



Getting Past Your Past: Take Control of Your Life with Self-Help Techniques from EMDR Therapy

Francine Shapiro

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Whether we've experienced small setbacks or major traumas, we are all influenced by our memories and by experiences we may not remember or fully understand. *Getting Past Your Past* offers practical techniques that demystify the human condition and empower readers looking to take charge of their lives. Shapiro, the creator of EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), explains the brain science in layman's terms and provides simple exercises that readers can do at home to understand their automatic responses and achieve real change.

Getting Past Your Past: Take Control of Your Life with Self-Help Techniques from EMDR Therapy Details

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From Reader Review Getting Past Your Past: Take Control of Your Life with Self-Help Techniques from EMDR Therapy for online ebook

Tammy says

I'd never heard of EMDR Therapy until my doctor recommended this book to see if it would help with some problems in my past.

This book explains what EMDR Therapy is. It gives techniques to try at home and has examples of people who have had done it successfully. It was interesting to see that it doesn't have to be a traumatic childhood experience to have a negative affect on your adult life. It becomes traumatic based on how you stored it in your brain at the time.

Excerpts from the book:

The same mind/brain processes that allow us to recognize a rhyme, or sing along with a tune we haven't heard in 20 years, are the ones that also drown us in the misery of anxiety, depression, heartache, and at times, physical pain.

EMDR therapy targets the unprocessed memories. By activating the brain's information processing system, the old memories can then be "digested" (stored in a way that is no longer damaging).

Memories that have been processed are transformed into learning experiences. Unprocessed memories can still have a negative effect on the present.

William Schram says

Getting Past Your Past by Dr. Francine Shapiro utilizes Eye Movement Desensitization and Remodeling (EMDR) therapy to help you overcome your struggles. My first impression is one of confusion because I don't actually know what EMDR is. However, it does sound quite interesting so I continue reading.

The idea of EMDR is to allow yourself to process memories or sensations that might be affecting your cognition in the present. It is based on the idea of digesting experiences when you sleep using Rapid Eye Movement. I don't exactly know why it works, but it seems that it does for a number of people. So in order to process these memories, you have to bring them to your current awareness and deal with them. The book includes techniques bring these memories to the forefront of your consciousness and other techniques to deal with those very same memories. Some of them I have heard of while others are new to me.

As with most guides that deal with crucial events and memories, you probably shouldn't do this yourself if you have a serious issue. The book does have a disclaimer in it so that is usually an indication that the information in it could be upsetting or dangerous. Seriously, if you have a large problem like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or something along those lines it is best to seek professional aid.

I liked the book well enough even though it did have some disturbing and terrible personal stories in it. The advice and sliver of hope that it offers compensate for it pretty well. Many of the people in the book that did

share their experiences hoped that they would be able to help others and that is fantastic.

Brittany says

I appreciated the fact that this book didn't feel like a manual and wasn't bogged down by research. It was an easy read that was interesting. The author spoke about how she came up with EMDR and how it transformed into a therapy that is helpful to many people all over the world. I found it interesting to read about each of the case studies that were presented though out the book. It made the concepts easier to understand by looking at them through the examples of clients of the authors and her colleagues. I also appreciated that the book felt a bit like a workbook in a way. The author takes the reader through step by step processes in order to apply concepts to themselves. She also went over coping methods in order to help readers feel safe when memories got to be a bit much. I found the butterfly bug and the spiral particularly interesting. Overall, I found the book to be informative but also easy to understand. If you are looking for a book to help you understand some basics of EMDR then I would highly recommend this book.

Cindy Mccoy says

Recommended to read before first time EMDR session. Easy read and the excercises were helpful. I learned about myself. I had to take breaks from reading because my thoughts were overwhelmed with memories and feelings.

Tami says

Dr. Shapiro is the founder of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) Therapy. This form of therapy looks at the events that cause specific emotional or physical reactions and traces these triggers back to the root cause. Then, using guided imagery, these unresolved events are processed.

EMDR Therapy is surprizing simple but the effects are phenomenal. It's interesting to see how an unprocessed childhood memory, trauma, or simple misunderstanding can lead to unhealthy patterns and unhappiness. What's really amazing though is tracing those reverberations to the original incident and releasing that hold in a matter of minutes. Moreover, the same techniques can be used to cope with intense emotion and difficult trigger situations.

Colette Fehr says

Very good book fro the lay person on an introduction to EMDR concepts and how we respond to and heal from trauma.

Morgan Blackledge says

Getting Past Your Past is about trauma, PTSD and an exciting (if controversial) treatment modality (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing) that reportedly gets very rapid, very dramatically effective results where other trauma treatments fail.

I have mixed feelings about this book. It's such an important subject. I have a very positive personal experience with Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR). But it's not (in my humble opinion) very well written. So I didn't find it to be a very pleasurable read. But what ever. It's still a very useful book. Particularly if it gets people who need it into treatment.

WARNING:

This review is going to be ridiculously long. I'm going to start from way back and take it all the way home. So consider your self informed and continue at your own risk.

The real subject of the book is psychological trauma. But what (exactly) is trauma, why do we have it, what causes it, when is it a problem and how do we treat it.

Those are all questions I will try to address (because I'm not so sure the book really addressed these issues so well). But first let's strip the issue down to the roots.

Trauma is largely an issue of emotional dysregulation. In order to understand trauma, we need to understand emotions.

What Are Emotions and What Are They For?

It's a strange question that doesn't get asked nearly enough. I teach an undergraduate affective psychology course. I ask that same question before every lecture.

I have a three word answer that I make my students repeat every single class. They roll their eyes after week 12, but you'd be surprised how many of them don't get it right, even after 16 weeks of repetition, personalization, elaboration and systematic recall.

The answer is:

Emotions are for Survival and Reproduction.

Maybe not exclusively, at least not for humans, but primarily, yes, even for humans.

Allow me to explain.

The Evolution of Emotion Research:

Not many people know this but Charles Darwin was fascinated by emotions. He applied the theory of evolution via natural selection to the study of emotions in his aptly titled 1872 work, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.

He proposed that much like other traits found in animals (including humans), emotions evolved to serve

adaptive functions.

Just like (almost) every other evolved trait (excluding evolutionary spandrels like belly buttons etc.) emotions were evolutionarily conditioned and conserved based on the adaptive advantages they bestowed i.e. based on their use value in the survival and reproduction game.

According to modern evolutionary theory, different emotions evolved at different times.

Primal emotions, such as fear and anger are associated with ancient parts of the brain (e.g. the amygdala and associated limbic processes) and almost certainly (like 99.9% certainly) evolved in our pre-mammal ancestors.

Feelings (and/or instincts) of fear and anger elicit safety seeking behavior e.g. the startle response, running in terror and becoming enraged and aggressive in response to a threat (to your parking spot).

Pretty much all animals are equipped with some sort of safety seeking and threat response action patterns.

That doesn't mean that all animals "consciously experience" what we refer to as emotions. We don't really know if they do or not (there's still a debate going about that). But even lizards and stuff have these types of hard wired action patterns.

Bonding emotions, such as a mother's love for her offspring, and the drive to pair bond (i.e. keep it together boyf and girlf style) seem to have evolved among early mammals.

Lizards and reptiles don't really bond with each other and they don't bond with their offspring. Not like mammals do anyway. They don't need to. Their babies survive either way.

Mammal babies need nurturing loving care in order to survive in their early developmental period.

Particularly human babies, who, let's face it, are pretty fucking incapable of taking care of themselves for their first 47 years of development (if one were to use myself as an example).

One theory posits that mammals (particularly humans) evolved such powerful bonding emotions (out of sheer necessity), that we can even bond with animals outside of our species.

Everyone has seen the YouTubes of the duck that raised a kitten. Nonhuman interspecies bonding happens. But nowhere near like it does between humans and their pets.

My wife and I literally refer to our dog as "the baby". That's not normal outside of humans (and frankly, it's pretty lame even amongst humans, but that's how we do).

Social emotions, such as guilt and pride, evolved among social primates (particularly humans).

WARNING:

Don't make the mistake that a lot of people do and think that the evolutionarily older emotions and the brain structures that produce them dominate the evolutionarily newer ones.

They don't.

If you're prone to mechanical analogies.

Think about an engine. If you want to rent somebody a truck, but you don't want them to go over the speed limit, you can put a governor on the engine that limits the maximum speed.

So, The engine comes first (It's older), the governor is added on second (it's newer or more recent) but the governor dictates the maximum speed of the vehicle.

Even the bossest 450 hp 5.7 Hemi will top out at 55mph if the governor is set there.

Analogously, sometimes, a more recently evolved part of the brain moderates an older part of the brain, such as when the evolutionarily recent prefrontal cortex (associated with prosocial emotions and flexible behavior) moderates the amygdala's fear response (associated with aggressive affect and inflexible behavior).

Evolutionary psychologists consider human emotions to be best adapted to the life our ancestors led in nomadic foraging bands.

It was more important for human survival to cooperate than anything else.

So sometimes love actually does win.

Or, if you're a fiscal conservative, rational self interest is sometimes best served by nonzero sum strategies.

So, to reiterate:

Emotions are for.....

SURVIVAL and REPRODUCTION

Or in other (maybe nicer) words, emotions are there to keep us SAFE and CLOSE

Emotional Conditioning:

So, we talked about how emotional traits were selected and conserved evolutionarily for their adaptive benefit to the species overall survival and reproduction.

But there's much more to the story than that.

Emotional traits can also become conditioned by an individual's culture, environment and life experiences.

In other words. Part of our emotional experience is hard wired, the rest of it is learned. That's right, learned.

Learning Theory:

Pavlovian (classical) Conditioning:

Refers to the way a neutral stimuli can become associated (paired) with hard wired responses.

For Example:

We don't come out of the baby factory being afraid of guns. We do come out of the baby factory afraid of (a)

loud noises (b) people in anguish (c) hostile facial expressions and vocalizations (d) things other people are afraid of and don't forget (e) death and violence.

So when, as young people, we are exposed to the otherwise neutral stimuli of a gun, we're not afraid, but over time, being exposed to experiences and/or media images of hostile people shooting other people and seeing them die, you develop a fear response to guns, sometimes even when they're not loaded or pointed at you.

Operant Conditioning:

Refers to the way our behavior is selected and conserved based on rewarding or punishing consequences.

I remember when my daughter didn't understand what money was. I would give her a dollar and she would lose it, or color on it. It just wasn't a reward for her yet.

Later in life, she learned what that stuff could do for a person and pow. Money became very associated with reward.

After that, she would do chores and stuff for small monetary rewards. She would also avoid breaking rules in order to avoid the punishment of having her allowance docked.

In this way, her behavior was shaped by these rewarding and aversive experiences. Her behavior was selected based on its consequences.

My point is, some of our emotional responses are innate, and some are shaped by our life experiences.

Nature provides the rough draft, nurture (in the form of experiences and consequences) finishes the book.

But back to the the subject of trauma. Almost all species of animal learn via classical and operant conditioning.

But not all animals get PTSD or anything like it. Pretty much only people do. Other kinds of animals experience a near death attack from a predator, and just bounce back shortly after the episode. They literally shake it off.

People can get stuck in the state of trauma. They can be haunted by intrusive memories of the event. They can be triggered to relive the traumatic experiences by seemingly unrelated stimuli.

What gives?

Relational Frame Theory (RFT):

RFT is a theory of learning that asserts that language adapted animals (humans) display a qualitatively different type of learning than other animals.

RFT argues that the building block of human language and higher cognition is 'relating', i.e. the human ability to create links between things.

Check this out:

Roses are red, violets are _____

Mary had a little _____

Go _____ your self you _____ mother _____ er

If you grew up in the USA, I didn't need to finish these sentences. You finished them for me. It happened automatically.

People fill in the blanks.

We take that for granted. But it turns out to be a fundamental feature of how people think and feel.

We also make cognitive and emotional connections.

When I say milk, what comes to mind?

Probably a large network of words, mental images and memories and emotions like:

MILK - chocolate - sweet

|

cow - farm - farmer - tractor

|

white - creamy - ice cream

|

cereal - coco puffs - breakfast

Each of these nodes are linked and associated.

In this network there is a not so distant connection between chocolate and tractor.

It seems kind of random, but it's not.

Chocolate and Tractor are related.

Many of the nodes are connected to other networks of association.

TRACTOR - my dads tractor - my dads farm

|

big tires - monster trucks - rednecks

|

combine - farm accident - the time I saw _____

So now we have tractor associated with my dads farm, rednecks and the time I saw _____, maybe someone get injured in a farming accident.

So, in this particular network, milk and a memory of a terrible farming accident are linked.

Let's say the terrible farming accident was really disturbing. You were a child when you saw it. And you never had a chance to fully make sense out of the experience.

Maybe, even as an adult, years later, every time you sit down for breakfast, you run the risk of triggering the unprocessed memory of the accident. And now, instead of sitting down for a morning meal with your children, at least part of your attention is consumed by the haunting memory.

That could be a problem no?

As I mentioned previously. Emotions are for keeping us CLOSE and SAFE. But sometimes our conditioned responses to extremely distressing life experiences can keep us alive in one context, but become problematic and even dangerous in other contexts.

For instance:

Becoming conditioned to be "hyper-vigilant" (very fearful and alert to any sign of danger) may keep you alive in a combat situation. But staying stuck in that hyper-vigilant state may become problematic when you return home to safety.

Fight or Flight, Rest and Digest:

The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) is a division of the peripheral nervous system (the nervous system outside your brain) that acts largely unconsciously and automatically to regulate bodily functions such as heart rate, digestion and respiratory rate.

The autonomic nervous system has two branches (1) the Sympathetic Nervous System and (2) the Para Sympathetic Nervous System. They essentially function like the gas and breaks on your car to rev you up or slow you down.

More technically, the (1) the Sympathetic Nervous System "up-regulates" your body and the (2) Para Sympathetic Nervous System "down-regulates" your body, and the two systems work together to keep you at an appropriate level of tension for the situation at hand.

The Gas Peddle:

The (1) Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) is the primary mechanism in control of the fight-or-flight response and the freeze-and-dissociate response.

This is your bodies emergency threat response system. When there is a real or perceived threat, the body garners its resources to either attack, run away or freeze up like a dear in the headlights, or (if it's really bad) pass out i.e. play dead like a possum.

In a dangerous (or perceived to be dangerous) situation, the SNS "up-regulates" your body by:

- increasing heart rate and blood pressure
- heart pounding
- increasing respiratory rate
- shallow rapid breathing and even hyperventilating
- decreasing digestive processes
- that stomach in a knot, pants shitting feeling
- you don't need to digest lunch if you're about to be something's lunch

- withdrawing blood from extremities

- cold hands and feet

- reduce immune function

- stress can make you sick

All of these effects should be commonly recognizable to anyone who has ever been in danger or felt anxiety.

In extreme cases like life threatening emergencies or panic attacks, the Fight, Flight or Freeze effects can get so rad i.e. the body can becomes so up-regulated, that people can experience:

- tunnel vision
- loss of hearing
- inability to verbally communicate
- slow motion time perception
- paralysis
- involuntary defecation and urination

The Break Peddle:

The (2) Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) is the primary mechanism in control of the rest and digest response and the tend and befriend response.

This is like your bodies rest and repair mode. When there is no real or perceived threat, the body garners its resources to repair muscle tissue, fight off disease, digest food and tend to relationships.

In a safe situation the PNS "down-regulates" your body by:

- decreasing heart rate and blood pressure
- decreasing respiratory rate
- increasing digestive processes
- increasing circulation in extremities
- increase immune function

Again, these two branches of the Autonomic Nervous System work together to maintain appropriate levels of action readiness (tension) for the situation at hand. Much like the gas and breaks on your car work together to keep you at the right speed for the road conditions (ideally).

All of these SNS and PNS reflexes helped keep your ancestors alive in their natural environment, what modern evolutionary theorist referred to as the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptation (EEA)

But problems occur when (a) contemporary stressors (email, traffic, taxes) chronically activate the stress response, or (b) highly traumatic experiences condition our threat response to be overly active.

Psychological Trauma:

Refers to a particularly high intensity threat response to a real or perceived danger, that floods the nervous system with so much energy, that the person experiences residual effects e.g. flashbacks, intrusive disturbing memories or thoughts, emotional dysregulation etc. even after the stressor has diminished.

Vulnerability to psychological trauma is influenced by a wide variety of biological, psychological and social

factors.

Trauma is most frequently caused by experiences that involve being, or seeing someone else being intentionally harmed by another person.

Examples include: harassment, sexual abuse, being the victim of child abuse or witnessing domestic violence as a child and of course, prolonged exposure to active combat situations.

Long-term exposure to situations such as extreme poverty or milder forms of abuse, such as verbal abuse may also lead to psychological trauma.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5 (DSM 5) Cite a list of diagnostic criteria for PTSD. It's way too huge to list here. Google it if your curious or if you suspect you or a loved one may have PTSD.

EMDR is a trauma and PTSD treatment developed by Francine Shapiro.

EMDR focuses on processing unresolved traumatic experiences.

If your traumatic past is emerging into the present due to triggering circumstances and you are "re-living" or "re-experiencing" the event in the sense that your body is having a threat or stress response that is disproportionate to the actual situation at hand, than EMDR considers that memory "unprocessed".

If the unprocessed traumatic memory is causing impairment at home, work, school, in relationship or in some other domain such as substance dependence, than it is clinically significant than you may wish to consider getting treatment.

If, after treatment, the same memory does not significantly dysregulate your emotions and no longer represents a source of impairment in your life, than EMDR considers that memory processed.

According to Shapiro, "when a traumatic or distressing experience occurs, it may overwhelm normal coping mechanisms. The memory and associated stimuli are inadequately processed and stored in an isolated memory network".

The goal of EMDR therapy is to process these distressing memories, reducing their long lasting effects and allowing the person to develop more adaptive coping mechanisms.

The process of EMDR essentially involves having the client recall traumatic memories and then subjecting the client to "bilateral stimulation" which can be accomplished in a number of ways, but is essentially any brief stimuli that alternates between left and right. e.g. alternating clicking noises in a stereo audio, or tracking a target with eye movements left and right.

The client reports the next image or memory or association that come to mind (see RFT above). If there is an unprocessed traumatic memory in the network of associations, EMDR attempts to bring it up, and utilize the biomechanics of dreaming (REM sleep) to encode the memory into longterm memory, so that it is "just a memory" rather than a repeatedly relived experience".

I know it sounds kinda crack head. But if administered by a trained clinician, it can produce some pretty

dramatic results.

It's very common for people to report dramatic reductions in PTSD symptoms after one or two sessions.

My personal experience with EMDR was very positive. But that's different than proof. It's just an anecdote.

As I mentioned, EMDR is controversial, but the good news is EMDR has been found to be effective in numerous randomized placebo controlled trials (RCT).

Anyway. Get the book I guess. It's pretty good. But get the treatment if you need it. That's the really good really important thing.

Don't suffer needlessly.

3.75 stars for the book.

5 stars for EMDR

Jerry Lane says

Really amazing that she's unveiling so much. In fact I'm surprised that she's telling this much. However she does a good job of informed consent I think recommending seeing a therapist for people who experience discomfort or distress when doing some processing on their own. There is some concern that not everyone will be able to find a trained clinician however. As a newly trained clinician this has helped solidify my experience though.

Katie says

I usually don't really like self-help books very much, but a friend recommended this to me after we had a conversation about EMDR therapy. It's a very interesting idea. Francine Shapiro discovered that traumatic experiences often caused problems for people down the line because they had been improperly processed - instead of storing them so that they could be used as a learning experience and placed within a healthy context, the trauma overwhelmed the brain's typical processing system. She also discovered that by stimulating each side of the brain - either with alternating taps, lights, or tones - these memories could be pulled back out and 're-processed,' allowing the victim to look at them in a healthier and more productive way.

Though it's still in the fairly early stages of testing, it seems to have really helped a lot of people, particularly those suffering from some form of PTSD. The first two chapters are fascinating. The book as a whole, though, gets a little tedious after a while. Shapiro doesn't devote much time to why this works, or any of neuroscience behind it. And after the first 50 or so pages, it's really just lots and lots of 2-3 page case studies. Some of them are interesting and most are pretty moving, but they almost all follow the same pattern: Person A is unhappy in their current life because of problem B; EMDR lets them trace Problem B back to Memory C, and reprocess the memory into a healthier context. There's really not much reason for this to be a 300 page book, and it drags after a while. And I wish more attention was paid to why something like this would

work, and what it means for psychology going forwards.

Rose Boyer says

I like this book a lot and am going to read it again. The issue I had in the beginning was the occurrence of disturbing thoughts that came up by attempting to use the techniques. After getting a therapist and working through unprocessed memories I was able to return and read the rest of this book. It was a little over two years later. I wouldn't actually recommend this book to anyone who knows they have significant trauma. I would suggest figuring out a way to get therapy first. Today I am in a healthy state of mind and am interested enough to revisit the first part of this book.

Wendy LaCapra says

Years of therapy are behind me, but on occasion I still find myself neck deep in oppressive anxiety. I first read about EMDR in *The Body Keeps the Score* and wanted a deeper understanding. I wish I had found this book years ago. This is an excellent book full of helpful suggestions.

Nicole Perry says

I'm starting to notice a trend in the books I appreciate most. They often include unique experiential exercises to try out to support healing. This is what I love so much about this book. After trying the techniques out of myself, I wrote them out and tried a few out with clients, and overall people really seemed to like them.

The exercises are geared strongly toward folks who feel like their past is still running their lives - whether in the form of visual flashbacks, feelings of overwhelm, pain that won't go away, or a sense of being transported back to an earlier, younger time. They were hugely helpful with clients who were in the early stages of healing trauma or were experiencing flashbacks or nightmares. It helped my clients when they were feeling unsafe or having difficulty grounding. It helped when they were having repeated disturbing images come up that they were having a hard time getting away from.

Now, like I do with most self-help books, I skipped the first two chapters, because I usually find that it's a review of information I'm already quite familiar with. Jumping in at chapter 3, I was immediately pleased with how the author encourages readers to notice the sensations in the body. I've really found that the body is the centre of healing trauma, and it's also the part of ourselves we tend to be most disconnected from. I'm trained in using a trauma healing technique called Somatic Experiencing (intermediate level) so of course the body-focus would make sense to me. What the book adds is the use of imagery for healing. I really like that and find it to be a nice pairing with body work.

This book could be used as a precursor to undergoing EMDR with a trained therapist or a precursor to any other trauma therapy. It could also be used as a standalone for people who feel fairly confident in managing their own symptoms. In addition to recommending this book to many of my clients, I would also absolutely recommend it for clinicians, even those like myself not planning to do any official EMDR training.

Hester Rathbone says

I read this book for work, about a month after getting trained in how to use EMDR (the psychotherapy technique this book focuses on). This had been on our suggested reading list before the training, but I'm happy that I read it after. A lot of the techniques made much more sense having some basis and training in them.

There are parts of this book that I appreciated as a clinician - particularly in the early chapters, it gives a good sense of what happens that can make past memories and experiences get trapped in our brains and keep us from moving forward. I felt like it gave a lot of really good hands-on exercises that clients can do on their own, and I plan to share the description of how to do the Calm Place activity with clients who are beginning to do the EMDR process with me, so that they have some ability to return to that Calm Place even outside of the office.

However, as the book went on, I found it less and less readable. Around Chapter 6, I started to recognize that the entire book is just chock full of telling other people's experiences with trauma and EMDR. It was like the whole thing just became one long example, with different names and life experiences inserted in every few pages. While one or two examples in a chapter can be helpful, this many were just excessive. It started to just feel like one long sales pitch - "see how many people EMDR has helped? It's magical, do it yourself and you'll see!" I understand giving some examples and even trying to fit in lots of different ones to help clients hopefully recognize stories similar to their own experiences...but it really went over the top. I basically just started skimming after awhile to see if each page was just another example or actually contained useful information.

For that reason, I would only recommend and share certain parts of this book with clients. No one needs to hear this many survivor stories, least of all people who are still sifting through their own traumas and might be triggered by hearing so many other tales.

Sarah Goodner says

I've spent nearly my entire adulthood in therapy, trying to get past the first 15 years of my life. If someone had introduced me to EMDR 30 years ago, I think my path might have been much different. I could have skipped the painful self-sabotaging addictions, multiple divorces, always choosing the wrong men, etc., etc. This shit is like magic. Seriously. It's so simple, it seems stupid. But it WORKS.

So many of my triggers are gone now, neatly put away on a shelf in their proper order and importance rather than hanging around my neck like a cow-bell, waiting to ring mercilessly at the slightest movement. It's such a relief to not go through life over-reacting because something with my current relationships reminded me of something I never healed in my past.

Amy Katherine Brown says

I found this book very interesting. While I have had some sessions of EMDR and found those sessions to be

successful, and reading this book helped me further understand EMDR, it raised questions for me too.

The way EMDR is presented in this book makes it sound like it is a basic "cure-all". It almost sounds too good to be true. This is where I become conflicted, as I have benefited personally from EMDR therapy, but I've found myself (as I read the book) emailing my counselor (who is trained in EMDR therapy) with additional questions about EMDR and whether or not it could be of further use for me.

While the book did contain many "self-EMDR" therapies, I think one really needs to be careful treating themselves. I say that because if there has been some real trauma that has gotten "buried" and this brings it to the surface, I would question how much an individual could handle. I know for me, having a trusted, trained person with me as the unprocessed and painful memories surfaced was critical to my being able to properly process them and benefit from the EMDR.

It is certainly worth reading for anyone interested in counseling, therapy, psychology, psychiatry or even how our brains work. It is an amazing therapy technique that the author "discovered" many years ago practically accidentally. But she seems to have discovered something that has been a benefit to many!
