

TFT Is Not Just Another Acronym:

Relief from physical pain and recurring nightmares

By DJ Stemmler and Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.

The following article was written by DJ Stemmler about the use of TFT to treat physical pain as well as recurring nightmares.

I had requested that DJ write up her experience with Thought Field Therapy, as I believe that hers is both a common and unique phenomenon. First, it is common in that she was initially put off by the whole idea of energy therapy, both due to a personal bad experience, but also, I believe, due to many types of therapies that in the long run have turned out not to have been effective for many people. Further, the actual effect of TFT is so unusual, that it is first difficult to believe that it could do anything at all, and second that it could be quickly effective and for the long term.

Hers is a unique situation in that she was willing to overcome all of this, and put herself at risk with someone she barely knew, and already had some evidence may have been less than credible. DJ is quite a special person, without all these characteristics, but with them, was able to garner for herself relief from both physical and psychological distress.

I met her the weekend following my first training program in TFT. I was, myself, in the process of believing what my eyes had seen and what I had personally experienced of the healing TFT brings about. I was very excited about it, yet hesitant to discuss it with many people. I recognize the power and amazingly wide application of TFT, but I did not want to risk the credibility I carry in my profession. When I left the TFT training in Indian Wells, California, I boarded a plane for Washington, D.C. for another meeting, where I met DJ.

She was one of those people one meets where there is an almost instant knowing of one another, and we simply found it easy to be with each other. She uses a wheelchair and is short. I really didn't think anything further about her appearance, that is, why she uses a wheelchair, or about her height, or hair color for that matter. Nor did she ask me about my appearance or style.

I engaged in some quite fun email communication with someone I had met in Indian Wells, Debra who lives in

Florida, and just for fun copied a rather technical TFT discussion to DJ. I later worked with DJ over the phone (she is in Pennsylvania, I am in California). Here is her story.

The first time I heard about TFT was in an email message. I truly believed the sender had gotten confused and sent me an email meant for someone else. I didn't understand anything in it and the writer kept referring to TFT. At the end of the email my friend Nora revealed her intent to copy the message to me for my entertainment. It was weeks before TFT came up again. I heard about it again when I shared a story with Nora about an accident I had while outside in my wheelchair. I use a three-wheeled scooter and the day before a bad weld in the

frame sent me flying over the handle and into a pine tree. Besides my pride I had broken my collarbone and landed in duck doodoo.

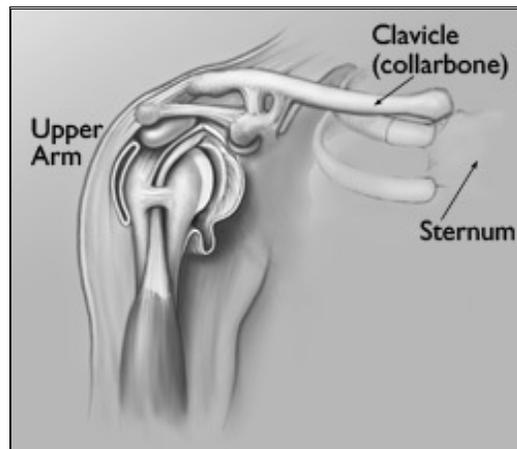
When I got to the hospital smelling very organic and looking like the lone survivor in a dwarf-tossing contest they tried various and sundry slings and supports none of which worked. They sent me home with painkillers and a prognosis of six months before the pain would be gone.

Nora took a risk and described a very bizarre form of therapy she thought could help the pain that she was

recently trained in called TFT. What Nora didn't know was how great risk she had taken in revealing herself to me. I had just ended an eight year relationship with someone I insultingly describe as a guru wantabe. My ex tried every form of meditation, energy work and cleansing diets imagined to man or women. Her half-hearted commitment to all lead to my disdain for any.

I must have read that particular email 10 times and thought repeatedly she's wacked. Being desperate as I was I tried it. And it didn't work. Once again I found myself affiliated with a wack ball. Give me a break God, send me a friend with two feet on the ground and a brain not permanently lacking a synapse connection! But God in her infinite wisdom ignored my plea and sent me TFT via Nora.

Nora also didn't know when she sent me the email that I have multiple disabilities. I was born with skeletal dwarfism* and when I was twenty-four sustained a spinal



cord injury in a car accident and now use a wheelchair. I have multiple artificial joints due to arthritis and years of joint damage due to my stature and years of work as an occupational therapist lifting patients. I have also had nightmares as long as I can remember that were so severe at times they led to a 30 year battle with insomnia, sleep walking and exhaustion.

Nora asked if I tried the treatment on my own and did it work? I wrote her back and said in as non-judgmental way as I could that it didn't work. I thought I was safe, but she called me that night and asked if I would be willing to do the treatment with her over the phone. I have to say I kept thinking, this isn't going to work and I am going to have to be honest with her. So I pacified her and said yes. She asked me to do a couple things I couldn't do like tap on my sprasternal notch. My arms aren't long enough and so we worked around it by using a wooden incense burner (a left over from my ex). At the end of the first round I could feel the difference in my pain. She kept going till it was gone! My shoulder felt so good I was able to do my quilting without any pain, something I hadn't been able to do since the accident. I tried for days after to talk myself out of believing that this could work. I was vulnerable and therefore it was all in my mind".

(Note: DJ wrote later: "So I forget to tell you what the doctor said. They believe the lump in my scapula is still residual from the collarbone/accident trauma in the form of a torn rotator cuff. Although I haven't had pain my motion is more and more limited each day. During the examination he said "I'm surprised this hasn't given you more pain!!!!!! I began a fit of uncontrollable laughter. I thought seriously about telling him about TFT but they lock folks like me up for less so I didn't... I'll stick to the safe testimonials.)

A couple weeks went by again and my friend Nora called again. This time she wanted to tackle the nightmares. I didn't remember telling Nora anything about my nightmares. She knew and we went ahead and did the treatment again for nightmares this time. Nightmares had always been a part of my life. I had tried counseling, meditation, herbs and even hypnosis. A counselor had told me they must have been serving some purpose so I should adapt. I would sleep with a night light on and a radio or music and had lots of soft cuddly things to sleep with. These techniques helped sometimes but for the most part I was sleep deprived, exhausted most of the time and would often resort to long naps to get me through the day.

Nora told me to concentrate on the feelings I would have during a nightmare. It was so simple for me to go right to

the feeling I would waken with almost each night. Almost a half of an hour after we began using TFT I couldn't find the feeling anywhere. It was gone! The next morning I woke at 6:34 AM to the sounds of a mourning dove sitting on my bedroom window. I have not slept so sound without incident for so long that I thought I had died... Then my dog Mia moaned and I realized,,, it worked!! no nightmares last night!!

Will this continue? Would the nightmares come back? Nora never said no but that they shouldn't and they haven't! I actually stayed awake too... that's the real difference for me. I normally wake up exhausted and sleep throughout the day off and on when possible.

The first day I didn't even consider that. My housekeeper came to do the grocery shopping. I had the munchies bad... I thought she would flip at this list! Of course the

munchies could be PMS... Any connection to the dream stuff do you think? (And in a note later that day: Also can you give me the name of the TFT guru again and the name of a book or two I could get... I like to understand the process, not that I wouldn't continue if I didn't understand but you know us suspicious types. Thanks again Nora, I cant ever remember not having nightmares...)



My third experience with TFT was after a recent car accident. My van's engine stopped (a

clever new invention to avoid the engine burning out if there is not enough oil) while driving 75 miles an hour. I was driving down a long hill on a mountain road, with no power steering or brakes, and a mountain drop off on one side and land and a guardrail on the other. Choosing the latter I struggled to get off the road and then had to turn real hard to the right into the guardrail to get it stopped.

My poor shoulder! I thought I broke it again but I didn't. Nora called again and I tried not to sound too eager as she suggested a TFT treatment. (I actually had my wooden incense stick at the ready!!) This time my shoulder felt warm and tingly all over like when someone rubs Bengay on you. Again the pain was gone. I slept fine and that night when I took Mia for a walk I reached down to untangle her leash and my shoulder popped and there was a great feeling of relief of pressure. And the pain has not returned.

Each experience has been different for me. I'm still skeptical of the longevity of the effectiveness but being skeptical is in my nature. Nora now has written into the rent-a-friend contract TFT as needed. I'm delighted but still won't kiss her ring!

Post Script: The third treatment had me a little concerned for a moment. We initially treated the pain in general, located in her hand, her elbow and her shoulder. After the first treatment, the pain was significantly reduced in the elbow and hand, but less so in the shoulder. So, concentrating on the elbow and hand we were able to reach a 1 from an initial SUDS of 7. Then, concentrating on the shoulder, still a 5, we repeated the treatment. When she was tapping (with the incense stick) on the collarbone point, she said, OH!, and stated that she had both heard and felt a pop in her shoulder, and that a burning sensation had begun, covering quite an area around her shoulder.

She said it was pleasant, like BenGay, but definitely burning, and asked what was the cause for this. It seemed to me that this must be the body's healing process at work, and did not believe anything negative should be deduced, particularly since there was no pain.

A third treatment resulted in a SUDS of 2. Since the inertia of physical pain is well recognized, I believed that with some time this would reduce to a one.

She agreed to email later, to let me know how the reduction of pain progressed. I had never experienced either of these sensations being reported during a treatment. The reason for reporting this is to share this information about the obvious physical responses to the pain treatment, and to show that people with multiple disabilities, most importantly the artificial joints, easily respond to the treatment. I would also like to note that I did not offer the treatments until I had been assured that the physicians had completed their treatment. As Roger has emphasized, pain has a function, and it is important to be sure that all that has been planned medically has been completed, so one will not be interfering with important body signals of distress.

*The fact that she has skeletal dwarfism first came to my attention when I was trying to get her to identify the points to tap. I was instructing as Roger usually does by asking her to make a fist, locate the knuckles of your little and ring finger, and, envisioning a triangle, then tap at the apex. Well, DeeJay doesn't have knuckles!!!

I told her that I KNOW she has fingers (!) so just begin where her fingers begin on her hand and go about inch toward the wrist. It was at this time I was beginning to understand how tricky working with DeeJay can be ? delightful. However, not knowing much about this condition, I began to wonder what bones and joints she has and does not have. I will ask, if that becomes important to know. Also, in order to reach the collarbone point, she initially suggested using a pencil. Probably I was too conservative, but feared that the components (lead, paint, metal, rubber) might, however slightly, interfere, so I asked her to find something more "natural". She landed on the incense stick, which was fine.

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