

**Tidbits from Stage Two Change Events: Getting Clearer, Going Deeper, Presented by EFT Trainers Kathryn Rheem and Marilyn Best**  
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*“We’re brave to go in there with our couples” Kathryn Rheem*

Last month I attended Kathryn Rheem and Marlene Best’s training, Stage Two Change Events: Getting Clearer, Going Deeper, at the Washington Baltimore Center for EFT. It was two days chock full of incredible training. The first day Kathryn focused on Withdrawer Re-Engagement and her research findings and the second day Marlene presented Pursuer Softening with Bradley & Furrow’s mini-model. In this article, I’ll share two pieces of content that were particularly helpful for me and might be of interest to you as well. First, is a brief overview of Kathryn’s discussion about emotion and second, some helpful hints to manage the times we’re resonating so well, that we get a little overwhelmed by the emotion ourselves.

At the beginning of her talk on deepening emotion, Kathryn offered a metaphor of a swimming pool. In stage 1, Step 3, we invite our clients into the shallow end of the pool where we reflect and validate secondary emotion. We dip in, go in and linger there a little with our feet on the bottom. We look for doorways into primary emotion, first cognitively, naming it, and slowly, gently dipping in a little, we help the client bring it into the here and now, experientially. Just a little at a time.

In Step 5, we slowly, gently move into the deep end of the pool where we can still feel our feet on the bottom, leading clients into their pockets of pain. To do this, Kathryn explained, “we invest in the client’s limbic life.” I use myself, my own emotional inner experience in the moment to attune with the client. I need to “feel the pull and lure of the client’s limbic system and go with it.” We “capitalize on every bit of data,” to increase our attunement. With withdrawers especially, we watch for facial expressions, the ones that occur when the person is deliberately or unconsciously hiding a felt emotion. These are the micro expressions that, according to Ekman (2013), last only 1/15th to 1/25th of a second. These are doorways into their inner emotional world. As EFT therapists, we have to notice these micro expressions, and use them to make a conjecture, or to evoke or heighten emotion.

In Step 7 we are now in the deep end, feet off the bottom, treading water. Here we stay with our client, helping them as they feel the emotion. We follow the affect until the need emerges. We stay with the client at their leading edge, make it relational and then helping them share it with their partner.

I don’t know about you, but sometimes I get scared when I begin moving into the deep end of the pool with a client. There’s a lot of emotion in the room, and with certain couples, my own survival strategies begin to kick in. This doesn’t happen with every one of my couples. I feel much more relaxed with some couples than others. When I’m scared, I tend to make meaning too fast. I begin feeling an inner drive to come up with

words to describe what the client is feeling. I conjecture too much. I often try to make meaning because sitting with the client's emotion is hard. My stomach is in a knot.

As Kathryn described attunement and the importance of joining the client limbically, increasing empathy, she explained that when we move too fast, we fail to let the emotion do its job. The meaning will emerge from the emotion itself. We need to slow down and "make room for our client's humanity." "Slow down, amplify primary emotion to clarify," offered Kathryn. We use our voices, softly, gently, slowly, using RISSC, to "call forth the client's inner world." I'm at my best when I can just linger here, stay quiet and be with my client in this moment, in this space. George Faller tells us that we might be the only person who has ever joined our client in this pain.

As I listened to Kathryn, I gathered up my courage and raised my hand. I told Kathryn and Marlene, and of course all the other participants in the room, that sometimes I feel afraid heading into an EFT session. That sometimes, treading water in the deep end of the pool of emotion with my clients, my mind goes blank and I'm not sure what to do. Kathryn asked the participants if anyone else feels scared heading into an EFT session. About 75% of the participants raised their hands. She asked if anyone else gets anxious and stuck in the middle of deep emotion in the room. About the same percentage of folks raised their hands. I was a little surprised, but comforted to see that so many other EFT therapists feel the same. As usual, it helps to know I'm not alone.

- "We're brave to go in there with our couples," Kathryn said, validating our experience. She offered the following helpful suggestions.
- Be transparent with clients. "Hey, I just got scared that I wasn't going to know what to do." or "I'm not sure what to do right now - I need a moment." or "I need to take a moment and process this emotion."
- Sometimes an intervention might be on my own behalf.
- Take a moment in myself and quiet the critical voice.
- Notice my View of Self and be a good parent to myself.
- Replay what I just heard and check it out with the client.
- Go back to the last time I can remember feeling attuned and start there.
- Place meaningful items in our offices (that remind us we're not alone, we're safe, connected and loved) to look at when the going gets tough in the middle of a session.

If you're looking for advanced training on Stage Two work, I highly recommend this training. Kathryn and Marilyn usually offer this training every June in VA and elsewhere throughout the year as well.

In preparation for writing this article, I emailed Sue, asking for a few words of wisdom on this topic. In typical Sue fashion, she responded with the following generous thoughts:

*“Yes - its important to know when we get triggered – scared by the emotion itself or the client’s experience. When we know, we can say – ‘Oh there it is’ – and find a way to say – ‘This is not me but .....(clients name)’ and go back to the EFT tango or to outlining the elements in the emotion – to being there for her. Then go find a colleague to talk to.*

*“In fact our own vulnerability is a wonderful way of attuning to another – unless it overwhelms and takes us off track.”*