

Help Yourself with EFT

A trauma sensitive
guide to using
EFT/tapping

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EFT and me

My name is Jules and I am an Advanced Certified EFT Practitioner, an EFT Trainer, a Mentor, a Social Worker, and a therapist with over 30 years of experience in working with people recovering from trauma. I specialise in EFT for sexual trauma and training mental health professionals in EFT.

I have been using EFT for the past seven years to help myself, my clients, my friends, and my family members. It is the safest, most gentle, fast, and effective way I have found of helping humans, not only with the impact of trauma but also for reducing everyday stress around whatever is troubling us, whether it is emotional or physical in nature.

Learning EFT has allowed me to help my clients access the power and wisdom of their bodies, in a safe way. And the body is where all of our trauma and trapped survival stress is living. Cognitive therapies can only access the mind, which is limiting as it's just one part of a person. Bringing the body in to therapy is what makes EFT so powerful.

I have developed this resource to help people understand how to start using EFT for themselves in a way that feels safe and gentle. I hope you find it useful, and please share any feedback with me about your journey with this resource.

Jules





in your own hands

This free guide to Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) is intended to help you discover how much you can help yourself by learning EFT / tapping as a self-help tool. It includes some handouts you can print out and use as templates for your own reference whilst tapping.

You can start tapping on your own if it feels safe to do so and use this resource as a guide to learning EFT to help yourself with any issue in your life that is causing you stress. EFT is a great stress reduction tool and can be applied to virtually any problem.

In my opinion, the combination of working with a trained practitioner and doing your own tapping will always bring the best results. So if you can afford to have some EFT sessions with a trained or certified person, it will be a great investment in your health and well-being. And a good EFT practitioner will take the time to show you how to tap effectively for yourself.

You can go to www.eftinternational.org to find a certified EFT practitioner.

This guide is not intended to replace the support of a therapist or the guidance of a professionally trained Certified EFT Practitioner. So please take full responsibility for your own use of EFT, and seek professional consultation or help if you require it.



what is EFT?

EFT stands for Emotional Freedom Techniques.

EFT is an evidence-based stress reduction tool that can be done with a trained practitioner in an EFT session or it can be used for self-help.

EFT is also often referred to as “tapping” because it involves tapping on acupressure points on the face and upper body whilst focusing on negative thoughts and feelings.

To see a demonstration of how to do EFT on yourself, go to my website www.tappingwithjules.com.

The page called “Help Yourself with EFT” has some videos you can watch to see what EFT looks like and some simple ways to start using it yourself.

The video called “How to do Basic EFT” will show you how to do a few simple rounds of Basic EFT.

EFT combines a number of elements of modern psychology with tapping on acupressure points.

Exposure therapy - thinking about and focusing on the negative thought, event or feeling.

Cognitive therapy - focusing on the thought about the event, sensation, or emotions. and how that feels now.

Somatic element - “soma” means “body” in ancient Greek.

EFT involves the body by tapping on the acupressure points and asking the body where is it holding that emotion, thought, or sensation now.

There is also an element of mindfulness involved in practicing EFT, as we are continually noticing our own thoughts, feelings and sensations in the body.



how does EFT work?

EFT involves identifying a thought, feeling, or sensation you want to feel less intensely or less frequently, and tapping on how you think and feel about it in the moment you are tapping on it. By tapping on the acupressure points at the same time as focusing on the negative thoughts and feelings, you will usually notice a reduction in the intensity of the emotion or thought in the mind, and/or a reduction in the physical sensation in the body.

We use the SUDS to measure the intensity of thoughts, feelings and sensations in EFT, which stands for Subjective Unit of Distress.

With SUDS we ask how intense does it feel now on a scale of 0 - 10? A zero would mean it's not intense at all, and a ten is the maximum amount of intensity.

EFT assists by sending a calming signal to the amygdala (the stress response centre of the brain) and lowering the stress hormones in the body, such as cortisol and adrenaline. EFT helps to de-activate the stress response in the brain which codes for threat. It allows us to think about something distressing with little charge, once the required number of rounds of EFT are completed.

When the body is under less stress, it can do a better job of healing itself.

EFT can help us to rewire our brains to help us change the way we think, feel, and behave about whatever we focus the tapping on. And it does this in quite a rapid way compared to traditional talk therapies and other modalities.

EFT can help with many different issues including stress, anxiety, depression, pain, sleep problems, trauma, PTSD, cravings, weight loss issues, substance use problems, fears, and phobias.

I think of EFT like a torch, and ask my clients "what do you want to shine the EFT torch on today?" as whatever we focus on, there will be a shift of some kind.



some things to know

The most common form of EFT is called the “Basic Recipe”. It does look simple on paper, and it can be an incredibly quick and easy way to help yourself and others. Most things you read about EFT will say it’s “easy” to get started on your own with EFT, and this is the case for lots of people.

However, in my experience of working with trauma, EFT is not always simple for people to do on their own. It can feel like too much too soon for some bodies, which can make EFT seem overwhelming, confronting, even frightening for some people. For this reason, a cautious approach should be taken.

Every body is different in how it will respond to EFT, and your unique response will depend on how much activated stored survival stress or “trauma” is in your body.

It will also depend on how stressed you are currently, what resources you have and what your level of capacity is for doing this kind of work with the body. You might really want to start doing EFT, but your body may not feel safe to go there yet. In my experience, the body is the boss when it comes to doing healing work.

It is best to listen to your body, consider what it wants, and go slowly in approaching this work. Slow and steady wins the race when it comes to healing, and “pushing through” too quickly can lead the body to shut down.

Think of EFT like adopting any new exercise; doing it a few times will not result in big changes, and going too hard too soon could leave your body feeling like “that was not pleasant” which might deter it from trying again. You want your body to feel comfortable doing EFT again and again, so take it easy, be curious and listen to what your mind and body has to tell you about the issue you are focusing on.



go slow, build trust

In this guide, I use the term “survival stress” rather than trauma, as a lot of people do not consider that they have experienced any significant trauma.

But when it comes to doing EFT, they might find that their body is holding “survival stress” and memories of past events which it considered stressful or traumatic at the time. Events which as adults we may have forgotten, perhaps because we repressed them or were told by an adult that what happened is not a big deal.

It may be that a “bad, scary thing happened” at some point - like being bullied at school - and because your body could not do what it wanted to do at that time - which was probably to run away or fight back - it may have shut down and gone into “freeze” mode to keep you safe.

And at that moment, the “survival stress” from that experience of being bullied gets trapped in the body and stays there, possibly for decades. Sometimes it wreaks havoc, causing pain or disease in the body. And sometimes it lays dormant until another event in your life triggers that memory in the body.

This could result in more emotional symptoms like anxiety, panic, and overwhelm, or may cause you to have trouble eating, sleeping, and not being able to relax.

It is this stored “survival stress” that we are helping the body to release with EFT. Along with any associated negative thoughts, feelings, and limiting beliefs from that event. An EFT session allows us to meeting with all the parts of ourselves - the body, the nervous system, the unconscious mind and the conscious mind, and to ask each part what thoughts, emotions or sensations the body is holding about that event now, and where in the body are these stored. It is a very clever system.



the ocean of emotions

Some people I work with feel afraid to do their own tapping as they are worried it might make something worse. They have trouble trusting themselves and others, they don't feel safe in their body and they know they are already "at capacity" and cannot cope with anything more.

If that is you, you are not on your own, and this is quite normal for a lot of people. EFT can still help you, but you may need the assistance of a trained person to get started, as a body needs to feel safe, comfortable, and have some trust in the process of EFT.

This is not to scare anyone off trying EFT, but to normalise this experience and to help people feel prepared for what might happen in an EFT session. When people are well-informed about any process they tend to feel more comfortable with it and can handle it better.

So if you feel afraid to go swimming in the deep ocean of emotions by yourself, that is understandable, because, like the ocean, the body can be unpredictable. The water can look calm on the surface, but have rips and currents (old traumas) which are not visible from the outside. And these can make it feel a bit intimidating or even dangerous to work with our own bodies.

EFT can take a person into quite a deep place very quickly, and it could be uncomfortable or upsetting to find yourself in the middle of a traumatic childhood memory on your own and without any support. Especially if you do not know how to get yourself out of that place.



still waters can run deep

SAFE TIME ZONES:

When you first start doing EFT, it is a good idea to focus your tapping on things that do not feel very intense - like a 6 or 7 out of 10.

Things that have happened recently like:

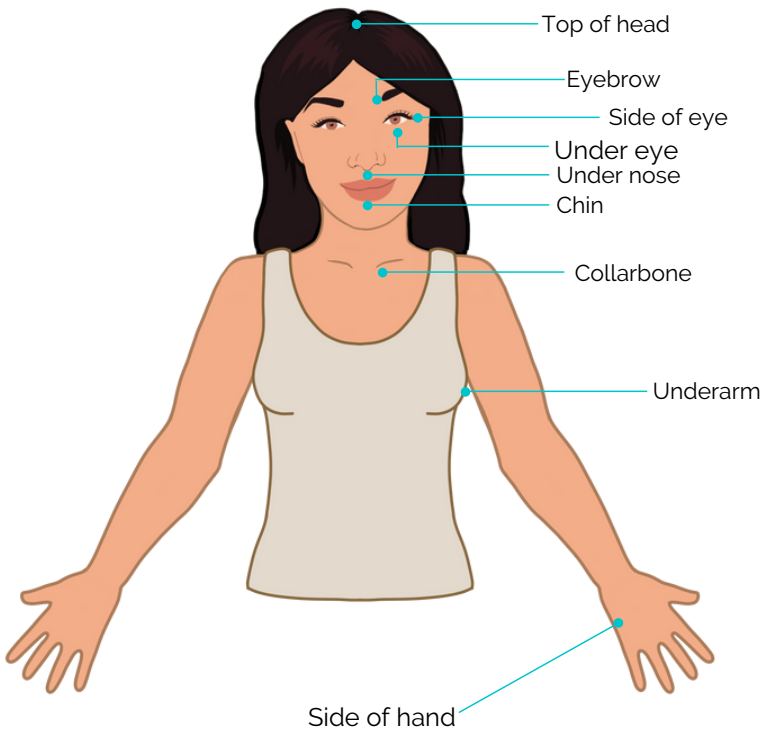
- a message you got from a friend that upset or annoyed you.
- a post on social media that made you jealous or angry.
- an email that frustrated you.
- an argument with your partner.
- your children not helping you out at home.

Future events are also a good place to start, such as:

- a meeting you have next week.
- an exam, a job interview, a party you don't want to attend.
- a challenging conversation with an employee.
- asking your partner to help you more at home.

These might seem like "little things" but you could be surprised how when you start tapping and "tuning in" to your mind and body when focusing on these events, just how strong your emotional reactions are and the feelings in the body can develop as a result.

Avoid tapping directly on memories which are traumatic in nature, whether they are from your childhood or a more recent past event. Especially when you are learning. As it can be difficult to be your own guide throughout such a process and be fully involved in it. It also could be potentially distressing to do trauma work on your own, so it is advised you seek the help of a certified practitioner to do deeper work or trauma work.



the tapping points

START SLOW, SEE HOW YOU GO

Just get started, do any tapping rather than no tapping.

Sometimes we are feeling too stressed or overwhelmed to even think of what might be the "right words" to use in tapping.

Don't let that overwhelm stop you from doing something, as just tapping with no words can help calm your system down enough to get more clarity about what it is you are really stressed about, and you might be able to do some more focused tapping after that.

You will learn to recognise that this feeling of not being able to think is how we know our amygdala (the stress response centre in the brain) is activated, because we are unable to think when that part of the brain is "on" and that usually means that the thinking part of our brain is "off".

It's a normal response to stress, as your body is preparing you to either "fight, flight, or freeze" in that moment, and it knows that thinking is not the appropriate response when we are in survival mode.

Remember that tapping is the perfect tool to send a calming signal to the amygdala, to lower the stress hormones in the body, and to help get that thinking part of the brain back online.

So just start tapping on any of the points without words, rather than stressing about what are the correct words or what you should focus on.

You will be glad you did!

YOUR POINT:

Many people have a favourite point that feels really nice.

You can add some breathing to this or even just imagine you are tapping on a point can bring benefit.

Tap, massage or simply hold any one of the points for as long as you like.

Try it and see: how it can help settle your body and mind.

BODY HOLDS:

Sometimes just placing our hands on parts of our body, like on our heart, over our belly button and on our forehead, can be very soothing.

These are quite ancient way for people to help themselves, which are now being promoted by world trauma experts.

Try combinations of one hand on forehead, other on heart.

One hand on heart other on belly button area.

One hand on forehead and other on belly button area.

THE HEART HUG:

Place your right hand underneath your left armpit and the left hand on your right arm, either on the bicep or the shoulder. Connect with your heart and feel yourself in the container of your own body. It feels like giving yourself a big hug when you need it the most, and just doing this for a few minutes can be very comforting.

START SLOW, SEE HOW YOU GO

Ways to start slowly bringing yourself calm.

SILENT TAPPING:

Just tapping on the points without words can be a nice introduction for the body. Even a few rounds of silent tapping can help if you are feeling upset, anxious or overwhelmed. When silent tapping, you are not focusing on whatever is stressing you, or where you are feeling it in the body. You are trying to regulate your nervous system a little first.

ORIENTING TAPPING :

Combining silent tapping on the points with noticing what is happening with your senses, in your environment and in your body, can be very calming for the nervous system.

You might look at a nice picture in your room, a tree blowing in the wind outside, pay attention to how the tapping feels on your face, feeling the weight of your body in the chair, listening to noises outside the room, in the room.

Paying attention to what you are sensing here and now, whilst tapping is a simple but very powerful way to help bring you back into your body the present moment safely.

There is a video demonstrating Orienting tapping on my "Help Yourself with EFT" page if you wish to be guided through this.

SNEAKING UP ON IT:

Usually with EFT, we want to be as specific as possible to get the best results. But if you are feeling something really intensely, it can be better to "sneak up" on the problem by starting out in a general way, rather than getting specific in the beginning about why you feel that way.

So if you are feeling really sad, because your friend let you down by cancelling plans together, you might say:

"Even though I'm feeling really sad right now, this is just where I am at".

The reminder phrase: "feeling sad".

"Even though I'm afraid of what might come up if I tap on this"

As the intensity lowers, you can start getting more specific in your set-up statement about what makes you feel sad about that event now.

DISCREET TAPPING:

Tapping on the "side of hand point" under a table is a great way to bring yourself a little more regulation, without anyone even knowing you are doing anything. This can be done at home, at work or anywhere you notice you are feeling a little stressed, even in the supermarket cue. Or:

Squeeze the sides of your fingers (either side of the nail bed) to help calm yourself discreetly.

START SLOW, SEE HOW YOU GO

Just get started, do any tapping rather than no tapping.

TAP AND RANT :

Possibly one of the most used techniques, favoured for its simplicity. Don't think too much about what words to use, just start ranting like you are bitching to your best friend and tap on the points.

We skip the tapping on the side of the hand and the "Even though I feel..." part, We just get straight into ranting and tapping.

Great if you are feeling vey worked up about something, or you can't stop thinking about something that is bothering you, try doing a few rounds of "tap and rant" to take the edge off. Even just saying the words in your head whilst tapping on the points can really help.

You can swear as much as you like and really get into how angry, annoyed, frustrated or anxious you are feeling, and notice how the tapping will decrease how intense those feelings are, and might even help them shift from one aspect to another.

You might start out really angry about something, then feel annoyed, then a little disappointed or frustrated. Then care much less!

This a fast effective way to change the way you are thinking and feeling so you don't ruin your downtime thinking about things that make you feel worse.

tap and rant example:

Coming home from work to find dishes not done from night before, despite my son promising he would do them.

top of head point: I am so annoyed at Jack

eyebrow point: I'm so annoyed

side of eye point: he promised he would do the dishes last night!

under eye point: he's left them there for me to do them

chin point: I am so annoyed at him

collarbone point: he's so lazy

underarm point: I bet he's done nothing all day

Try a couple of rounds like this and just see how fast and effective it can be. Keep going until you feel much less charged up a bout it, and an hour later you might notice you have barely thought about that thing at all.



BASIC EFT THE BANANA BREAD WAY

Identify an emotion you want to feel less intensely or less often.
For example let's say you're often feeling ANGRY lately.
This represents your whole loaf of banana bread;
or the overall problem you want to work on.

Imagine cutting off a slice of your loaf of anger,
and cutting that slice into 4 x pieces.

Each piece represents a recent time when you felt that anger, or a time in the future when you expect to feel that anger.

Choose one recent or future event to tap on (one piece of banana bread) and keep focusing on that event, noticing what emotions, thoughts, sensations come up. Making notes, adjusting your set-up to reflect changes,

If another event comes to mind, that's a different piece of banana bread and you need to change the set-up statement to reflect how you think and feel about that event. Below is an example of a set-up statement for anger about a recent event.

Even though I feel: Angry 7/10

Just thinking now about: specific recent / future event

Seeing the sink full of dirty dishes this morning

Because: why do you feel this way about that now?

Jack said he would do them last night and he didn't

And I feel it in my: head

I feel like my head is going to explode with this anger

But I deeply & completely accept myself OR:

I accept this is how I feel.

Repeat 3 x then tap on points saying "Angry, feeling angry in my head"

Stop and check in after 1-2 x rounds, what has changed? Repeat the process with a set-up statement that reflects any of the changes.

HOW TO DO BASIC EFT

SET-UP STATEMENT:

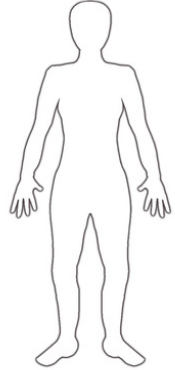
Identify an event or an emotion you want to feel differently about and rate it out of 10

Even though I feel:

Just thinking now about:

Because:

And I feel it in my body:



ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT of your choice: make it your own.

But I accept myself and how I am feeling OR
I accept this is where I am at right now

Repeat whole set-up statement 3 x

tapping on side of hand point

Then tap on all the points whilst saying your reminder phrase.

REMINDER PHRASE:

Repeat emotion word, tapping on each point.

Tapping on all the points once is one "round" of EFT.

Try doing a couple of rounds, stop, check in with yourself to see what might have changed.

If nothing much has changed, but the words feel right keep going until you notice the intensity has reduced. Aim for a 0-2/10.

If there are changes to how you are thinking or feeling, make a note of them, and adjust your set-up statement to reflect the changes.

HOW TO DO BASIC EFT - EXAMPLE

SET-UP STATEMENT:

Identify an event or an emotion you want to feel differently about and rate it out of 10

Even though I feel: **UPSET (7/10)**

Just thinking now about:

How I sent that message to mum a week ago, inviting her for Easter, and I know she saw the message, but she hasn't even replied.

Because:

It makes me feel like I am not important when she doesn't even reply.

And I feel it in my body:

I feel teary and heavy in my heart

ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT of your choice:

But I accept myself and how I am feeling OR

I accept this is where I am at right now

Repeat whole set-up statement 3 x

tapping on side of hand point

Then tap on all the points whilst saying your reminder phrase.

Feeling upset, feeling teary and heavy in my heart

REMINDER PHRASE:

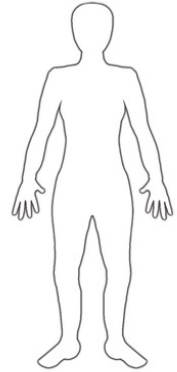
Repeat emotion word, tapping on each point.

Tapping on all the points once is one "round" of EFT.

Try doing a couple of rounds, stop, check in with yourself to see what might have changed.

If nothing much has changed, but the words feel right keep going until you notice the intensity has reduced. Aim for a 0-2/10.

If there are changes to how you are thinking or feeling, make a note of them, and adjust your set-up statement to reflect the changes. Rinse and repeat!





what if it gets too much?

PUT IT IN A BOX or CONTAINER:

During a tapping session, if you stumble onto a memory that you do not wish to work on by yourself, or an emotion that feels too overwhelming, remember you can put anything into a container (in your mind) and lock it up safe and sound, and place that container anywhere you want.

Knowing you can come back to it any time, either by yourself or in a session with your EFT practitioner. Or you can never come back to it if you don't want to. The choice is always yours.

Many of my clients put things in imaginary containers and leave them in my cupboard and we may never open them up again. It is quite amazing how this technique can work to help the mind and body "contain" an issue, event, or emotion.

Try not to overthink this, the intention is just as important than getting it "right". All that matters is you are telling your mind and body "Thanks for offering that up, but now is not the right time for me to work on that, so into my container you go!" Imagine a box or container in as much detail as you can; colour, shape, size, lid, locks, and where you wish to place it for now.

"Even though I have this old wooden treasure chest, with the pirate symbol on top, and the big golden padlock, and it's going straight to Emerald Beach, where it can sit in the sand until I want to come back for it."

PUT IT IN A CONTAINER

- A good way to process an event in a session.
- or finish a session or piece of work on an event when the issues are not fully resolved.
- if you run out of time.
- you feel tired or have just had enough.
- if you don't want to work on whatever came up for any reason.
- When SUDS is above a 3/10.

A good technique for visual processors

What kind of container would you like to put this issue / event in?

Describe it in as much detail as you can.

- size, shape, colour, material, lid, locks.

And where would you like to leave it?

Set-up statement example:

"Even though there is this clear square tupperware container, with a blue lid, sealed tight, and I am leaving it right at the back of the pantry, I deeply and completely accept myself."

REMINDER PHRASE:

"This clear, square, tupperware container,
with a blue lid, sealed on tight,
Putting it right at the back of the pantry".

Often the container will morph and change with each round, as the mind processes the event.

It might get smaller or fade away, whatever happens is ok.



what happens in an EFT session?

LAYERS OF THE ONION:

When we are tapping, it is common that our thoughts and feelings about what we are tapping on can shift and change. We might start out feeling really angry about the event we are tapping on, then annoyed, then frustrated, then disappointed. And then we might realise that we feel sad. This can happen all in minutes.

In EFT when our feelings shift in this way, we say the "layers of the onion" are falling off. For some people this can happen very quickly, and the changes are dramatic. For other people it takes longer, and the shifts are more gradual. Whatever happens for you is normal for you, but just like when we are cutting onions, there are often tears which we are sometimes not expecting.

ASPECTS:

When we are tapping and focusing on an event or feeling, there can be different Aspects which come in to focus, which are like different pieces of the same puzzle.

If I am tapping on a craving for chocolate for example, I might focus first on the smell of it, or the taste of it, the texture, the crunch, the feeling of the packet or the chocolate melting in my mouth. These are all different "aspects".

Another aspect might be the way chocolate makes me feel.

It's my little treat, it's just for me, I deserve this, it makes me feel happy and special. I might also pay attention to the aspect of what is happening in my body; perhaps I notice I am salivating in my mouth as I think about the taste of my favourite chocolate. Or my stomach is gurgling. All of the different aspects are important, so try to focus on one at a time: taste, smell, feelings associated with.



memories can pop in

As I am tapping on how chocolate makes me feel happy and special, I might recall how my grandmother used to give me a chocolate treat when I was a child, and how much I loved this ritual and how much I loved her, and miss her still.

This might lead to me all of a sudden feeling very sad, realising that there is no one in my life that makes me feel so special and loved as my grandmother did.

I can tap on that sadness now, or just do some silent tapping for a little bit first to help the wave of emotion come in and pass through. Or I can pop it in a container, if I want to come back to it with a practitioner, or later by myself.

COGNITIVE SHIFTS:

EFT helps us become more conscious of what is unconscious.

When we are doing EFT, we can have amazing insights pop in, and get a whole different perspective on our own problems, as we notice the new thoughts and feelings. We call these "cognitive shifts". For example after having the memory about my grandmother whilst tapping on my daily chocolate craving, I might become aware that I am using the chocolate to "soothe myself" when I am feeling lonely and sad lately since my best friend moved away.

After tapping I might start feeling more compassionate for myself, realising what a hard year it has been, adjusting to my best friend moving away. And I know I have been trying to soothe myself with chocolate, as it represents that unconditional love of my grandmother or best friend.

I might then decide to do something about meeting some new people, and start going for walks in the evening, whilst calling my best friend, rather than stuffing myself with chocolate when I feel lonely.



how to get the best results

Once you feel ok about doing EFT on yourself, focusing on feeling safe and comfortable in your body, then you can start to explore how to get great results with EFT. This is achieved by finding appropriate events to tap on, and learning how to “get specific” in terms of how those events make you feel.

We do this by thinking about the event like it is a photo:

And ask yourself

WHO was there?

WHAT happened?

WHEN did it happen?

WHERE did it happen?

HOW do you feel now thinking about that event ?

Example: let's say you have been feeling easily upset lately, by lots of little things, and it's kind of embarrassing as it happens at work and in social situations.

Your whole loaf of banana bread is “UPSET”.

Identify a recent time when you felt that way. You recall last Saturday, being at your mum's house and seeing an old photo of you with your daughter and her dad, your ex-partner. And it made you feel really upset, because looking at the photo, you recalled how happy you were that day, and how good that relationship used to be, before your ex-partner lost his job and started drinking too much.

To tap on this using the photo framework might look like this: :

“Even though I feel UPSET (8/10)

Thinking about seeing the photo of us at mum's last Saturday,

Because I remember how happy we were on that day, we were on holidays in Bali.

Our relationship was good before Jake lost his job and started drinking too much, and I feel upset in my chest, and I deeply and completely accept myself.”

Feeling upset, upset in my chest.



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