



Resolve your anxiety with tapping

Guest: Nick Ortner

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Please note this interview was originally broadcast as part of our first Trauma Super Conference in 2020, and is one of four interviews replayed this year due to popular demand.

[00:00:12] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this session where I'm super excited to be talking with Nick Ortner. Firstly, Nick, welcome and thank you so much for joining me.

Nick Ortner

Alex, it's a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Alex Howard

I think this is going to be a really important session for a few reasons. Firstly, we're going to speak to some of the challenges that I think a lot of people may be feeling and working with at the moment.

There's also going to be a super practical session. So by the end of this session, you're going to have some tools to play with to work with, that should be able to have a meaningful impact upon your experience.

Just to give people Nick's background, for anyone that doesn't know. Nick Ortner is the CEO of The Tapping Solution, LLC. And producer of the Tapping World Summit, which is being attended by over 1 million people. And I was very happy to be supporting, promoting this year, it was a fantastic event.

He's the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Tapping Solution: A Revolutionary System for Stress Free Living* and *The Tapping Solution for Pain Relief*, a step by step guide to reducing and eliminating chronic pain.

Prior to that, Nick created and produced the breakthrough documentary film *The Tapping Solution*, which I think played a key role in putting tapping and EFT on the global map, and more recently has created the Tapping Solution app.

So, Nick, I'm really happy to have you here, I'm really grateful for you making the time. I think there'll be people joining us that have had some experience of tapping or EFT, there'll be others that have no idea what it's that we're talking about.

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So I think probably a good opening point is just to give a little bit of context of the background of, when we talk about tapping, what are we talking about?

Nick Ortner

We are not tap dancing, as people are always wondering what is tapping. There's also some guitar tapping thing that comes up whenever I look up tapping. We call this tapping because we are literally physically tapping on end points of meridians of our body. And what the latest research shows is that when we tap on these places in our body while focusing on the stress, the anxiety, the overwhelm, whatever is going on in our lives at that time we send a calming signal to the amygdala in the brain.

A lot of your very wise viewers and listeners will know that that amygdala is the fight, flight or freeze response center in the brain. Something that I'm sure you're going to talk a lot about throughout this conference, throughout the rest of this information. That part of us that gets triggered, that feels unsafe, that triggers that stress response.

So the tapping is sending a calming signal, in essence, rewiring that response. That's why we can imagine something happening. So if, for example, someone is scared of public speaking, all you have to do is say, close your eyes and imagine you're in front of 3,000 people right now. That's all you have to do, it all you have to do. And what happens? Their palms get sweaty, their stomach starts gurgling, they get nervous, anxious. Just that event in their mind is causing all of this distress in their body. And that's why also we can imagine that and we don't make it painful. We don't go right to that 3,000 people, but that's why we can run these processes in our mind while doing the tapping; sending that calming signal and releasing whether it be the psychological component, the energetic component. We're learning more, more every day as to how exactly it's happening but we're flattening that response, we are reducing and releasing that response.

And I don't know what your experience has been with it, Alex. I've been doing this for almost 20 years now from when I first learned it. I still wake up every morning saying, wait what? Why are we tapping on our face and our body? And how does it work so well? How is it that I can be anxious or angry or overwhelmed? How can it be that a thought can have this grip on me? This emotion can have this grip on me? And then I tap on these end points in my body and it just lets go. That distance is created, what was once pressing, overwhelming, anxiety producing is now far away or just gone altogether.

Alex Howard

I think you asked about my experience. I remember I came across tapping almost 20 years ago, funnily enough, a very early Gary Craig DVDs. And it was one of those things, I was early in my therapeutic career and it was one of those things where it was like, it can't be this simple and I remember at the time people that had spent many years working as psychologists, psychotherapists were really resistant to the idea that it could be that simple. And what seemed to happen many, many times over the years, is people were, I think, converted, which is the wrong word because it makes some a cult. But people were inspired or impacted by their own experience, something happened for them that was in a sense, undeniable.

[00:05:16]

I'm curious for you, when you first came across tapping what it was? I know that you went through your own journey in terms of putting together the Tapping Solution film and it was a big leap for you in terms of financially, and life move. What was that inspiration?

What were those experiences that inspired you that this was something that you wanted to take out to a bigger audience?

Nick Ortner

Yeah, that's a great question. So I discovered tapping right around 2003. My first memory about, been trying to trace, OK, when did I first see it? And I'm pretty sure it was at a Tony Robbins event.

Tony's actually been into energy medicine and tapping and all that stuff for a long time. He tends to be ahead of the curve on this kind of thing and he did a quick demonstration of the tapping.

I was in San Diego at a leadership conference, and from there it was like, I mean, read the books. Let me study with Gary Craig. I've looked at everything, bought all the DVDs, you probably still remember the cardboard things they came in.

Alex Howard

I do.

Nick Ortner

And then you pop it in and you watch. I started using it with friends and family. The running joke at the time was, don't say anything is wrong around Nick because he's gonna make you tap on it. It was just from this inspiration and this desire to help people heal. And time and again, through those first couple years, someone would present a problem. They would say, my shoulder hurts, and also normal people like my buddy who hurt his shoulder playing football.

I remember going to a Yankees game, I'm driving, he's next to me, it was his left shoulder, I could see the image so clearly where he's going like this. He says, "it's been hurting for weeks. It's not getting better. I'd heard the tapping works, some pain relief".

And I was like, well, let's try this. I'm going to take you through it. We're stuck in New York City traffic. Here we go. Do the process and then all of a sudden the pain is released. Time and again seeing people let go of these things have these shifts.

So you mentioned making the movie, around 2007 I just had the inspiration to make a documentary film. And true inspiration because I had no filmmaking experience, credit cards, credit lines, 40,000 dollars worth of camera equipment just on that desire to get this message out there. And really, when I look at what was most transformative for me, for tapping when I really saw that it worked so well, it was during that time period. It was when I immersed myself in tapping because in making the film, because it was really hard to make a movie with no filmmaking experience.

[00:07:56]

Now I'm blessed too, texting with Tony Robbins and being friends with Cheryl Richardson and Christiane Northrup and all these leaders in the field. I didn't know anybody that I was just a fan. I've got a big bookcase to my right here. I was just a reader, a follower, following Wayne Dyer, following Louise Hay of being into personal development and inspiration.

So I started from nothing in terms of those connections and it was the tapping process every time I got stuck that really helped break through. The tapping process when we go, all right. Well, we just spent 100,000 dollars and we have 300 hours of footage that we don't know what to do with. We just filmed a lot of stuff and don't know what to do.

And people say, well, how does that happen, what does this have to do with my life? Anything we want to create in our lives, when we want to breakthrough, when we want to actualize something, it is so critical that we turn off that fight or flight response.

We're faced time and again with that stress response and stress is going to happen in life, we're going to be faced with these situations. So when I'm making this film, I'm faced with these stressful situations, I don't know where to go next.

Now, there's two ways I could go and you're going to find this in your life every single day. The stress state is where the amygdala is firing, the blood is flowing away from your brain into your arms and legs, you're not thinking clearly.

I like to joke that if you are being chased by a lion, a tiger or a bear, you're running at full speed and I come up next year and I say, hey, Alex, I heard you've got some big dreams and goals and you want to put on this amazing conference looking into the mind body and trauma. Tell me what you want to do there, how many lives is it going to change? You would look at me and you say, hey, that's all fine and good, but there's a lion chasing me. There's a tiger chasing me. There's a bear chasing me. I literally cannot think creatively, passionately, inspirationally moving forward when I'm dealing with these challenges. And that's what I faced in that year. I had an opportunity time and again to decide, am I going to be stressed or am I going to be open, creative, resourceful.

When we think about when we get our best ideas, ask anybody, they say, oh, I was taking a shower, I was walking in the woods, I was taking a bath. It's rarely that we say, well, it's Monday morning and I was stressed as could be, it was just miserable I had one hundred emails coming at me, there was the Corona virus taking over the world. All these things were happening and I just had that moment of inspiration.

So what we're looking to do with tapping and really in all aspects of our lives is to determine where the places in our lives are, where we're running that stress response consciously or unconsciously. Where are the places where we're holding on tight, where there's tension, where there's tightness, where there's emotional overwhelm, where the body is frozen and see how can we free up this energy?

We all have unbelievable stores of energy and creativity and inspiration within us, but they only happen when we reduce that stress.

[00:11:05] Alex Howard

And I think one of the things that you touched on that's also really important, that it's not just using tapping to get rid of suffering or symptoms, whatever it may be.

But it's also people actualizing their potential in their life and the inevitable challenges and frustrations and difficulties that come up in that process as well. But it's really an all- encompassing tool that people can use at many different junctures and chapters that they may face.

Nick Ortner

It's such a great point and I think it's an important one, especially when we're looking at trauma. I've certainly seen in the last 20 years within the EFT tapping community that there can be a tendency to go, okay, tapping helps heal trauma, heal things from my past, let go of these old patterns. So I can't do anything in my life until I clean all this up, until all my trauma is fully healed, until I've forgiven everybody in my life, until I've gotten a clean slate. I've got to just focus on this.

It's important to focus on these things, to take the time to say, there is this pain, there is this anxiety but there's such a delicate balance between doing that and then moving forward.

And then you do a little bit more of that and then you move forward again.

I think that forward progress, that forward movement is so important so we don't get stuck in the weeds of our pain.

Alex Howard

That's a really, really important point. And I think the same thing is true, just as a side comment, often people recovering from chronic illness, it can be the same. I have to be in a perfect healing state the whole time. I have to resolve all of my trauma, have the perfect diet, take the perfect supplements, and only then will I recover. And the amount of enormous stress that goes into trying to get that perfection is often the blocking in and of itself.

Nick Ortner

You said it beautifully, it's a block in and of itself, if I have one bad meal or it's not even I mean the standards that we set for ourselves. And maybe it's because we read a blog post about the perfect supplements for healing your gut. And we have all this information that comes at us that says this is bad, this is good, this is bad, this is good. And then six months later, it's the complete opposite. So our brains are just flooded with all this contradicting information and then, I've seen it time again we set this bar so high we go, I need to be completely parasympathetic at all times in my life, it's the only way I can heal, if I meditate three hours a day, if I tap for two, if I have migraine, if I do this, do that and the pressure of that is just overwhelming.

So how can we find the places where we can heal? How can we let go of the stress and anxiety? And then how can we live our lives? How can we move and create and be strong and powerful with whatever we have available in that moment?

[00:13:47] Alex Howard

So you touched on a little bit earlier that part of how tapping works is that we're shifting what's happening in the amygdala and we're helping turn the body into a calmer state.

Can you say a bit more, and I think one of the things that's also interesting in tapping is that we knew tapping works, getting on for 20 years ago. And it's almost like a lot of the sciences come later that we started to discover more and more of the reasons why it's effective.

Maybe say a little more about some of the scientific explanation behind how tapping actually impacts upon the body?

Nick Ortner

Yeah, absolutely. The research is coming in fast and furious, which is exciting. It feels, you mentioned earlier and I wanted to comment on it, how well it works, almost being a barrier to it because it can't be this easy. And, you know, Dr. Roger Callahan discovered tapping in the 1980s when he started putting things together, then modified to EFT the version that I use by Gary Craig so this has been around a long time.

But I think initially, especially by the people that we're most into it, it was like this worked so well, this is so obvious. All you have to do if you're a therapist is try it with a client that you've been struggling with for a decade, you see the breakthrough and that's all the evidence you need. But that only gets a little portion of the population. The rest of the population wants the science and research, which is okay. I think it's important to go, hey, we can be excited and passionate and share this tool and also say, let's figure out exactly how it's working.

One study that I just saw that I love, especially because it was a replication study. So replication means, hey, someone did a study, let's have a different group of people, see if they can do it again. And a lot of your viewers will know that that's actually a big challenge in science, throughout science, not just in our little world of tapping. It's a challenge that someone will do a study and then can't be replicated.

So what they did in the study, this was a cortisol study, cortisol is one of the main stress hormones in our bodies, we can easily measure it with saliva. So you just spit in a tube, saliva is analyzed and we see how stressed are you in that moment? There were three groups in this study. One was the tapping group who did an hour of tapping. The second group was a psycho education group, so learning about psychology and the brain. And the third group, the poor control group, just had to sit and read magazines for an hour. Spit in the tube before, spit in the tube after.

The tapping group saw a 43 percent decrease in cortisol in an hour. A massive drop. I mean, just a huge, substantial, hard to ignore drop. The psycho education groups on 19 percent decrease and I love that comparison because it shows there is positive benefit from anything that is good for your brain; that you're learning things, that you're in that learning state, that you learn about stress. So potentially just as talking now and the rest of your series could drop cortisol in the body as people get inspired, as they relax, as they see that there's ways to control their experience. And then we add the tapping on top of it, we get that 43 percent decrease in it. And then the third group, the magazine readers, saw an increase of 2 percent in their cortisol.

So just sitting there, I don't know what magazines they were reading. I've joked that I'd like to see that study replicated again with Facebook as the control group, or Instagram as a control group. Let's see

what the cortisol is going to do there, I imagine it's going to go up just a little bit. But to me, just seeing, okay, we can feel better, you can have an experience, we're going to have one together today, you're going to go, something shifted. But then knowing scientifically your saliva shows, the proof shows that cortisol is going down in your body when you do this process. That by itself is a game changer.

[00:17:39] Alex Howard

One of the things that is, I think, particularly challenging at the moment with everything that's happening and the wider landscape with the COVID-19, is that people are living in a world that has a lot of uncertainty, that even though I think we've always lived in a world full of uncertainty.

People at least had the illusion of predictability and certainty in their lives. And I think also my wife and I were talking about this the other day, that often what also happens when we go through our own personal life crisis, the rest of the world continues in its normal kind of orbits and cycles.

So you might go for a really distressing time, but then you go to work and that sort of stabilizes you and maybe you go to the gym after work. So there's a stabilizing force of the rest of life and somehow with that being lost as well at the moment everyone's collectively going through their own challenges and disruption and changes. That creates a real ongoing impact, not just on people's physical bodies and emotional bodies, but also their minds, that people get in certain habits and ways of thinking.

So it'll be interesting a little bit about how tapping can impact us on all of these different levels and help mind that place of calmness, despite the fact that the world around us is uncertain.

Nick Ortner

Absolutely, and one of those words you use 'uncertain'. So if we look at stress and this is before COVID-19, any stressful situation is going to have two components, lack of control and uncertainty. So if you're worried about your finances, you are most stressed about the things that you can't control or uncertain.

If you're worried about your body, you are most stressed when you don't feel like you can take the right supplements or make the right choices, and you can't control that.

I don't need to tell anybody that this situation is a really stressful one. But I think it's important to recognize part of why it's so stressful is complete lack of control. We're all sitting here at home just waiting. We're just going, I don't know, is someone gonna tell me what's happening next, what we're gonna do next. So complete uncertainty and complete lack of control. What can I do about it? Me at home. What can I do?

So when we want to move past this anxiety, this fear, the stress, we want to look to technique's, opportunities, places in our lives where we can take back control and where we can create certainty for ourselves, and that is something the tapping does really well.

I hear it time and again when people have an experience and let's say they're used to being anxious and often they release the anxiety. Part of the power in that is going, oh, anxiety doesn't just happen to me and I'm at the whim of it.

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Fear doesn't just happen to me, and I'm at the whim of it. I have some control over how I feel so I can let go of this fear, I can let go of this anxiety.

So just that moment of processing these emotions through our body and going, okay, it's strange and I don't know how this is happening, but when I do this, I can feel in control of my emotions and lowers the stress so dramatically.

Alex Howard

I was just thinking as you were talking, there's a very famous film, I guess, of Tony Robbins on the morning after the New York bombings in 2011. And one of the points that he made, he's running a seminar at this point and knows people have been impacted by this. One of the points that he makes is that people are responding in the way they always respond. So people that get angry are getting angry. People that are freaking out are freaking out. People that feel that they manage their own anxiety by helping everyone else, were trying to help everyone else.

And it strikes me that in a sense, what we're in right now is a pressure cooker that's intensifying the responses people have any way in life, they're just more intense and more obvious.

There's also an opportunity in that for people if they can work with that. And we're going to come to the practical pieces in a minute in this situation, that's a great leap forward for the rest of their lives.

Nick Ortner

One hundred percent, I think we've all thought, oh, how easy did we have it before then, before this all happened? What were we stressed out about? Hey, we got to go to restaurants and have dinner out on a Friday night. What else did we want in our lives?

Alex Howard

There's a joke in the UK. Can we just have Brexit back? That suddenly seems like a golden age.

Nick Ortner

Yeah, I love it. Yeah, one hundred percent taking that power back. This is an opportunity. I mean, with having the awareness that these are anxiety inducing times, these are stressful times. You don't have to be perfect through this time. It's okay if you're sad during these times. It's okay if you get anxious. And at the same time, while we have that self-compassion, can we move through it? I think it's one of the most powerful parts of the tapping process that is sort of baked in. So when we start tapping, we say, even though I'm anxious, I love and accept myself. Even though I'm anxious, I choose to relax now. Even though I'm anxious, things are going to be okay.

In that moment we are saying, hey, I'm anxious. So as opposed to bearing it down, which a lot of us have been taught to do. You're anxious, you're angry, you're sad. Hey, swallow it down, there's no place for these emotions and our busy modern world. We are saying I'm anxious, I'm overwhelmed, I'm scared, I'm angry, I'm stressed. And with these feelings, I can also accept myself, I can also choose

to relax, I can also love myself. That set-up statement to me is one of the most beautiful parts of tapping because it's a dynamic that we don't always see.

[00:23:22]

We either go. OK. I got to be positive. So positive thinking, so no matter how anxious I am, I'm just going to pretend that I'm not anxious. And we know how well that works when we are just sort of bubbling underneath because we swallow these motions down. Or we wallow in the emotion or we are overwhelmed with anxiety, we're overwhelmed with fear.

There's a place in between. There's a place where you can go, I'm human, I'm anxious, I'm scared, I'm overwhelmed and I can make a choice to feel differently.

Alex Howard

And I think that's one of the things which is also really important as we start to come into the practical piece, that people are not being told they can't have their experience. There's not a rejection of, as you say, not trying to flip it into the positive.

There's an owning of and an accepting of what's there.

So maybe as we come into the practical element, just a little bit more about that sets up a statement and then we can come into some of the mechanics and the methodology of this.

Nick Ortner

Yeah, of course. So whenever we start tapping, the first thing to do is just to decide what it is we're working on. So we've been talking about anxiety, anger, if you have pain in your body, tapping has proven to be extraordinarily powerful to reduce and eliminate chronic pain, so you can focus there. If you're anxious about something that's happening in a week or a month or something that happened last year. We want to begin to zone into what's the thing that we want to let go of? What's the thing that we're holding on tight that we want to release?

Once we identify that, then we give it a number on a scale of 0 to 10. Tapping can be so powerful in the shift that it's really critical to give the number. I'm sure you've seen it, Alex, or someone says, oh, well, you know, I wasn't really mad at my mom and it was like 10 minutes ago you were raging. But we make these cognitive shifts that can be so profound that we just forget and we let go and our brain just wants to move on to the next thing.

So we give it a number. We say, all right. I'm anxious from 0 to 10, how anxious am I? And why don't you go ahead and do that now? Let's take a moment to pick something that you want to work on.

So you're anxious about COVID-19, you're worried about your finances, your physical body. Whatever is going on, pick one thing. And then see if you can localize that emotion, that event, that anxiety in your body and help us to get really grounded, to go home, I'm anxious about what's going to happen and I just feel it in my throat. And if nothing comes up in your body, that's okay.

[00:25:54]

Now let's give it a number on a scale of 0 to 10 with intensity. If you're angry and you are just raging mad because you just got into a fight with your spouse 5 minutes ago, you might say it's a 10. Give it a number, whatever comes up for you.

Now, shall we do some tapping?

Alex Howard

Let's do it.

Nick Ortner

So we start by tapping on the side of the hand, it's called the karate chop point. Whatever hand feels comfortable for you.

Now, I'm going to use general language here if you're tapping on your own, down the road, you want to try to be as specific as possible. But I'll help guide you through the process so the language doesn't get in the way. And Alex, will you be my echo as we tap along?

Alex Howard

Sure, let's do it.

Nick Ortner

All right. So tapping on the side of the hand, repeat after me, either in your mind or out loud, "even though I'm holding on to this stress."

Alex Howard

"Even though I'm holding onto this stress."

Nick Ortner

"I choose to relax and feel safe now."

Alex Howard

"I choose to relax and feel safe now."

[00:26:55] Nick Ortner

We're gonna do that two more times, just staying on the side of the hand. "Even though I'm holding on so tight."

Alex Howard

"Even though I'm holding on so tight."

Nick Ortner

"It's tough to let this thing go."

Alex Howard

"It's tough to let this thing go."

Nick Ortner

"And with all these feelings."

Alex Howard

"And with all these feelings."

Nick Ortner

"I accept myself."

Alex Howard

"I accept myself."

Nick Ortner

And one more time. "Even though part of me is really overwhelmed."

Alex Howard

"Even though part of me is really overwhelmed."

[00:27:24] Nick Ortner

"By everything that's happening in my life."

Alex Howard

"By everything that is happening in my life."

Nick Ortner

"And this one specific thing."

Alex Howard

"And this one specific thing."

Nick Ortner

"And with all of these feelings."

Alex Howard

"And with all these feelings."

Nick Ortner

"I choose to relax now."

Alex Howard

"I choose to relax now."

Nick Ortner

Now we'll move through the points. The first point is the eyebrow point inside of the eyebrow where the hair ends and it meets the nose. You can tap with two fingers of one hand, the other hand or both hands.

The meridians run down both sides of the body, so whatever's comfortable and easy for you. And I want you to just tap gently and think about the thing that's stressing you out. If you're anxious about something you saw on the news see that headline now. Moving to the side of the eye, it's not at the top a little further round, right on the bone.

[00:28:14]

Again, one side or both sides. And we're looking to activate that amygdala to focus on that thing, to give it a voice. So do that now, what are you anxious about? What are you angry about? What are you feeling in your body?

Now under the eye, right on the bone. If there's a movie around what happened or is happening, play that movie now.

You can close your eyes if it's safe to do so and just imagine that headline, that upcoming deadline. The thing that's providing all the stress.

Under the nose. If you're worried about COVID-19, what specifically are you worried about? Is it your own health? The health of someone you love? Think these thoughts now.

Under the mouth. If you're figuring out the points or getting a little distracted, that's okay, just go back to that original thing.

Three points left are the collarbone point, just feel for the two little bones of the collarbone can go right below it. All ten fingers of both hands if they're available. Tapping gently.

Tuning in to that stress, that anxiety, those feelings of overwhelm. Whatever's keeping you stuck.

Underneath the arm, three inches underneath the armpit, right in the bra line for women, either side of the body. Tapping gently, tuning in. What's stressing you out? Last point, top of the head. Think those thoughts, feel those feelings.

And we'll do one more round again out loud or in your mind, repeat after me tapping on the eyebrow. "It's safe to let this go."

Alex Howard

"It's safe to let this go."

Nick Ortner

Side of the eye. "It's safe to relax."

Alex Howard

"It's safe to relax."

Nick Ortner

Under the eye. "Even with everything going on."

[00:30:22] Alex Howard

"Even with everything going on."

Nick Ortner

Under the nose, "I choose to relax now."

Alex Howard

"I choose to relax now."

Nick Ortner

Under the mouth, "to let go."

Alex Howard

"To let go."

Nick Ortner

Collarbone, "to feel safe."

Alex Howard

"To feel safe."

Nick Ortner

Under the arm, "in every cell of my body."

Alex Howard

"In every cell of my body."

Nick Ortner

Top of the head, "right now."

Alex Howard

"Right now."

[00:30:49] Nick Ortner

And you can gently stop tapping and take a breath in and let it go. Now we tune back in. So we did two very quick rounds and we tuned back into that original issue. So we say, okay, I was anxious, it was an 8 and now it's a 7 or 6 or 5. I was angry about something and it's gone completely or changed to something else.

One of the crazy things that happens with tapping is that we unlock these things within. So we think that we're anxious about this one thing. But then when we begin to relax, when we open up that awareness, we realize, you know what, it's really this that going on. It's this shift that I want to change or make in my life.

Alex Howard

So what are some of the things people could be experiencing now?

So some people may feel that it's gone up a little bit and may have gone up or down, it may be the same, you mentioned that it may be moving.

So maybe a little bit about the kind of variety of experiences people could be having.

Nick Ortner

Yeah. Well you said it perfectly. That was general enough and relaxing enough that hopefully people are feeling a little bit of that relaxation in their bodies, where they're letting go, a little bit, we're breathing, a little bit more.

Once we start going deeper and we're looking at specific traumatic experiences, certainly you can feel that heightened. Disclaimer always tapping is, hey, don't go where you don't belong, don't go where you don't feel fully comfortable. So if someone says to me, "Oh, I just learned about tapping yesterday and I want to use it by myself to deal with sexual abuse from when I was seven years old." Might want to slow down a little bit, might want to begin to explore working with a practitioner, working with a therapist, a psychologist, psychiatrist who is trained in tapping and can create that combination, it doesn't mean that you can't start tapping on your stress relief and reducing anxiety and feeling safe in your body. But it can be challenging, it's not impossible, but it can be challenging to work, especially in the most deep seated trauma by ourselves.

We tend to feel safer when we're around another human being, even if it's a Zoom call where someone is holding that space for you and can help guide you through the process, so little thing to be aware of there.

We did two rounds, what I find is as we let go, the first round is often just taking our breath, like we haven't slowed down in a month or a year or a decade. And that opens things up where I like to start with people, it's just that. Let's look to reduce all that noise in our lives all that peripheral stress. And then from there we begin to feel more grounded, feel safer in our bodies, and we can do that deeper work.

[00:33:37] Alex Howard

A few questions people may have practically. How many times do they tap? How hard do they tap? How many rounds do they do? So maybe just speak to a few of those specifics.

Nick Ortner

Yeah. So you're tapping sort of as if you're drumming on a table you don't want to be, I know some people go crazy tapping that are like, my face hurts, well you're tapping too hard. So it doesn't really require a lot of pressure to create what you want.

You can also tap different speeds. I tend to tap rather quickly in the same way that I can talk rather quickly. It can be useful to slow it down, even for myself, especially if dealing with anxiety, we want to try to slow down the beat a little bit so we're not almost anchoring in that anxiety with really fast tapping.

So tapping gently, don't have to make a tremendous amount of pressure. In terms of length of time, hey, one round is better than no rounds. So if all you can do is one round once a day for 60 seconds and find a little piece to begin, open that door. Fabulous.

In our Tapping Solution app. Most of our meditations are within 8 to 12 minutes. I've found that to be a sweet spot of, I can do it, I'm willing to commit to the 10 minutes and I can go deep enough to get a result that I can feel good about and move from there.

If you're working with a therapist or a coach, you'll often find that we'll begin an hour session and you won't be tapping the whole time. But just like any other sort of coaching relationship, you talk about things and explore things and then do some tapping on it, and then unpack them a little bit and go from there.

Alex Howard

And people, on each spot, they're tapping how many times?

Nick Ortner

Yeah. So we say 5 to 7 times. There's no right or wrong. There's nothing that says, for example, on some tapping meditation I'll stay on the collarbone for a while, especially once we've gone a little deeper. I find that if I can stay in one spot, I can focus on some more mental things, go a little bit deeper in that experience as opposed to constantly distracting people with the next thing.

So you might find, I did some tapping on stress and anxiety and I'm feeling good, and I'm going to stay on the collarbone and I'm going to go deep into one part of this experience. The other thing, too, is after you tap if you have the time to take a few minutes to let it sink in.

A lot of people combine tapping with meditation where you do 5 minutes a tapping to quiet that monkey mind and then sit in that meditative state. So that combo seems to work really well for people.

[00:36:19] Alex Howard

And we opened up with this general practice just to help settling.

If someone's got, we're not talking about a major life trauma piece here, but a very specific thought pattern or feeling, which feels difficult. How would they begin to work with that?

Nick Ortner

So you can just start in that moment, so whatever is presenting itself to you. Even though I'm anxious and just start with the physical feelings in the body. Some of the most productive, the deepest work with tapping is when we identify oh, I feel anxious because of what happened to me when I was 10 years old, of that big T or your little T trauma. That said, I got up in front of the class and everyone laughed at me, and I've just been scared of being around people ever since and we find these things. And when we bring them up in our minds, we feel its energetic pull on us, we feel that amygdala firing, we just do the tapping through the process to let go.

So starting where you are letting it unfold into that deeper work. In the same way that we talked earlier about not clearing out everything in your life at once. Sometimes people go, they realize, they learn about trauma for example, in the first place and they learn from these amazing experts all the different things that are going on with trauma and then they'll decide. All right. Well, I have to fix my trauma 100 percent and get it done in the next 48 hours.

So slowing it down, saying potentially, you know what, I'm going to tap just on feeling anxious in my chest once a day for the next 7 days and that's all I'm going to do. That way I can get a win. That way I can say I feel better. That way, I can begin to build that practice and say, this is part of my life. I would much rather see that than, it's sort of like going to the gym. We want to lose weight. We want to get in better shape. We don't start off running a marathon, and some people do. They go, all right, here we go. I'm going to go to the gym and I'm going to run, six miles and I'm going to sweat like crazy. And I'm going to be sore as can be the next day and not be able to work out for two weeks or hurt myself.

So how can we start slow in this experience, build these wins in for ourselves and then go from there?

Alex Howard

And one of the things I think is also just worth speaking to briefly is, people that have got kids who may also be feeling quite unsettled at the moment.

You know, kids, for example, perhaps that feeling unsettled, they've got to socially distance from their friends and they feel sad about that or they feel a bit scared going back to school when schools go back. Say a bit about how people can use tapping with children.

Nick Ortner

Yeah. It's really powerful with kids. My brother Alex, who works with us at the Tapping Solution, wrote a kid's book a couple of years ago, it's called *Gorilla Thumps and Bear Hugs*. You can get it on Amazon and that.

[00:39:07] Alex Howard

Great title.

Nick Ortner

Hey, yes, thank you. It shows the tap points with animals. That was his brilliant idea to say, let's combine an animal with a tapping point. So we have the lion cry point and my daughter, when she taps on her chest, she goes, I'm doing the gorilla. So we connect these things for them. So that's a great tool to use with them.

And then also in our Tapping Solution app, specifically, we have about 25 different meditations that are of three around Coronavirus anxiety, we've been putting our efforts there the last couple of months, and we have 4 specific ones for kids for different age ranges. Because under 5 is very different from 13 to 17.

So what's nice, you can just pull that up, do it with your child, it'll take you through it. There's even too little child avatars so they can feel like they're tapping along with an image that represents them more. And then also within there we have a sleep one, so calming the body before bed, which even though it's not fully COVID-19 related, it just helps to release that anxiety. And then we also have one for focus in the school setting and then the home setting. So that is a whole new thing that many parents around the world are dealing with right now. How do I get my kids to focus? And we've got specific tapping meditations for that.

Alex Howard

It was very kind of you to create that specifically for my wife and my kids, but I guess others can use it as well.

Nick Ortner

Exactly. We'll let others use it.

Alex Howard

So Nick, I'm mindful of time, but you mentioned the Tapping Solution app. What are some other ways people could find out more about what you guys are doing?

Nick Ortner

Yes. Our main website is www.thetappingsolution.com The app, you can download it for free on IOS or the Google Play store.

I also want to mention that we've made the premium version of the app free for six months for health care workers, first responders and we just added mental health therapists and teachers because I was just getting story after story, mental health therapists who are on the frontlines of our well-being working so hard. They have Zoom fatigue. This is a whole new thing where they're not used to working in this format, probably with their kids in the background and all these things going

on, so if you go to www.thetappingsolutionapp.com you'll see a little banner there and you can sign up for that free six months.

[00:41:37]

And then I've got books on Amazon.

I'm on Facebook at [facebook.com/nortner](https://www.facebook.com/nortner) and Instagram, [@Nickortner](https://www.instagram.com/Nickortner), where you mostly see pictures of my 5 year old daughter, June. But there's also some tapping.

Alex Howard

That's awesome. Nick, thank you so much for your time and making it so practical as well. I really appreciate it. It's been great.

Nick Ortner

Thank you so much for having me.