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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH EFT TAPPING EXPERT, YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO, ON BRINGING EFT TAPPING INTO SCHOOLS

ELENI VARDAKI: Yolanda, thank you so much for being here.

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: It's such a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

ELENI VARDAKI: I'm excited for you to share your tips here with our fellow EFT Practitioners who want to learn from your very rich experience of introducing EFT into schools. Primary, all the way up to middle school and high school (secondary). Would you like to share your first tip?

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: There's, you know, so much I could be saying, but we should start by the very beginning. How do you even get in there?

I would say in order to get in there, first of all, probably tap on yourself. If you're having doubts, if you're wondering if this can't even happen. If anything of that sort is in the picture. Tap on yourself and send that email to the head teacher. Or the person that runs the wellbeing program in a school. Make that call. Go for it. Right now, suddenly there is a huge need to support our children. And wellbeing is being taken into account more and more in every school. So, do that. Get in touch. 'Cause you might be surprised by the response.

And perhaps consider if you've had any clients whose children you have helped, or if you just work with children for tapping or whatever, and maybe if you're a counselor or whatever, why not speak to some of the parents that have seen your work, firsthand, and use that as an introduction to the head of the school where their children attend. Right? That worked really well for me. Parents that were very happy to see that their children no longer had a phobia, or could now sleep or, or could whatever the case may be, they were more than happy to speak to the head teacher and say, you know, "So-and-so has worked with Yolanda. And she's feeling much better. I think you should consider having a word." In fact, some of the parents put in a word for me before I even asked. So bear that in mind. It could be a good way in.

And if there isn't that way in, then just go for it yourself. Basically.

ELENI VARDAKI: In terms of talking to schools, is it, you know, depending on the school, like some might be public schools, private schools, do you wanna talk a bit about how you talk about that, you know, the funding part.

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: It is important to consider that some of these schools have more funds. Some of these schools have fewer funds, some are private, some are state schools.

What I did in my case, and this is a tip that might help some of you, is educate myself on how do these schools fund themselves? Obviously the private schools there's nothing much to research there. But for the public, for the state schools, I found it very interesting to just find out a bit more about how that

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works. Because where I live, and it might vary wherever you are, but where I live there is a specific type of government funding that the schools are entirely allowed to use for purposes such as this.

It greatly aids the discussion, when you finally meet with that head teacher, if you can say, "And by the way, other schools fund my work by using exactly these ear-marked funds", and even that part of it is covered for them. At least it's one thing they don't need to wonder about.

ELENI VARDAKI: Are there any other tips that you would like to share?

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: I suppose I could talk a bit about what does it actually look like? How do you tap in a classroom with a whole bunch of children, sometimes quite young even?

So, I often start by, depending on age, of course, if there are say Key Stage One (up to 7 or 8 years old), I would call it "Our magic points", and I would explain to them, often I might start by saying, "The sun has given me a message for them to say that they must never worry, because they must always know that it's always behind the clouds. And that's the same with them. That sometimes they'll get rain. And sometimes they'll get stormy. But their Sunny Self is always behind all that weather. So I might tell them a little story, just to grab their attention a bit. And then I might say, I might start explaining how "The best way, the fastest way I've ever found to hurry the clouds along is to use your magic points." Right?

So obviously always keep it age-appropriate. If they're a bit older, maybe not magic points, maybe not so much of the little stories. But still say to them that we all have really clever points in our bodies that help us feel calmer. And of course, that we all feel not very happy sometimes. And that is entirely normal. And that this is one really clever way to feel calmer and better and go about your day in a better state of mind, or in a better mood.

If you are talking to secondary school children, that would be 12-18, then you might introduce words, like feeling "anxious", feeling "depressed". Obviously, you're not going to mention this kind of thing to a 5-year-old. So it's all common sense. But my tip to you would be getting in there with a little bit of a plan that is age-appropriate and get them tapping.

Another tip is to use tapping songs. There are some lovely tapping songs that you can find on YouTube. I mean, you never have children more engaged than when you say, "Oh, who would like to watch a little video of a song?" And they all go, "Yeah! Me, me, me!" Got them all. They're all yours right there and right then. And you know, they're happily watching a little song, but they are in fact learning how to tap, and how to feel better. Okay?

So yes, things like that can be useful in a classroom environment.

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And in terms of, perhaps, what the teachers can do themselves, what you can share with the teachers, I came up with this idea that there's, of course you, you might already know, there's a shortcut for tapping where you only tap on your fingertips. Because as you all well known, because you're all tapping practitioners, there are four entire acupuncture channels that end on four of your five fingers and you can tackle four entire channels by tapping on the endpoints just like that.

So as you are all aware of that, the bit I came up with was, it occurred to me to test out with a teacher, whether they could in fact use this in the classroom as a shortcut to get attention and calm quite fast. So there's only one rule. The rule is that there's only one rule. And the only rule is that if teacher starts walking around, going like this, anybody that sees the teacher doing that is to stop what they're doing and just be quiet and do this.

Anybody that sees either of them will do the same thing. Anybody that sees anyone else is to stop everything they're doing, and just do the same thing. So, teachers report that it is a really fast way of getting children all quiet and tapping. So not only they're no longer making noise, they're no longer quibbling or they're no longer whatever they were doing, but they're in fact calming themselves right there and right then.

Within a very quick couple of minutes, 3 minutes, maybe 4 max - rarely, rarely - you have a class that's quiet, that's listening to you.

And that is in fact, in a calmer state of mind with, you know, reduced amygdala activation and dropped cortisol, which is wonderful. And then you go to teach them Maths, or whatever it is that was coming up. So that's another thing.

And then I suppose, on the teacher side of things, like I was saying, my last tip would be that the teachers themselves can do this. Of course, if you are going to be doing, say that they have an exam. And the teacher know tapping, 'cuz you've been tapping with them, or you've taught them on the side, or whatever the case, maybe the teacher themselves can either give the option, can - always give the option, never make anybody do anything, of course.

This is really important to give children the option to join in. People might not understand it very well. Might have even certain objections. Very extremely occasionally you might come across somebody that misunderstands that this is a physical intervention, much like a massage, and that it has nothing to do with anything else. That there is no belief system behind it. Very occasionally you might come across somebody that misunderstands.

But in any event, it's absolutely vital to give children the option to do this, say as a teacher. And so, the teachers themselves might perhaps, before an exam, just take a couple of minutes where everybody's

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doing this...and then they go on to do their exam. Or if they want to and they'd like to, they can do the full tap. They can tap on the magic points, and they can tap the entire basic EFT sequence.

ELENI VARDAKI (09:17): What types of interventions have you used when working in schools?

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: I have mainly run 4 types of sessions. I'll briefly describe them. One was focus groups. I set up a maximum of 6 children that the school nominates, the head teacher nominates them, with parental permission. And those children get a little half an hour with me, every week, where only they are tapping on their concerns. Because it's a group setting, it's obviously really important to respect confidentiality. So I would never get into the details of what it is they're going through or why they need a bit of tapping. But I just ask one word of all of them. So I'd say, "Just tell me: Are you sad? Are you angry? Are you upset? Are you scared?" You know, your typical emotions. And then they just give me one word, and we tap in a group setting. And they tell me from 0 to 10, how bad they feel at the start, and then in the middle, and then in the middle, and at the end.

And invariably they all go to zero, and then they go back to class quite happy and feeling calm. And they get a few weeks with me, and of course after a few weeks, they often no longer need to come and see me. So then the teachers nominate different ones. Okay? So that's the focus sessions.

There are also drop-in sessions. And the drop in sessions, like I've said earlier, can look like you are somewhere where they know where they come and see you. Or you walk around the playground, or something like that. So, those are the two most popular. But a little less often, there is periodically, what schools have been setting up these days quite often, these wellbeing weeks. And you can go there and maybe spend the entire week or a couple of days or whatever, seeing the entire school. That's the third type of session.

And then the fourth type of session that I've seen working really well is the occasional sessions, where maybe there's an exam and you come and talk to an assembly and simply train them. Could be a large group, it could be a smaller group. COVID has got in the way of big assemblies, of course. But you can still - I literally had a school ask me to come on the actual day of the important exams at the end of Primary School in the UK, and come on the day tap the two groups of Year 6 students, just spent 10 minutes in each classroom, before they actually did the exam. So, you know, that kind of thing is also very valuable. Children actually asked. They asked the school if they could please tap before their important exams.

ELENI VARDAKI: Oh wow! Wow. So it shows the ripple effect of the work you're doing, you know? And also for EFT Practitioners, for us to remember that it is a ripple effect, that it is organic and it is, you know, something that because it works, it starts spreading on its own. And students start asking for it.

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YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: Totally, once they see what it's like. Initially they might really not know much about it, which is absolutely fine. As we know, we're used to this, as EFT Tapping Practitioners. Although it's getting so much more well known, but initially they might go, "Sorry, what...what is this? EFT what...?" But by the end, in my experience, there was a school that had a rota where the teachers, every week a different class got me. And the teachers were fighting over it. "Oh, I know I want Yolanda this week." "No, I want Yolanda this week." Once they see how simple it is and how effective, everybody wants a calmer classroom that can think more clearly, and learn better. (Eleni: Yeah) Of course we know, this reduction in cortisol and this reduced amygdala activation, we know it's proven to help learning. And of course I am not the researcher here, but if you want more information on the details, you can always look up the amazing Dr. Peter Stapleton.

ELENI VARDAKI: And I can have a link as well here, so people can go to her website, evidence-based EFT, and learn more about the research. It's just incredible. Now we now understand the "why" about how it works, type of thing: <https://www.evidencebasedeft.com/>

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: Exactly. 10 years ago, when I started doing tapping work, when I pivoted into this line of work, it was a lot harder for me to show people the science. But it's coming so fast. It's coming up so fast. Right now, every time I give a talk, I always make a point of going into Google on the big screen and typing "NHS EFT", and people can then see the National Health Service in England, the Guidelines for EFT Tapping. What it is? What are the points? And what you might use it for? And how it works. That makes my life much easier at the start of every talk. I start with that in schools too, of course.

ELENI VARDAKI: Oh that's a wonderful tip. Thank you so much. Oh my goodness! So much valuable, valuable information here for fellow colleagues to go off and look up and research to support them in their work. Before we wrap up are there any final pointers you'd like to highlight or emphasize?

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO (14:28): I suppose I'd like to mention a couple of key points before we go. One would be parental permission is absolutely critical. You have to discuss with the school: "How is this going to work?" "What parts of it they judge, and you judge, that require parent permission?" And they should administer it for you. You're not even allowed to have these parents' names and email addresses, obviously, for Data Protection. So they should administer this. And you should be very clear from the word "go", on what is required, parental permission, and who's doing what, and when. I've had the occasion when there was no parent permission for one of the children coming into my focus group. And I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't do it. I would just stand there until the admin person rang the parents and verbally confirmed, before it came in writing, that they were in fact more than happy for the child to come and do tapping with me. Okay? (Eleni: Yeah).

So parent permission is absolutely critical.

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As is of course giving children the option. Never making anybody do anything, obviously, like we were saying. And of course the other consideration that is absolutely key is safeguarding. Wherever you live, there will be Safeguarding training. There will probably be a Safeguarding board, Partnership board or something like that. Speak to them. Get trained, get thoroughly trained on Safeguarding for children and for adults. Protect yourself, protect the teachers, and protect the children. I would say, never tap with - particularly a small focus group of children who may be going through something quite serious - never be on your own with them. Don't expose yourself.

Have another adult (in the room when tapping with a group of children in a school), like I do. Then they are protecting, the school is protected, and you are protected.

ELENI VARDAKI: Win, win, win.

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO: Totally, totally. Right? Calmer children, and everybody protected, and that is the way it should be, I think.

ELENI VARDAKI: Yeah, working with ethical, you know, high ethical codes of conduct here, and professionalism. So thank you so much for all this valuable information, here, that you've shared and experience. I want to thank you for taking the time to do this, 'cause I know that you have so much work and you're doing this to help other practitioners also. It's very generous of you, here, to share your time and expertise so that others can learn from this experience. Because there is increasing demand, you know?

YOLANDA SAEZ CASTELLO (17:06): Absolutely, absolutely, go for it people. Go for it, And make the impact you've always wanted to make. It is a pleasure for me to be here. And yes, I do often wish there were a couple of me! Thank you so much, Eleni. And good luck, everyone.