

“Lemon Aide” for The Wisdom of Soma and Soul



with Bette J. Freedson, LICSW, LCSW, CGP

When a client comes in declaring, “I’m stuck!” what comes to your mind as you begin a diagnostic formulation? Which methodology do you choose to address the issue? As clinicians we are blessed with a plethora of concepts, techniques and strategies from which to choose our therapeutic aide.

Perhaps you educate your client about “stuck” being a personal decision. Maybe you assist her in re-integrating some dislocated piece of Self. Or might you interpret “stuck” as a part providing a certain secondary gain? While cognitive, behavioral, and parts-work modalities have validity, reliability and effectiveness, somatic and soul-centered approaches may contain a different type of potency.

A simple three-part exercise I call “Lemon Aide” is one such approach. Lemon Aide can evoke somatic resources that empower the healing potentials of Soul Wisdom. Consider what Clarissa Pinkola Estes, author of *Women Who Run with The Wolves*, says about information residing in the body.

“The body remembers, the bones remember, the joints remember, even the little finger remembers. Memory is lodged in pictures and feelings in the cells themselves. Like a sponge filled with water, anywhere the flesh is pressed, wrung, even touched lightly, a memory may flow out in a stream.”

Lemon Aide has the ability to press gently where somatic release is needed, allowing memories and wisdom to flow out and be absorbed into the soul. This holistic dynamic was demonstrated during a recent therapy session with Norma, who announced, “I am frozen and I feel numb!”

Norma described fear of ending a conflicted relationship and feeling trapped where she was living. Despite longing to “move on,” Norma’s fears were keeping her “stuck” in the sympathetic arousal of fight or flight. To cope, she’d settled on “freeze.”

When I suggested that mentally wrestling out of her dilemma was keeping her mired, but there might be a way to move her, Norma was unconvinced but curious. It was time for “Lemon Aide.”

Part one, “The Lemon Effect,” elicits sympathetic regulation and the body/brain connection.

First, take one or two easy breaths and imagine a lemon. Imagine cutting into it. Notice what happens in your body as juices flow. When ready, take a smell, a taste or suck on a slice. What happens in your salivary glands, in your mouth, in your mind? Now try imagining your favorite meal and notice what happens in all your senses. Your brain and body react to the phenomenology of an imaginary experience as if it is real.

The Lemon Effect, I explained, helps us see that if the brain experiences the lemon as real, worries can also affect our brain/body connection, the same connection that can help us trust that we can sense and feel our way into wisdom and solutions. This is the potency of Lemon Aide-- and the next steps.

Again, take a gentle breath, feeling relaxation as it presents in your mind, in your body. When ready, contemplate something that worries you. What thoughts come? What do you notice in your body? What emotions ebb and flow?

Take another easy breath, and let the perceived stress flow away, or just be there.

Now, allow yourself to feel what it feels like to have this resolved. Feel it as if it is done. Experience your personal felt-sense of a solution, as if you are now on the other side of your stress. Notice what happens in your body, your mind, and your emotions. Your brain can experience the real-ness of a solution, as it can experience a lemon, your body can feel the relief. Sometimes actual solutions come during this time, sometimes later. You can trust that when it is time you will know.

As it turned out, Norma's relief came immediately. She reported salivating as she imagined her favorite food during frequent visits to Arizona, where she feels in charge of her choices. Then, Norma put her hand on her heart, reporting a sensation of warmth, as the images and emotions began to flow.

Norma had been an "army brat" with many moves, many good-byes, many losses, and anxiety about new people in new places. Norma saw how fear of abandonment and loss had become her emotional companion. This time fear was keeping her frozen in place long after it was time to leave a relationship or situation.

To anchor Norma's new wisdom, I suggested that she keep her hand on her heart, feel the warmth in her body, and know that this sensation could replace the feeling of numbness. I offered that her heart could always be one portal to the soul wisdom of her authentic Self.

Since this session, Norma has moved her relationship from central to peripheral. She has moved into a home and neighborhood that nourishes her spirit, and she is feeling in charge of her choices.

For each of us there is the right touch. It can be accessed through Lemon Aide, a practice of mindfulness, somatic sensing or any practice that touches the soul's intuitive knowing. Whatever somatic portal you choose, the resources you need reside inside. All you need to do is press gently. What you need will flow and your soul wisdom will flower.

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