

CHAPTER 1

Master Your Energy to Transform Your Life

For thousands of years ancient wisdom has recognized life energy within and around living human beings. It is known as *chi* in China, *prana* in India, *ki* in Japan, *nishama* in the Jewish tradition, and the *state of grace* in Christianity.

In the East, life energy became ingrained in the culture and is integral to the thinking about health and the treatment of illness. Mind, body, and spirit are inseparable. In both China and India, treatments and practices developed around life energy that included the pathways and areas for energy flow as well as descriptions of the patterns of this flow. In China, life energy, or chi, is described as flowing through channels that form a system known as the acupuncture meridian system. In India, life energy or *prana* flows through a system of energy centers known as chakras.

In this chapter, you will learn how the Western public was introduced to the concepts of life energy in Eastern medicine in the 1970s. We discuss how this information was integrated with traditional Western thinking, which provided the impetus for some innovative practices in both medicine and psychotherapy.

We also give you an introduction to your mind-body-energy system and discuss your life problems in terms of restrictions to the energy flow. Using the metaphor of walls, we discuss how your energy can become blocked in a way that, even with your best intentions, you are unable to reach your new goals.

We will give case examples of the walls that perhaps originally were built by your mind for protection but are now destructive and life-limiting. You will also find an overview about the energy of your thoughts and why working on energy, dammed up as walls, can free you to refocus that energy and create new options for yourself.

The chapter also introduces the central themes of *The Energy of Belief*:

1. Your mind is more than just your brain.
2. Your thoughts, emotions, and beliefs not only have energy, they are energy.
3. You can do self-work on the negative energetic aspects of your thoughts, emotions, and beliefs using an energy psychology technique called Touch and Breathe (TAB).
4. In TAB you use the acupuncture meridian system as a gateway to your mind-body-energy system.
5. Using TAB is effective because it releases the energy of the negative beliefs that block you from your goals and then uses the freed energy to help focus your intention to reach them.

Walls

What are walls? *Walls* are forces that keep you from achieving your goals. We've all hit walls or come up against walls. A wall might be an anger you can't let go of...a fear you can't shake...a job you're afraid to tackle...an old memory that intrudes and won't go away...or an unwanted behavior you struggle to stop. Walls may be connected to unpleasant emotions like hopelessness, helplessness and thoughts such

as *what's the use?* Walls are kept in place by the negative beliefs you have about yourself, or the world in which you live. Beliefs, whether negative or positive, are thoughts that act as filters for your experiences and may be compared to tinted glasses that influence the color of all you see. Beliefs not only influence all you perceive and respond to in the outside world, they also affect how you view yourself. For example, if you have the belief "I deserve good things" you stand tall and reach for a far-off possibility, but if your belief is "I don't deserve good things," the energy of that belief keeps even the closest of opportunities out of reach.

Walls can begin by chance or develop over time as a means of protection. They are formed from your energy and require a continual supply of your energy to be kept in place. Sometimes the walls have a payoff; what you do to protect yourself works for a while. Even if it only works briefly, at least it is a small relief from feeling bad and it might even feel good for the moment. The problem is that the protection of a wall comes with a heavy price; it is difficult to seize a new opportunity when it means letting go of an old protection.

Walls of Protection

Walls of protection are those seemingly unexplained responses, such as feeling incredibly uncomfortable when paid a compliment, or feeling abject terror when your job requires you to travel. They are often accompanied by a belief such as "I am unsafe" and even though you may or may not remember how the wall got started, it doesn't matter.

Sally's Story

Sally, a 26-year-old software designer, described how she experienced a wall during another failed job interview despite her excellent credentials. "I go into an interview feeling fine. When I sit down and I see the interviewer, I suddenly feel as though I've crashed into something. I begin to think I am unsafe. I get a rush of thoughts and I think the person is picking my brain. This makes me terribly uncomfortable. I try not to signal my distress, so I don't speak; I clam up.

Afterward, I'm angry with myself for having such crazy thoughts and then I feel even worse. I know the thought is in my head, but I can't control my reactions."

Sally's wall began as a means of defense against a painful experience in her youth and grew into an insurmountable obstacle whenever she had a job interview. We shall continue to discuss her experience and her self-treatment later in the chapter.

Roman's Story

Roman, a 45-year-old financial banker, is fearless in his pursuit of deals, but was frightened in his search for a significant other. He described his wall, "I have a great job, a great car, and a great apartment, but my social life is nonexistent, a big zero. When I see someone I'd like to meet I suddenly act differently as I begin the social exchange. It's like a glass wall. I can't see it and I come crashing against it each time I try. I want the closeness but I just can't get there."

Although Roman had some guesses about why his wall existed, he did not remember any specific event or any particular belief related to it. Fortunately, it isn't necessary to know exactly what caused the problem, or when and where it began, for TAB to be effective. In TAB we focus on correcting the energy disturbances associated with thinking about the problem and releasing the blocking beliefs behind it. After working with TAB, Roman attended a friend's wedding and was sitting at the same table as a woman he found very interesting. Unlike many times before when the wall would keep him from engaging in conversation, Roman found talking to her easy despite the loud music. In fact, it was so easy he found himself smiling and relaxing during the course of the evening. Previously, he had not normally smiled when talking with a woman who interested him and as Roman later recalled, it was in that moment he knew he had passed the wall.

Both Sally and Roman responded to uncomfortable situations with immediate responses that were like knee-jerk reflexes that happened without a second thought. Although the beliefs that caused them to build these walls may have been valuable earlier in their lives, they are no longer useful now. As you can see, for Sally and

Roman, their former beliefs limited their ability to go after things they truly desired.

Joe's Story

Joe, a 58-year-old fireman, had a mild, chronic cough and was recently diagnosed with early-stage emphysema. Joe had smoked for over 20 years. He described his wall of frustration as he faced his doctor who told him, for the fifth time, that he needed to stop smoking. "I said to myself, 'Joe, just do it,' but I couldn't. It's like I had a wall in front of me, a very big wall. Believe me," Joe continued, "I've climbed tall ladders up high walls, but there's no ladder tall enough to get me over this one."

And then he added, "But you know, smoking makes me feel good. I don't want to believe that I am going to die if I keep smoking. I want to keep that thought out of my head."

Joe was so drawn to the good feelings while smoking that he didn't want to think of his deteriorating health, nor the concerns of his family who love him and want him to stop smoking.

Teresa's Story

Teresa is a marketing executive and single mother of two young children, who dragged through her day because she was so exhausted. Her job was in jeopardy but she couldn't seem to control a behavior she developed at home at the end of the day. Teresa explained, "I found that after a long day of work and when the kids were finally asleep I enjoyed playing FreeCell, Solitaire, or shopping on the Internet. It is extremely relaxing." Then with an edge to her voice she continued, "I crave time for myself when no one is asking me for anything, so being on the computer doing mindless things for hours seems like a perfect solution, except that it is way out of control. I am suddenly aware that it is two o'clock in the morning and I'm still saying 'just one more game.' It is as if while playing I am in a trance walled off from feeling."

Like Joe, Teresa had an *enjoyable* experience each time she played a computer game that was, in a sense, a time-out from the overwhelming family and job responsibilities she faced everyday. She described the experience as "feels numb, a good numb." Unfortunately,

she re-experienced tension when a game was over, so she sought relief in the next game and the next game. People who get trapped in nonproductive and ultimately self-sabotaging activities keep doing it because it momentarily seems to relieve their tension, even though they realize that it is self-defeating in the end. In other words, you pursue a self-defeating action because you like it, because it helps you to feel good for the moment, and because it keeps reinforcing itself.

If walls are blocked energy, where do you find them? Joe, Roman, Sally, and Teresa didn't have the answer when asked to explain their location, and scientists don't either.

Where are Your Thoughts, Beliefs, and Walls?

Where are your thoughts? Where are your beliefs? Where are your walls? Are they in your head, your mind, your gut, or somewhere else? Throughout history, writers, scientists, religious leaders, philosophers, and psychologists have studied thinking but none have identified what makes up a thought and where does thinking begin or end. No one knows exactly what positive, negative, or neutral thoughts are or where and how they occur. In spite of this, the answers are important in psychology in order to help find ways to solve life problems.

In the early 1970s a new source for answers to these questions arrived in the West.

Traditional Chinese Medicine Arrives in the West

"Now, let me tell you about my appendectomy in Peking." So began the July 26, 1971, article by *New York Times* journalist James Reston, who accompanied Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on his historic trip to China. During this visit, Reston had emergency surgery in which acupuncture was used for pain control and thus a curious and astounded Western world had a glimpse into the mysteries of Eastern medicine as practiced in China.

Although a large Chinese population had immigrated and worked in the United States. during the 100 preceding years, relatively little was known at that time of traditional Chinese culture, medicine, or science outside their immigrant communities. Reston's personal experience and report, amplified by Kissinger's press briefings, changed this and his account, followed by President Richard Nixon's visit to China, captured the attention and curiosity of the American public.

The excitement rekindled the scientific interest in the human energy system that had lain dormant in Western medicine since the time of the Swiss physician Paracelsus who, in the sixteenth century, wrote about energy forces in medicine and the body's ability to heal itself. Energy medicine, which had been derailed time after time since the ancient Greek civilization, was to gain a significant toehold in the twenty-first century (Diepold, Britt and Bender, 2004).

The Physical You or the Energy You?

There was an old battle in Western medicine between two groups of scientists, the **vitalists** and the **mechanists**. The vitalists talked about life energy and energy systems as important to your well-being and the mechanists said that if you couldn't see the energy it couldn't be proved and therefore, it didn't exist. For reasons that were largely centered on personality and politics, the mechanists prevailed. They gathered evidence to support their theories of the brain from research on cadavers and as a result, many myths were perpetuated that lasted until this millennium. Among them was that the brain, once formed, could not continue to develop beyond the age of 16. Up until relatively recently, educators and psychologists were fairly pessimistic and believed the myth that the brain had too few connections and deteriorated before it even got past a person's teen years. However, recent studies have proven these beliefs untrue.

The Problem with Studying Cadavers

Imagine aliens coming to earth and finding a TV. They play with the TV remote and suddenly they get to see pictures and hear sounds from the TV itself. They are curious about where the pictures and sounds come from so they take the TV apart — no more images and sounds! They then put the TV together again and the pictures and sounds return. From this they might conclude that the pictures and sounds were inside the TV. However, we know that the TV receives and distributes signals through the airwaves or through cable connections that originate elsewhere. And, like aliens studying a television set, scientists who studied the brain in cadavers and theorized that the physical brain alone accounts for all the processes involved in thought, emotion, and behavior, also formed inaccurate conclusions as to how the mind functioned.

Myth: Your Brain Architecture Limits Your Thoughts and Actions

Philosophers and scientists had long debated whether the lack of control human beings have over their thoughts and emotions might be explained by what were defined as deficits in the brain's architecture and function (Koestler, 1967; Konner, 1982).

The science of the mid-twentieth century was pessimistic about what was described as a failure of the human brain for two reasons: the structure of the brain revealed by dissections and microscopic study pointed out a lack of connections or wiring between the physical parts of the brain popularly referred to as the **old, primitive brain** and the **new, evolved brain**. The **old brain** includes more primitive structures such as the midbrain and the limbic system. This area of your brain is responsible for basic life functions and the fight–flight–freeze stress response. The **new brain**, which includes the outer cerebral cortex of the brain, is more evolved and specializes in higher, more complex thought. The lack of connections between these two parts meant that there was little opportunity for the **new brain** (the part that allows you

to do calculus and design complicated machinery) to help when the **old brain** was triggered in response to fear or stress.

William's story illustrates the idea of *primitive response* of his **old brain** disconnected from his **new brain**.

Example of Primitive Response

William is a 25-year-old medical student who is bright, funny, and a good guy who would give you the shirt off his back — except while he's driving. When someone in front of him is driving too slowly, especially an elderly person, he experiences "road rage." He responds by driving fast around the offending driver and giving him the finger. At one point an exchange in a parking lot over a parking space nearly cost him his life. He was quite shaken and says, "I know losing my temper in these situations is crazy, but I can't help it." What happens to William illustrates the problem with brain architecture; the ability to shift thoughts is dampened by out-of-control emotions and William's emotional reaction came from his **old brain** unregulated by his **new brain**, his thinking self.

There would be very few people left if everyone simply acted on a wish to kill someone when they were cut off, or felt disrespected by another driver. There needs to be a moment to think through the consequences of your actions, but it is often very difficult to take the time to connect to the higher thinking cortex when you're engaged in an emotional experience. It is further complicated by related beliefs you already have about the situation because of prior life experiences. William says, "I want to be able to say to myself that the old man driving so slowly on the road is just like my grandfather whom I love, but before I can think, the rage takes over me."

Generating New Pathways

This inability to gain control over runaway emotions poses a huge hurdle on an individual level. If there were no way to develop a path in the brain between thinking and feeling, then William is left without the ability to prevent his angry reaction to slow drivers and connect to the kind feelings he has toward his elderly grandfather. Beyond the

individual level, there are also global implications. Lack of communication between the thinking part of being human and the emotional part of being human has resulted in wars and disruptions of civilization. These shortcomings of the brain's development have led some to predict the destruction of all humankind by our own hand. It is frightening to think that generations of traumatized, angry brains in war-torn countries are set for life, with no chance of healing and repair. Thankfully, since most of the information in Western science about the brain came initially only through dissection of cadavers, research such as the Nobel Prize winning studies of Eric Kandel (2007) and newer technology has allowed us a glimpse of the living brain which indicates you can indeed make new pathways and can also repair old ones.

Your Brain can Generate and Regenerate

New research and technology have reported that the living brain can continue to change with your thinking and these discoveries are quite relevant to overcoming self-defeating beliefs and behaviors. In recent years, scientists have discovered that your thoughts are able in a sense to "rewire" the physical brain so the brain's functioning is improved. In other words, you're not stuck with the original lack of wiring. Your brain has plasticity and it can change (Schwartz & Begley, 2002; Scott, 2006).

If your thoughts have the power to rewire your brain, the next compelling question is how? Researchers are investigating numerous possibilities and are now looking beyond **the physical you** for answers. This opens the door for investigation into what is considered **the energy you**.

The Energy You

As already discussed, until recently most of how we perceived **the energy you** has been in terms translated from Eastern medicine where **the energy you** was never separated from **the physical you**. Formulations of chakras, meridians, and biofields have provided the start of exploration into **the energy you** by Western mental health

professionals, but they are only a beginning. Western medicine is being drawn back to its own history and researchers are now studying both **the physical you** and **the energy you** with studies and theories gleaned from not only biology but also physics. For example, psychologist Fred Gallo (2007) refers to Einstein's equation that depicts the relationship of energy and mass ($E=MC^2$) as a way for the Western world to conceptualize the statement that **energy you** and **physical you** are intertwined.

Western Interest in Energy and Wellness

In the West, centers to study complementary and alternative methods of health care have been developed at most medical schools due to a growing interest in and awareness of the benefits of Eastern practices for mental and physical healing, and overall well-being.

In addition to physicians, mental health professionals were also impressed by the clinical improvements accompanying Eastern practices that engaged the acupuncture meridian system and the chakras. This led to the formation of a branch of mental health known as *energy psychology*. Energy psychology is an umbrella term suggested by psychologist Fred Gallo in 1999 to include all psychologically oriented therapeutic strategies that incorporate the various forms of vibrational energetic influences and utilize the meridian system, the chakra system, or the area that surrounds the body called the biofields.

Energy psychology not only includes the important elements of establishing rapport with patients, setting goals and talking as practiced in traditional therapies, it also takes into account the energy of the patients' words, thoughts, and beliefs, and their impact on the mind-body-energy system. This attention to the flow of energy could be compared to the attention paid to the flow of air when there is a breathing problem. In CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) the first step is to clear the airway, because no matter what else is done you cannot breathe until the blocked airway is cleared. Similarly, from an energy

psychology perspective, you cannot resolve a psychological problem when your mind-body-energy system is blocked, until it is corrected.

Vibrational Frequencies and Fields

Even though energy was at one point part of Western medical history, it was difficult at first for Western scientists to think of the workings of the mind in energy terms. The physical brain seemed a more promising site for explanations of thoughts and beliefs over the unsubstantiated concepts of energy and invisible pathways.

However, in addition to the studies showing the brain regenerating and creating new pathways, there was the development of incredible technology that created an interface between the brain and computers. News of computers allowing individuals the use of artificial limbs directed by their own thoughts could not be ignored (Scott, 2006). If it was possible to create new pathways between parts of your brain and you could generate movement in a limb by your thoughts, the next natural step was to begin to study the nature of the energy required to do these mental-physical acts and explore where the energy came from.

Mind is More Than Brain

As early as the 1960s the famous brain surgeon, Wilder Penfield (1969) remarked that when all was known about the brain, we would still not know all there was to know about the mind.

Now, a growing body of research is supporting this idea. At the frontiers of research of the mind, scientists are suggesting that every cell in your body has some capacity to remember; and that failure to consider and treat “body memory” accounts for the continued power of a psychological trauma despite years of talk therapy (van der Kolk, 1994; Levine, 1997; Scaer, 2007)

Two examples of other parts of the body that have been given special consideration as sources for energetic processes related to mind are the heart and the fascia (a component of the connective tissue

system in your body). When scientists talk about the roles of the heart and the fascia, they talk about electromagnetic fields and electronic signaling, both of which are forms of energy, and therefore are part of **the energy you**.

The Heart

It has been shown that the brain and heart are linked in a strong electromagnetic field generated by the heart (Pearsall, 1998). Studies have shown that the heart beats with inter-beat variability that is an indicator of your health and well-being (Childre, Martin & Beech, 1999). Other studies show that heart rate variability is influenced by emotions as well as a person's physical state (Serban-Schreiber, 2003).

The Fascia

The fascia is another area that has drawn a great deal of excitement in recent years. Fascia surrounds muscles, bones, organs, nerves, blood vessels, and other parts of the body. It is an uninterrupted sheet extending throughout the entire body that is known to maintain structural integrity and support and to provide protection from external forces. At one time fascia was viewed as merely something inconvenient that got in the way of surgeons when they were trying to get to other organs that needed their attention. But now, fascia is catching attention as a possible source of communication among organs by way of acting as an electrical signaling device through cellular communication (Church, 2007). We will talk more about this in Chapters Three and Nine.

Memory Bound in Thought Fields

Information bound in thought fields is another way of thinking about where your walls are located, and is the basis for TAB. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake (1995) wrote about biological information in fields and psychologist Roger Callahan conceived the idea of thoughts bound in fields (Callahan & Callahan, 1996).

Dr. Callahan, inspired by both physics and philosophy, described thought fields as invisible, nonphysical electromagnetic patterns in space binding energetically encoded information into a cohesive arrangement that affects human behavior, emotions, and experience. He developed a psychotherapy called thought field therapy, or the Callahan Techniques™, that treated unwanted information in thought fields. Building on Dr. Callahan's work and others, the BDB Group defined a thought field as...*an energetic bridge between thought, memory, and emotional experience that reaches beyond our conscious awareness* (Diepold, Britt & Bender, 2004, p. 116).

The simplest way to conceptualize thought fields is to think of them as similar to magnetic fields. Remember in school when you placed a magnet under a piece of paper and sprinkled iron filings or paperclips on top of the paper? The small filings or paperclips then arranged themselves in a pattern that outlined the magnet's field. In the same way, it is hypothesized that materials in your thought fields are able to arrange themselves and influence patterns of behavior.

Like those invisible magnetic fields, thought fields are invisible to the human eye and, unfortunately, unlike magnetic fields, the existence of thought fields is not demonstrable with present technology. Nevertheless, if you accept the hypothesis that when you think about your problem and have an emotional response and the response is by way of a connection to the thought field, you could then imagine that by activating the thought and the response at the same time, you might be able to develop a treatment to release the negative emotional charge connected to the thought.

Thinking about a problem in order to help resolve it is not a new idea; it is used in almost every school of psychology. What you do with what you are thinking is what is different in TAB. In TAB, while thinking about your problem, you will be learning a way to focus your intention and reduce or eliminate the signals in the associated thought field that are linked to self-defeating thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors. You will learn more about the signals in thought fields in the next chapter.

Concept of Mind in TAB

As discussed in the Introduction, TAB (Touch and Breathe) is an energy psychology that was developed as an adaptation of a professional treatment called evolving thought field therapy (Diepold, Britt & Bender, 2004) In TAB your mind includes your every cell and all the unexplained connections that make up who you are and that link you and your thoughts to the cosmos.

When you do TAB you will be using meridian treatment points connected to familiar areas of **the physical you**, such as the bladder, lungs, and heart. You will also be thinking about the problem you want to work on, in a way that connects you to the thought field that binds the thought or belief of that particular problem. This process can be thought of as similar to tuning into a particular station on your radio.

When you use TAB you will put your awareness on certain meridian treatment points and use the synergy of touch, breath, intuition, intention, and mindfulness to self-treat.

Why TAB Works When Positive Thinking Doesn't

You may have had the experience of having the best of intentions, trying positive thinking, repeating affirmations and not having any success eliminating the problem. It is important to understand that positive thinking is an energetic process that involves the higher centers of the brain, the mind and all of you in the context of the energetic universe. An uncompromised flow of energy is required in order for you to connect to your positive intentions and goals; if your energy is disrupted by a negative belief, or your thought field contains unwanted signals, you would not be able to connect the positive intention to achieve your goal. TAB frees up energy and allows you to keep your focus because you work energetically on the thoughts and beliefs that have divided your energy.

An interesting study by psychologists John Diepold and David Goldstein (2002) lends some support to this energetic theory. Drs.

Diepold and Goldstein did a brain mapping using the QEEG (quantitative electroencephalogram) to study the changes in a patient's brain before and after a single energy treatment session. Not only did the patient report feeling much better after the treatment, the QEEG showed substantial positive differences in the brain map.

Revisiting William's Story

The issue for William, the medical student with "road rage," was the sight of someone intruding in his space instantly connected to a primitive survival mechanism of fight. The thought that followed was, "I've got to teach this person a lesson." The thought itself is not the problem and it's not part of a belief about people in general. In fact, William's belief about people in general is that he wants to help them, which is why he is in medical school.

If William could buy some time he could eventually get to a thought such as, "Hey, he's only some old guy like my granddad." But William can't shift thought fields quickly enough before he acts on his rage. The thought, "I've got to teach this guy a lesson," is in a thought field that contains an emotional signal which William experiences as righteousness and rage and he cannot get to a more forgiving and understanding place while in the clutch of his emotions.

In order to reduce the signal in the thought field, "I've got to teach this guy a lesson," William has to take the signal connected to his emotion of rage out of the thought field. Using TAB, William focused on the thought of the old man cutting him off. He then followed the steps (that you will learn in later chapters) to take the energetic signal out of the thought that had bound him to his intense emotional reaction. Using TAB, he was able to work on the actual energy of the thought field.

What Happens to Thought When You do TAB?

Compare William's thought about being cut off to a wrinkled bed sheet. Think of the signal for rage as wrinkles in the sheet. Doing TAB could be compared metaphorically to ironing the wrinkles. When you press the wrinkles from a sheet, you still have a sheet, but without the

wrinkles. When you remove the energetic signal for rage from the thought field, you still have a thought but without the debilitating emotion. You then find it easier to shift thought fields and consider your options for how to deal with a situation with rational choice, rather than knee-jerk reaction.

What Happens to Memory?

After using TAB, you can still remember what you want to remember; you keep memories you want or need, but you no longer have to be subjected to the unwanted emotion that accompanies the memories. For those distressful memories connected to trauma, you will still remember the incidents, but the emotional impact will be different and the memory will be far less distressing. Most patients report that after treatment they can remember the event without reliving it.

And What About Beliefs?

Beliefs are judgments made by your mind when interpreting life events. We call them blocking beliefs if they compromise your stated intentions to reach your goals. Blocking beliefs are typically negative, and usually start with the words “I” or “I am” (something bad). Examples include, “I am not smart enough to...” or “I will be laughed at if I attempt this.”

It is sometimes possible for a blocking belief to seem positive when you first uncover it, such as “I deserve to have some fun” or “I am unsafe in a particular situation.” In these examples the belief, “I deserve to have some fun,” can appear to be a constructive belief, but it may be connected to the belief that I deserve to have fun no matter what the consequences (as frequently happens with addictive situations.) Or the belief that “I am unsafe and I need to protect myself” may be true in some cases, but it may become an overriding belief that leads you to limiting yourself. Once you decide to use TAB to treat these beliefs that no longer serve you, you will have the ability to make new choices and consider healthier beliefs.

Sally's Story Continued

Recall that Sally, who was unemployed, struggled with interviews. Whenever she was in an interview, her brain would get flooded with negative thoughts, resulting in her barely being able to respond to the interviewer with any more than yes or no answers. Sally had no idea why she reacted that way, but she became angry each time she did. However, when she asked herself, "When was the first time I felt like this?" she remembered being in seventh grade. She was running for president of her class and her opponent was a boy named Ronald, whose mother was a friend of her mother's. Ronald's mother had visited Sally's mom and asked Sally what she would do if she were elected president. Sally was open in her response and told details of her plan of action if she won. The following week, both presidential candidates were to give speeches. Ronald was first to speak; he stood up and proceeded to say almost word for word all the ideas Sally had shared with his mother. Sally was shocked, angry, ashamed, and hurt. She was so upset that she was unable to recover and say something when it was her turn. She sat down, humiliated. As Sally recalled that memory she realized that this past experience caused her current feelings of anger and fear when she was faced with the prospect of giving out information about herself and her ideas, which she knew and her audience didn't. She was scared of revealing things about herself. She was able to connect that experience with the manner in which she reacted during the job interview. She stated, "You just can't trust anyone." When asked what she believed about herself when she thought that you just can't trust anyone, she replied, "I am not safe if I reveal too much."

As you can see, Sally's problem started when she was a twelve-year-old girl trying to protect herself against experiencing the pain and embarrassment of having her ideas stolen. Over time, however, that belief stopped serving her and, in fact, compromised her ability to function, as evidenced by her poor performance in job interviews. Previously she had been unaware of the connection.

Therefore, the wall that you surround yourself with can start out as useful but if it grows unchecked it can snowball into self-sabotage, because of the negative beliefs generated by it. Walls and beliefs build on one another and a belief has the energy to block progress and thus

create a wall. A wall can then prove you are inept, which, in turn, then creates a belief. Many negative beliefs that create walls during adulthood come from beliefs learned early on in life. Often, in childhood they were protective or soothing, but in adulthood they are often limiting and agonizing.

Sally now recognized that unresolved memories, beliefs and feelings from that seventh grade experience kept her trapped and didn't allow her to participate effectively in an interview. Remembering the source of a problem does not necessarily resolve it. Many people are all too painfully aware of where their negative beliefs come from, yet they are still trapped behind walls because of them. As already discussed, sometimes it is useful to try to understand where beliefs come from, but it is not essential to recall the source in order to get through the wall or clear the energy disruption. Although Sally had identified the beginning event, and now understood the source of her interview problem, that knowledge alone did not change the disturbing feelings connected to the memory of the betrayal, nor the belief that she was unsafe when questioned during an interview.

Sally had tried positive thinking, talking, and trying to change her behavior but none of these strategies were successful. With TAB, she was able to identify what about the interview situation connected energetically with her old memory of humiliation. She used the techniques of TAB, which you will learn in the coming chapters, in the following way: briefly, she did a polarity check (Chapter 7); she then asked herself for permission to work on the problem by self-test (Chapter 6) and began to identify and treat the meridian points that required attention. She created a healthier belief, "I am able to choose what I tell others safely." At the end of the treatment she strengthened the belief by doing a future performance exercise that you will learn in Chapter 11.

The TAB self-treatment took Sally 30 minutes. She went to her next interview and sat down without her usual anxiety. Although she did not get the position because she was told she was overqualified, she was delighted that she was able to show the interviewer how much she

knew. She had reached her goal to perform well in an interview. A week later, another company called her for an interview having heard about her from the interviewer of the past week. Sally had moved forward, her thought field cleared of emotional signals that were no longer useful, and her wall was gone. This is quite typical of a TAB treatment, and once you decide to use TAB to treat beliefs that no longer serve you, you will have the ability to make new choices and consider healthier beliefs.

Exercise: Evaluate Your Walls

Here is an exercise that will help you begin to use this book. Take some time and respond to the following questions:

What walls or disruptions are you facing? What thoughts, beliefs and feelings are getting in your way? What behaviors do you want to change? How would you describe your “wall” or your “disruption”?

What do you think you need to do to get past your problem?

When did your problem start? What was going on in your life when the problem first appeared?

When was your problem the worst? When did it cause the most difficulty for you?

What memories do you associate with this problem?

Was it ever useful to have this problem? If yes, when?

Is there an “I” or “I am” belief that goes with this problem? If yes, when did it start?

Moving on to Chapter Two

Summarizing this chapter, you now can think about your problem thoughts and behaviors in terms of the energy of walls and beliefs. Next you will learn more about the nature of beliefs and the triggers that set off your unwanted thoughts and behaviors as signals in the thought fields.