



## **Somatic Attunement: Another Way to Acquire Knowledge**

With Bette J. Freedson, LCSW

What does it mean to you to acquire knowledge?

When you want information, where do you go to get it?

Like many of us today, I rely on technology for answers. However, a comment made by my professor Bruce Maloof (Boston University School of Social Work) while handing our statistics class a syllabus headlined: *The Tao of Physics and Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, has come to mean the most to me.

“Lest you believe that the scientific method is the only way to acquire knowledge,” he explained, “I want you to realize that knowledge can be intuited through body/mind/soul sources.”

I was elated with this affirmation; at the time, I had begun to explore the psychic dimension of mind as a channel for reducing stress, receiving intuitive information and promoting healing. While I’ve forgotten most of what I learned about statistics, attunement to the intuitive power of the inner being remains my passionate interest and a core intention of my clinical work.

This deep belief in the body/mind/spirit/heart connection as a source of knowledge, and the use of hypnosis for accessing its available wisdom, has led to some fascinating therapy sessions, like a recent one in a small and effective group with two savvy men who keep their bodies tuned up and keep themselves tuned in. Somatic sensing has enabled Tom and Bert to form powerful partnerships with inner wisdom. Their lives have depended on it.

Tom and Bert live with AIDS. Bert, a sixty-ish nurse, seasoned, compassionate and frustrated by new techno-driven hospital requirements, has been deliberating retirement. Tom, at seventy, is long retired from a first career in business and a second career as an AIDS educator. Now Tom devotes himself to helping care for his three grandchildren. Both Tom and Bert are prone to give of themselves past the point of exhaustion, even to the point of illness. Making effective life management decisions has become as crucial to them as the imperative to manage their HIV. Somatic sensing has helped in this process.

Take Tom for example. Three years ago Tom's chronic gastrointestinal problems resulted in an extended hospitalization followed by rehab. Tom was discharged scared, weak and fitted with an Ostomy pouch. He faced a big decision. Was he going to stagnate in depression or make a fulfilling new life? For assistance, Tom attuned to his "gut" feelings. What his gut revealed shifted Tom into determination to recover.

In trance Tom recalled the emotional agony of hiding his authenticity as a young gay man. He experienced a felt sense of both the pain and the relief of coming-out later as a married man, the father of two children. Tom's realization of how denying his truth in the past had contributed to health problems in the present allowed him to reach for the inner knowledge he was seeking. Tom emerged from trance with motivation and courage to adapt to the ostomy, regain his strength and see where somatic wisdom would guide him next.

Now, on this current day, vibrant and healthy, Tom was wrestling with continually overextending himself to care for his grandchildren. While Bert, also dealing with a tendency to exceed his physical limits at work

and with friends was commiserating and supporting. I suggested that they take a couple gentle breaths, focus more deeply inside and when ready, locate a place in their bodies where wisdom was available.

Almost immediately, Tom's hand went to his ostomy and Bert's to his chest. Tom's insight was powerful. "HIV has kept me alive." He reported. "It has taught me how to respect my body." He sensed further that if he pays attention, "My 'gut' will inform me of what limits to set."

Bert's attunement went from heart to shoulders, where he reported seeing two "gremlins." He sensed the way they were helping him understand his ambivalence. With so much to give, Bert realized, "Sometimes I forget to listen to my own needs." He intuited that he would be able to bear the new rules and work a bit longer if he stays attuned to and follows his body's wisdom regarding boundaries.

Coming out of trance, Tom and Bert honored somatic sensing. "The body informs when you tune in," Bert said. "I've been trying to tell my patients that, and now I am realizing it more deeply myself." Tom added, "The body constantly tells us our status, and if we listen we will know what we need." Tom and Bert intend to keep their physiological batteries charged, insuring that they will stay tuned in to somatic wisdom.

Consider this: next time you go to a technological appendage for information, would it not be fascinating to remember what Professor Maloof said so long ago? You might enjoy taking a moment before you google to discover that with somatic attunement, knowledge and wisdom can be downloaded into your body, understood in your mind, and received by your soul.

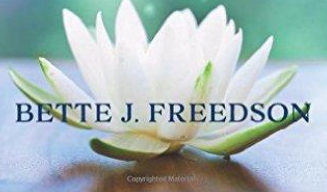
*Bette J. Freedson, LCSW is a clinical social worker, certified group psychotherapist, and the author of **Soul Mothers' Wisdom: Seven Insights for the Single Mother**. Bette's specialties include stress management, parenting issues, recovery from trauma and the development of intuitive insight. She maintains a private practice in southern Maine with her husband, Ray Amidon, LMFT.*

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# SOUL MOTHERS' WISDOM

SEVEN INSIGHTS  
FOR THE  
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