

A Simple Way You Can Break Free From the Bondage of Anxiety

Like many of you, we are now watching our pastor livestream his sermons into our home as the new way of doing church. Pastor Joel recently preached an excellent message on walking fearlessly, sharing faith-building Scriptures reminding us that God is our refuge and we are more than conquerors in Him.

Joel also shared very transparently about his lifelong struggle with anxiety, and how just a few years ago, he experienced breakthrough in this area and now lives free from panic attacks. Hallelujah!

His story is not that different from Brian Johnson, the anointed Bethel worship leader and son of Pastor Bill Johnson. In his book, *When God Becomes Real*, Brian shares a similar decades-long struggle with anxiety and panic attacks, and how he, too, found healing in recent years. Praise God.

We are living in an unprecedented season and experiencing things none of us have ever imagined. For some, all of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 may be causing you anxiety. Maybe you are worried about finances and when you'll be able to go back to work. Maybe you are afraid that you or someone you love will get sick. Maybe you are stressed because it feels like nobody really knows what is going on, how to fix it or when life will ever get back to normal. Whatever it is you are feeling, please know that you're not alone.

It's Not Just You

The reason I share Joel and Brian's stories is threefold: First, I want you to understand that even strong Christians feel what you feel. Just because you are anxious doesn't mean

you are weak.

Secondly, Brian and Joel know God, know His Word, and know how to pray and to praise, and yet they still struggled. So just because you are struggling doesn't mean you don't have enough faith, and it doesn't mean you aren't spiritual enough. Those are lies from the enemy.

You are complete in Christ and you are enough! Finally, the biggest reason I want to share their stories is to offer you hope. They found breakthrough and freedom, and you can too.

The question remains, though: How could Brian and Joel—these indisputably solid men of God—still struggle with debilitating anxiety, fear and panic attacks? While I am not a medical doctor and am the first to admit everyone is on their own journey, I want to offer you one possibility to encourage you or your loved ones who may be struggling with these same issues.

We are a triune being—spirit, soul and body. Experiencing fullness of health in one area requires that other aspects are prospering and in good health as well. When our body is offline physiologically, it can trigger a cascade of neurological and emotional signals throughout our system that affect our minds and our hearts.

Back to our question of how spiritually strong, mentally stable Christian leaders can struggle with such severe emotional stress and overwhelm. Obviously we know their spirits are saved and healed, because they are whole in Christ. Our mind is usually considered to be part of our soul, and we have no doubt these men of God had thoroughly renewed their minds with the Word of God, so their souls are healthy too. That leaves just one aspect of their triune being to account for: the body.

This is actually encouraging, because when we understand that there may possibly be a physiological facet to our emotional

healing, then it makes sense that we would try a physical remedy. That is, doing something with our physical body to address these negative emotional symptoms.

Enter, "Emotional Freedom Techniques."

Emotional Freedom Techniques, also known as EFT or tapping, is a God-created physiological technique that allows us to experience liberty and choice about our feelings and how we experience them. It involves tapping gently on acupuncture points of the face and upper body. This tapping can release pent-up emotional stress and trauma, via the neurological system, of daily and long-term events and memories.

To be clear, I don't believe either Joel or Brian ever tried EFT. What I am suggesting, however, is that you try it. If you or someone you love is feeling overwhelmed by what's going on in the world right now, or if you often feel stress or chronic anxiety, you don't need to suffer any longer. Maybe you are discouraged because it seems like you've tried everything, and nothing has helped long term. Don't give up hope! Give tapping a try and just see if it isn't the answer you have been praying for.

If you are a counselor, I believe you will find this a complementary tool to inner healing prayer and other heart work approaches you already use, possibly even accelerating their effectiveness in a synergistic way.

Our Emotional Brain

Without getting too technical, the limbic system is part of our brain that helps us process emotions. The amygdala and hippocampus are two parts of the limbic system, and they are responsible for helping us feel safe. Sometimes, though, this delicate mechanism in our minds is hijacked and we are thrown into a state of panic, fear or overwhelm when really there is nothing to be frightened or worried about. Our physiological response is disproportionate to the circumstance, as

biochemically we have signaled a fight/flight/freeze reaction. Essentially, we've moved ourselves into meltdown mode.

It is in this moment that tapping can interrupt and neutralize this physical overreaction. How? We use the body to calm the body. Because it's actually a *physiological trigger* with excess amounts of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline being released when it's not needed, we can use a *physiological technique* to address it.

This is why tapping—that is, pressing gently—on certain points of our head and upper body can efficiently and effectively relax us into a state of calm. Hundreds of university research projects show why EFT works so well in releasing various traumas, including anxiousness, fears and persistent sadness. It brings us back to the present moment, the eternal now of God. And right here, we are safe. Right now, in this moment, we are OK. Scientifically speaking, we are moving ourselves from high-level beta brainwaves into the slower, meditative, alpha brainwave state. This is a place of peace, the space of rest.

Please know that you don't have to suffer with anxiety, fear, sadness or stress. Scripture reveals that even David, the mighty warrior and worshipper, became "greatly distressed." But not for long. He addressed those unwanted feelings and strengthened himself in the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6).

We can do the same. If you are struggling with negative emotions and what you've been doing hasn't helped, why not try something else? Find out if EFT works for you and tap into God's peace and joy today. {eoa}

Charity Virkler Kayembe has a doctorate in biblical studies, is passionate about the sacred supernatural and writes about the unfolding adventure that is walking by the Spirit on her blog at [www.walkingbythespirit.com](#). She has been featured on Sid Roth's It's Supernatural!, Cornerstone TV, Charisma magazine and The

Elijah List. Charity is the coauthor of four books, including Hearing God Through Your Dreams, Unleashing Healing Power Through Spirit-Born Emotions and Everyday Angels.