

Ep #131: Private Sessions Series: How They Work



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatelty

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. 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 Hately.

Welcome, and welcome back. With this episode I want to share with you how I work with my private sessions. This is a question that I get a lot from both the trainees that I work with, health professionals who are interested in training with me, as well as clientele who are curious about how it is that I do my work, and from a lot of people about why I get the results that I do.

And I think a big piece of it is the way that I set up and I design my sessions, and then how I work through them and the governing values that I have with regard to the way that I teach. So inside of this episode I'm going to cover most of all of that so that you can really feel into yourself if this is something that is of interest to you. And if you're someone who runs your own practice, you might take some of the ideas that I have and then integrate them into what you're already doing.

A little bit of background on this is I've been teaching private sessions well before I even got into yoga. So I was doing private sessions with clientele shortly after I had graduated from university. I was working at a multidisciplinary pain center part-time. And I was also working with insurance companies with people who had been in motor vehicle accidents one on one, both in a community center, gym based setting, as well as my own small space.

So I've been doing the private one to one practice for a long, long, long time. And over that time I have noticed a number of patterns, which ultimately evolved into this way that I work with private clients today.

For a long time, I held a belief that I only ever wanted to offer people one session at a time. And the reason for that is because I knew that I could help someone reduce quite dramatically the pain or other symptoms that they were experiencing in one hour.

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So I never really understood why anyone would sell a 5 or a 10 package series because why buy it when I can help the person reduce and eradicate their symptoms in one session? Like it seemed to me to be a bit excessive. I understood the business idea behind it, but I didn't understand the reasoning for the client.

And for me, the way that I run my business is it has to come from the client first. Meaning I need to make sure that what I'm going to do really serves the client and makes the most sense for them. And then if it makes the most sense for them, I implement it and then I adjust it accordingly to them. But they are the driver of the reason that I'm doing what I'm doing first and foremost.

Then I started to notice that there was this pattern that I was seeing, is that people would have their pain reduced or eradicated in that first one hour session. And then when they would come back for their follow-up they would have a length of time, one day, two days, two hours, five days, it really depended on the person, where their symptoms would be gone. And then they would come back either to the same degree, sometimes more, sometimes less.

And then we were helping to refine their movement patterns and tune into their awareness. And then they would go away and then integrate what they were learning and then they would come back and then typically the symptoms were down again. And I started to see this pattern over time that it was taking about five sessions for someone to get the sustainable result.

So the length of time between sessions that they were experiencing less or no symptoms was increasing. And then the person was gaining a really, really good understanding of what was contributing to the increase of their symptoms and they could hear those whispers and yellow lights that I often speak about, they could really tune in to those more effectively.

And they had a lot more tools and understanding about what they could do to intervene if they needed the intervention. And they were also getting to such a greater quietness in their body of what was contributing that they

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weren't even feeling them. So it's that classic line of when you listen to the whispers, you don't have to hear the screams.

So in the early stages, they were understanding those whispers, sometimes missing them and still the scream would come back. But then as the sessions went on, they were getting more understanding of the whispers, but also the whispers of the whispers, and the whispers of the whispers of the whispers. Like they were getting quieter and quieter and understanding more and more about what really was contributing to the issue.

And so the more that they were in that space of the whisper, the more they were in that space of the whisper. And the scream just was not in their state. It wasn't what they were experiencing, unless there was a big, big, big emotional load that came through or a big physical load that came through like the death of a loved one, or they had a huge race or something of that sort. Then their system might choose their old compensatory or survival strategies.

But the thing is, is that what I often found, by that point someone really was tuned in enough to understand what was contributing, that they could manage it, they could take care of it, they could refine it. And they could get out of the experience and evolve out of it faster because of the awareness that they had. So that was the pattern that I started to see more and more and more.

So I just kind of kept paying attention to this. When I came back from maternity leave after having my twins I saw that there was a really good opportunity for me to refine the way that I was doing my work. I had less time in my day, I had a different kind of focus. And so I was looking at how to best figure out or sort out or do the private sessions in a way that I was honoring what my clients needed and I was also honoring myself.

And so when I remembered in the patterning is that it was about five sessions for someone to really get a good understanding of what was contributing to what, so I opted to run a program that was at least five

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sessions. And I ultimately settled on nine sessions because they would get a good feel in five, and then the next four would really hone in the pattern and help them really tune into possibility.

I know I used the word really a few times there, but truly there was this really-ness to it, right? They for real were paying more attention, they were in that quiet space where they could feel a sensation that was niggling at them, and they had the ability to tune into it. And then they could work with that over the next four sessions to really understand it more clearly and be that much more connected.

So I have a model that I call the healing helix. And I've mentioned it on a few episodes so far, where awareness needs to grow first. You can't change anything you're not aware of. So awareness grows. That helps improve the clarity of what's actually going on and helps you understand truly what the problem is so that then we can pick an intervention, a technique, a tool to help create better connection with your body and brain.

And then that improves the feedback between body and brain. And then that grows the awareness. And then that grows the clarity. And then that grows, right? And so then that just keeps evolving the connection that someone has with the way that their body and brain interact with each other and they start to really see that their body and brain is one, right? It's in the same structure, like my brain is in my body, yeah? And so they work together.

So people might say, well, it sounds like you're not really fixing people. I'm like, no, I definitely am not fixing people. To me, there's nothing broken unless there's something broken, right, like a broken bone. But that's not my scope of practice anyway. So I don't actually see that anyone has anything to fix.

What I see are there are compensatory patterns that can be resolved. There are some inefficiencies and movement patterns that can be resolved. There is often breathing patterns that can be shifted. And there's definitely quietness that someone can cultivate.

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And as someone tunes into their depth of quiet more and more and more and more, that just opens up more levels of awareness of what's contributing to what. And it's really quite beautiful when someone connects into that space.

Now, you might be wondering, okay, not everyone would benefit from the way that you teach. Absolutely, I am definitely not for everybody. And when people ask me about my private sessions, I usually give context of who my ideal client is, like the kind of person who really gets off on what it is that I offer.

And the key piece of this is that my clients tend to be people who have a persistency of symptoms. And those symptoms could be orthopedic in nature, like pain, like physical pain. They might also have long standing anxiety or depression. They might have an autoimmune condition that has flares, like rheumatoid arthritis for example. They might have other things, like I think about my husband's psoriasis and the flares that go along with that. I've worked with people with psoriasis.

Now, they've come to me initially for physical issues, but as they've tuned more into the sensations and symptoms associated with what they're experiencing physically, they then start to see the correlation to what's happening with their psoriasis, or their autoimmune condition, or their anxiety or their depression. So all of those pieces, all of those labels, those conditions can show up in a space with a client.

What I've also noticed is most people who come to my practice have already seen that they've made some gain. So they've had some positive result working either with medication or with another health professional, but the gains haven't lasted.

So they know that there can be change, but they haven't had the sustainable change yet. And at a depth in their knowing, their capital K knowing, they know that change is possible. Even if a health professional has told them otherwise, they fundamentally know that it is possible, they just haven't figured it out yet.

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So that's the kind of person that's curious, right? There's a curiosity that's present, they fundamentally know that change is possible, they just have no idea how to get there. They've experienced it, they've caught a glimpse of it, but how do they make it sustainable?

I should also add that many of the people who come to see me might have a facet joint deterioration, or an osteoarthritis, or disc changes. So there might be a structural issue that's very much present and even despite that structural issue they still know they can feel better. I want to be really, really clear here, is I'm not changing any of that skeletal stuff, not at all. What I'm doing is I'm helping them notice and then I'm helping them to improve the way that they move.

So what I have seen consistently over time is that when we can help people with scenarios in their body, like orthopedic issues, autoimmune issues, any other symptom, if I can help them improve their compensation patterns, if I can help them reduce those compensation patterns and move better and really tune in to what's working and what's not working, and nurture what's working, quiet what's not working, they will feel better.

Now someone might say, what on earth does movement have to do with autoimmune or moving better have to do with anxiety or depression? Well, here it is, I am a body girl first, for sure, right? The way that I watch someone move and help people improve their movement pattern, what I'm asking them to do is pay attention.

So I'm helping them really attend to their focus. And I use those words really deliberately, right? I'm helping them to take their sight, both their eyes but also their inner eyes, their mind eye to the way that they are moving. I'm helping them get quiet to pay attention to the whispers and then they start to notice where they're compensating.

And when they can quiet that compensation down and they see how they're moving and they're moving better, and they correlate that to the reduction of symptoms because when someone moves better their symptoms drop down, I see that over and over and over and over and over

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and over again. When someone moves better their symptoms, their physical symptoms drop down.

So how does this relate to something like anxiety or depression or autoimmune types of physiological scenarios? Well, when someone sees the whispers contributing to their physical orthopedic scenario, they start to notice the whispers related to their auto immune, or to their anxiety, or their depression or whatever else is going on for them. So they start to see more and more of the whispers. So now they're able to tune into the whispers and intervene there.

So we can do this really, anywhere. I've told stories on this podcast about how I worked with that with my kids. When my kids were two, my boy started to bite his sister. And so I did what all moms would do, which is say stop biting, and that obviously did not work. So then what I did is I tuned into what happened before the biting happened. And what I could see in him was this increase of energy that his little body just could not manage. And then how that came out was biting.

So then what I could do is I could look at that whisper that I saw, like, okay, I'm seeing this energy increase. I could ask him, all right, what do you need? And so I had my way of asking him what he needed, and usually it was something like he was hungry, or he was tired, or he needed a mommy hug or something. But then because I addressed the need at the whisper level, the biting went away. That is not an orthopedic issue, right?

When we can work with this at an orthopedic level and people see the reality of their symptoms going down at a body level it's quite naturally, my clients are the kind of people who quite naturally then start to see the relationship to other symptoms that they are experiencing. That's how this evolves.

I'm not a mental health specialist or an expert whatsoever, but simply noticing the whispers in relationship to how their typical symptoms express, they can intervene at that whisper level and so much changes. So much changes. And one of those changes which is really significant and

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fundamental is that there's a level of ownership that somebody has, a level of understanding of their own being.

I liken it to this idea of a lot of times in health professional relationships with their clients there can be this power over, where the health professional knows more than the client. And granted, I understand that that could be the case, I don't see that to be so.

So even though I might know more about anatomy, and physiology, and recovery, and all of that, my client knows more about their own body. They've lived in their body for a heck of a lot longer than I've known them. And so they're bringing their own experience to the mix and I'm bringing my own experience and expertise to the mix. And together, we are working with this.

And so it's not just sort of like this cognitive book knowledge that I know based off of the latest and best evidence that we know of. But rather what is the person actually expressing right now both out of their mouth and with their body? And then how do the principles of anatomy and physiology and recovery relate in this specific situation?

So there's a lot of dynamic between what the person already knows to be true and what I know to be true. And then collectively, then we work together to support them.

Another piece that's important is in between our sessions we have a messaging system on a messaging platform called Slack. And there is a connection back and forth between us as is needed. So my clients can ask me as many questions as they want, I sometimes update their program while I'm in between sessions. There's a lot of change that can happen inside of the space, I call it the white space, between our sessions.

And so in that space there can be lots of dialogue about what they're becoming aware of, is this a yellow letter whisper? What do they do with this? How can they intervene? This is not working with their program, or this is working with this program, or here's what I'm now noticing. And so

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there's a lot of back and forth and interaction depending on who the person is. Some of my clients utilize that a lot and others don't use it as much as others.

It's sort of as simple as that, I'm available for people to really support them in the evolution of their understanding of their body, of their brain, of the way they think, and the way they perceive themselves. And that really opens the door to possibility and what they see as possible for themselves and their movement.

And it's why someone can have structural issues, like they can have degeneration of a bone, they can have disc protrusions, but because they're tuning into the whispers of their body, of their mind, of their brain, they can intervene in such an effective way that they don't have to hear the scream, right?

And so because they now are experiencing that, here's what's also really important, is that because they have evidence that their body, or their mind, or their brain is different, they now know that more is possible. So what tends to happen between the sixth and the ninth session is they begin to recognize that so much more is available than they actually realized. That more is possible because they've already made all of this gain, right?

And so, oftentimes, my clients will then re-up for another three month contract because now, now they see what's really available for them. Like they got through this first piece, they feel so much better, they have so much less pain, their body is moving much better, they're sleeping better. And now they're like, okay, now, now I want to do this other thing that I didn't even think was available for me.

So then we might be specific about increasing strength, or helping them train for a particular outcome. Whether they're an elite athlete, or whether they're an amateur athlete, or they're planning for something in backpacking, or they're a water skier, or maybe they want to get down onto the floor with their grandkids, or whatever really is available.

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But we continue to help them hone their levels of awareness, their movement patterns, and they become that much more efficient in the way that they move, so much more effortless effort. Which takes away the energy drain that can come from, you know those times where you have like a pain symptom or a series of symptoms and you're kind of damming them, imagine like the Hoover Dam. And you're damming them up like with your mind and then you're going about your daily life.

There's a lot of effort and energy to do that. That takes a lot of bandwidth, it takes a lot of energy to do that. And so when we can help improve the way that somebody moves and connects with themselves we can, A, build up the bandwidth, we can build up someone's cup to be able to work with themselves.

But we can also start to address that persistency of pain that they've been holding at bay, that they've gotten dammed up. And then that is less of a drain on their whole system and then they start to feel way better, they feel more rested, they feel more tuned in, clearer in their mind and just stronger. Stronger and more calm overall.

So that's what the private sessions are all about. If this is something that really resonates with you and you're like, "Oh, sign me up, I want some of that," then send us an email, health@functionalsynergy.com, and we'll let you know if there are spots available. I usually take between one to three people per month, so if we've got a spot available, we'll let you know.

And we can let you know when the next one is available and we can get you into the process. Just send us an email, health@functionalsynergy.com, let us know what's going on for you, why you think that what I'm offering would really support you, and let's have a chat. All right, have a great time exploring. Take care.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us

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at health@functionalsynergy.com where we can customize your learning path. That's health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking forward to hearing from you.