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With Your Host

Susi Hatley

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hatley. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hatley.

Welcome and welcome back. I'm so glad that you're here because today you have the opportunity to listen to an episode I'm recording out of some inspiration that's resulting from a confluence of events that have occurred. And I'll share two of the events, but there's more that are ebbing and flowing in and around me right now that it's pretty cool.

One of them is that we've started the Healing and Synergy Program, which is a new program. We've got a whole bunch, I think we've got about 80 people, 70 or 80 people in the program and it's deep. We aren't even talking yet about anatomy or the dynamics of a healing relationship.

We're just setting the stage of what it is to have or ensure success for ourselves and with our clients. And the conversations are just so rich already and it's so fun because this, to me, is what this process really is all about. It's not simply about improving movement.

It's not simply about shifting up what's going on inside someone. I'd like to call it like the energetic substrate, if you know what I mean. I don't even know if there is such a thing as an energetic substrate, but it's the two words that I stick together to really highlight what really seems to be happening when people make transformative shifts in the way that they are because that they've moved better, because they're breathing better, because they're that much more aware.

With that is in my certification program, as part of their practicum, we run video reviews where trainees bring in videos of the classes that they're teaching with their clients. And in one day, it was so moving to watch this one trainee. And I hope, I hope, I hope I can bring her on to this podcast that she'll agree because it's phenomenal what she's doing.

I'll have trainees who work with people on the spectrum and get amazing results with them and this is just through the roof. It's just outstanding what's happened with the fellow that she's working with. And something she said, which I couldn't have said it any better, but it really is the core and crux of what it is that I teach people and that is, she was saying, you know, I look at my clients and I'm asking myself, you know, what's this body trying to tell me that the person can't?

Because so often, no matter what's happening with somebody, whether they can't speak or they don't have the words to speak or they just aren't aware and we can see their body moving. We can see what's happening with their body. The bodies don't lie, so we can see, and sometimes a person can't express for whatever reason and when we can connect and engage and be in relationship with our clients, it's remarkable how we can gather the data of the body sharing with us and then turn that into a conversation and a dialogue that really raises up the possibilities.

It makes me think about a video that I watched years ago and it was The Piano Guys and they were playing their rendition of Beethoven's Five Secrets, which is beautiful, by the way. And at the beginning of the video, at about 21 seconds, I'll put the link into the show notes here. At 20-ish seconds, there's a quotation that starts, that comes from Beethoven, which is, "Don't only practice your art, but force your way into its secrets, for it and knowledge can raise men to the divine."

So we can remove the men piece out of that, of course, and I might even alter the force word in there to change it up a little bit, to Susi-fy it, to be, don't only practice your art, but allow for the secrets to arise, to unfold in front of you, for that and knowledge can raise us to the divine.

I remember hearing another line, probably in a movie or somewhere about the Sistine Chapel, and I'm going to completely blow up the line, so I'm just going to talk about the divine presence and beauty. And this happens in the healing process.

There's this space, there's this magic, that when we can meet and be with a client, and simply, just simply meet and be with a client and apply the knowledge that we've gained, apply the techniques that we have, and allow for the secrets to emerge because we are applying our knowledge and applying the technique in such a profound, honoring kind of way, that there's something that happens.

I keep using the word arises between two people, and even in a group class. And I think that as human beings, we've all had this experience at one time or another. A taste of it, or a full-blown experience of it, where it goes beyond words. It goes beyond logic. It goes beyond what our left prefrontal cortex can say is happening. There's just something that happens.

I use the metaphor of a round peg into the round hole, so if you can follow my vision here of the round peg trying to get into a triangle hole, it doesn't work. Tries to go into a square hole, but it doesn't work. And then finds the perfect shape, and it clunks, and then the doors open and something shifts in the body. It doesn't mean a release happens. Sometimes that's the case. Sometimes a bigger breath happens.

But more so what happens is that there's a connection on many levels, and in yoga we use the kosha model. But there's this connection between all the levels that isn't something that logically can be named. It's just this insight, this a-ha, which interestingly enough, neuroscience has been able to link to a part of the brain where this is connected to. But there's this insight, this a-ha, and everything just kind of comes together.

And what we now at that point know, we may have known with a capital K, known, but now we capital K know, yeah? So there's just this, like, yes moment of, oh, that's what that's about. And that is a fundamental step towards shifting and changing.

Now, the reason I'm bringing this up, and the reason why I'm sharing this here is because if we want to make a difference in healing, like, I mean a

profound difference in healing, we need to move simply from technique and towards transformation, really elevating the healing practice.

And there's a nuance to this because sometimes people will hear that, they'll be like, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, so what do I do for transformation, right? They can fall into that left brain trap of, like, what's the technique for transformation? When the reality is there's not a technique. There's not a binary answer. There's things that you can do, but as we all know, we can do and do and do and do and do until the cows come home and not have the change that we're seeking, and then have all sorts of reasonings for why that didn't happen.

But when we can step back and ask ourselves, what is this body trying to tell me that the person can't? Not that the person is unwilling. Not that the person literally can't, although that sometimes is the case, but again, the body doesn't lie. I'm not suggesting the person does, but the body doesn't lie.

There's a magic to the process that lies within, beyond, and in and around all of the anatomy knowledge and all of the relational listening techniques that we can utilize in the process of helping someone get better. And when we are able to recognize how we are applying anatomy, how we are applying technique, and how that is landing for another, we can make a really significant difference in their world.

Because when we get into this conversation of how, we're now in a relationship. And I like to say that in the healing relationship that I speak about, we are at a level playing field. We are in a relationship that is power with, which is distinct from a common medical authoritarian relationship, which is power over.

When there's power over, what we're modeling for our client is to be power over with your body and your mind. To be power over through any layer of the kosha, we could even throw in emotion and spirit there too. But when we're power with, we're now modeling this person has as much to offer as me, the clinician. In fact, they know their body better than I could.

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Yes, I've got decades of experience, and they know their body. So let the two meet and collaborate on moving forward. Then we model the relationship of collaboration between a person and their symptoms, between person and their body. There can become a dialogue, a conversation of what a body is needing because the body, as I've mentioned, is already talking. So without the coercion or the convincing, how can we connect and engage?

Let me give an example of how I play with this in a real world of core stability. Core stability is a conversation that has been going on for a number of decades. When I was first starting out in the multidisciplinary pain clinic after I graduated, that was when the research out of Australia about the transversus abdominis being an important piece started to kind of percolate through the physical therapy world.

It has not come down to the fitness world yet. And because I was in and amongst the physical therapists and had many, many friends in that realm, I would hear these stories well before they ever entered into the personal training, yoga, Pilates realm.

What was coming out at that point was with one episode of back pain, the transversus abdominis could turn off. And then the thought was, well, if it turns off and maybe it's contributing to back pain not resolving, maybe we can turn it back on and the back pain would go away. And everybody started getting into the transversus abdominis.

Now what is important to note is that prior to that, the big push was tucking and tilting the pelvis. That was the thing that was going to help reduce back pain. So this information comes out from Australia and the transversus abdominis has nothing to do with tucking and tilting the pelvis. Transversus abdominis, those fibers are horizontal. Tucking and tilting the pelvis is more vertical. And so we began.

There then became an understanding of the connection between the transversus abdominis and the pelvic floor, but also the multifidus, which then evolved into, oh, wait a second. If we get too much posterior part of

the pelvic floor involved, then there's a good likelihood of all of that contraction between the multifidus, the transversus abdominis, and the pelvic floor falling apart. And onward we went.

What's interesting is a number of years later, once the transversus abdominis had already come down into the fitness world and was taking the fitness world and the yoga world and all of that arena of knowledge by storm, it was already starting to shift in the PT world where the transversus abdominis was becoming less of the golden child. That even though people were retraining their transversus abdominis, their back pain wasn't going away.

And as I was engaging with a number of PTs about this, it all became very interesting what they were starting to see. And it was what I was seeing as well with my client base without knowing that the transversus abdominis was losing its shine as the golden child.

What I was seeing amongst my clients and when I was participating in classes and in yoga classes was that people would attempt to engage through the pelvic floor or the transversus. And what they would do is they would brace by holding their breath. Or they would clench in through the pelvic floor. They might create more tension and not less.

They became tighter, more solid, but not in a solid helpful way. But solid in a braced way, which if you were lifting 450 pounds over your head might be helpful, but when you're carrying the groceries, not so much. A light load doesn't need that much tension.

What I saw a lot of was locking and loading or after the requisite core work inside of a group yoga class, everyone would sort of leave, like finish up with this collective sigh, which really let us know that they were breath holding through most of that and training their breath holding mechanisms and not actually their core. Because remember the transversus abdominis interweaves with that diaphragm. So if there's a limitation in how we're breathing, that could lead into a limitation into how that transversus abdominis was engaging.

So around that time, I started to really question, all right, so then what are we really trying to do? Where is the disconnect between understanding from a scientific viewpoint what the mechanism is, the underlying mechanism, to what's really clinically relevant? Because clearly there was a mechanism where researchers saw that there was this impact from sometimes just one episode of back pain where the transversus turned off.

And I haven't dug into this further, but it made me question about like, I wonder why the transversus abdominis, if I could humanize it, would want to turn off. And what I would see with my clientele is interesting that there are so many compensation patterns, which made me harken to a biomechanics prof that I had shortly after graduation. I've told the story a few times.

He was a little bit eccentric for his times. And he said something that struck me in one of those ways that you kind of know there's some truth to it, like capital T truth. Aren't really sure how, but I'm going to stick with it anyway because there's something in it that lands, which is that everybody has great core stability, there's just a whole bunch of tension lying over top of it. And that's what I ended up seeing.

Now, maybe I was seeing this because the suggestion was given to me to see it, but it was a lens nonetheless. It was what I was seeing. And as I helped people reduce the tension holding patterns, their core started to come more alive. But not only did their core come more alive, meaning their ability to dissipate load became easier, freer, more nimble and agile. Because if we think about core stability, what we're thinking about here is how can we go from fast to slow, slow to fast, turn directions, go up and down all around.

Think playing hockey, swish, swish, swish. Think about walking on ice and almost falling, right? And being able to right yourself back up. Think about picking up children and the groceries. Oh, and your phone, right? Think about those. In all of those, there's nimbleness and agility, a lightness. That's what we're aiming for. So if that exists already in somebody, if that's

what their core is, if that's what their core is contributing to, and we can reduce the tension holding patterns around that, then that can arise.

Now, I speak more about this in one of my Power of Pure Movement programs, which is up-leveling the core conversation. And if what I'm saying here resonates with you, then you can go and find that course right over on our website at functionalsynergy.com.

But what I want to speak here and direct here is what I started this episode off with, which is there's magic here. There's an artistry here. If you're willing to step back and pay attention, if you're willing to engage. It's so easy to get caught up in purely the science of this from a formalized research perspective. And I'm not knocking that, so please do not interpret my saying that as knocking it. Not at all.

But how do we bring that into clinical relevance of what we're actually seeing? Because when we get stuck into what is the mechanism, so often, and there are physicians who will say this, that there can be this link broken between what the mechanism that is seen in a scientific experiment, and then what actually happens for the human being when we begin to apply it.

The human being is not in the proverbial petri dish. The human being has layers of kosha, experiences and life. Not every person with back pain expresses it in the same way. Not everyone with rheumatoid arthritis expresses it in the same way. Not everyone on the neurodiverse spectrum expresses it, that's why it's a spectrum, the same way. So then why would a mechanism be a binary experience?

How does that idea that we see in science express itself clinically? That is where the magic arises. That is when you really hone your craft. That is where you make the difference in healing. That is when we move beyond technique to transformation. We step back, we utilize those component parts, our knowledge, and we allow for whatever to arise to arise.

And I'm deliberate with using that word, because there are times I have no idea what's going to happen. In fact, all the time I have no idea what's

going to happen. I can have expectations. I can have assumptions. I'm doing my best to meet my person where they're at. And there are just things I can't see. My person's an iceberg, and so am I and something arises. A result happens. Often something unexpected.

I like to say to my clients, my trainees, that when someone comes into my room, I know very, very well that they're going to get better. How they are, I have no idea. It always surprises me. It does not surprise me that they get better. That is going to happen. But how and the process, I have no idea.

So if I tie this back to the story on core stability, how someone grows their core stability is not simply a matter of what's happening with the transversus abdominus or the pelvic floor. I mean, science now can say that to be true. But how someone actually specifically goes about connecting to and building upon and really honing those connections and those building upons to really and truly up-level what we call core stability, there's more than just doing exercises. There's more than just doing technique.

If this is catching your fancy, if this is connecting with you and with the part of your being that knows in your soul or your spirit you're meant to help people. And you even have already had experiences with your classes that you teach or the work that you do, because some people who come to work with me are already business coaches and other types of coaches that already have great results. And you want to bring in therapeutic aspects of yoga, you might want to consider the therapeutic yoga intensive.

Our registration is open. And at the therapeutic yoga intensive, you have six days with me where we dig into and connect with movement and breath and stillness from a very embodied space. And there is space to allow for that which to arise, exploring the science and how that science actually integrates within you. And you get to watch it happen in another.

It will elevate and raise up your skill set, whether you are growing your ability to become a yoga therapist, or you are already a yoga therapist, or you are a health professional wanting to integrate yoga therapy more so

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into your practice. It's a great next step. I'd love for you to join me. And you can learn more over at functionalsynergy.com/intensive. Have a great time exploring.