



## Suzanne Noel: Humanizing alien feelings

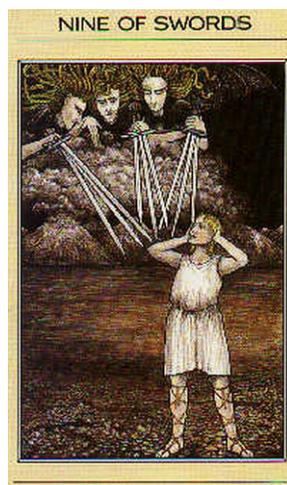
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This is the transcript of a short conversation with Suzanne Noel. For better or worse, this transcript retains the spontaneous, spoken-language quality of the podcast conversation.

Serge: *We have all had moments, difficult moments, of dealing with feelings that might feel overwhelming and trying very hard to avoid them. You're going to share some of your experience about that.*

Suzanne: Yes, Hi. Thank you Serge. For me, as I close my eyes and go inside myself, the image that comes up is of a tarot card where somebody is being bombarded by the accusatory voices of the three Moriah. I don't think I'm going to get into the tarot



cards so much, but he's holding his head in despair. For me, that's how those feelings can be. They're all around you, and they seem bigger than you. There's no escaping the feelings.

I think that's what makes them so difficult. It feels hopeless, like there's no way out. You can try all the tools that you know, at least I have in the past. EFT, EMDR, writing, praying, contacting my higher power. I found for me what helped me to bring them inside from "out there," where they're huge and like a tidal wave and way bigger than me, is to be able to sense inside of myself with somebody else. That's what's really important because there's something about the presence of another person listening, caring, that helps

me feel safe enough, then I go here (brings hands to chest) and it's almost like then I own the feelings, and they become my feelings.

Serge: *I'm just going to reflect on what you said. There's a very, very strong image of feeling besieged. You have that visual of the tarot card, the person holding and feeling all these voices coming from many directions. And, from that place, you're collapsing under this weight. Now, instead of feeling besieged by these forces that are overwhelming, you have a sense of owning the feelings, of feeling them from inside. What makes it possible is the sense of having the company of somebody who is gently listening to you so that you have that company and that reflection as you're processing the feelings.*

Suzanne: Yes, exactly. As I was just holding that sense of bringing the feelings inside, it was like holding a very slippery octopus, like they don't really want to be held. With the other person there, it's almost like they can - -maybe not hold the octopus- - but

maybe hold you a little bit while you're holding the octopus. As you're relating to it, the octopus can calm down and then feel safe also - - rather than: you let go of the feelings, then they can hijack and you'll have a huge octopus on your head.

Serge:

*The many tentacles of the octopus and the slipperiness of the octopus. Using that*



*image, the last thing in the world you're saying is "it's easy to pay attention to these difficult feelings". It's very difficult in so many different ways, but somebody is holding you as you hold the octopus. And that holding is actually just the same way as if you have a very tantrummy baby: Being held is actually a way to progressively calm it. The octopus is calmed by you as you're held, in a way, by*

*that other person.*

Suzanne:

Yeah, and I'm getting an image of the octopus transforming then. It's been humanized with the mutual holding, it's humanized and it becomes ... I'm actually seeing the adult male and the adult female walking with a child now and they're both holding the child's hands. It's no longer an octopus, something alien that seems inhuman like our feelings can feel like... I don't know, but it has that quality of being something alien or something - - I'm not sure, but they're humanized. Both can hold them, both can walk forward together. It's also about developing that inside of us, the male and female adult that are able to hold the inner child feelings. I think a lot of those feelings, at least for me, stem from childhood trauma. It feels more like my inner child is in that place and I don't have access to my adult self. If I have another adult there with me, we can do that, humanize the feelings.

Serge:

*The image is now: The octopus actually turns into this baby, and the baby is held by loving parents. As I'm hearing you, it's the opposite of the way a horror movie typically unfolds: In the horror movie you start with the beautiful baby who looks totally normal and happy and then turns into a monster. That's archetypal horror. In this, we're reversing it, we're turning it on it's head. What is at first appearing like a monster, actually turns out to be the baby, the inner child who had a trauma. Being understood, then the trauma is again seen as the beautiful child it once was.*

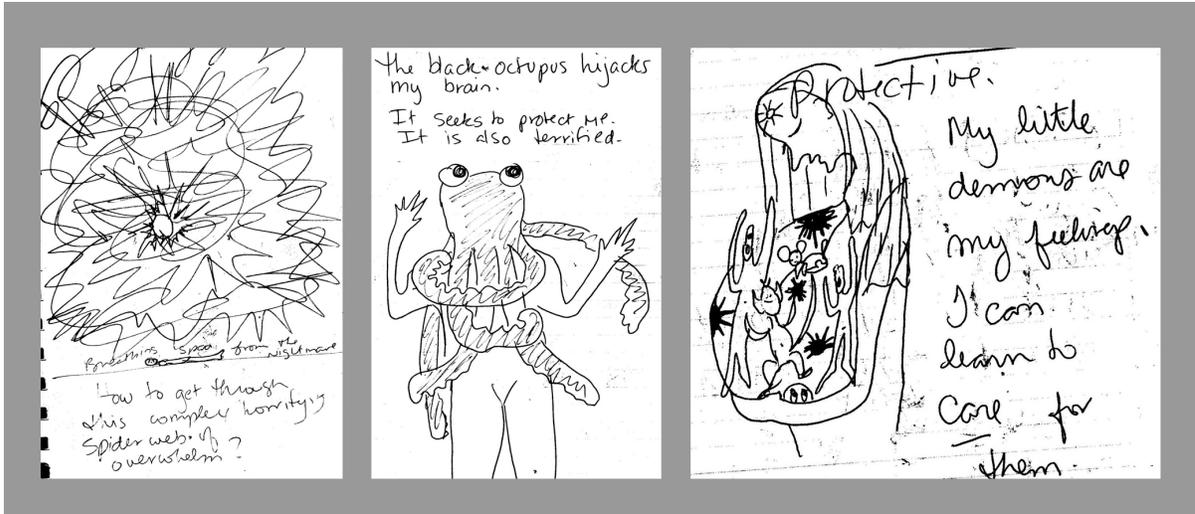
Suzanne:

Exactly. That's beautiful.

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Suzanne Noel is a Certifying Focusing Coordinator. She developed Recovery Focusing and the H.O.W. We Heal model for group work. She lives in the central valley of Costa Rica. Her favorite quote is "I met what came, left behind my sorrows, and am traveling still." (Movie, Restoration).

The next page has drawings that Suzanne Noel made about this.



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