How can the people who annoy you help you get more from your tapping?

You may have noticed that people can be very annoying, they can do and say things that upset and disturb us.

Wouldn't it be great if we could reduce that level of annoyance and, as a free bonus, improve our own self-acceptance?

Thanks to Carl Jung and some tapping we can do just that.

Jung suggested (that in spite of all appearances) that which annoys us doesn't reside in the other person it resides in ourselves.

The other person isn't doing something intrinsically annoying, we are annoying ourselves at what they are doing.

Of shadows and shoulds

He proposed that the 'something annoying' that people are doing illuminates parts of our disowned self, our 'Shadow', the parts of ourselves that we can not accept or even acknowledge.

As we grow up we adopt the values and 'rules' of our family of origin. These rules (our shoulds) told us what was, or was not, acceptable and how we should behave. As children we absorbed and internalised those rules and expectations. The urge to break those rules had to be suppressed to please and appease those who looked after us.

Now, as adults, thoughts or impulses to 'break' those internalised rules are uncomfortable to us, they go against our family and cultural programming.

Protection through projection

Rather than deal with these uncomfortable feelings directly we protect ourselves by 'projecting' those disallowed aspects of ourselves onto others.

'They' are the ones who are rude, loud, critical, greedy and so on. By keeping our attention on those qualities in them we don't have to pay attention to our own inclinations to be rude, loud, critical, greedy and all those other forbidden inclinations.

Unfortunately, being annoyed or upset is uncomfortable for us and there are so many people and so many opportunities for projection and distress.

Fortunately, all these annoying people also give us the opportunity to soften that distress **and** allow us to accept more of ourselves.

Unmasking projection

Let's imagine that your next door neighbour likes to practice on his drum kit late into the night. Not surprisingly you might find this a bit annoying.

If the idea of projection is correct then this behaviour triggers an aspect of your experience that has been suppressed or denied.

What has been suppressed or denied is probably not a secret wish to be a drummer. It is more likely that his behaviour represents something that is disowned.

If you were to answer the question: "What is the problem playing drums in the middle of the night?" you might come up with these kinds of answers:

- he is selfish
- he is inconsiderate
- he just does what he wants without thinking about others

- he just wants to annoy me

Sound familiar?

If these traits are annoying to you try asking yourself these questions:

- Have I ever wanted to be selfish?
- Have I ever been inconsiderate?
- Have I ever wanted to do something without thinking of others?
- Have I ever wanted to annoy someone?

Were the traits and qualities that I dislike disallowed or disapproved of when I was growing up?

Projection's double wound

If you felt a twinge of recognition at any of those questions you are suffering from the double wound of projection.

1. You feel the upset and distress when someone violates your internalised rules.
2. You have to deny, or reject some part of yourself that has, or wants, the behaviour that you are rejecting in the other person.

Would it be useful to be able to feel less upset **and** accept (though not necessarily act on) that denied part of yourself?

This simple tapping routine can help you achieve both goals.

This process (based on Paradoxical Tapping) is to defuse the distress and to invite your mind to consider all the ways you do, or want to do, what is annoying you.

The benefits of dissolving projection

Soothing both sides of the double-wound of projection takes some, or all, of the distress out of the annoyance and turns it into a simple fact.

Dissolving the distress helps you respond in a less triggered, more resourceful way to do what needs to be done.

Acknowledging those impulses in yourself connects you to your shared humanity with the other person and makes it easier to deal with the other person from a more balanced and expansive point of view.

If I accept my selfishness won't I become selfish?

Accepting your suppressed impulses and feelings won't mean that you suddenly become selfish, inconsiderate, big-headed etc. Accepting a feeling isn't the same as acting on it, just as suppressing it isn't the same as not having the feeling in the first place.

This process will help you acknowledge and accept those feelings and impulses rather than pretending they don't exist or struggling against them.

Deciding what to do with your feelings and impulses is much easier if you know they are there and are free from emotional distress or distortion.

Process: Dissolving Projection

1. Think of someone you dislike or who annoys you.
2. Make a list of the characteristics or traits that you find distressing. E.g. He doesn't turn the lights off, she is untidy, they are scruffy, etc.
3. If the annoyance is a specific action, for example: *He doesn't close cupboard doors*, ask yourself *What trait/quality does that behaviour demonstrate?*
    - He doesn't shut the cupboard doors because …
        - he's lazy
        - he doesn't care
        - he does it to annoy me
4. Give each annoyance / distress a 0-10 score
5. Work through the annoyances using the following tapping routine
    - KC: *"Even though s/he/they …, I accept myself and how I feel"*
        - EB: *"S/he/they …"*

- SE: *"and in how many different ways do I …?"*
- complete a silent round of tapping.

You only speak on the first two tapping points. The rest of round is tapped out in silence so that your other-than-conscious mind has a chance to process the *'in how many different ways'* question and soothe any distress that arises.

For example:

- KC: *"Even though he is a loud-mouth, I accept myself and how I feel"* x 3
  - EB: *"He is a loud-mouth"*
  - SE: *"and in how many different ways am I a loud-mouth?"*
  - UE: *(silent tapping)*
  - UN: *(silent tapping)*
  - CB: *(silent tapping)*
  - UA: *(silent tapping)*
  - TH: *(silent tapping)*

6. If there are any reactions, memories, feelings or thoughts that come up during this process tap them out as usual.
7. Think about that particular annoyance now. If there is still a charge repeat the process.
8. If the annoyance is particularly resistant you might like to try the following tapping routine phrases:
   - KC: *"Even though s/he/they are …, I accept myself and how I feel"* x 3
     - EB: *S/he/they …*
     - SE: *and in how many different ways do I **want** to …?*
       For example:
     - KC: *"Even though he's a loud-mouth, I accept myself and how I feel"* x 3
     - EB: *"He is a loud-mouth"*
     - SE: *"And in how many different ways do I **want** to be a loud-mouth?"*
9. Repeat the process then bring to mind the person you are annoyed with, what is that like now?

Using this process can help you work with everyday annoyances (which are abundant) to be more at ease with yourself and others.

Unfortunately those 'others' may still be loud-mouths or leave cupboard doors open, however you will be less hooked by those behaviours and be able to respond to those challenges in a more resourceful, balanced way.

Image courtesy of Jagz Mario