

EFT with 11 Year Old Pupils

by Margaret Loudon

Background

My name is Margaret Loudon and I am an ex Head teacher (Principal) and former local education authority schools adviser now working as a Consultant in inner city schools. Alan Turton is a Hypnotherapist, an NLP Master, a Life Coach and an EFT Practitioner. Alan runs his own company called Positive Action Works Social Enterprise CIC. Alan has also worked for several years as a supply teacher, mainly in secondary schools.

I have become an avid advocate of the power of Emotional Freedom Techniques through working with Alan for 15 months dealing with a number of personal issues. After reading about the work done in Canadian schools we were keen to work with local teachers and pupils and thought a starting point would be Year 6 (11 year old pupils) facing their final assessment tests before leaving primary school.

I approached a school in one of the most deprived wards of the city where the head teacher and all teachers are innovative and always looking for ways to improve their pupils' well being. They were very interested and keen to try it out. The first session was on the Friday before the week of the National standardized assessment tests (SATs).

Prior to working with the children we met with the class teacher and discussed what issues she thought they might have. As well as the expected anxieties of taking tests, 35% of the pupils have special educational needs.

1st Classroom Session

The children and parents had been informed about our visit and when we went into the classroom a few children asked Alan if he was going to hypnotise them. Alan explained that while that was his occupation, today we would be doing something different and much more fun that would also help them with their anxieties about their forthcoming tests.

We decided to start out with the muscle testing exercise. Alan told the children that we had devised a new "Lie detector" method and asked for volunteers. Most of the 23 children's hands shot up immediately.

Alan wrote 5 things on the flip chart:

- Favourite colour
- Favourite food
- Favourite hobby
- Favourite teacher
- Number of their house

The children were asked to think about the 5 things. They were then told to tell the truth about 4 questions and to tell a lie about the other one, while holding out an arm which Alan pressed on gently. The pressed arm held strong on the truthful statements but went weaker on the untruth.

Eight children did this with Alan and the others had great fun saying which statement was untrue. Then, working in pairs, they tried it out with each other.

Then Alan asked them to think about their upcoming SATs and on a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is no anxiety to 10 which is the most extreme anxiety, to all say how they felt. The majority of children had anxiety levels of between 5 and 7.

Tapping (EFT)

Alan showed the children how to tap using all the points and we started the tapping session.

Even though I'm a bit worried about the SATs, I'm still a cool kid.

Results after first round of tapping

Numbers of children and the anxiety level difference:

- 1 remained the same
- 1 dropped 1 point
- 19 dropped 3 - 5 points
- 2 dropped 7 points

We continued tapping.

Even though I might get the answers wrong, I'm still a cool kid.

After this round one child said 'I'm not worried about getting the answers wrong, I'm worried about reading the question wrong'. She explained that she often gives the incorrect answer because of this when in fact she knows the right answer.

So we continued to tap

Even though I'm worried about reading the question wrong, I'm still a cool kid.

Even though I might not have enough time, I'm still a cool kid.

Checking the scale of anxiety now, 21 children reported they were down to 0 or minus 0. The scores of 2 of the children still remained high. Alan had noticed that one of these two was tapping incorrectly. So we asked them both if it would help if we tapped for them. They agreed and we tapped.

Even though I might get a lower level, I'm still a cool kid.

After this, both these children came down to level 2. By now others were at 0 and some said they were at minus 10.

I was amazed that all but 2 children had readily taken part. One had rested his head in his hands throughout the session and another had watched but not willingly participated. At one point I went to him and suggested he tap:

Even though I think this is nuts, I'm still a cool kid, which he enjoyed doing.

To end the session, Alan explained that we all have had bad things happen to us and asked the children to think about something bad that had happened to them. He didn't want to know about it but wanted them to concentrate on it as they tapped.

Even though that bad thing happened to me, I'm still a cool kid.

The second child who had mostly watched during the previous tapplings, passionately tapped on this one. We finished by telling the children that if they felt worried over the weekend to tap the first affirmation, "Even though I'm worried" etc.

Conclusion

We were amazed at how readily the children accepted what we were doing and tapped with such passion and belief. We had expected more children not to take part as many of them have personal and emotional problems which diminish the importance of tests. The teacher said she had never seen the children so relaxed. When the session started they were sitting upright and gradually became more floppy and sleepy. She really liked the way we had focused on the fact that whatever the results of their tests they are still great people.

One child was so enthused that before she left the classroom she wrote down "I hope I do good in my SATs, I know I'll do good in my SATs, I will do good in my SATs" and said she was going to tap on that at home.

2nd Classroom Session

The Wednesday after the SATs week I (Margaret) returned to the school to find out how the children had coped with the tests. The teacher reported that they were totally relaxed from the moment they entered the classroom on the Monday morning. She had helped to maintain this relaxation by playing soothing music and lighting candles. As soon as I entered the classroom the children asked me if I was there to do 'this relaxing again'. I explained that I had come for feedback from them about whether the tapping had helped but agreed to do a short session first.

I introduced the 'hip and shoulder flexibility' exercise and asked the teacher to try it first. She stood in front of me, both of us side on to the children so they could see, and asked her to hold one arm out in front of her and then turn as far round as she could towards me. The children were able to see which side of my body her arm touched. She did this a second time to totally warm up and then I introduced the tapping affirmation. I asked all the children to tap with her, explaining that the energy from their tapping would help her go further.

Even though I have restricted flexibility, I am still a great teacher.

The teacher repeated the exercise and got much further. The children were amazed and we decided to try and get her further still.

Even though I still have some restricted flexibility, I'm still a great teacher.

The next time she got even further. I had noticed that all the children were tapping including the two who had not taken part in the previous session. The children then paired up to do the exercise. Some children were so flexible that I thought they could not get any further after tapping. But they did and I heard cries of 'Wow', 'I don't believe it' and 'look how far I got' all around the room. They chose as their affirmation,

*Even though I have restricted movement, I'm still a cool kid
Even though I still have some restricted movement, I'm still a cool kid.*

When I arrived at the school at lunchtime, I had seen a few children from this class upset in the playground following a name calling incident. I decided to work on this. I asked the children if anyone had ever been called names and how they felt. A number of children volunteered information and one child stated that he had been called names but it hadn't happened at school.

This gave me an opportunity to reinforce that tapping can help situations that occur anywhere. I reminded the children of the tapping points as on the flexibility exercise I had noticed that some were getting careless about where they positioned their tapping finger(s). I then asked all the children to tap reminding them that if the issue didn't apply to them their tapping would help those it did apply to.

Even though that person said something nasty about me, I'm still a cool kid.

Afterwards they said that had really helped but one child volunteered 'I feel awful now because I called someone names'. We tapped:

Even though I called someone names, I'm still a cool kid.

She said that helped a lot. Then I asked the children if the tapping session had helped them with their tests. One child yelled out 'OF COURSE IT DID' as though it was obvious. The great majority said it had helped and I asked if any children wanted to share their views with me in private. Quite a number of children chose to do this.

Children's Comments

- I was very worried about the SATs but they were the easiest thing I've ever done in my life.
- The tapping helped me drastically. It kept me calm for the SATs.
- My SATs were good. Tapping made them easy.
- I expected them to be harder but they were easier (the boy who Alan tapped for after his level of anxiety did not reduce).
- I felt really calm after being so worried (the girl that I tapped for).

Children's Own Tappings

Many of the pupils had continued to tap both before and during the SATs. The child who had written "I hope I do good in my SATs, I know I'll do good in my SATs, I will do good in my SATs" after our first session had successfully tapped this at home.

Others had tapped:

*Even though my SATs were hard, I know I tried my best.
Even though I'm worried about getting a low level, I'm still a cool kid.*

The children had done their tapping in their bedrooms but one child had done it on the bus going home. This was the child who had not participated in the 1st session until the final tapping. He told me that he had tapped:

Even though I got the answers wrong, I'm still a cool kid.

I asked if he didn't mind doing it on the bus in front of other people. He said 'no' and when his mum asked what he was doing he told her that he was tapping, it's really great, and it works.

Two of the children had tapped on issues unrelated to SATs. One had sat quietly in her bedroom thinking about her uncle fighting with the army in Iraq. She hadn't said anything but as she tapped she was thinking about him and hoping he was safe. The next day he had spoken to her on Facebook.

The granddad of another had died 7 months ago. She had tapped:

*Even though one of my relatives died, I'm still a cool kid.
Even though I miss him a lot, I'm still a cool kid.*

Conclusion

Working with these pupils exceeded all our expectations. We had expected more children not to participate and were impressed with their enthusiasm and the passionate way in which they tapped. We were both surprised at the maturity of their own affirmations and how they knew instinctively what to say. We are going to work with this class again just before they leave the school to move on to secondary education.

In the meantime the Reception (5 year olds) teacher has asked us to work with her pupils having heard such good reports from the Y6 class teacher.

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