DEALING WITH OUR PAST TRAUMA

6 COMMON MISTAKES WE MAKE AND HOW TO MOVE ON FROM THEM

A guide for women to release the emotional scarring from life's experiences from as far back as childhood

by Marie Spencer-Rowland
Contents

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 4

‘THINKING’ MISTAKES ............................................................................................................................ 6

Mistake No. 1: It’s My Fault ..................................................................................................................... 7
  The Truth About Blame .......................................................................................................................... 7
  Marcy’s Story .......................................................................................................................................... 8
  My Advice ............................................................................................................................................. 8

Mistake No. 2: I’m Ashamed ................................................................................................................... 9
  The Truth About Shame ......................................................................................................................... 9
  Lily’s Story .......................................................................................................................................... 9
  My Advice ........................................................................................................................................ 10

Mistake No. 3: I’m Going To Pretend It Didn’t Happen And That I’m Absolutely Fine ............ 11
  The Truth About Avoidance .................................................................................................................. 11
  Arianna’s Story .................................................................................................................................... 12
  My Advice ........................................................................................................................................ 12
Dealing With Our Past Trauma - 6 Common Mistakes We Make And How To Move On From Them

‘DOING’ MISTAKES ................................................................................................................................. 13

Mistake No. 4: Using Food, Alcohol And / Or Drugs – Even Facebook And TV ................... 14

The Truth About Coping Mechanisms ................................................................................................ 14
Susan’s Story ............................................................................................................................................... 15
My Advice .................................................................................................................................................... 15

Mistake No. 5: Lashing Out / Showing Aggression ........................................................................ 16

The Truth About Anger .......................................................................................................................... 16
Wilda’s Story ............................................................................................................................................... 17
My Advice .................................................................................................................................................... 17

Mistake No. 6: Living And Suffering With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) ............ 18

The Truth About Traumatic Memories ............................................................................................... 18
Zara’s Story ............................................................................................................................................... 19
My Advice .................................................................................................................................................... 19

A Bit About Me ........................................................................................................................................ 20
INTRODUCTION

In our pursuit of happiness and our desire to move on from past trauma, we tend to want to erase the past, to pretend it didn’t happen. For those of us who’ve lived through a traumatic childhood or past, our programming – the way our brain filters and reacts to situations – can lead us to do and believe things about ourselves which we carry throughout our lives.

The good news is that you can help yourself move through and beyond this, by looking at these common mistakes from a different angle, hearing what others have faced, and learning how they moved on with the help of some easily accessible therapy.

Even if you can now look at a situation or event with a logical mind, compartmentalise it and break it down in your head, the truth is that the emotion and energy behind it are still embedded within your body and your energy lines. We become reactive to people or situations – maybe even 40 years after the event – because they remind us of something that happened to us when we were younger.

If you tune into your thoughts and what you actually say to yourself, you might find you’re carrying a lot of burden, heartache, fear, even resentment. Perhaps you blame yourself for what happened; maybe that was the only way your mind, as a child, knew how to make sense of it. There might be a part of you now, big or small, that’s still holding onto that thought, belief or emotion – even if you know it wasn’t your fault.

There is a way to be free of these feelings for good and to experience a tranquillity and personal transformation that can change your life and your future, so that you can live without the pain and torment of the past.

In this brochure, I’ve identified some common misbeliefs or actions relating to a traumatic upbringing. To be affected by trauma, you don’t have to have been a victim of it. Simply seeing something happening to another person can leave us with an array of emotions and feelings that we can still recall in minute detail.

As a way of coping with our experiences, humans come up with incredibly clever yet predictable ways of dealing with their pain. Each of us is different. For me it was food and a need to feel like I was loved by the opposite sex; in my younger years, it was also a need to control those around me. That was how I processed the distress, pain and heartache I was feeling. For you, it might be alcohol helping you to forget. Or perhaps you’ve held on so tightly and become hyper vigilant and stressed, you now suffer with anxiety or panic attacks and take medication on a daily basis to help you make it through each day.
We all have our way of trying to deal with the past. The secret is not to feel ashamed but to embrace it, to see it for what it is – and then let it go. And the issue here is the ‘letting go’ part, because that actually takes a lot of work... unless you’re using Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT).

You’ll see I’ve divided the brochure into ‘thinking’ mistakes and ‘doing’ mistakes – ie, the things we tell ourselves and do, almost unconsciously, as a way of coping with our memories of past events – and I’ve chosen what I believe and from experience with my clients, to be some key mistakes.

You may read the headings and feel you don’t make these mistakes, but reading through the detail and looking at the case studies might bring about some greater awareness of your patterns and behaviours. If you find even just one that seems to resonate, then I would implore you to release what it is you’re holding on to. Thoughts and feelings have energy and unfortunately, that energy doesn’t just evaporate.

In some cases, the ‘doing’ mistakes are totally involuntary and our body, mind and spirit just seem to do their own thing, leaving you having to battle through, hoping – praying even – that soon it will get better and you can feel ‘normal’ again. For all of these mistakes there is a way to use EFT in order to help release and permanently let go of what is no longer serving you. Our minds are incredibly powerful and eventually our bodies will show signs of past trauma and distress. Worryingly, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that 85% of all diseases have an emotional element. Start doing the work on this now and you may prevent it appearing later on in the form of serious diseases and illnesses like diabetes, heart disease and even cancer.

In writing this brochure, I’ve tried to give you ways in to an amazing therapy that can help you. Reading it is by no means the only way to deal with your problems, but it will hopefully give you an idea of how to heal yourself so you can be free of the burden and heartache you’ve carried for so long. My wish for you, and for women around the world, is that we can all find an inner peace, courage, contentment and a meaning to our lives – not just from our past, but also for our future.

If you find the case studies and advice in this brochure helpful and want to learn more about EFT and how you might start the releasing process, click here.
‘THINKING’ MISTAKES

There are two kinds of suffering. There is the suffering you run away from, which follows you everywhere. And there is the suffering you face directly, and so become free.

Ajahn Chah
MISTAKE NO. 1: IT’S MY FAULT

THE TRUTH ABOUT BLAME

As children, we’re not emotionally mature enough to fully comprehend the world around us, seeing things as simply ‘good’ or ‘bad’. If we’re ‘good’, we are rewarded; if we’re ‘bad’, we are punished. When we are mistreated, bullied and even neglected as a child, we don’t yet know how to see this as bad or wrong. Instead, we take it on as a belief: “I must have been bad because I’m now being punished”. We then equate it, in our young minds, to mean “I am bad”. As we grow older, we internalise that feeling over and over again, until it becomes ingrained in who we are. We see ourselves as a bad person and whatever happens or happened in the past is or was “my fault”.

The truth is this is a learned behaviour, a program our brain has acquired. Our brain forms pathways and despite its incredible capacity for greatness, it can also be pretty lazy. All the way through our lives, we analyse what is happening to us right now through a filter that can, more often than not, lead all the way back to our childhood.

If you were punished or told as a child you were bad, your brain stores the event and that feeling of ‘being bad’. The next time you are punished or told you are bad, it strengthens the pathway within your brain, since that is what your brain has experienced and understood before. Your brain will always take the path of least resistance, so from here on in, even through to the present day, when something ‘bad’ happens, your brain is going to confirm to you “I am bad and it’s my fault” because that is what it knows and has experienced.
**MARCY’S STORY**

Marcy had parents that would withdraw love from her when she wasn’t well-behaved and would repeatedly call her a “naughty little girl”. She grew up thinking and believing that if you were bad then you wouldn’t be loved and it was her fault if her parents withdrew their love from her. Apart from her growing up trying to be a people pleaser to keep everyone happy and to be accepted, she would take rejection – from boyfriends, friends, work colleagues, even random strangers who were rude to her – as a sign that she was bad and that it was her fault (even when it wasn’t.) Internally, and on a deep emotional level, she equated this to being un-loveable.

She would take on other people’s opinions of her as truth and constantly try to improve or change herself in order to be loved, because she believed that she had done something wrong to make people not like or love her.

**MY ADVICE**

Even just recognising our behaviours and patterns can be a turning point for us. If you find yourself trying to get people on side, or your instant reaction is to apologise and take it on as all your fault, say to yourself, “This isn’t real; it’s nothing more than programming”. If you can create a program, then you can also un-create it. By using EFT, you can very quickly disassemble your old beliefs and thought patterns.
MISTAKE NO. 2: I’M ASHAMED

THE TRUTH ABOUT SHAME

Shame is something we don’t want to share with the world. It not only upsets us deeply, it leads to a feeling of ‘being bad’ in our core – we’re not worthy, not good enough, and we should have not only done better but known better as well. We can feel guilty about something we did, but being ashamed comes from a deeper place – a place of our being. We’re bad on the inside as well as in what we do.

Sometimes this can be taught to us and even put on us by others (in cases of abuse). We can be ashamed of what has happened to us because of a fear of being seen differently by our peers, fear of being teased for being a victim or having had something done to us that isn’t deemed ‘normal’ or appropriate. But in these cases, the shame isn’t yours to carry.

LILY’S STORY

Lily felt like she had been told her entire life that she was bad. Even the smallest mistake with her homework resulted in a verbal put down or physical assault from those in authority. It seemed like nothing she did was ever right. Even if there had been moments of praise, the harsh punishments and negative feedback far outweighed the positive. It was a childhood of criticism which Lily had taken on as a direct attack on her person. (A lot of young children do this, because they can’t differentiate between their behaviours and who they are as people.)
So Lily grew up believing that she was simply a bad apple and her ‘shameful’ feelings led to her trying many different ways to cope with the hurt. She felt alone, like she was the only one who was ‘bad’ and thus had been cast out of the family unit. This rejection led her to lash out and show aggression towards others. She would use food, drugs and alcohol as a way to suppress her feelings of not being good enough to be given love; she even contemplated suicide, feeling the world would be better off without her in it. All these coping mechanisms just compounded her belief that she was bad at the core – even her soul was tainted – and reiterated the fact that she wasn’t worthy and should be ashamed of who she was. She would never be good enough.

**MY ADVICE**

Shame is an incredibly heavy and ‘vibrationally’ disruptive emotion, and one that can cause you the most damage on a cellular level. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and let these feelings go – they’re not serving you at all. Admitting your deepest and darkest secret and setting it free is an empowering experience, because once we’ve let go, we start to realise that we were the ones keeping ourselves prisoner. There is an incredible freedom that comes with facing our secrets and our truth.

A sense of shame might be difficult to look at by yourself. It can be an incredibly horrible and raw feeling and in order to protect ourselves we might, even unconsciously, choose another emotion to mask it. I would highly recommend that you seek out an EFT practitioner in order to help you explore the emotions that come up and eliminate them one by one in a safe and accepting environment. Something that EFT offers is an ability to remove the issues and emotional connection without having to relive the event step by step as you would if you were to see a counsellor or psychiatrist.

If seeking out help isn’t something you can do right now, then you can use EFT yourself to start to break the emotional connection (click on the link in the intro). Always start with what’s there right now. If you’re feeling angry then tap on that; if you’re anxious, sad or needing to reach for food or alcohol, then tap on that until you reach a state of calm. This can be a longer process than working with a specialist, but I promise you there is a light at the end of the tunnel.
MISTAKE NO. 3: I’M GOING TO PRETEND IT DIDN’T HAPPEN AND THAT I’M ABSOLUTELY FINE

THE TRUTH ABOUT AVOIDANCE

The energy it takes to pretend you’re happy when you’re not, or to swallow your anger or your pain, can be exhausting. So when something happens to you that you want to bury and try to forget, your energies become seriously disturbed.

Even if you do manage to push it out of focus for a while, possibly for many years, there’s a high risk of something triggering the pain later on down the track, possibly even just by someone saying something. When our past memories come back round a second time, they can cause just as much, if not more, pain than the first time. The emotional connection to an event is going to stay locked away within your body until it’s permanently released; and until then, it has the potential to show up as physical pain, illness or emotional instability.
ARIANNA’S STORY

Arianna’s father sexually abused her when she was younger. She had pushed the memory down so much that she had actually forgotten about it until she was in her 40s. She had only seen her father sporadically over the space of 20 years and it wasn’t until she visited him in the family home and he kissed her on the cheek to say hello, that it all came flooding back.

Arianna was now reliving her childhood again and the heartache and shame she felt showed up as physical pain. Her body started to shut down and she could find no relief from the aches and discomfort she was feeling. She turned to food and alcohol as a way to bring some comfort, but the torment remained no matter how hard she tried to cover it up.

MY ADVICE

If you’ve buried something that you’ve tried to forget and you’re now finding yourself with aches and pains that just won’t leave no matter what you try, give EFT a go (again, click on the link in the intro).

Start with what you know, don’t over complicate things. If you have pain in your shoulder, then tap on that first. It could be a blockage of emotional energy to which, once you have released that, the emotions of the past may start to come up and you can tap on them and release them as they present themselves to you.

In cases of an extremely painful past, you may not feel strong enough to do this on your own, and I would strongly recommend you seek out a professional EFT practitioner who can take you through the stages of permanently releasing these emotional connections.

Marie is a very inspiring and passionate woman – but as an EFT practitioner, she is amazing.

Carole Boivin M.Ed – Canada
‘DOING’ MISTAKES

Some day, the medical profession will wake up and realize that unresolved emotional issues are the main cause of 85% of all illnesses. When they do, EFT will be one of their primary healing tools ... as it is for me.

Eric Robins, MD
MISTAKE NO. 4: USING FOOD, ALCOHOL AND / OR DRUGS – EVEN FACEBOOK AND TV – AS AN EMOTIONAL CRUTCH

THE TRUTH ABOUT COPING MECHANISMS

You’re suppressing your emotions which are already damaging your body on a physical level and then you’re adding more toxic substances to your body as a way of coping. Our bodies are incredibly capable of healing themselves if we allow them, but first we have to let go of the harmful thoughts, feelings and substances that we put into it.

Unfortunately, many of us aren’t aware that emotions have energy which affects the physical body. It’s also a sad fact that as time goes on, we find we need more and more ‘vices’ to numb these feelings and keep them suppressed. You might start off with only one glass of wine or bowl of ice-cream, but that will lead to two glasses or bowls and so on and so forth.
SUSAN’S STORY

Susan used food and alcohol as a way of coping with her painful past, not only to forget about what had happened but also to make her feel better. Food and alcohol became her ‘happy place’, giving her comfort and a feeling of fullness, not to mention a ‘happy buzz’.

Because Susan had not only buried her emotional torment but also used unhealthy foods and alcohol to keep it buried, her body started to shut down. She was overweight and unhappy and as she approached her 50’s, she found herself battling cancer. Her body had reached a level of toxicity that it could no longer contain. (Cancer is now being shown in many cases to have emotional routes.)

MY ADVICE

Do you have a ‘go-to’ food? One that always makes you feel better when you’re upset? Or do you find yourself just reaching for food in general when you start to feel overwhelmed or you don’t quite know how to process what’s going on?

In Susan’s case, using EFT, she might start with “I want a block of chocolate because it’s going to make me feel better” OR “I don’t even know what it is I’m feeling, but this tub of ice cream is going to make me feel better”.

In cases like this I would highly recommend seeking out an EFT practitioner to help navigate the emotional hurdles that come up. But if that isn’t possible right now, then use the link in my introduction to start your own healing journey. Just allow whatever needs to come out, but keep tapping on those points. Even hold the food item in your hand if you need to as a visual stimulant and keep tapping until you no longer need it. Once you’ve broken the connection to the stimulant you can then start your focus on the emotions that come up for you.
MISTAKE NO. 5: LASHING OUT / SHOWING AGGRESSION

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGER

When we’re hurting, sometimes the only way we think we can feel better is to hurt someone else. If we’ve been bullied or feel we’ve been overpowered, our helplessness can lead to us seeking out someone we can gain authority or control over, even verbally. You’re not only in pain yourself, you’re now causing pain to another and this can become a vicious and constant cycle of anger and frustration. It’s been documented that those who lash out the most are the ones that need the most love.

Anger and aggression towards others can be a sign that you feel the need to protect yourself. For example, if you’re carrying a feeling of shame, a common reaction is to lash out. Showing how hurt we are to the outside world can make us feel vulnerable and many of us struggle with that. Instead of letting in vulnerability, we turn that feeling of powerlessness into aggression, believing it keeps us safe, validated and in control.
**WILDA’S STORY**

Wilda was angry at how she’d been treated by her parents and even at a young age would dominate the younger children she played with. She just needed to feel in control of something because, even on an unconscious level, she felt she had no control over her young life. Unfortunately she continued this pattern through to adulthood and started attracting partners that were the same. Now even her love life was a constant battlefield, not to mention people at work and on the commute to the office, and even with some of her family members. The outside world, according to Wilda, was angry, so she retaliated, because it was easier to blame someone else for how they behaved towards her rather than look at what was going on within herself.

Eventually she grew tired of having to deal with so much aggression in her life: it felt awful and was exhausting – waiting for something to blow up into an argument and to be constantly on guard. So she began her journey of letting go of the things that caused her to feel anger and embracing peacefulness as one of her new values. It wasn’t always smooth sailing, but once Wilda was able to let go of past emotions and start focusing on the good in people, her life changed as did her relationships. She allowed the vulnerability in – owned it and accepted it as part of who she was, and started to feel a constant calm and acceptance.

**MY ADVICE**

Breathing is great at getting you to calm down, but the truth is anger needs an outlet. Being angry is a natural and healthy reaction, so please don’t bury it; instead, find a way to release it in a healthy way. Long-term I would highly recommend meditation. Just five minutes every day is enough to centre yourself and find your inner calm. Even after just a few sessions of meditation you might notice it’s harder to get angry as meditation gives you an all over sense of peacefulness.

In cases where you are struggling to contain your anger or rage, EFT is a remarkable way to let it out rather than swallowing it, thereby causing damage to yourself on a cellular level.

In Wilda’s case, she might start with just a simple “I’m angry” as she taps on each point. Always keep it simple; don’t try to over-complicate it. If you’re angry at someone or something then add that into your tapping sequence – ie, “I’m angry that Justin did that and thinks it’s acceptable”. Whatever is coming up for you, allow it to come up and don’t try and filter it but keep tapping on those points until you feel calm. This will help remove the blocked up energy of anger from your body.
THE TRUTH ABOUT TRAUMATIC MEMORIES

More and more women are showing signs of PTSD from having been in violent and abusive relationships – as are children who’ve suffered trauma throughout their young lives – but are reluctant to voice it as it’s usually associated with veterans coming back from war.

PTSD covers many different symptoms and you may find you suffer with one or more. The obvious thing people think about with PTSD is flashbacks but the fact is that it goes far beyond just a visual recall of an event. PTSD can be linked to anxiety or panic attacks, fear, insomnia or nightmares, a feeling of loneliness or wanting to isolate yourself from the outside world, hyper-vigilance, hostility and even self-destructive behaviour (to only mention a few).
Although PTSD has to be medically diagnosed, many GPs will tell you that you can’t do anything about it and that you just have to learn to live with it. This is incorrect: there are now therapies, a lot of them considered holistic, that can help you ‘re-wire’ the brain patterns that cause you to relive a traumatic event. EFT is one of those key therapies.

There is a way to break the emotional connection to traumatic memories of the past.

**ZARA’S STORY**

Zara had been sexually abused by a family member when she was a child and her attacker used to put his arm around her and touch her right hip when he was alone with her.

Thirty years on, Zara was happily married, but whenever her husband or anyone else put their arm around her and touched her right hip she would jump and be taken back to a time when she was vulnerable, scared and felt powerless and alone. She struggled to enjoy an intimate relationship with her husband and even hugging friends.

Using EFT, Zara was able to interrupt the patterns that her mind and body had created whenever her hip was touched. By spending a bit of time focusing on the emotions that came up for her and the incidences in which it had happened, she was able to permanently let it go and now, she no longer jumps or reacts when her husband or friends touch her.

**MY ADVICE**

In cases of PTSD and traumatic memories I would suggest seeking out an EFT practitioner just to help you navigate some of the emotions that will come up for you. However, if that’s not an option right now, just keep tapping and focusing on what is coming up for you now. Think of it like an onion, where you’re peeling back the layers each time until you reach a neutral state but start with what is present for you in the here and now. In Zara’s case we might start with what comes up for her emotionally when her husband touches her hip and work back from there.

**IMPORTANT NOTE -** If you are using medications in order to keep your symptoms under control, say if you’re suffering with anxiety, DO NOT stop using them until you are 100% ready to do so. EFT can help you, step by step, to reduce your anxiety level to zero but it might take a few sessions to get there. In severe instances, I very much recommend that you seek out an EFT practitioner who can take you through each stage with precision and patience. In the meantime, use EFT regularly on yourself to help release all of those built-up emotions and feelings that are no longer serving you.
Within eight weeks, I am a different woman – happier, stronger, energised and positive; ready to live the happy life that I now know I deserve. I have finally let go.

Kim Waring
A BIT ABOUT ME...

I am a Melbourne-based women’s coach, EFT practitioner and founder of The Wholistic Women’s Warrior.

I grew up in a household where violence, fear, yelling and belittling were just part of family life. At the age of six, I witnessed for the first time my father beating up my mum. Later, the domestic violence continued, but it was my mum, fuelled by alcohol and angry at how her life was turning out. And as I got older I started to unconsciously repeat my mum’s patterns. Thankfully, I discovered EFT and once I’d seen how it worked for me, I started to work with other women to help them heal and let go of the emotional scars of the past.

www.wholisticwomenswarrior.com