

Ep #141: Beyond My Biomechanical Knowledge, Here is One Key Thing I Do to Help My Clients



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Susi Hately

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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. With this episode I want to dig into a specific part of my private sessions that I think is a really significant part that can, in many ways, change the trajectory of someone's healing process. And I want to share with you why I think it's significant and then give you some really key bullet points that you can utilize for yourself if you are a client, or if you are a professional and you're working with clients.

I label it as being significant based off of the feedback that my clients give me and then often what happens next for them in terms of progress. Let me dig in here. So we know that beliefs matter. We know that in the context of beliefs, what we think about can have an impact on our healing trajectory, whether symptoms reduce, whether symptoms increase. We know that if we are perceiving symptoms as being a threat or a danger, that we will have them heightened.

If we do not see them that way, if we see them as being in a light of support, or that you've got it or you don't need to be concerned about it, symptoms tend to be interpreted at a lesser level. So there's a belief piece and an interpretation piece around how we are thinking about what we are feeling that has an impact.

Our beliefs also will influence or reinforce the habitual patterns that we have. And our habitual patterns will include things like how we do the exercises or protocols, or how often we'll do them, or I mean many, many other things.

We can also develop a bias around our belief or around our thinking about whether we can get better at all or not, right? We can have this lens of the way we are with our bodies. We can have a lens with the way that we are

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with our minds. We can have a lens with the way that we see ourselves with our situation.

So when somebody that I'm working with has a reduction of symptoms, it really provides an opportunity to be deliberate in outlining what just happened. So, for example, when a client of mine experiences a reduction of pain, they may say to me, "Yeah, wow, I don't have pain anymore." Or they may say to me, "Oh, I feel light. My walking is different. My eyes are looking differently at the horizon," or something of that light. And this is the first time in the process of my working with them that they say this.

Now this can happen in the first session, this can happen in session two, it usually happens between one and two. But it can also happen in session three, where the texture of the way the person is describing it sounds like there's like, "Oh, this is like, whoa, this is novel. This is new. This is kind of weird," right?

When they're in that frame of mind, what I say there is, "You did that. You did that. This was you who did this to yourself. You created this change." And then I'll also say, "And the fact that this change exists in your body means that it can exist in your body."

And usually when I say a combination of those two things, that, A, you're the one who did this, and B, this means that you can have this change, there's often a glossiness to their eyes. There's also sometimes a brightness to their skin and sort of like a "What? Say what? Really?"

And I say, "Because you just demonstrated the evidence. A moment ago, you said, 'Wow, my pain is down, or my gait is lighter, or the way that I'm stepping is different, or my back feels better.' Like you said that." And so when I repeat that to them, we take a moment typically and are like, "Huh."

And there's this pause, which then I say, "Now, the symptoms will likely come back because this new pattern that elicited this experience that you're having, this new pattern doesn't have depth yet. It doesn't have

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endurance yet, it doesn't have traction yet. It doesn't have habitual patterning yet.

So what we now need to do is this, we need to help you really experience when this feeling begins to fade. Because there will be indicators of this feeling fading, letting you know that your symptoms will be coming back. And this is where your power lies.”

And then the person, obviously, will say, “Well, how do I do that?” And I'll say, “Okay, let's step back a little bit. Can you explain to me more about what it is that you're feeling? Like give me more of a subjective experience about what you're feeling.” And to get the subjective experience is really, really important because their own inner world's experience of their state is what they can really own.

And oftentimes what a person will say is, well, I don't feel the pain. Or there is no pain, or there is no tension, or there is no strain, or it's not really there anymore. So the consistent factor there is no or not. Usually it's some form of negative, like I don't, or not, or it isn't. And then it isn't there, the it, which is the pain or the symptom is still the center.

It's still the subject matter, so I want to direct their brain to actually create language around what is there. Not to make it up, but to really name what is there. If the pain or the symptom is not there, then what specifically is there?

And earlier in this episode I mentioned how some people will say, wow, my gait is easier, my walk is lighter, I feel taller. All of those are great ways of explaining what the experience is. And I do not give any verbiage or any indication of what they should be feeling. I really allow them to take a moment to name it.

And initially, it's hard for people because they're so used to having whatever symptoms they have. So to not have them is awesome. And I say to them, “I get that this is difficult. And you don't need to answer right now,

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but just consider, like what does this actually feel like? Because as you can name what this is feeling like, this feeling becomes different than not having the symptom or having the symptom,” right? You see that?

So then they take some time and they usually come up with two or three things. And I'll say, “Okay, now this is what you get to pay attention to. You now get to notice when that starts to fade. Because as that fades, then the symptom, the whispers of the symptom will start to emerge. And that's when you now can start to intervene.”

The chances are, because this is a new habitual pattern, you're going to maybe blow by it. You might miss it, you'll just go kind of into the symptom side. But now you know what you can do to get out of the symptom and have this experience again. And then you just notice it again, when it starts to fade. And you start to play this game a little bit.

And what's cool about the process is you'll hear it in the way that I'm describing it is that I don't see symptoms as being bad. I don't see not having symptoms as being good. And I don't see describing the new experience as being good. I see them as all being states.

And as I'm being deliberate in my description with my client, my focus is on helping them get there too. Because when someone can start to gain a level of neutrality about whatever they are experiencing, then there's less opportunity for their brain to feel threatened or to feel like there's danger present.

They can actually see it for what it is and say, hey, you know what? I know what I actually need to do right now to alleviate this. I know what I need to do to make myself feel better. I understand why the symptom is present, of course, it's present because I just did X, Y, and Z, or I just ate this food, or I just worked all day long and I didn't take a break, or I was up all night long with my kids.

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I mean it makes sense, right? Like there is a clarity of like, oh, yeah, of course, of course this is showing up. So you can hear that in sort of the tempo that I'm sharing, this is what ends up changing for a lot of my clients, is there's less dread around a symptom and a lot more internal control.

And in the past, I've used the term, they grow their internal locus of control. And it's true, it's exactly that. And then their interpretation, their belief about the process changes. And when their belief changes, everything changes. But it's the way in that I do this.

So some key things that I'm doing and then I'm not doing. I'm guiding them as to what I want them to do. I am not feeding them words to describe their experience. I guide them to explain or describe subjectively their experience, not necessarily objectively what their body is doing.

That might come in, but I want them to come at this from an embodied feeling perspective, like what is their proprioceptive experience? What is their interoceptive experience? Like what is the feeling state? What's the sensation that's being experienced? As opposed to cognitively trying to wrap their head around it. That might happen, but I'll still pull them back to name the sensation, describe the sensation. Where does it feel in your body? How does it feel?

And then as they're able to get that, now they can start to hone in on the subjective world that they're experiencing and they can tune into this now as their barometer. They now can feel when the barometer is moving towards red or yellow. And they can feel when their barometer is more at green, much like the traffic light analogy that I use. So they can really tune in.

Now, I use this experience not only when their pain symptoms go down, but even when they start to feel into a movement better. So a lot of people who I see have been given an exercise called bridge pose, and it's often utilized for helping to engage the glutes. And sometimes one of the cues that are given is squeeze your butt first and then lift.

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And a lot of times when clients experience that they feel more strain in their back and in their quads and their knees. So then I guide them to placing their hands around the gluteal fold, so where the bum sort of meets the leg. And I ask them to lift from there and try not to do an anticipatory contraction first, but allow for the glutes to engage as a result of lifting into bridge. And then quite often what happens as a result is now they feel their glutes engage.

They no longer feel it in their back and they no longer feel it in their quads or their knees. And it's a great example of me saying, all right, okay, so you did it. You just did that, which means you can do it again. Which means your body knows how to be responsive to a load change from being on your back, knees bent, feet on the floor, and then lifting up into bridge. You actually created that result. It's all on you, which means you can do it again.

And then often, a person will say, "Oh, okay, let's do it again." And I'm like, "Okay, let's do it again." And then they do it again and they're like, "Woo-hoo, I did it again." And it's like, "Yeah, you did it again." And then they'll do it again, it's like, "Woo-hoo, I did it again." So do you see what ends up happening when I do that is there's a real realization on their part that what they are doing to themselves is working. It's making them feel better.

And there's such power in them being able to feel the sensation, to tune in interoceptively and proprioceptively, to be in that embodied state, to experience it not from cognitively trying to work through it about where their body parts should be, but to really tune in to the sensation of their body moving and how their body is responding.

Because now, the sensations are developing a language. They're not just this kind of like sensation, like this feeling passing in the wind, there becomes a meaning for them. And the meaning is only theirs to discern. I can't tell them what their sensation means or feels or whatever. That's all on them. But what I can do, I can guide them in their experience of it. So I'm not telling them how to experience it, but I can guide them towards simply experiencing it, whatever that it is.

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Okay, I want to emphasize why I think this is so important. One of my key beliefs and governing values is that in order for someone to get better, they have to grow their awareness. That is particularly with people with chronicity and persistency of symptoms, what lies underneath their awareness or what's outside of their current circle of awareness is often what is contributing to the issue that they're experiencing.

Because if they were already aware of something, they'd be likely making the change and having a different result. So when someone can be guided to an insight around what the sensation is, it can open up the doors of awareness in a really, really cool way.

It can add to clarity about what the problem is and to a connection, a new connection, a reinforced connection between their brain, the rest of their body, their breath, and just overall who and how they are. And that then increases the feedback mechanisms throughout their whole system.

So what I'm doing is, again, I'm not guiding them in how to experience. I'm simply asking them, tell me what your experience is. How would you describe these sensations? Give me more understanding of what it's like, right?

And so anything that they say is their own. I don't need to say that it's right or that it's wrong, I can simply listen to their own realizations that they're having. And this might sound crazy, but there's amazing magic and miracles that can happen for people in terms of changing the dynamic of the way they feel in their bodies.

If this resonates with you, if this interests you and you are someone who is seeking private sessions, and you would like to work with me, then do reach out to me. You can read more about our private sessions at functionalsynergy.com/heal.

And if you're a professional and you want to dig into growing your skill to being able to create results in such a unique and powerful way because the

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results that you're creating, it's because of how you are teaching your client. And it is so cool to be able to integrate medical protocol with mind/body technique with just like this depth of understanding through this ancient practice of yoga that will just blow your mind over and over and over and over again.

So if that's something of interest to you, then reach out to us at health@functionalsynergy.com, we're just about to open up registration for our spring cohort. And if you've got questions about how the program works or anything else, just send us an email and we can get you on our list and let you know when that is open.

Okay, you have a great time exploring. See you next time.

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