

Straight to the Heart

Radical Exposure Tapping and the Transformative Healing of Trauma

LAURIE MACKINNON, PhD

PRAISE

Dr Laurie MacKinnon's work as a therapist, researcher and educator has long inspired clinicians across therapeutic disciplines. What convinced me about Radical Exposure Tapping was its grounding in the neurobiology of trauma; Laurie makes a clear and compelling case for why it works. In practice, it is a powerful de-arousal strategy and a powerful way of reframing what has happened, settling the somatic responses that keep people stuck. I have used it with individuals, with couples, with a whole family gathered in their dining room, and online across continents, and I would have no hesitation reaching for it in any of those settings. Clinicians will be inspired and well equipped by having this book available at a time when there is a real need for hope. It is a significant and highly recommended contribution to trauma treatment, practice and research.

Sue Foley, MA, MSW, MEd, MAASW

Forensic and Clinical Social Worker; former Director, NSW Children's Court Clinic, Sydney

Straight to the Heart is an engaging, easy-to-follow and clinically useful guide to applying Radical Exposure Tapping in the treatment of trauma. Illustrating its techniques through a variety of clinical cases, the book consolidated my understanding of RET and increased my confidence in using it with clients. It is an excellent resource for both clinicians new to the RET model and experienced RET practitioners looking to sharpen their skills.

Sarah Edelman, PhD

Clinical Psychologist and author of Change Your Thinking with CBT, Sydney

I was fortunate to attend Level 1 and Level 2 Radical Exposure Tapping training with Laurie MacKinnon. The method of therapy is extremely effective at helping patients to heal from their trauma in a relatively short time frame, and it substantially changes the experience and narrative of the trauma with Laurie's unique methods. The book is an excellent account of the theory and step-by-step method of Radical Exposure Tapping, with real-life examples, important language, and specific techniques. I highly recommend this book.

Dr Michael O'Shea, FRANZCP

Psychiatrist and Member, RANZCP Section of Psychotherapy; Greenwich Specialist Consulting Rooms, Sydney

Dr MacKinnon's Radical Exposure Tapping is an excellent trauma-processing therapy. It quickly allows therapist and patient to understand the body symptoms, the held images that continue to haunt, and the associated negative cognitions, and it enables resolution of the trauma memory symptoms. I have used RET in correctional settings, homeless clinics, and via telepsychiatry, and can thoroughly recommend it as an effective and user-friendly approach. This book, *Straight to the Heart*, is a valuable addition to any trauma therapist's toolkit.

Dr Andrew Watt, FRANZCP

General Adult and Forensic Psychiatrist, Sydney

Straight to the Heart generously draws on Laurie's extensive clinical experience, deep understanding of trauma, and exceptional teaching ability to create a practical and compassionate guide for therapists. It is a reliable touchstone for navigating the complexities of trauma, helping therapists stay grounded, work with confidence, and guide clients towards self-acceptance, healing and lasting recovery.

Claire Ralfs, PhD

CEO, Relationships Australia (South Australia), Adelaide

As I read this book, I could hear Laurie's voice, breaking down how to work with trauma, with vivid descriptions of her conversations with clients that jumped off the page. Her explanations of why it works will be invaluable for therapists, new and more experienced, seeking to understand RET's efficient approach. What comes through these pages is Laurie's determination to share hard-won practice wisdom, always from the client's own experience of trauma and a practical question: what actually creates change? She has tested the work seriously, using standardised measures, transcribing sessions and examining client feedback to see what was and was not working. Above all, this book is an act of teaching, a legacy for those coming behind her. I finished it wishing that every woman who has lived through domestic and family violence could find a therapist trained in this way of working.

Megan Solomon, BA (Hons, Psych), MCFT

Practice Lead Counselling, Uniting, Sydney

I trained in RET before COVID, and years on, it remains one of the most powerful and most used tools in my toolbox. Clients do not have to tell me their whole trauma story. They bring out small, salient pieces, and I can see the effects so quickly. What convinced me were the clients who went in saying, "this is stupid, it won't do anything," and it worked anyway, and they came back asking for more. Most of my clients carry repeated trauma, death by a thousand cuts, but you do not have to work on every memory: find the right one, like pulling the right piece from a Jenga tower, and the others seem to sort themselves out. I have done full EMDR training, and I still go back to RET. The tapping keeps part of the person in the room with you, engaged in the task, and I have never had a client overwhelmed by it. RET gets right to the heart of it.

Oriane Landry, PhD

Senior Leader, Mental Health and Counselling, Bendigo Community Health

I trained in Radical Exposure Tapping in Laurie's very first workshops, and it has been at the heart of my practice ever since — with couples, with families, with children and teenagers. RET gave me what my systemic training could not: a way to reach the visceral, and to help people find the words for what they feel and then process those words. Having a clear model gave me the confidence to hold whatever a client brings into the room. Fifteen years on, I still see the same transformation at the end of a session.

Arti Yagnik, MSW, MA

Individual, Couple and Family Therapist, Adelaide

I learned Radical Exposure Tapping thirteen years ago, and apart from learning how to read, it is the most useful thing I have ever learned. I have used it hundreds of times, in a college counselling service serving students of every age, culture, and background, including clients who do not speak perfect English, and it never gets old. It remains my most powerful tool. This is the written guide I have wished for ever since.

Alana Thibault, MSc

Registered Psychologist, Learner Success Services, Bow Valley College, Calgary, Canada

I have known and worked with Laurie MacKinnon since 1988, as colleague, supervisee, and friend. I watched RET take shape from its earliest iterations, including when it was first offered to staff at the Bouverie Centre in Melbourne before being delivered more broadly across Australia. *Straight to the Heart* brings that lifetime of clinical wisdom into a book that is both rigorous and deeply humane. Reading it feels like sitting with a master clinician whose greatest gift has always been making profound insights practical.

Julie Beauchamp, BAppSc(OT), MC/FTherapy, CertAWT

Formerly Program Manager Clinical Services, The Bouverie Centre, Melbourne