

# Chapter Nine – Integrating and consolidating the map of EFT

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In chapter 9 I integrate and consolidate the process of EFT as a scientific and artistic endeavor. I illustrate signals or markers of emotional experiencing. I present guideposts through the steps of change and give descriptions of the EFT tasks to do at each of these steps.

Finally, to help you to refine your creative competency as an EFT therapist and to integrate EFT into what Carl Rogers called a “way of being”, I end the chapter with a discussion of therapist *felt sensing*. A therapist’s ability to get a felt sense of the attachment drama playing out between partners is the link between knowledge and competency.

## Micro-markers of implicit emotion: the heart of change in EFT

I explore, with concrete examples, nonverbal and verbal markers (signals) of emotional experiencing. Markers of verbal and non-verbal micro-processes signal to the therapist to pay attention and to respond sensitively to the tiniest slices of implicit and emerging emotion. For example, to a verbal or non-verbal marker indicating an alliance rupture, an EFT therapist responds with basic empathy and validation. A sudden non-verbal reaction to the other partner indicates some attachment significant fear has been touched, and an EFT therapist then slows the process, replays the moment, and refocuses on the implicit emotion in the non-verbal response. To an abrupt retreat from emotional experience, an EFT therapist firmly and gently explores what happened immediately prior to the exit. I provide clinical examples to bring these moments to life.

## Markers of the steps and stages of EFT

Since the EFT model is both linear and circular, I present markers through each step and stage to help therapists more clearly recognize the steps and stages, so as to flow more fluidly with the repetitive moves towards change. My hope is that portraying markers to guide the therapist to respond with the task of each step on the journey, will contribute to therapist confidence and creativity.

“Emily remembers the early days of EFT when she would ask herself, “Where am I? Am I in Stage 1 or Stage 2? This distancing partner just became tearful. Does this mean I am doing withdrawer re-engagement, or are we still in Stage 1, getting a clearer sense of how the more withdrawn partner gets sucked into the cycle? This pursuer seems so vulnerable. Might I begin blamer softening or have we not de-escalated yet? Partners are kinder to each other. Does this mean we have de-escalated? The withdrawer is trying harder to engage in conversation. Does this mean re-engagement has happened?” Although she used to think these questions were simply the mark of a novice, she has come to respect them.” – p. 198

In response to Emily's following ten key questions, I present client markers that point therapists to the relevant Stage 1 and 2 tasks of the EFT process and detail how an EFT therapist responds at each step along the path.

## Stage 1

1. Can the couple and I clearly identify each partner's position (of pursuit or withdrawal)?
2. Do we recognize the moves of their basic negative cycle?
3. Can we find markers pointing to the underlying emotions that are driving the cycle?
4. Are partners beginning to experientially grasp how their distress stems from their particular cycle (i.e., how their actions have an impact on another's deepest fears which, in turn, trigger their self-protective actions in a repetitive and self-reinforcing way)?
5. Have we reached de-escalation, where partners fully grasp the cycle and are ready to begin Stage 2 with the withdrawer?
6. What emotional handle can I grasp to open the doorway into Stage 2?

## Stage 2 When is it time to:

7. Shape a Step 5 enactment?
8. Explore Step 6—the observing partner's experience of their partner's new disclosure?
9. Invite the Step 7 reach?
10. Invite the observing partner's response to the Step 7 reach?

## ***Felt Sense Understanding***

To practise the art and science of EFT, a therapist needs both the knowledge of the steps and stages, discussed above, as well as the creative capacity to resonate with a felt sense of the present moment.

"A felt sense could be described as feeling the other's experience in one's own body, having an implicit understanding of another's experience, which is something other than, though not totally separate from, understanding the other's experience explicitly or conceptually" p. 216

I discuss four ways that attending to a felt sense of present-moment experience can be one of an EFT therapist's greatest resources. That is by feeding the empathic imagination, helping to communicate empathic understanding, increasing depth of emotional experiencing and by strengthening confidence and creative competency

As a compliment to this chapter, I am also posting Levenson & Svatovic's EFT Knowledge and Competency Scale – a very useful tool for EFT Therapist Self-Supervision.