**TAPPING FOR PHYSICAL PAIN**

**by CJ Puotinen**

**1. Describe the pain.** Where is it? How big is it? What shape is it? What number do you give it on the 0-to-10 scale?

*It’s a rectangular box about the size and shape of a videotape cassette buried deep in my shoulder, and it’s a 9 right now*

*It’s a flattened oval, the size and shape of a squashed grapefruit. It covers my lower back. I can’t move. It’s a 10.*

*It’s three small hard marbles in my upper right hip. When I press against them the pain is a 6 or 7. When I try to do yoga, it’s a 9 or 10.*

*It’s a heavy wet blanket that covers my spine. It’s a pretty constant 5 or 6. I can still walk and move, but it hurts all the time and weighs me down, and I always know it’s there.*

**2. What color is it?** Is it bright or dull? Glossy or matte? Solid or dappled? Vivid or muted? Neon or pastel? Transparent or opaque? Clear or hazy? Blurry or in focus?

*It’s bright yellow with orange flecks at the edges like a flame.*

*It’s a deep red-orange.*

*It’s navy blue, like a dark velvet blue.*

*It’s a bright, clearly delineated orange oval surrounded by an indistinct reddish swirling cloud.*

*It’s a grimy dull mustard yellow. It needs a bath.*

*It’s a bright electric neon blue.*

*It’s black. When it lightens up, it’s charcoal gray.*

**3. What is its texture?** Is it rough or smooth? Hard or soft? Solid or spongy? Does it hold its shape or shift and change?

*It’s hard with a rough, grainy surface.*

*It’s very hard and spiky, with thorns all over.*

*It’s soft and oozy, like Jell-O. It undulates.*

*It’s fuzzy.*

*It’s raspy, like rough sandpaper.*

*It’s a ball of electricity that shoots lightning bolts down my spine.*

*It’s thin and sharp like a needle or an ice pick.*

**4. Does it make a sound?** Do you hear a noise, a voice, a rustle, a crackle?

*It’s a dull, heavy, background roar, like highway traffic.*

*It crackles, like a wood fire or like paper burning.*

*It’s shrill, like a dentist’s drill.*

*I hear a lot of static.*

*It grates and grinds, making a noise like gravel.*

**5. Is the pain steady, or does it pulse or throb?** Is the throbbing intermittent or ongoing? Does the pain come in waves? Does it have a rhythm?

*It’s a dull, throbbing, monotonous pain that never stops.*

*It comes and goes. When I least expect it, it zaps me hard.*

*It’s like the tides. It starts in the morning at a low level and rises up all day, then at night it recedes.*

*It moves in ripples or waves, starting in my right hip and moving across my back to my left shoulder.*

**6. What does the pain remind you of?** One way to get a good answer to this important question is to say, “This pain reminds me of \_\_\_\_,” or, “This pain makes me think of \_\_\_\_,” and wait for your mind to fill in the blank.

*This pain reminds me of being sick when I was a kid and feeling totally helpless.*

*This reminds me of the time I painted the house because I couldn’t afford to hire anyone and I sprained my back.*

*This pain makes me think of how much I hate my job.*

*This pain makes me think about my sister-in-law and all the time I had to spend with her planning my niece’s wedding. I’m still exhausted.*

**7. When did the pain first appear?** What were you doing? What was happening in your life? What is your pain’s history?

*This pain started the week my brother got arrested.*

*This pain started right after I found out I was pregnant.*

*The day I got laid off, I came home from work and tripped on the stair. I’ve been hurting ever since.*

*My back has been in spasms ever since my wife walked out on me.*

**8. How does the pain make you feel?** This is another crucial question because EFT is Emotional Freedom Techniques, and emotions are the underlying cause of most pain. Does the pain make you angry, frustrated, upset, sad, depressed, irritated, or confused?

*I feel guilty because I’m impatient with everyone, including the cat.*

*Are you kidding? I’m furious! This pain has wrecked my life!*

*I get so discouraged. Everything’s an effort. Nothing seems to help. Why bother trying?*

*I’m worried about everything—my business, the kids, money. All I do is hurt and feel sick about not being able to do anything.*

**9. Is there anything else we need to know about this pain?** A good way to ask this question is to say, “Thispain must be here because \_\_\_\_\_,” or, “This painmakes me realize \_\_\_\_\_\_.”

*This dark gloomy black awful wet blanket of pain must be here because my adjustable rate mortgage is going up again, I may lose the house, and I’m too depressed to think straight.*

*This bright orange ball of pain in my lower back makes me realize how much I hate living next door to my cousin.*

*This pain makes me realize what a big mistake it was to buy a new truck.*

*This pain is here to punish me for what I did last summer.*

**10. Has your condition been diagnosed by a physician?** If so, including this information is another way to bespecific. For many, a medical diagnosis complete withofficial terminology makes the diagnosis “real.”

*Even though I was diagnosed with herniated nucleus pulposus lumbar spine at the L5 level…*

*Even though I have a C5-C6 cervical herniated disc that is compressing my spinal cord…*

*Even though I have degenerative adult scoliosis…*

If you don’t have a specific diagnosis, you can still take advantage of the power that medical terminology holds over most of us. Borrowing from the preceding descriptions of back pain, consider saying:

*Even though I have deep, throbbing nociceptive pain resulting from old injuries and involving muscle tension, changes in circulation, postural imbalances, psychological distress, neurological effects, spontaneous excitation of the central nervous system, and changes in my limbic-hypothalamic system…*

*Even though I have chronic neuropathic pain from nerve damage, resulting in exaggerated responses to painful stimuli and constant or intermittent burning, aching, shooting, or stabbing pain that fires spontaneously at old injury sites and at other locations along the nerve pathway…*

As you examine the pain, keep tapping and adding to your description so that your Setup Phrase keeps growing. Remember, the Setup Phrase can be as long as you like, and the more you talk to yourself about the pain, the more likely you are to create descriptions that work*.*

*Even though I have this pain that’s the size and shape of a squashed grapefruit in the small of my back…*

*Even though I have this bright orange grapefruit-sized pain in the small of my back…*

*Even though I have this hard, spiky, thorny bright orange pain the size of a squashed grapefruit in the small of my back…*

*Even though I have this hard, spiky, thorny bright orange pain the size of a squashed grapefruit that doesn’t make any noise, it’s quiet and lethal…*

*Even though I have this hard, thorny, silent spiky bright red-orange grapefruit pain that shoots flaming lightning bolts that stab like sharp needles through my lower back and up my spine…*

*This hard, thorny red-orange pain reminds me of when I had a tooth infection and had to go to the dentist, and I felt so helpless and frustrated….*

*Even though this spiky orange grapefruit pain is interfering with everything in my life so I can’t do anything or go anywhere, I can’t work, I can’t think, it’s so frustrating, it makes me so angry, I’m so upset, I feel so helpless, I’m just a wreck, and it’s all because of this grapefruit in my back…*

**11. When you finish tapping, test your results.** Can you move? Can you stand, sit, bend, walk, or whatever you couldn’t do before? Compare your pain now to the pain you described at the beginning of this exercise. Measure it on the Intensity Scale. Picture its size, shape, color, texture, and other descriptions. How is it different?

*Now my hard red-orange spiky thorny grapefruit pain is a small square box. It isn’t red-orange any more, it’s lime green. It isn’t spiky or thorny any more, it’s smooth. It isn’t a 10 any more on the pain scale, it’s a zero. It isn’t angry and disruptive any more, it’s well behaved and apologetic. It didn’t mean to hurt me. I feel safe now. I don’t feel helpless. When I bend to the left or right, I can’t find any pain at all.*

*It was dark brownish yellow and now it’s very pale, clear, pastel yellow, almost transparent. It was the size and shape of a golf ball, and now it’s smaller than a marble. It hurts a lot less, but I can still feel it when I stand up. I’d say it went from an 8 to a 2 or maybe a 3.*

**12. Measure your progress.** If the pain has completely disappeared, congratulations! Enjoy resuming your normal activities. If the pain has improved but has not completely disappeared, start your next round of EFT with “Even though I still have…” That’s the Setup Phrase to use for whatever pain may be left, for pain that has moved, and for pain that has changed its shape and size but is still with you.

*Even though the pain is still there a little…*

*Even though I still have some of this pain in a small smooth navy blue box on the right side of my spine just below my neck…*

*Even though I still have some of this pain in a soft, round green grape that’s stuck in my left shoulder… It’s barely a 3 but it’s still there, but I can feel it getting softer and dissolving…*