

Mind to Matter: How Your Brain Creates Material Reality

By [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#) | mercola.com

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- While the SARS-CoV-2 infection itself has been shown to be far less lethal than initially suspected, government responses to it have led to an epidemic of fear and stress, which can have serious health consequences
- When you think a negative thought when you feel fear, your cortisol level starts to rise and chronically high cortisol produces all kinds of ill effects in your body
- Our brains are hard-wired and evolutionarily adapted to pay attention to potential threats. As a result, most of us need to train our brain to notice the positive and to feel gratitude
- EcoMeditation, developed by Dawson Church, Ph.D., incorporates several proven techniques shown to induce rapid changes in your brain to increase positivity and well-being
- EcoMeditation includes tapping, neurofeedback techniques, mindfulness, HeartMath's quick coherence technique and various breathing techniques. When you do these together, they reinforce each other

Dawson Church,¹ Ph.D., is a leader in the energy psychology movement, one of the most common forms being the [Emotional Freedom Techniques](#) (EFT), which I have promoted for years. Church investigated and built on the EFT techniques developed

by Gary Craig² in the 1990s (which in turn was a derivative of the founder of energy tapping, Roger Callahan's, work³).

While Craig was not a clinical investigator, Dawson's work has led to over 100 clinical trials on EFT. In this interview, Church shares insights from his experience, which he has also documented in the books "[Mind to Matter: The Astonishing Science of How Your Brain Creates Material Reality](#)" and "[Bliss Brain: The Neuroscience of Remodeling Your Brain for Resilience, Creativity and Joy.](#)"

This information is particularly timely in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While the infection itself has been shown to be far less lethal than initially suspected, government responses to it have undoubtedly led to an epidemic of fear and stress, which can have serious health consequences. As explained by Church:

"The stress we feel in our minds and bodies can often do far more harm than pathogens. I've done several randomized controlled trials of cortisol.

When you think a negative thought, when you feel stress, when you have a fearful belief, your cortisol level rises within three minutes. Chronically high cortisol produces all kinds of ill effects in your body, including depressed immune function and increased inflammation. The fear will get you even if the virus doesn't."

The Importance of Positive Thinking

As noted by Church, our brains are hard-wired and evolutionarily adapted to pay attention to potential threats. Failing to notice a threat can get you killed, whereas there's no evolutionary reward for failing to notice the good stuff. As a result, most of us need to train our brain to notice the

positive, and to feel gratitude.

“We’re subject to a constant barrage of bad news, so it takes meditation, it takes tapping, it takes time in nature,” Church says. “You really have to be deliberate in your efforts to redirect your attention and not have meditation it hijacked by all the bad stuff out there.

What I do in response is to read positive blogs, news and media. That doesn’t mean I never read any bad news, I stay informed, but I make sure I read positive things. I’m reading Marcus Aurelius right now ... I meditate for an hour every day. And I anchor myself in what I call in my book ‘Mind to Matter,’ Nonlocal mind.

Tune into nonlocal mind, look out the window and see the roses and the bees and the sunset, and then it’s a lot easier to stay centered when confronted by difficult local events. I also focus on compassion.”

The Benefits of EcoMeditation

In 2008, Church attended a conference where he presented with Roland McCraty,⁴ head researcher in how the heart and mind interconnect from HeartMath Institute, and Joe Dispenza,⁵ whose fields include mind-body medicine and brain/heart coherence.

Curious about what would happen if he combined the best evidence-based methods, he came up with what eventually became known as “EcoMeditation” – a conglomerate of techniques proven to rapidly increase positivity and well-being. They include:

- EFT tapping
- Neurofeedback (heart rate variability control)
- Mindfulness
- HeartMath’s quick coherence technique

- Self-hypnosis

According to Church, when you do them together, they reinforce each other. “The whole is more than the sum of its parts,” he says. EcoMeditation has now been empirically tested and refined, showing that it can lower baseline cortisol levels by one-third in as little as a week. And, when stress chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline decline, the neurochemicals of repair and rejuvenation such as DHEA, serotonin, and dopamine increase.

In one trial, Church looked at the effects of EcoMeditation on immunoglobulins, antibodies that bind to and neutralize coronaviruses. In just two days, participants who did EcoMeditation had a 27% rise in these antibodies in their mucous membranes.

“You produce a huge shift in your immunity by lowering stress,” Church says. “Meditate, tap, use your favorite methods to lower your stress level. This automatically upregulates your immune system.”

Emotions Are Contagious

The year 2020 has been challenging for most people. The drumbeat of negative news can overwhelm even the most resilient among us. In Chapter 2 of “Mind to Matter,” Church talks about a phenomenon called “emotional contagion.” In a nutshell, researchers have shown that emotions have an impact similar to that of infectious disease. They’re contagious and affect those around us.

EcoMeditation is about 15 to 20 minutes long. It doesn’t take long and you’re then making a powerful declaration that you are choosing to be that agent of positive emotional contagion.
~ Dawson Church

He cites one study in which they found that the next-door neighbor of a happy person is 35% more likely to be happy as

well, and the neighbor twice removed is 15% more likely to be happy. That person's neighbor, in turn, who is 3 degrees removed from the happy person is 6% more likely to be happy. The same contagion rule applies when the emotions are negative.

"We're in the middle of this mass contagion of fear," Dawson says, "and it is depressing our immune systems, rendering us less resilient, affecting us psychospiritually, making us less able to cope. That's when we need a bigger dose of positivity, joy and gratitude. We need to do that deliberately. That means meditation, it means consuming positive media. It means not exposing yourself to needless negative emotions."

The Chemical Effects of Meditation

One of the reasons Dawson recommends [meditation](#) is because of the distinct biochemical effects it produces. He explains:

"Mystics describe this experience of oneness with the universe. When they meditate, they lose any sense of as isolated beings. If you look at MRIs of Tibetan monks, you find that the part of the brain that constructs the sense of self – the mid-prefrontal cortex – downregulates. They lose themselves."

Another part of the brain that downregulates is the part of the parietal lobe, the temporal parietal junction that handles 'proprioception', the location of our body in space. When they're in this deep mystical experience, their sense of self has turned off and their brains' ability to locate their bodies and space is turned off.

At the same time, oxytocin, the love hormone, floods their cells. They experience this ecstatic bliss as anandamide,

serotonin and dopamine flood their brains and they've lost the sense of who they are and where they are, and they're literally feeling one with the universe.

Do that each morning using EcoMeditation and you're one with what I call nonlocal mind. You have that experience of mystical unity. Then, after meditation, you come back into your body, come back to your local mind, your mid prefrontal cortex turns back on, you're a local self again, your parietal lobe comes back. You know where you are in time and space.

You then bring all the resilience of that contact with nonlocal mind into local reality and you're then far more effective ... Over time, these parts of the brain start to shift into this function as the neurological wiring changes, and then it becomes a trait."

To show you how effective meditation can be in daily life, Dawson cites a 10-year-long study of high performing people by the McKinsey Consulting Group. It found that those who are able to enter this flow state are five times as productive as ordinary people.

Another study by DARPA described in his book "Bliss Brain" found people who meditate improved their ability to solve complex problems by 490%. "That's why meditation is a powerful antidote to dealing with all the chaos of the world around us," Dawson says. These and many other studies can be found on www.eftuniverse.com/research-studies/eft-research.

EcoMeditation Summarized

As mentioned, EcoMeditation incorporates several different techniques, including EFT tapping, breath control, and meditation. To download a free EcoMeditation audio track that

guides you through each of the steps, see [EcoMeditation.com](https://www.eco-meditation.com). Step 1 involves tapping a series of acupuncture meridian endpoints. Dawson explains their relevance:

“Over 100 clinical trials have shown that [tapping] regulates the body. It downregulates your stress. It improves your mood, it decreases anxiety and depression very, very quickly ... The research shows that symptoms of trauma, hypervigilance, intrusive negative thoughts, depression – all of these things are regulated by tapping.”

When you're doing EFT, you first focus on a target problem by formulating a statement. The target problem might be 'I'm afraid of catching the virus.' It might be, 'I'm afraid of dying.' It might be 'I've lost my job, I don't know how I will cope.' However, in EcoMeditation, you tap the points without defining a specific target problem.

“We know that general tapping produces an effect,” Dawson says. It basically regulates your energy system in a general way and helps you enter a space of calm. Next, you add in heart coherent breathing, muscular relaxation, neurofeedback techniques, and meditation on compassion.

“There are several things that move the needle in terms of neuroplasticity in the brain quicker than others,” Dawson says the one that changes the brain the quickest is compassion ... a response to the suffering of the world and just a sense of acceptance of people just as they are.

We get people to this compassionate state and then they start to feel really centered, really resilient, really happy. Focus on a person who makes you feel unconditionally loved. That might be a Saint. It might be a historical figure. It might be a childhood hero ... Focus on that person and then ... expand that compassion to every atom in the universe.

That's the very general conceptual framework we use to keep people out of trauma. We've had to really refine this thing over the years because a lot of people traumatized and it's very easy to trigger traumatic memories.

If you go into that altered state without adequate preparation, it can be produce what's called retraumatization. The instructions for EcoMeditation have been very carefully calibrated to avoid the possibility of retraumatization, which of course is the opposite of resilience, which we're trying to produce."

Emotional intensity is also important for optimal results, and the emotion of [gratitude](#) typically generates this. As such, compassion and gratitude go hand in hand and work very well together. Lastly, you need to recenter in your body. So, at the end of the meditation, open your eyes and take in your surroundings. You feel the weight of your body in the chair or on the cushion as you re-anchor yourself in the here and now.

"We don't want people to bliss out and then not be able to bring it back down to the immediate issues of their lives," Dawson explains. "We want to have them experience that mystical state, and then come back and be effective in their daily lives."

Sheltering in Love

When California issued its first round of lockdown orders, Dawson and his wife agreed to use that time of increased togetherness to be extra nice to each other – to literally shelter in love. He explains:

"We realized we would be together a lot more than usual. We said we're going to use this as a crucible to really be nice to each other. We weren't not nice to each other before, but

we knew we'd have tension.

We used this as a way to shelter in love, get to know each other better ... I began to learn things about her. I began to be fascinated by her. We used the crisis to strengthen our relationship. Families are systems. When you change one element of a system, you change the whole system.

That's why, in a marriage, in a family, not everyone has to change. People think that 'Oh, my husband has to change. My wife has to change. My kid has to change. My parent has to change.' Actually ... your chances of getting them to change are approximately zero. The only person you have leverage over is yourself ...

We know, through that new science of emotional contagion, that your emotions are contagious. So, make that choice to work on yourself, to find your negative emotion, to release it, to be this agent of positive emotional contagion all around you and soon you'll find it spreads far beyond you.

Be proactive. Do the things it'll take to shift your mood. When we shift psychology, we shift biology. People don't realize how dependent their biology is on their psychology. For example, in study of a weekend EcoMeditation, anxiety went down by 26%. Depression went down by 32%. PTSD symptoms went down by 18%. Pain went down 43%. All of these are psychological shifts people are making as they tap and meditate.

Average resting cortisol went down significantly by 29%. The resting heart rate went down by 5% and their immunoglobulins went up by 27%. These are your leverage points and you can decide proactively to meditate to tap and to release all that negative emotion you have.

Fill your mind with positive thoughts. I'm not saying don't read anything negative. You can't avoid it. You need to be well informed. But be informed and see it through the lens of that positive being. Tune into nonlocal mind every day. That's something you can choose to do.

EcoMeditation is about 15 to 20 minutes long. It doesn't take long and you're making a powerful declaration that you are choosing to be that agent of positive emotional contagion. You then enter your day after that morning meditation as a resourceful person, a resilient person.

Are there still problems – financial problems, medical problems, family problems? Sure. There might be all those problems. But now you are a resilient person who is facing those problems and bringing five times the problem-solving ability into that situation.”

For me, personally, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably been one of the best things that have ever happened to me. I have never been healthier, I think, in my life as a result of this forced discipline to stay at home and pursue a healthy lifestyle, many of which are detailed in Dawson's book. It's a great toolbox.

More Information and Free Resources

Again, to learn more about the scientific underpinnings of tapping, visit www.eftuniverse.com/research-studies/eft-research, and for a free EcoMeditation audio track, see EcoMeditation.com. If you want professional EFT help, you can tap with a practitioner, live via the internet, on tappingplace.com. Free tapping resources and meditations are also available on DawsonGift.org

Also consider picking up a copy of "[Mind to Matter: The Astonishing Science of How Your Brain Creates Material Reality](#)," in which you'll find 30 different practices that will help reprogram your mind and energetic system, including yoga, Chi Gung, Tai Chi, spending time in nature, grounding and much more. The book is available on Amazon, but you can also get it free – just cover the cost of shipping – if you order it on mindtomatter.com.

"Pick the ones that fit your lifestyle and love yourself enough to do that," Dawson says. "Make a practice of doing them. Be that proactive person and then you'll find your whole lifestyle to change.

One of the problems that meditators have [is that] we really have to calibrate ourselves when we meet other people because they're not here, they're not full of love, joy and laughter. They're full of anguish, stress and doubt. [So] you listen to people, you hear their grief and pain and sorrow and loss.

Then, by the end of your time with them, they've been affected by your positive emotional contagion and we then can change the emotional tone of our whole world. One of the cool things about those studies is that positive emotions travel out to affect those around you. So, do negative ones, but negative ones only affect people 2 degrees of separation out.

Positive ones affect people 3 degrees of separation out. We're actually more effective as agents of emotional contagion if we're positive than negative. So, go out there and meet people where they are. Listen to them if they're suffering, but then bring the power of joy and beauty and all those benefits of nonlocal mind into your local world and be that powerful change agent ...

Do things to love your mind and body, and then be that

vibrant person who helps those around you shift. A suffering world needs us now more than ever.”