I’m speaking with Sylvia Becker-Hill, who is an Executive Change Strategist. She specializes in coaching corporate leaders to bring about positive, lasting change. Utilizing the latest research in neuroscience and emotional intelligence, Sylvia helps executives transform their leadership. That brings us to the focus of today’s conversation: neuroplasticity.

Do you remember when you started focusing in on the brain and neuroplasticity?

It was several years ago. It came from frustration working with clients. I kept finding myself up against a wall. Some of my clients were so resistant to change that I became personally frustrated as a coach. Despite using all of my coaching tools, I would hit a roadblock. That’s what triggered my interest.

What is neuroplasticity?

It’s a new scientific paradigm—a phenomenon proven about 20 years ago. Before then, scientists believed that the brain only grew and changed until we were about six years old. It was thought to remain the same from then until death. If injuries occurred or problems arose, that was too bad.

Now, because of this paradigm, we understand that the brain is flexible and able to change itself constantly until we die.

Optional asides: Miraculous recoveries started research into the old belief, and more and more scientists figured out that the old theory was wrong. In fact, the brain can rewire itself and heal itself.

So neuroplasticity describes the ability of the brain to rewire itself throughout our whole lives.
Why is this significant to you and your work?

As humans, we have access to the conscious part of the brain, where we know what we know and are aware of what we feel. This is small compared to the subconscious part of our brain. I like to compare this to an iceberg, with the enormous part below water representing the subconscious. Most of our patterns, habits, memories, values, judgments and categories are stored in the subconscious.

[The Iceberg Mind Model™ has been included below to illustrate this point.]

OK. I know that one of your specialties is breaking complex ideas down into understandable pieces. So, can you explain why our brains relegate so much to the subconscious?

Why? Because the brain seeks efficiency. To function daily, the brain needs to compartmentalize these things out in order to take care of the “must-do” items.

Think of a computer. What we see on the monitor is consciousness—what we’re aware of. Yet in the background, the computer is performing a multitude of functions that we don’t even think about—running backups, checking messages, protecting against viruses, etc. This represents the subconscious at work.

The problems begin when we want to initiate change. Let’s use weight loss as an example. When we try to change on a conscious level, we say something like, “I want to lose weight because I will look better, feel better and live longer.” Most people know what we’re supposed to do in order to lose weight, yet it just doesn’t happen. (Or if it does, it’s often not permanent.) If the conscious mind were enough, then we wouldn’t have such a huge industry around weight loss.
So, why can’t we just do it?

Because everything in our subconscious is working against it.

It’s like trying to drive with one foot on the gas pedal and one on the brake. You’re trying to move ahead with your conscious decision—the gas pedal—but several things in your subconscious are putting on the brakes.

Most people struggling with weight loss don’t eat just because they are hungry. They tend to make their food choices out of habit, eating for emotional reasons or reward or based upon beliefs from childhood. When you think you have to clean your plate, you eat more than you should.

In order to really follow up with your conscious decision to lose weight, you have to have brain alignment. Your subconscious and conscious have to be in alignment, or agreement, with the same goal. Without brain alignment, you are literally fighting against yourself when you are trying to change or reach a goal. Remember the iceberg analogy: The subconscious is always more powerful than the conscious mind.

What about “where there’s a will there’s a way”?

It’s not just willpower, because willpower is a resource that can be depleted. Willpower is part of our conscious mind, and with sleep deprivation, multitasking or stress, your willpower gets tired. Using weight loss as an example again, you might stick to your diet goals all day long, but after a long day, you might go home exhausted and blow it, eating way more than you intended.

Willpower alone will not get you where you want to be—and where you dream to be.

So how do you tap into your subconscious?

To get the full power for change, you have to get your unconsciousness on board. This is where neuroplasticity kicks in, and it’s the reason I’m so passionate about neuroplasticity. It provides hope and a solution, for we can access our own brains and change our subconscious mind.

When your computer stops working, you have a technician clean, repair and reconfigure it as needed. We can do the same thing, accesses and rewiring our subconscious brain in a deliberate way. We are now able to create brain alignment, changing our subconscious in a way that it supports our conscious goals.

That makes me especially excited, for when you have brain alignment, things that seemed impossible before change so easily now that it’s almost like magic. It’s like driving with both the brake and gas pedals on and then removing the brake all of a sudden. You are now capable of going full speed ahead, breaking all speed limits.
Those who have fought with yo-yo dieting but then achieve brain alignment through coaching can lose weight without struggle. Now, without a lot of work or strict dieting, they start to lose weight in a sustainable way. Before, they could only control things for a while, and then their subconscious would kick in and take over.

We achieve brain alignment through self-directed neuroplasticity.

**What is self-directed neuroplasticity, and how do you facilitate brain alignment without brain surgery?**

I use emotional freedom techniques, or EFT. This involves positive energy psychology. I’m trained in Progressive EFT, which goes beyond the standard.

EFT is based upon Chinese acupuncture. Humans have an energy system in addition to a nervous system. Energy travels through pathways called meridians. In EFT I use this knowledge to show people how to tap on these energy points with the tips of their fingers. Through a specific tapping sequence, we can access the meridians of the subconscious mind.

[The Human Meridians and Pro-EFT Tapping Points images below have been included below to illustrate this.]
Most of the time change is blocked by old fears and negative beliefs. These are usually created during a time of huge stress or trauma. During those times, the energy in our body gets blocked. Picture a kink in your garden hose. It’s similar to our energy systems. We have kinks from every trauma in our life—from small things like traffic aggravations to profoundly significant things like the loss of parents. All of these are stored and locked in our bodies.

When we use EFT, it’s like removing a kink so that energy can start to flow again. We can literally start to change our minds so that we clean our unconsciousness from any negative emotion or belief that is blocking our conscious efforts. You won’t forget your memories, but the emotional charge, negativity and stress related to them will be gone.

Sometimes it’s only the negative charge keeping that memory alive. If you want to forget something, now you can. Some are haunted by bad memories that play over and over in their minds. Through tapping, you create a charge that will stop this dialogue in your head. You can change whatever you want to change.

Can you back up for just a second and explain what “charge” means in more detail?

As a culture, Americans are not trained to observe things without an emotional reaction. (Some cultures are trained that way.) As soon as we react to something emotionally, we create a charge—either positive or negative. The stronger the emotion, or charge, the more we “fix” on that event or item.

For example, if you’re trying to lose weight, you might find yourself fixating on a stupid piece of cake instead of enjoying the party you’re attending. This is because of emotional charge. Sometimes our attention fixes on the negative, and we lose awareness of other things.

Emotional charge is like glue. It keeps things in place. When you experience things without that charge, you forget about them immediately. For better or worse, charge helps you hang onto things for a long time.

To remove trauma, you need to remove the glue related to it. It’s like taking the glue off of a craft. You could destroy the craft or just remove the glue and start over so it is free to be rewired in a different way. And so are you.

The connection created through a strong emotional charge keeps neurons connected with each other. That’s the tangible link. Through tapping we access these charges, which produces a measurable effect on the physical part of the brain. You can see how the physical part of the brain changes after you change the emotional charge and blocked energy. Get the energy flowing, and the brain can start “flowing” again on a physical level. And that’s how I can create brain alignment without slicing into my clients’ heads!
Do you want to say anything else about the tapping process?

Where brain surgeons use scalpels, I use tapping to work on the emotions and energy. While a neurosurgeon might cut away a tumor with a scalpel, I use tapping to cut away the emotional pain, negative beliefs and subconscious resistance to change.

How is tapping different from getting a massage or going to a chiropractor?

I work with conscious and subconscious using language. I interview the client and talk about the goal. I do detective work to determine what the blocks are. This is very goal-focused, targeted work.

It's kind of like using the File Manager on your computer to find the files you need. I use language to dig around so I can access the specific files, or blocks. As a coach trained in EFT, I can target specific files in your subconscious in order for you to move towards your goal. This involves precise, targeted, sophisticated, goal-focused dialog, using lots of questions to get this cleared and sorted out.

How long does this take? And can you give some examples?

OK. I'll describe one of first miracles I experienced as a result of EFT.

I'm 44 years old, yet I couldn't ride a bicycle until last spring. Before then, I would have a panic attack and totally freak out every time I touched a bike. There was obviously a psychological and emotional block.

There were many times over the years when this negatively affected my ability to socialize, but I just couldn't get past it. I'm now married to an active man and mountain biker, and we have two active boys. I didn't want to sit on the sidelines anymore.

All "traditional" coaching sessions targeting this issue helped with my conscious mind, but as soon as my hand touched the bike, I’d lose it. Finally, I used EFT on myself for just 7 minutes, and that made all the difference.

Until then, I could not remember why it was a problem. During that short session, I was finally able to get rid of the emotional charge and emotional feelings that were holding me back. Later the same day I went to two bike shops, interviewed sales people and then ordered a bike online.

After tapping to help with the nervousness, I rode for 20 minutes on the day the bike was assembled. Just 5 days later I went on a bike ride with my boys.

Previously, this issue had been a shadow in my private life. I was deeply embarrassed and ashamed that I couldn't ride a bike. As a coach I help other people accomplish huge changes, but not being able to change such a "minor" thing for myself affected my self-confidence. Now I know now I can change in deeper and more meaningful ways than I had ever imagined. This
boosted my self-confidence as a coach and in the trust that we ALL can change in more deeper and meaningful ways than we ever imagined.

I know now for sure than when something is created by a human, it can be discreated or changed as well. So whatever negative emotion, blocking relief or resistance to change was created in the past, you can get rid of it. That’s so exciting. We’re not doomed to stay the way we are. We can literally redesign ourselves.

Now I can help people use this technique for themselves.

**What does this open up for you, as a coach?**

When we try to change a client’s environment or something inside, we need to facilitate properly aligned feelings. Otherwise we create stumbling blocks for this change.

**Can you share a business-related issue that was resolved with EFT?**

Sure. I’d love to...

One of my executive clients had a very difficult relationship with her boss. She was so frustrated that she was about to leave the company because of that relationship. We used tapping to address all of her negative emotions, most of which stemmed from the first two weeks that they started working together.

After the EFT work her frustration was gone, and she was able to see how she was responsible for some of the misunderstanding. Her confidence level was higher, and she finally had the courage and freedom to have a conversation with him about their relationship. She then experienced a miracle of sorts. When they met, HE was different already.

When we start to change ourselves and let go of old resistances, our environment starts to change in our favor. She started a completely new relationship with him, became happy with her work again and decided to stay because there was no longer any need to leave. That whole coaching session lasted less than 15 minutes. I helped her keep the job she loved by getting rid of the stress she felt from a bad relationship.

**So now what?**

My advice to everyone who has a goal is this: If you feel yourself getting stuck, procrastinating or not moving ahead, look for a coach trained in EFT. Change is hard, so get the help you need to remove the subconscious blocks that are preventing change.

To make your life more magical, seek brain alignment. To make impossible change seem possible, always seek brain alignment. Your subconscious becomes your supportive friend instead of your enemy. I know for sure that it is possible.
Thank you, Sylvia, and thanks to everyone who listened to this interview.

Sylvia is devoted to helping people live their full potential. After hearing her grasp of—and enthusiasm for—this topic, you can better understand why her clients have experienced deep transformation with her help.

Would YOU like to eliminate stress, procrastination and doubt—quickly?

Take control of your career and your life:
go back to Sylvia’s website, www.sylviabeckerhill.com/ProEFT,to claim a free ProEFT Discovery Session with her.