

## Kinesiology and Resolving Trauma

by Mary Louise Muller, M.Ed., RPP, LMT

Kinesiology is one of the great gifts that has been given to me this lifetime. I remember life pre and post kinesiology. When I learned Touch for Health in 1977, I loved the sense of strengthening muscles and new balance and vitality coming into the body. I then went on to learn polarity therapy and held kinesiology in the background until I learned Edu-K in 1987. This time the power of balances was even more pronounced, for more emotional and mental aspects were being addressed in this new system. I began to believe kinesiology could balance anything and everything.

In 1992, after having taken the full trainings in Edu-K™, Three In One Concepts™ and the new PKP, I felt ready to tackle the world. I was having amazing results with both my clients and myself. Then along came my frozen shoulder which I was sure would be gone in just a wink of an eye. Then I began to think it might take a little more than that.

The frozen shoulder became my teacher. I did my usual helpful things, both by myself and with other practitioners, and it got worse- and worse- and worse. This was a puzzle to me. I eventually was introduced to a man named Peter Levine who specialized in **trauma resolution**. After a few sessions with Peter, everything turned around and I was in the process of slowly getting better- and better- and better.

The main thing I learned from Peter was that **trauma patterns** need to be addressed with an understanding of trauma. Things that might be helpful with other patterns may actually aggravate them. They already have a tendency to move quickly and spiral. Processes that do not know how to pace and provide containment may actually drive a trauma pattern deeper and create retraumatization.

A **trauma pattern** may be identified by three main characteristics. The person is in a state of hypervigilance, helplessness and disassociation.

**Hypervigilance-** Usually when you speak with them, they talk rapidly, the mind is obsessed. The hypervigilance is a state of arousal from which the person has never recovered. Usually it is connected with a perpetual state of fear that has been unable to be resolved which perpetuates the sense of vigilance.

**Helplessness-** The person feels like no one can help. This sense of powerlessness is related to being overwhelmed in the trauma situation and unable to meet the challenge. Not all traumatic experiences leave a person traumatized. The traumatization comes from being overwhelmed by the trauma. When we triumph over a challenge, it may empower us.

**Disassociation-** They have difficulty staying present and in the body. A natural defense when overwhelmed is to disassociate. This saves us from experiencing the intensity of the brutality of many traumas and thereby helps us survive.

As we work with people who have unresolved trauma reactions and they begin to heal, they regain the ability to be more present vs. disassociated, more powerful vs. helpless and more peaceful vs. hypervigilant. I call these the three P's- **Peace, Power and Presence**.

Hypervigilant, helpless and not fully in the body may sound like many of the people who come to your office. As kinesiologists, we often have people come to us who have tried many other options before arriving on our doorstep. Also, things are not black and white. There are shades of holding trauma patterns and ways that it is combined and intertwined with other issues like developmental and physiological problems. Here are some basic rules in dealing with trauma type patterns.

**1. Make sure the person is in a space where there is a sense of personal resources for the ability to heal.** What are the strengths that enabled them to survive,

and what strengths brought them to your office? What does the person like about his or herself? What are the external resources available- friends, family, professionals? If the sense of inner or outer resources is not strong, this must be developed before working with trauma related patterns. If they are in a traumatized state when they come, do "first aid" and help them calm down and come to a place where they can begin to find resources.

**2. Do not trust muscle biofeedback answers to questions that are leading, highly charged in nature or to which you expect answers to determine exactly what happened.** Stay within a balance system and know that some answers and issues are metaphorical. Also know that within a trauma issue, the system *overcouples* aspects of one experience with other aspects of that experience and with other experiences. There is no clear "memory" like a tape recorded message. There is a blur of things taped over each other and interwoven. The client may have a birth issue, overcoupled with a fall and a separate loss of a relationship.

Because of the sense of hyperagitation, the client may feel unclear within and ask you to find the answers. Help the client to come to his or her own state of clarity. We often hear of people who become absurdly over-dependent on muscle testing biofeedback. These people are commonly in an unresolved trauma state and unable to settle to find the clear answers within.

**3. Physiological and biological completion is the key.** Do not think that "uncovering the truth" will solve the issue. Rather than, "The truth shall set you free", "Physiological completion will set you free." Part of the trauma pattern is to go over and over things in the mind and even when answers come, a sense of confusion remains. The nervous system is so agitated that the body wants to know why it's agitated and from what to protect itself.

The past is over. The person is now safe. When the nervous system relaxes through physiological completion, the obsessive sense of questioning melts away and the person is

able to be more with what is now and what needs healing. Slowly a deep clear sense of what is true for that person will emerge.

Let's look at what we mean by "physiological completion". When the body has a life-threatening experience and the nervous system goes into the tremendously charged state needed for fight, flight or freeze, it must also diffuse this charge through the fighting, fleeing or dissipation after the trauma time is over. The nervous system then returns to a level of function that is calm and ready. The parasympathetic and the sympathetic nervous systems then have the possibility of full response from ground zero.

When the hyperaroused nervous system response is not given the space to process and dissipate, the parasympathetic comes up to override the agitation, but the base of that agitation level is always there.

Peter Levine uses great video examples of what happens in nature when he shows scenes from a television show called "Great Escapes". A rabbit escapes the chase of a coyote. This may be an everyday occurrence in that rabbit's life. As the rabbit becomes aware that he has outrun the coyote, his leaps takes on a quality of joy and exuberance. He runs out the charge in the nervous system. A possum coming out of a freeze response shows a gradual shaking, trembling and changes in coloration as the nervous system dissipates the great charge that has held the creature frozen.

As I think about the human clients I've worked with, I remember shaking and trembling coming out years after the trauma which created the charge in the system. That charge has been in a holding pattern which may have been expressed as symptoms over the years. Now that the person finally has sufficient safety and resources, the charge is able to come out of the holding pattern and allow settling in the nervous system and movement of energy.

**4. Work in a way that helps to contain the clients process, so they may move through things gradually and in bite-sized pieces.** Peter Levine calls this *titration*. Trauma situations have called for

drastic and intense body responses that then often become tied up in unresolved holding patterns that now need to resolve slowly and gently. Rapid and intense release may retraumatize and give the system another layer that it cannot process. Kinesiology is often helpful in both resourcing and prioritizing so that the person is able to take on the pieces they are ready and able to digest.

Peter talks about the field in which the healing of trauma patterns can take place. The client must have a sense of safety, containment and resources. As a kinesiologist, notice how you can provide these.

**1. Safety-** Notice what makes people feel safe. Create an environment in your office that feels comforting and beautiful. Hold your own inner balance of peace, calm and power. You are creating and holding a field that gives the client a sense of your support and inner strength which then can join with the client's support and inner strength to be highly resourcing. Individual clients may have specific needs. One may need to know that the door is nearby. Another may need to know that there is privacy. Watch and listen and ask them about a sense of safety.

**2. Containment-** Help clients to speak slowly and to take one piece at a time. Touch them when they need physical contact or comforting to help contain things. You are creating and holding a container that gives clients a sense of limits and boundaries. You are giving a sense of being held or cradled so that when intense work moves through, there is support in containing the process.

**3. Resources-** Help clients to appreciate the inner strengths that got them through the trauma and that they have currently. Help them tune in to their inner knowing, their self trust, their self love, their specific empowering qualities. Help them to acknowledge external resources that helped them at the time of the trauma and help them currently- their friends, family, professional support, nature, spiritual connection.

After learning Peter Levine's work, I wasn't sure how to integrate it into my practice, so I put SE (Somatic Experiencing™) in my balance menu and got powerful results whenever it came up. SE helps increase practitioner focus and awareness through tracking the client's process. The practitioner helps the client to increase awareness and ability to process through learning to be with his or her own felt sense. Creating the field of containment, safety and resource is essential to the healing process if the client is going to sense the ability to reach within and touch the very deep hurts and traumas. Understanding the process of holding and releasing trauma patterns is essential to the ability to help the client process. SE is a very powerful and simple healing tool.

It dawned on me one day that the SE work itself might be more effective if the client was "switched on" for the skills necessary to process trauma. It was even possible that clients would be unable to process and might be stuck in ways if they were not "switched on". I made a check list of resource skills that a person needs, in order to be able to move through the healing of an unresolved trauma pattern.

This list may be used with any form of kinesiology balance. As a pre-check, use muscle biofeedback to find out which aspects are "switched off". You may use further muscle biofeedback, personal noticing and awareness for any individual resource skill. For example, with something like grounding, you might have the person notice their connection with the earth. Sense where the body feels grounded and where it doesn't.

Use your favorite system or balance menu to "switch on" these skills. Anchor the shift by muscle checking the response again. Now the possibility of the system healing a pattern that has previously been unable to be processed is greatly enhanced.

## Client Resource Skills for Trauma Resolution

based on the work of Peter Levine, Franklyn Sills and Mary Louise Muller

Creative Self Regulation	Uncoupling of overcoupled
Physiological completion and recovery	Uncouple fear from immobility
Process shock	Expansion- lengthening- decompression- physical, mental, emotional
Nervous System- balance between sympathetic and parasympathetic	Sense of flow- time- continuity
Proprioception- sense of self in space- centering	Containment- management of titration- structuring pieces
Vestibular response- balance centers	Safety- heart protector
Eye movement	Spirit connection- curiosity- motivation- wonderment
Discharge/charge- diffuse- hold- regulate charge	Restore energetic systems- Tibetan eights- clear energy cysts
Return to mobility- orienting/defensive response - intentional movement	Resource- External resource - Internal resource
Grounding- embodiment	Personal fulcrums - Grounding- Centering- Observer viewpoint- Clear reflection- Resourcing image of self- Boundaries
Come out of collapse- restore fullness	Repattern- renegotiate
Limbic brain function- emotional mediation- reticular activating system	Archetype- movement- posture- image
Reconnect undercoupled- Reassociation- Recompression- Reintegration	

### Reference:

Levine, Peter, *Waking the Tiger: How the Body Heals Trauma*, Ergos Institute, Lyons, Colorado, 1995

Book and course information is available  
through Pacific Distributing:  
39582 Via Temprano, Murrieta, CA 92563,  
USA Phone and FAX 909-677-0652

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