

Wesley Little's entire blog site < <https://www.becomingatherapist.org>> is perfectly compatible with the theme of this newsletter – resources along the journey.

On her home page she invites the reader to “: Join me as I struggle with learning this incredible model, Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy. It's a long road, let's have friends along the way.”

### **The Confused Mind Says No – by Wesley Little**

I heard an interesting phrase the other day I had never heard of before. I was listening to a podcast about marketing by Allison Puryear, and as she was speaking she said off-hand, “You know, the confused mind says no.”

That phrase really struck me, and when I looked it up I saw that this is a widely known idea, although it was new to me. The confused mind says no. That's so true, isn't it? And it made so much sense to me in the work we do with couples and EFT. When a couple is in the chaos of escalation, or frozen distance, they are making meaning of things for sure, but underneath it all is confusion. Because they loved this person across from them at some point, and felt loved by them. This worked once. So why do they feel so awful now? Why can't they communicate in a way that makes them feel better after a disagreement?

I suspect in that moment of confusion, we say “no” to a lot of things. “No” to the idea our partner does care, “no” to hearing our partner's hurt when we are hurting so much, “no” to believing things could be different. Maybe even “no” to the relationship. This is why I love that EFT is a process of clarity. We go slow, and try to really understand with our couples, what is actually happening in these moments? What are you feeling? How did you make sense of that? What did you do with that feeling? What is happening on the inside versus the outside? It's slow and hard work, but I truly believe that if I can do it well enough, EFT can bring the couple in front of me clarity.

Of course, it's not just our couples who get confused and shut down. Couples work is so, so hard. I'm always surprised when I hear a therapist say that couples work isn't challenging for them. When I hear someone say that I feel like I'm living on a different planet than they are. This is the hardest thing I've ever tried to learn. There are times I want to shut down, and say no, because I'm confused about where to go with a couple, or how to guide them expertly enough that they start to see their part of the cycle. And the stakes are so high. This is someone's marriage I could help or not help. Even writing that sentence makes me want to start breathing into a paper bag.

That's where another remarkable part of EFT comes in – the community of continued learning and support. Thank goodness for the people who work so hard to become trainers and supervisors and help us through the weeds of learning how

to do this work. Not everyone who starts on the path of EFT decides to stay. I'm curious to know the percentage of people who do the Externship who don't continue on to Core Skills, and then the people who do Core Skills who don't continue to use EFT. If I were to guess, I would imagine that if people do fade away from EFT it's not because they don't believe the model works. I mean, you only have to see Lorrie Brubacher do a live session once to know this model can be miraculous in the hands of someone like her. I would guess they fade away because it's a difficult model to learn and even harder to go into session day after day and doubt you're using it well enough for your couples. The difficulty and confusion of learning the model might be leading them to say "no."

How I try to fight through the temptation to shut down, or give up, is by continuing my learning all the time. Signing up for The EFT Lab with Jennifer Olden and Lillian Buchanan was one of the best decisions I could have made. They break down skills in such a helpful and digestible way. I get supervision every other week with a great supervisor, and this also forces me to watch my tapes (yuck). I know that once a month I'm going to check in with Rebecca's Jorgensen's "In Session" and watch an EFT trainer do a session, where I get to see all the different ways experts show up and use the model. It all helps me feel like I'm not just floating around in EFT space, getting more and more confused why I can't do anything with my Pursuers.

Learning this model is an investment. It takes a lot of money, time, and energy to stay on the EFT path. I think of our couples, who are hesitant to spend money and time on couples therapy. And I think, wouldn't it be worth it, though? Wouldn't it be worth it to skip going out to dinner or buying new stuff for a little while if this vastly changes your marriage? If you felt true security with your partner? If your kids didn't have to see those arguments and tense silences? For us, I think the same. Wouldn't it be worth it if we could get much better at this model? I invest because I long for the day where I feel less anxious before a session and less doubt after.

Relationships are confusing for our couples, and becoming a couples therapist can be confusing for us. So little by little we work towards clarity for them, and for ourselves, so we don't end up shutting the door on something positive and incredible.