

The Creation of Empathy: A Conversation with Alize Timmerman

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A while ago, I read a book titled, “*The Trituration Handbook—Into the Heart of Homeopathy*” by Anneke Hogeland and Judy Schriebman; ever since I have been thinking about trituration or C4 homeopathy and how it impacts our understanding of the remedy and our clients in a deep manner. Trituration is defined as a dry method of potentizing medicinal substances whereby the substance is finely ground in a mortar with a certain proportion of milk sugar, thereby progressively attenuating it. The authors have described trituration or C4 homeopathy as a way of learning homeopathy by experience. They say that when you prepare a remedy by your own hands, following the trituration method, you become increasingly aware of the stepwise unfolding of the substance information and you can move through layers and levels inherent in the medicinal substance. You become more and more sensitive to the nuances of the information released by the substance and this increased sensitivity makes it easier for you to resonate with your patients. I was intrigued by this claim and when I learned that Alize Timmerman, lovingly called the ambassador of C4 homeopathy, was coming to speak at the JAHC 2013, I quickly noted down all the questions that were on my mind and requested a meeting with her, so that I could pick her brain as a representative of the *American Homeopath* (AH).

AH: Aphorism 256 asks us to prepare our medicines ourselves. In the present day when close to 5000 different substances have been turned into homeopathic remedies, and with the number of available remedies increasing daily, how practical is it for someone to follow this aphorism to the letter, especially when we have endless distractions, limited time and patients demanding a quick fix?

Alize: Hahnemann meant that we give the remedy by our own hands. By giving the remedy, the homeopath also

gives his empathy and connects with the patient at a deeper level. As you drop the remedy into a vial, add water to it, shake it a few times to dissolve and then give it to the patient, it is already the process of “making the remedy.” It is like cooking food for someone. You may not have grown all the ingredients in your backyard, but you create a meal by putting them together and cooking and then you serve the food. That is what this aphorism means.

AH: You have been using the trituration method successfully. Please tell me about this process.

A: In C4 homeopathy, we triturate remedies by our own hands, or even better, do so in groups, in order to gain a larger resonance. Up to the C3 trituration and after further potentization from that level, one is not yet at the end of gaining possible knowledge about the remedy and about the symptoms of the sick human being. Moving up to the C4 step, which only requires another hour of trituration, delivers the essential knowledge of the substance and the true essence of the remedy. We hardly ever go all the way to C8 and mostly we stop at C4/C5 levels. By reaching this level of trituration, we begin to understand the action of the remedy and develop awareness. We can then understand what the patient is trying to say about his suffering. At first, you simply do the trituration process for about two years and then go on to do a proving. We begin to know which symptom has to do with the substance and which symptom has to do with you. It is a developmental process happening in the prover. This is real homeopathy. We live in the intellectual word. We are trained to think that we can take information from outside into our intellect. But when you do trituration, it opens up an inner world of learning. Hering, Kent and Hahnemann all learned by doing provings.

Homeopathic trituration is a concept postulated by the German pharmacist Witold Ehrler in his book *Pearls of Pharmacognosis*. Ehrler discovered that in the process of making a new homeopathic remedy by grinding the initial substance in a mortar with a neutral substance, the person grinding the remedy experienced symptoms of the remedy. These symptoms are rather consistent for a large number of people taking part in a grinding session, although a certain variance in symptoms is noticed among the provers. Each successive step of triturating the remedy shows a specific set of symptoms, thus creating a hierarchy of symptoms ranging from a mundane, physical level and going up to spiritual and then esoteric levels.

The starting point is C0 level. Diluting the medicinal substance a hundredfold and meticulously grinding for at least one hour so the medicinal substance is thoroughly mixed with the neutral diluting material (i.e. milk sugar), one reaches the C1 level. Repeating this process brings us to the C2 level and so forth. This process of diluting and grinding was named by Hahnemann as "trituration." In Hahnemannian homeopathy one usually proceeds to the C1, seldom to the C3 level. Basically, until about 1980, most remedies were triturated to C1 level and then potentized. Ehrler was the first to explore levels beyond C1 and go up to C8. As Ehrler discovered, while preparing a remedy by diluting and grinding it with a neutral substance, the intrinsic knowledge of how a remedy will work on people is disclosed to the prover. The prover takes part in a sharing of knowledge on a level transcending the pure physical world, coming to know the essence of a remedy. This knowing is "pharmacognosis."

Key notions here are resonance and the expression of a remedy on the different levels of being. Trituration discloses the essence of a remedy step by step. Each trituration step is in resonance with on the one hand the person preparing the remedy, and on the other hand all people in a state similar to the remedy at that specific trituration level. So, when working with triturated remedies, the therapist experiences a journey through the layers of the remedy. The therapist working with triturations will enter into a resonant empathy, with the full force of the remedy revealed to him or her, enabling the therapist to become also in resonance with the patient treated. When triturations are duly used, the therapist will be the "knowing witness" in the healing process of the patient, connecting the archetypal force of the remedy with the actual need of the patient, truly making Hahnemann's proposition "*similia similibus curentur*" happen.

AH: C1 to C8, does this correspond to the centesimal scale?

A: No, not at all. C does not have anything to do with the centesimal potencies. It is taken directly from Witold Ehrler's cosmology and refers to one of his eight Carbon levels of existence (C0-C8).

AH: C1 to C8, Does this correspond to the LM scale?

A: You have to first triturate and then dilute and succuss all the way to the LM scale. It is the same for the centesimal scale. C0 to C8 just describe the levels of trituration.

AH: A regular homeopath usually does not have access to the crude medicinal substances used for making homeopathic remedies. For example, it would be rather difficult to obtain crude Lachesis venom. Is it possible to use mother tinctures, 1x, 3x or 6x from a pharmacy and use that as a starting point for trituration?

A: No, You must get hold of the crude medicinal substance.

AH: Do you potentize triturated remedies?

A: Yes, this has been described very well in *The Trituration Handbook* by Hogeland and Schriebman. Potentization of triturated remedies is based on Witold Ehrler's understanding of the number six which came to him during his trituration of graphite. Graphite is pure carbon with hexagon bonds. Number six has significance in alchemy and it is very likely that Hahnemann divided each hour-long trituration round into six parts of alternating grinding and scraping. Ehrler extended this power of six into creating potencies.

The power of six determines the number of dilutions and succussions. Take for example:

6 to the power of 1 (6^1) = 6
 6 to the power of 2 (6^2) = 36
 6 to the power of 3 (6^3) = 216
 6 to the power of 4 (6^4) = 1296
 6 to the power of 5 (6^5) = 7776

In addition to these dilution and succussion stages, we also have to take into consideration the number of trituration rounds that were done. Taking powder from the fourth round of trituration, we can get:

$6 + 4 = C10/4$ (European style) or
 $10C/4$ (North American style)
 $36 + 4 = C40/4$ or $40C/4$
 $216 + 4 = C220/4$ or $220C/4$
 $1296 + 4 = C1300/4$ OR $1300C/4$
 $7776 + 4 = C7780/4$ or $7780C/4$

AH: What is the most frequently used triturated remedy level?

A: Mostly we use C220/4 but recently, we have used C220/5, C40/5, C12/5, C30/5 and so on. Last year, we used

C5 a lot and it addresses the situation and miasm, the background, so to speak.

AH: Do you sometimes start helping a patient with C1 and then gradually raise the trituration level to C4 or beyond?

A: We start at C30/4 or C40/4. Then we go up to C220/4. But we can also start at C220/4 and then come down to C220/3 and below. It depends on what the patient needs.

AH: Why?

A: With different potencies, you can access different levels. Trituration is a step-by-step process, each successive step with its own specific level of influence and resonance and therefore its specific point of action in a person. The eight levels take us on a journey from the material to the transcendental.

- C0 material, substance, tincture
- C1 biological/physiological level
- C2 sensations, feelings, emotions, compensations experienced in the body
- C3 mental, thinking, delusions, illusions, religion, mythical, contrasts like good versus bad
- C4 acceptance, to be Buddha, spiritual, without judgment, destiny, synchronicity
- C5 individual archetype, the Source, dreams
- C6 collective archetype, vitality and vital sensation, energy
- C7 development of worlds, cultures
- C8 transformation of opposites

Another way of connecting our insights on C4 remedies with other approaches in homeopathy is to relate the trituration levels with the elements and the four major realms on earth.

- C0 + C1 – Earth, minerals and metal
- C2 – Water, plant
- C3 – Air, animal
- C4 – Fire, human

We know that, as a generalization, minerals and metals work more on the biological/physiological level, plant remedies more on the level of feelings and sensations, and that the animal remedies relate to propagation, the future and the mental level. Here we find the similarity with the C4 hierarchy: C1 working on functional pathology (muscles, bones etc.), C2 on emotional pathology, C3 on delusions and feelings and C4 on spiritual problems.

AH: I understand that C4 helps patients make peace with their suffering and begin to accept it as a gift. When such a state is achieved, is it possible that the patient would not

want his suffering to end? He may not want to give away his gift? Is it possible that such a patient will not come back for a follow up, even when his symptoms have not gone away, except that there is this change in his attitude that makes him see his suffering as a gift?

A: Yes, that does happen. They become content. They begin to see the larger picture. They begin to see the true meaning and purpose of their suffering and sometimes they do not come back for a follow up even though the symptoms are present. The patients on a C4 remedy go through a change in their attitude and begin to see their suffering in a different light.

AH: How about C5 to C8?

A: C5 problems come from miasms, from the underground, from the genetics and family background. At this level, the use of C5 gives the best results. With C6-8 you can access the collective suffering of humankind. In treating an individual at this level, you can treat their experience of the collective suffering.

AH: In deep-seated and advanced pathologies, is it safe to give a C1 level remedy as we do with 6c on a daily basis?

A: Yes, that can be done. We can give a daily dose of C1 the same way as a low potency.

AH: Please tell me about specifics. Can we use cartilage C1 for osteoarthritis and can stomach ulcers and liver cirrhosis benefit from C1 preparations of healthy tissues? I am curious about potentized Herpes simplex and Epstein Barr viruses. How about potentized *Helicobacter pylori* for stomach ulcers, Hepatitis C virus for liver cirrhosis and cancers, and *Borrelia burgdorferi* for Lyme disease? A direct correlation of these pathogens in eliciting pathological symptoms is well established. These questions come to mind when I think about specific remedies for specific conditions, similar to *Arnica* for bruises and muscle soreness and *Hypericum* for nerve injuries. What potencies would best serve the purpose?

A: That is organ therapy. I do not use these much in my practice. I use human remedies like *Lac humanum*, *Placenta*. But I have heard that remedies made from healthy organs and tissues can be helpful. When you have a very clear pathology with these viruses, then you can use 200c and get great results, on a line similar to *Arnica* for bruising.

AH: How about using nosodes in your practice?

A: I do not use them as often as I use human remedies. They have a wide-ranging application for the modern lifestyle. I use the indicated nosode when the symptoms are taking over the whole personality and the individual cannot

develop, or when children cannot be themselves because the miasm is so strong and their development is blocked.

AH: How many different remedies are available in C1-C4 scale? Where are these remedies available for purchase if a busy practitioner would like to use them but is strapped for time?

A: About 1000 remedies are available. Labopharma in Berlin carries the remedies. They are a bit pricy because they are totally handmade. Mostly used are remedies such as *Calcarea*, *Silica*, *Nat-mur* and *Alumina*. These are basic constitutional types.

AH: You have used the word empathy, indicating that when a practitioner performs trituration taking the crude substance from C0 to C4 and beyond, he engages in a gradual process of deepening and intimate understanding of the various levels of the remedy. Now my question is, this empathy with the medicinal substance—how does it help the practitioner develop empathy with the patient and the level he is vibrating in?

A: Simple. You begin to synchronize with the patient, be with the patient and it all opens up. If you mirror the patient, you come to good communication, then things open up for the patient. This is empathy. Basically, as you triturate the remedy and move from C1 to C4 level, you begin to understand the suffering of the patient and how he expresses and experiences symptoms at various levels. This awareness is the beginning of empathy.

AH: How does this fit in at a day-to-day level in a busy practice where a homeopath can see perhaps twenty to thirty patients in a day?

A: It is interesting that when you begin to understand the remedy you are giving to a patient, you can easily understand the essence of the patient. Now you have a key to the patient. You can let the patient talk about their life. When you understand their life on a deeper level and then give a remedy, you have chosen the remedy based on your empathy. It does not matter how many patients you see in a day—you can develop an empathetic connection with the remedy, with the patients and the way they experience their suffering. This is facilitated by engaging in the trituration process.

AH: In the days of Hahnemann, the provers took the remedy orally, and produced symptoms at various levels, sometimes eliciting severe pathologies. In trituration provings, what happens when the remedies are not taken orally, but the practitioner engages in triturating them? Have you had any prover elicit physical pathology as a consequence of the proving process or do you get a set of mental-emotional and spiritual pictures?

A: Trituration proving is a laborious, time-consuming process. You cannot do it while multi-tasking. You have to engage in the process with total concentration. This effectively calms our inner being.

We have observed a lot of physical symptoms during trituration provings at C1 level. While doing a C1 proving of *Equisetum*, the prover reported severe migraine. Since we do provings in a group, the outcome is much more reliable. Different people present different symptoms. For example, if a person always has back pain and he experiences back pain while proving, then that is his individual symptom. Another example comes to mind. We were proving estrogen and there was one man in the group. As the proving progressed to higher levels, the man started treating the women in the group as his women. Then he became one of us. He started talking about feminine subjects and began showing heart-centered behavior. He became overly protective of us. He had no idea we were proving estrogen. In effect, he was showing mental-emotional symptoms.

AH: I am wondering if the triturated remedies work like nanoparticles.

A: Very likely. I teach at Durban University in South Africa and a study from there indicates that C4 remedies have much smaller nanoparticles and therefore have much more activity.

AH: You use a porcelain mortar and pestle for the trituration process. Does it affect the remedies?

A: Porcelain is made up of silica, alumina and calcium among other things. These are the basic constitutional types too.

AH: Do triturated remedies have an expiration date?

A: If the remedies are kept dry, they have a long life. In water, the remedies change over time. You have to shake up the bottles every day. If the remedies just sit in the water, they deteriorate.

AH: Could you please give an overview of your practice?

A: When I focus on a patient, be with this patient, listen and figure out how to help, it gives me a great freedom. When we talk with each other, a tremendous exchange happens between our bodies and there are biochemical changes happening within the body. It is a great way to sacrifice oneself for the other. When I am engaged in this process of exchange, I feel that my ego is not acting out and I experience a tremendous possibility for giving. I feel very privileged to do this healing work. It is difficult for me to ask for money, though my patients have paid me very well and I have earned a lot. I feel it is

my vocation, a calling, to be in a state where I can engage with another human being for nurturing. You do not necessarily have to be a homeopath. You can nurture in many different ways anytime you engage with someone and express empathy. This work of nurturing others through healing brings on healing within ourselves too. I look for that when I take a case. With my patients, I look for that point where the patient can heal himself because he understands the very core of his issues and where he is stuck. That is what I do by listening with empathy.

When you say, “have to find a remedy,” you are already on the wrong path. It is a path on which the intellect engages in searching and there is no empathy, no connection with the patient and no empathetic understanding of how your patient is experiencing his suffering. You have to let go of the need to find the remedy, just be with the patient with all your heart, and then the remedy emerges.

AH: Do you follow any system?

A: I do. I always have—even before the sensation method became the talk of the day. I have always asked my patient, “How does it feel?” The tricky thing is you must develop this skill if you are trying to understand where the pathology is. It is not just communication. You must know where the energy is stuck and where the real pain resides. This knowing comes with experience and cannot be taught. It is like playing piano. You keep practicing and one day, music comes out and it comes out from your heart. It is not you knowing the notes and having the skills. It is something else. It flows from your vital force. It is the same thing when I work with my patients.

AH: That is where the word empathy fits in exactly. We are developing the art of being a good observer. We train ourselves to go where we must go and discover where the pathology and pain experienced by that patient actually resides. There can be too much of technique and too little of human interaction. And that is something to be avoided. There has to be human interaction driven by empathy when you sit down face-to-face with your patients and listen to them. In us there is a certain antenna to spot where the problem is in the patient, right?

A: You got it.

AH: People sit down and tell you their life story. How do you deal with it?

A: I listen and spot the delusion in their story. It is their life pattern. I mirror their behavior. Remedies also work at that level. I ask them if they want me to help them develop love and acceptance in their life. If they do, then I can work with them and help so that they will not fall into their habitual pattern of being in the world. I allow patients to go deeply

into their misery to where their emotional pain is, because that is where the case will be seen most clearly. By doing this, they identify and confront the pain, and then may have to dis-identify because the pain is too great. But this confrontation and aggravation is the first step toward integrating. Life stories can also give clues to the remedies. Life stories can indicate a disease state because the vital force is stuck at a point. When I make them aware of where they are stuck, help them see the total picture, help them embrace and accept their suffering and their pain, they experience healing. The only way to heal is to move people from stuck-ness to acceptance. This is where empathy comes in. This is where human remedies come in handy.

AH: Can human remedies become a daily prescription—considering that most patients are stuck at some level in their development?

A: Yes, of course. It can help. In my book titled, *Treatment of Human Development Disorders*, published by the Hahnemann Institute, The Netherlands, I have described in detail six different human remedies that have been triturated, proved and are being prescribed.

At this point, I felt quite convinced of the idea that the trituration process takes provers from C0 to C4 levels and beyond, and along the way enriches them with empathy and awareness for the way patients experience their suffering. I could go on and on asking Alize to bring out cases from the treasure trove of her over three decades of experience as a classical homeopath and illustrate the impact of C4 homeopathy on her current practice by giving case examples, but a look at the clock reminded me it must be almost 2.00 a.m. in Europe where Alize comes from. Though Alize would have very kindly obliged if I pressed on, I felt that since she had to be up on the stage by 8.30 a.m. the next day, starting off the JAHC session, I thought it better to conclude the interview on this happy note that human remedies can help on a day-to-day basis.

Vatsala Sperling, RSHom(NA), CCH, MS, PhD, PDHom, trained as a Clinical Microbiologist but she always remembers the sweet homeopathic pills she received from her local homeopaths while growing up in India. She is a graduate of Misha Norland's School of Homeopathy and she continues to study with several distinguished teachers in the United States. She lives in Vermont with her family. A classical homeopath and author of eight books and several essays, Vatsala can be reached at her website, www.Rochesterhomeopathy.com.