slowly peeling off the layers until we feel self-confident and loved enough to encounter our core being with an attitude of love and acceptance. EFT unlike most psychotherapeutic paths does not require the client or therapist to dig into the unremembered or dimly remembered past to look for clues on how to resolve present problems. It focuses more on the things we can't forget than the things we can't remember, and views the problems of the present to be resolved in the present, which is a much quicker and more hope-filled process than most other methods.

Being Mean to yourself, over money, food etc.

Meanness is the opposite of Generosity; it comes from a belief in Scarcity rather than Abundance. There are lots of ways we can be mean to ourselves, just as there are lots of ways we can be mean to others; the trick is to recognise this attitude in ourselves and to ask, "Why am I doing this to myself?" The answers may be varied such as "You can't afford to spend this money on yourself", or "You must have a small piece of cake so there will be plenty for others." However, underlying these seemingly reasonable excuses we will often find a version of "I don't deserve it / I'm not good enough!" I once met a wise man on a train in Germany. We talked about many things but one thing he said has stayed with me over the years. "Most people suffer from I'm-not-good-enough-itis "Again we can question this, and use EFT to see where it will take us. For anyone who accepts the not-good-enough definition of themselves, EFT will provide a way to first question, and then release this negative self-judgement.

Being Impatient with yourself.

Whilst we struggle to be patient with others and with situations, we are often very impatient with ourselves. We feel we have to learn quicker and get to our perceived goal faster than we are doing. Even with EFT we are inclined to think, "I've been doing it for x amount of time, why am I progressing so slowly?" We forget that our perception of our own progress is not necessarily correct, tainted as it is by our lack of love and acceptance of ourselves.

Calling yourself names

Some of us do this more than others, but watch for that inner voice saying "Stupid Idiot! Silly Fool! Fatty! Half-wit! Etc". We would probably not call other people these names, at least to their face, but happily verbally abuse ourselves. I am corrected in this by my four-year-old grandchildren, when I call myself a silly granny, they get annoyed and say - No you're not!" This has had such a good effect on me that I now think twice before saying something that was becoming a habit. Use EFT to dispel these myths about ourselves.

Judging yourself. - Negatively or Positively

"Judge not and you shall not be judged" is very good advice. To judge is to assume a position of superiority which we really don't have, even in relationship to ourselves. If we judge another or

ourselves negatively we perceive a wrong, which then has to be corrected or forgiven. Correction, as far as others are concerned is usually not possible, or indeed our business, so we are left with resentment and unforgiveness which then has to be resolved to restore good relationships and peace of mind. The same applies to our judgement of ourselves, where resentment about the way we are due, perhaps to the past behaviour of others and refusal to forgive them or ourselves can lead to misery. EFT can help enormously with this whole area, freeing people from the bonds of judgement, but we must always ask ourselves the question, "Do I have to make a judgement about this, or can I just let it be whatever it is?"

The positive judgements we make can also cause us difficulties. If we rate others too highly we can put them on a pedestal from which they will fall sooner or later, thereby causing us disappointment and resentment, - how dare they fall off the exulted platform on which we placed them! Rating ourselves too highly can cause arrogance and insensitivity, even though such rating is compensation for the feelings of inadequacy lying beneath.

Not forgiving yourself

Having judged ourselves and found ourselves wanting, in other words less than perfect, we now have to forgive ourselves, which can be more difficult than forgiving others, at least the others who say they are sorry and want our forgiveness. Part of this is, (I think) because the crimes we convict ourselves of are secret, often known to us alone in the privacy of our minds. Once brought into the open, perhaps during an EFT session, they seem less heinous, and through the repeated love, forgive and accept myself affirmation can come to be seen in a different light.

The "Judge not and you will not be judged" saying quoted above continues with, "For whatever judgement you give to others that will be the same judgement given to you", or in other words, what goes around comes around. I believe this contains a great truth, and although said two thousand years ago contains a modern psychological understanding. The way I perceive myself affects the way I perceive others and the way I perceive others reflects back the way I am seeing myself to be. If I am self-friendly I am much more likely be other-friendly. If I am generous towards myself with kindness, forgiveness or material things, I am going to demonstrate that same generosity towards others. This leads us back to where we started, the exhortation to "Love our neighbour as we love ourselves"