

# Emotional freedom, one tap at a time

• By JENNA ROMANO

**P**earl Lopian moved to Jerusalem just under a year ago with an entrepreneurial spirit, a healer's heart and dreamer's vision.

Founder of the Tapping Center, Lopian has devoted years of research and training to mastering Emotionally Focused Therapy (also known as EFT or tapping) and has extended her knowledge to clients, business colleagues and now a growing network of Jerusalem community members.

Lopian has an impressive professional background in finance, which she left in the year 2000. Despite having successfully improved the financial lives of others, she always had a growing desire to help others emotionally. Describing herself as a natural healer, Lopian eventually moved in a different direction with her career, her love for helping others being the impetus to turn to the profession of therapy.

"It was the early 2000s and the markets were booming, but the experience left me cold. I felt that there was so much more I could do to use my talents and passion to benefit society. I really wanted to enhance lives, not just bank accounts."

Lopian began volunteering as a coordinator and bereavement befriender at the Manchester Jewish Federation and as a hospital visitor at the North Manchester General Hospital. Assuming the position of family liaison officer for the UK Camp Simcha in 2009, she successfully created the camp's Manchester branch on her own, where she offered practical emotional support to families dealing with children who had life-threatening conditions.

Lopian enjoyed the fulfillment and practicality of her new professional life, and in 2008 earned a diploma in counseling from the Manchester College of Arts and Technology. It was not long after that the therapist was introduced to the method she lives by today, becoming a qualified EFT practitioner. Lopian studied under Gwyneth Moss, who learned directly under Gary Craig, the founder of EFT, who introduced the method in the 1990s.

EFT is a method often compared to emotional acupuncture – a therapeutic process that draws on theories of alternative medicine in order to give patients an emotional healing experience that is rapid and sometimes more effective than talking therapy.

The EFT process starts by pinpointing and releasing emotional blockages caused by trauma, and Lopian identifies these blockages as energies that often cause fear, depression, anxiety and/or compulsive behaviors. According to Lopian, while these negative manifesta-



Pearl Lopian: Seeking the source of stress. (Marc Israel Sellem)

tions can hinder a person's life – they can create specific challenges in his development, relationships, even professional success – they can be easily assuaged using the EFT process.

"When we verbalize our thoughts, stating how we feel while tapping on acupuncture points at the same time, we calm the body and neutralize the intensity of the thought. Tapping on the meridian points on the body sends a calming messages to the amygdala, the part of the brain that controls the stress response."

This idea was eye-opening for Lopian, who noticed that, using traditional talk therapy, many of her counseling clients were not able to free themselves from traumatic experiences.

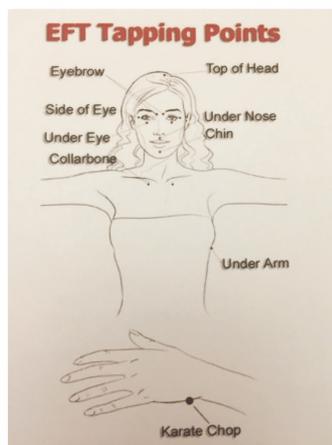
"It was frustrating for them to talk things through yet confess that the painful memories and experiences were still weighing them down, taking up a lot of space in their lives and stuck in their bodies."

By giving her clients the ability to recognize the source of their own stress and properly respond to trauma from a new perspective, this gives them the independence they need to progress and overcome personal challenges.

Lopian, a naturally understanding, smart and empathetic person, invites her clients to familiarize themselves with the EFT process before they begin a session with her. I sat down with her a

few weeks ago (my first-ever EFT session), and was immediately intrigued to find out how easy the method is to learn with her guidance.

Our session began with identifying a specific issue to work with, an overview of the eight tapping points, and then



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Lopian commenced creating a script of affirmations, while acting as a mirror for me to follow her tapping map. After about an hour, I understood that if the tapping technique is effective for an individual, it can be life-changing for the simple reason that Lopian acts not only as a therapist but as a sort of trainer, educating the individual to use the technique outside the therapy room, whenever a stress might trigger a response.

I spoke with a number of Lopian's previous clients who had positive results, and was amazed at the range of issues they were dealing with – from weight loss, to paralyzing depression, to self-confidence and marriage issues, and even children who have stage fright before a dance recital. Many of these clients praised her for teaching them how the system works, and following up with scripts that allow them to practice EFT on their own.

When the treatment is successful, the body is compliant to the process, and the emotional shift is powerful, immediate and effortless. Working together with Lopian, her client can neutralize a negative thought or memory with the calming, soothing, tapping repertoire, as the body becomes focused on the experience and calms itself down.

"Most of the time, my clients tear up, yawn or get tingles. That's how I know energy is already shifting. Through this simple, painless method, they are able to shift a lot of energy, breaking through limiting beliefs that may have been buried deep inside the body for a long time."

Lopian's passionate practice does not stop at her office door. She has an active Facebook page with lots of EFT resources – articles about EFT's various uses and videos offering quick instructions on how to deal with fear of heights or public speaking. Lopian is a real advocate for the method, speaking at international and local conferences as well as public schools in order to educate the public (all ages) about the success and accessibility of EFT.

This year, Lopian set up The Tapping Center in the Ginot Ha'ir Community Center (Emek Refaim), a space that is the first of its kind in Jerusalem, where EFT will be available outside of one-on-one therapy sessions. Lopian will offer EFT training workshops for interested parties, clients and therapists who are willing to learn and advance their knowledge of the technique.

Starting this fall, The Tapping Center will also offer a solid schedule of open sessions for people who are interested in trying EFT, as well as focused support groups, including EFT groups for stress reduction, weight loss, presurgery support, preparation for childbirth, and more.