**Emotional Freedom Technique or EFT and Stress**

Studies have shown that EFT reduces cortisol levels by as much as 24%,Cortisol being the “master hormone” regulating many aspects of the body’s stress response mechanisms. Studies have also shown that PTSD, an extreme stress reaction; a condition effecting 3.6% of the US population, can be effectively treated in as little as 90 minutes[1] and with an average of 5 sessions.[2] PTSD, stress, and anxiety are degrees of reaction to a threat or perceived threat to the body. It is estimated that 43% of adults suffer the adverse effects of stress; 75-90% of physician visits are due to the effects of stress and stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide[3]

**What happens in the body?**

The body reacts to a threat or perceived threat with a Fight, Flight or Freeze response. In the fight, flight or freeze response the hypothalamus activates two systems; sympathetic nervous system and adrenal-cortical system.

The overall effect of these two systems on the body;

-  Heart rate and blood pressure increase

-  Pupils dilate to take in as much light as possible

-  Veins in skin constrict to send more blood to major muscle groups

-  Blood-glucose level increases

-  Muscles tense up, energized by adrenaline and glucose

-  Smooth muscle relaxes in order to allow more oxygen into the lungs

-  Nonessential systems (like digestion and immune system) shut down to allow more energy for emergency functions

-  Trouble thinking(the reptilian brain cuts blood supply to the limbic system and neo-cortex)

Our bodies are designed to react to a threat and release the energy after the threat has passed, unfortunately in our modern society the perceived threat never passes and we remain in this heightened state leading to all sorts of repercussions in the body. Think of the impact of digestion and immune function being shut down or the excess of adrenaline and glucose running through our bodies; the constricted blood vessels and we see chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, hypertension, increased pain, skin issues like acne, psoriasis and eczema; diabetes and infertility[4]. Suppressed immune function alone is linked to allergies, autoimmune diseases such as arthritis, MS, fibromyalgia and vulnerability to infection.

**How does EFT work?**

With EFT or tapping, we have a tool to restore the body to a balanced state. The technique involves activating the trigger (thought, feeling or emotion) while stimulating the acupressure points. The stimulation of the acupressure points sends calming signals to the amygdala while the trigger is actively sending arousal messages to it. The calming message signals the hippocampus that the trigger is resolved and breaks the cycle.

[1]Feinstein, D. (2012). Accupoint stimulation in treating psychological disorders: Evidence of efficacy. *Review of General Psychology, 16*, 364-380. doi:10.1037/a0028602

[2]ibid

[3]American Psychological Association

[4]Carlson N. R. (2004). Physiology of behavior, 8th ed. New York: Allyn& Bacon