

# EFT Tapping Peeling the Onion

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# Peeling the Onion

If you're tapping on emotions (i.e. "this anxiety I'm feeling") and not getting much clearance, **you need to zero in on why you're feeling that emotion**. Then you need to tap on that, not on the feeling.

The idea is to dig to the root cause of the emotions. This technique is called "peeling the onion."

Try answering these questions and then tapping on the answers you come up with (which will be intense if you've hit the nail on the head). Go through them in sequence, pausing to tap after you answer each one, if your answer makes you feel any intensity.

- 1. What happened that's making you feel this emotion?**
- 2. Or, What are you worried will happen that's making you feel this way?**
- 3. Out of all those scenarios, which would be the worst (even if it's unrealistic)?**
- 4. Why exactly would that be so bad? ("Then what?")**

Or, in other words: **How would you feel if that happened?**

- 5. When did something like that happen in the past?**

Or, in other words: **When have you felt this way before?**

- 6. What was the emotional fallout of that past event?**

Please note that these questions are designed to trigger you. Therefore, only go as far as you can without forcing yourself to relive traumatic or overly intense memories. If you have had trauma, I recommend not tapping alone - it's too hard to do when you're triggered, and you risk re-traumatizing yourself if you don't clear the intensity.

## How to Peel the Onion

Here's an example. Let's say Maddie is feeling anxious. She tries tapping on her anxiety, saying "this intense anxiety I feel in my chest and stomach." It comes down a bit, but it's not really going away. She realizes she needs to uncover the source of her anxiety. She asks herself the Peeling the Onion questions, writing the answers in her journal to help her think more clearly.

**What happened that's making me feel this way?**

*Well, I'm not sure. I just feel anxious a lot of the time!*

**OK, what am I worried will happen that's making me feel this way?**

*Hmm, well right now I'm worried that I'm going to go to work tomorrow and have to deal with Dan, my manager, who always has something critical to say about my work.*

**What's the worst scenario I can imagine that might happen with Dan?**

*Maybe that Dan will tell me "this is total garbage" or something like that about the project I'm pitching to management soon.*

**Then what? / Why would that be so bad?**

*Then my dream of doing this would go down the drain. I would lose Dan's respect. He might not give me another opportunity after that.*

**Then what? / Why would that be so bad?**

*Then I'm never going to earn any respect at work, be given an opportunity to take on more responsibility, or feel like I'm valued. It would be even worse than it already is.*

**When did something like that happen in the past? When have I felt this way before?**

*Well, I always felt like my parents never totally valued or respected me. I knew they loved me, but they usually only ever criticized me. It felt like they never saw the real me, but I was always fighting so hard to prove to them that I was worth their love and attention.*

**What was the emotional fallout of this?**

*Honestly, I think I was just heartbroken that I never got that real feeling of acceptance and love at home. I think I needed that, but I could never get it, so I just did my best to do the right things all the time. I was always trying to measure up, like if I finally got it right, they'd change.*

Now we have something to work with. You can see the emotional charge really gets amped up with questions like these. In this example, we discover that underneath Maddie's anxiety there is grief (heartbreak), feeling inadequate (shame), probably feeling frustrated, and years of feeling of needing try, try, try (exhaustion and desperation).

Anxiety was the surface emotion. Maddie's mind/body was anticipating an emotional fallout similar to what happened to her as a child because the events at work were lining up in a way that felt similar to the past. Maddie's anxiety was a natural, automatic reaction to that.

I'm taking the time to analyze this example with you because this is a very common pattern.

**Events in the past cause us to react in automatic ways in the future, but we usually aren't aware of it until we peel the onion.**

When we tap on root issues, we tend to collapse the whole structure of the problem. All of the interconnected feelings, beliefs, etc. tend to shift. If Maddie only tapped on the anxiety, it

would keep coming back over and over again, despite all the tapping she did. So if your problem keeps returning, you haven't got to the root.

*To continue our example: Let's imagine Maddie begins answering the Peeling the Onion questions. She feels a spike of intensity when she answers #2 and remembers the stress from work. So when she's done writing the answer in her journal, she does a round of tapping on worrying that Dan will say something critical about her work.*

*She checks in after that round, and that specific worry about Dan has come down somewhat. But her overall anxiety is still pretty high - 6/10. So she moves on to the next question: What's the worst case scenario?*

*Again, as she pictures the worst case scenario and writes it in her journal, Maddie feels the emotions spike again. So she taps on her answer: "Even though Dan might say 'this is total garbage' about my project, I'm still moving toward loving and accepting myself..."*

*She gets some clearance on that particular worry. She's feeling some relief, but she still has an anxious knot in her stomach. She realizes she hasn't got to the root of the problem. So she moves onto the next question - why would it be so bad if Dan rejected her project?*

*She thinks on it, and has an immediate intensity spike when she imagines the feeling of losing Dan's respect. She feels it in her gut and it's quite intense. So she taps on that - "Even though I have this intense feeling in my gut and really don't want to lose Dan's respect, I still deeply and completely accept myself..."*

*And so on. Maddie keeps going until it finally "goes clunk." That means, until she gets a really clear and strong sense of relief. When she taps on the memories from childhood of never feeling accepted (she picks 2-3 intense ones that come up), finally the anxiety disappears. She feels calm, and has a peaceful perspective on things. When she checks back in on her anxiety, it's at 0/10.*

*The next day she goes to work and doesn't feel any unusual anxiety about the project and Dan's approval. She still cares about it being accepted, but not in a way that wraps her up in anxiety or dread. She also notices her anxiety has disappeared in many other areas of her life. She realizes that a lot of it was connected to trying to gain others' approval. Now she no longer feels that intense anxiety driving her to do that. She can stay relaxed and open instead!*

**You'll know you'll have resolved the problem at the root when you feel complete relief.** You'll feel so much lighter and freer after tapping, possibly more than you have in years.

So when you're stuck, ask yourself these questions to help you peel the onion. Tap on these issues as they come up (for example, the fears with Dan, and past events with parents) and you'll find yourself some breakthroughs.

If peeling the onion gets too emotionally intense, or it's just confusing to sort things out, make sure you reach out to an EFT coach or other health care provider.

# Peeling the Onion Worksheet

Go through each of these questions in sequence. If your answer makes your intensity increase, that means you should pause and do a round of tapping on whatever just came up.

You may find relief after you tap on, say, question three, or you may find you need to answer all of the questions to the end.

If you're still feeling intense after answering all the questions and doing a thorough tapping session on them, you have a couple of options:

- Wait a day or so for new information to come up out of your subconscious. You've just peeled back the surface layers that were perhaps keeping the root of the issue compressed and hidden. Old memories you'd forgotten may come up. You may also find yourself reflecting and processing in a new way. From that, new insights as to what's really at the root may emerge (which you should tap on!).
- If you feel totally stuck, or emotionally flooded, after trying to peel the onion, get in touch with an EFT coach, counsellor, or psychotherapist to help you clear it. This is definitely the wise choice if you have trauma you're dealing with.

What emotion am I tapping on? (It could also be a physical sensation.)

1. What happened that's making me feel this?

2. What am I worried will happen that's causing me to feel this way?



3. Out of all those scenarios I just listed, which would be the worst? Think: the potentially unrealistic doomsday scenario.



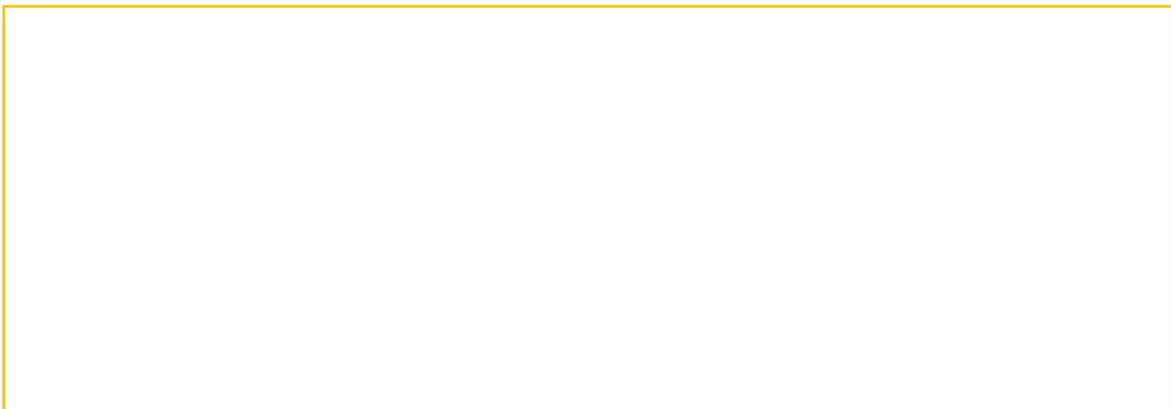
4. Why exactly would that be so bad? ("Then what?") Or, in other words: How would I feel if #3 happened?



5. When did something like that happen in the past? Or, in other words: When have I felt this way before? Focus on specific events.



6. What was the emotional fallout of that past event? Make sure you process these emotions with tapping, rather than just write about them.



# Questions?

Peeling the onion takes practice before it's a natural skill. It's normal to get stuck along the way at first. You may be able to keep trying and have a breakthrough, or you may decide it would be faster to reach out for advice. So if you have questions, get in touch!

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