

**Ep #229: Yoga Intensive
with Charlotte Van Bassan and Susan Morrison**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hately

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hately

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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.

Susi: Welcome and welcome back. I am so glad that you're here today because I have two very, very, very special guests. I have Charlotte van Bassen and Susan Morrison. And what's great about these two is they have completed the therapeutic yoga intensive back in October. And it's now about, what, four months since then and they've enrolled in the certification.

And I really wanted to have them share with you their experience so that you can get a feel of what the therapeutic yoga intensive can do, not just from what happens in the six days – And I interviewed four of the graduates from that program really soon after that – but more what happens months later and what the impact is and what you can expect months later. Because sometimes we take programs and we have great, great insight and great experiences, but then things sort of dwindle off.

And so this is really a way for you to see what's possible if you were to enroll in the program, and we've got one coming up in April, and if it resonates with you. And so they'll be sharing their experiences and if you have questions that arise out of this, by all means just send me a note to health@functionalsynergy.com.

So how I'll begin is, first of all, welcome Susan and Charlotte. What I'd like to begin with is first of all how did you kind of get into my universe. Like how did you find me? Maybe not how you found me, but when – Like I know, Susan, we go way back and it's been cycles. It's been years, really. So how did that all happen? We'll start with you.

Susan: Okay, so I believe it's about 10 years, and to tell you the truth, I don't remember. What I do remember is I had been watching your, gosh, videos I guess it was at the time. This was back in like 2014. I had just

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completed my 200 hour yoga teacher certification and was beginning to teach and was not really sure on what direction I wanted to go with that.

And I stumbled upon something with you talking about the purity of movement. At that time you were using the idea of moving green light, yellow light, red light, rather than whispering and screaming. That really resonated with me. And you were offering an in-person weekend in Portland. I live in Oregon and I was able to drive up there and meet you and just loved it.

I have felt that ever since then wanting to do this yoga therapy training. And thinking there's just no way that I can do it because you're in Canada and, you know, I have a life and animals and a home and all of these things. And when I kept seeing little things from you and realized, oh my goodness, it's online, and after Covid getting much more comfortable doing things online and realizing that this is something that you can actually do through a computer screen, it was a no brainer. I just signed up immediately.

And the intensive was my first step before jumping into the full therapy certification program.

Susi: All right, that's great. So then that's one perspective. Charlotte, how about you? You're more recent.

Charlotte: Yes. So I've done a couple of your online courses. I did the Power of The Pits, the lower glutes and then I did the neck one. And that was last year. And then I redid it this year and something about it just landed in my body and I could feel things shifting and changing, which was very compelling. I don't have pain, but I sure as heck had tension. So that just kind of melted away, which was kind of miraculous.

That and I've been watching your videos all the way through the pandemic, which was great. And I'm really interested in getting people out of pain, so for me that was super compelling. And I could feel it in my body, so that was it.

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Susi: Yeah, it just was the bullseye. Question now, Charlotte, are you also a yoga teacher? I know you're a biodynamic craniosacral therapist. Are you also a yoga teacher?

Charlotte: I'm also a yoga teacher and I teach Pilates. I have my home studio with equipment, so that's what I primarily do. Yeah.

Susi: And then you interweave the yoga and interweave the biodynamic. Is that how you blend your skills?

Charlotte: Oh yes, everything I learn, I bring to the table. So I do not teach traditional yoga or Pilates, it's very different. So I always just go with what compels me. So if you looked at my yoga class, it wouldn't look like a traditional yoga class or Pilates. Very, very different.

Susi: And so are you teaching, in your yoga are you teaching one-on-ones or are you teaching groups?

Charlotte: Mainly groups and some one-on-one, but I've been using all the stuff that we learned and applying it to how I teach Pilates and yoga. So I've been doing it in my group classes, I've been doing it in my privates, and in my Pilates classes. And it all seems to land really well with people, which is great.

Susi: So interesting. And, Susan, I know that you're a yoga teacher because you mentioned it. I knew this before, that you had mentioned you had done your 200 hour. And you teach groups and you teach some private sessions, that's correct, yeah?

Susan: Only groups. Only groups right now. I have done private in the past. Currently I'm teaching four group classes a week.

Susi: Okay, awesome. So you're in the intensive, you're learning a bunch of stuff. What stood out for you the most that you were able to take home for either in your body and or with your student base?

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Susan: Similar to Charlotte, I realized as we were going through the intensive, I don't have a lot of pain or feelings of tightness. I tend to get tight a lot in my shoulders and in my neck. And even without really targeting my own body, going through the exercises we did, particularly I love that spinal strip, love that, and moving slowly, I felt better.

I noticed that my movements were less constricted and some of the sort of recurring neck pain that I have, just due to tension, went away. And so I thought, wait a minute, I didn't really even have anything to start with. And I'm finding that, wait a minute, maybe I did. And I also realized I do a lot of compensation. I didn't realize that when I lifted my arms, my ribs were coming along. I didn't realize that as I lifted my legs, my hips were tilting in directions I had not intended.

So I immediately started teaching differently. And Charlotte and I were talking a moment before we came on with you, about the idea of just really slowing down, which is something that you stress so often. And really, I love that. I was just doing it this morning, same exact thing. We spent, in my Hatha class, probably five minutes working on just moving slowly through the shoulders, arms up overhead, arms out to the side.

And I can see the difference in the bodies of the people in class. And I can hear the sighs, like, ah. Like Charlotte said, it lands immediately. And so I'm using stuff that I've learned from you in every class.

Susi: What are your students saying back to you, or are they saying anything different or new or like any words about how different they might be? I mean, we could call it living in their body, they might not call it that, but that they are experiencing in their bodies.

Susan: Yes, I have a couple of men that I'm working with, and both have lots of results of motorcycle accidents and work injuries, lots and lots of tension in the necks and shoulder area. And this one in particular, I saw him last week for a class and he walked up to me and said, I don't know what you've done, I don't have any pain today. None.

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And I don't know what happened, though something happened. He's using the spinal strip. He's coming to the yoga classes routinely. We're moving slowly. He's stretching at home. And I saw him again just the other day, and he said the pain is still gone. He doesn't have that neck pain any longer.

So I'm definitely getting feedback that people are feeling better.

Susi: Now, was he a client that came in before you did the intensive with me?

Susan: Yes.

Susi: And so he was someone who was a student already and then has carried through with you since?

Susan: Yes.

Susi: Interesting. Really good. Now, would he describe anything like any change of awareness or any of that sort of information?

Susan: Yeah, he's a person who is sometimes hard to settle into, you know, slow down, breathe a little bit. He tends to be kind of a jumpy character. And yet he told me, he said, I can feel the connections. I'm feeling how when I move my shoulder, I feel it over here in my hip.

And he's starting to realize in his own body, in his experience, if he moves mindfully and slowly enough, he can catch those compensation patterns and just be aware of them. And what I'm asking him to do then is to stop then. When you notice the hip kicks in or the jaw is clenching or whatever you're noticing in other parts of the body, stop and slow down and move.

And it's amazing, he can catch these things and he's willing to work differently in his body rather than just pushing, pushing, pushing, which has been his history, to just push through pain.

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Susi: So this is so curious because we know what's happening is he's growing his ability to perceive in an interoceptive kind of way, but he also has greater proprioception. Do you have a sense of what was the difference that was the difference that helped him move from being a fellow who's a bit jumpy and pushy to being someone who slows down in the way that you've described?

Susan: What do I think preceded that?

Susi: Can you get a sense of what was the difference that was the difference?

Susan: I think the difference for him is he recognized that he feels better and that this is something that he has a huge amount of control over. He does not have to continue living his life physically and mentally as he did. He can relax a little bit, breathe a bit deeper, slow his movements down, and his body will reward him for it.

And I believe the payoff of having less pain and more freedom of movement is huge for him. And he's opened up, he calls me now and tells me what's going on. And we're going to do some study and I'll work with him in our upcoming program. Yeah, he's all on.

Susi: It's interesting because I think what we're getting a taste of here is how he was a certain way and had a change of result. And those changes in result have changed up the possibility and his belief of what's possible. And that's continued to cycle through the changes in the growing awareness that he's got more. I don't know, maybe he's got more trust. But the word you used, so much is in his control.

Susan: Yeah, and you can see it the way he walks into the room, that buzz energy is way quieter. He's not nearly as frenetic in his body.

Susi: Really, really good. Really good, because what that's saying is he's not just coming to class and then getting some benefit. And you know how

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sometimes we can go to class and then we kind of burn it up throughout the week and then come on back to class and then burn it up throughout the week. And there's not, it is relief, there's not as much growth though. And I'm not knocking, sometimes people, I mean, even I have needed that at times.

But what's happened here is that he was in a space and the stimulus was what he needed to really make that shift, that really uptick in how he could feel into his body, yeah?

Susan: I think so, yeah.

Susi: Yeah. Really, really cool. Really great. Really great. How about you, Charlotte, have things shifted over the months since you've taken the intensive? What have been some big ideas that you've seen kind of play out in your practice?

Charlotte: I had somebody come up recently and she'd been doing mat Pilates online and was having back pain. So she came to me and she wanted me to show her how to do Pilates. And I took one look at her and I'm like, there's no way. So I took her right back and we were just doing the granular movements and she was resisting it because she just wanted to do the Pilates, right?

So it was very interesting. And I think we ended up doing like maybe four movements, if that. And she went away and I thought I would never see her again. She phoned me up, her back pain was gone. Her neck pain was better. She came back. And the first time she came back after that we spent a lot of time, she was really worried about not being able to progress. She thought she'd be stuck doing these granular movements.

So I spent about 10 minutes talking about, no, we're going to get you back to where you want to go, we've just got to go through this process. It's process oriented. And she signed up for six classes. And when she came last time, we did a little bit of different stuff, actually elevating the pelvis,

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and we uncovered something underneath that there was some pelvic floor stuff happening. So we did some different stuff with that and it changed what everything felt like.

So that was just so unexpected. I didn't think I'd ever see this person again. And, you know, it worked. And like, wow, that's so amazing. Especially since she's what you would call a Ferrari and trying to pull her back, she really resisted that. But that was very compelling to not be in pain and that she could see the possibility of being able to do what she wanted to do, which wasn't there before. So that was so cool.

Susi: So there's something there to unpack, though. And just for people to hear the Ferrari analogy, so I'll sometimes refer to clients who can go like 100 miles an hour, they can go from zero to 100 in like a second flat type thing. That's what I'm referring to as people who move super fast. And they actually have some coordination. Like they're actually good at moving fast. It's an effective way of being for them. It's just currently not super supportive.

So the act of supporting a Ferrari to slow down, it's not bringing them to zero, necessarily. It might be bringing them to ninety five or maybe even ninety nine, right, depending on where they're at. And this can sometimes be a common point of resistance or an obstacle, perhaps, for people when they note that it is granular movement. And there's a concern that if they slow down, or even they might be stopping, and if they slow down, they'll never speed up again. And so they just want to keep at the pace they are.

And there's a number of ways that I work with people who have that concern because it's very valid. It's very real. And there's ways with it. And there's a certain amount of support that's needed to be provided.

My question for you, Charlotte, is how did you help her, even though she was resisting, but she was still doing it. Like there was obviously a trust level there. And I'm curious how you were able to support her. And you

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actually brought her quite slow, right? You actually helped bring her mileage down quite a bit. So how did you go about doing that?

Charlotte: Golly, that's a good question. Well, I guess the second time she came, we did spend at least 10 to 15 minutes talking over what she felt and how she felt she was being held back. And I was kind of talking her through, well, this is just a phase. Let's go through it. And I think taking the time to give her the reassurance that this is not where she was going to stay, this was just a phase on the way to being able to get back to being able to do what she wanted to do. I think that she felt that was really reassuring.

And then when we went through the movements again, she could just feel that it was getting easier and easier and that she was kind of uncovering some of those patterns that are below our level of consciousness. Which, doing the intensive with you, it finally made sense. Intellectually I could understand it, but to physically feel it, I think that's the key. You know, here's the stuff and it actually works. When you feel it work, that is a very compelling reason to keep going.

Susi: Yeah, and the intensive is an experience, right? I teach intellectual lecture-based kind of information, and there's a huge portion of it that is you experiencing it, as well as you teaching others receiving teaching. But you are experiencing this because I fundamentally believe that we have to experience the experience in order to be able to teach an experience, right?

So we can't fake something that we haven't experienced, right? So people can say, I shouldn't compensate. And there's lots of trainers out there who will say they shouldn't compensate and lots of people out there say they shouldn't compensate, but then they compensate.

I mean, and I want to be fair about this, we all compensate. But the distinction is when you can tune into that which is contributing to the way that you're moving, which can be correlated to the sensations or the pain or

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the tension or the tightness that you're feeling, and really pay attention to where those deviations in your body are, then a lot can change.

And this is not necessarily about which muscle needs to be strengthened or which muscle needs to be released. Now, that's actually something I want to ask you guys about because a lot of time when people think of compensation, they're thinking, oh, I need to strengthen a muscle. There's a muscle that's not working that I need to wake up. Or there's something that's too tight, and that's the compensation, which is not untrue. What I'm working with here is how segments move.

And so how would you describe that, Charlotte? When you're talking about compensation, how do you explain that to clients?

Charlotte: I talk sometimes about it being like a windshield with a bunch of bugs on it and what we're doing is clearing away the bugs and the muck so you can start to see clearly through. So that it's a layer thing. So I think for me, that's a pretty good analogy. Like clear the bugs and the muck off the windshield so you start to see what's underneath, right?

Susi: Oh, I love that. I love that because even if you move the windshield, you're spreading the bugs.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Susi: You need to clear it. That's really good. I really like that. I really like that. How about you, Susan?

Susan: That's sort of tricky. I like that also. I think what I've been focusing on is, and one of the things that you've talked about is, just because we notice something – So I had a client yesterday in class and we were stretching, real slow stretching of the right hamstrings and laying down and everything was just quiet. And all of a sudden he goes, oh my gosh, this is really kicking off my left glute. Okay.

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And my response is, interesting noting. No idea. I have no idea why that's happening. It's not wrong or right or in need of my attention. Where I am with it is let's just notice that. And then as you're moving, is there a place where maybe that hasn't happened yet? And can you stop there? So the hamstring comes up just so far and the left glute hasn't kicked in yet, and then maybe stay there. Maybe do a little bit less.

So I don't think I focused on trying to figure out why something else is jumping in, rather than just moving below or before compensation that we're aware of. Because there's all sorts of stuff like Charlotte mentioned that is probably happening that none of us even know yet. And that seems to really hit home. That seems to be, ahh.

And then like you've talked about, just keep moving there and see what happens when the rest of the body can stay quiet and the rest of the things can relax. And maybe there is something there and maybe we'll discover that as we keep working. But at the moment I have no idea what's happening in his left glute.

Susi: And it's interesting because many people don't because there could be any number of things that are happening there. That's the thing, right? So that left glute doing what it's doing could be for a bazillion different reasons. And so asking the question of why can really lead down the rabbit hole, which is really fun if we want to go down the rabbit hole and kind of think about all the various connections that are there.

And in the moment, if our aim is to shift up a neuromuscular pattern and if we simply move that leg bone as far as that doesn't really kick up the glute, now we're starting to change the habitual pattern. That's where we can start to play. And then what starts to become cool is as the glute stops kicking in, oftentimes we see the range of motion improve without the glute kicking in.

So there's a natural progression of organically improving range of motion. There's not a need to stretch out the tissue or any of that stuff. When we

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kind of get going in the way we're meant to go, a lot of change can organically happen. And then we start to become aware of more and more and more. And we kind of actually see, oh, interesting, I noticed this in my foot or in my jaw. That's related to my glute kicking in, which can sometimes really blow people's minds because what the heck does the glute and the jaw and the foot have to do with anything?

But as people start to recognize their own patterns, they start to map it out themselves. They start to see those correlations.

Susan: It's almost as if we can help introduce them to their own body. Because I think I've gone through most of my life not particularly paying attention and just moving ahead with where I want to be and not really understanding what I'm doing or is it the best movement? Like you talk about, if we can purify the movement, strength comes because the "right" part of the body, the part of the body that's designed for that movement is then the one working.

It's just amazing how little I know about my own body. And if I can slow down and sense into it, there's so much information there.

Susi: Well, yes, and I think there's a piece around a lot of people operate from their neck up and they can read all about the things they should be doing and the programs they should be following. And so they take that information from a thought perspective, which is not a bad thing, it can be incomplete, though.

So then when they can start to sense, then they can interoceptively tune in and proprioceptively tune in. They can feel sensations of their body and where their body is in space and the parts of their body that don't actually need to be involved in the movement. So then it just changes up the whole dynamic and the energy that's put out when we move.

Charlotte: And when you clear up between the segments, then you go back and do the same movement and suddenly you've got this enormous range

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of motion and ease that wasn't there before. I think that's what blows most people's minds is that you're doing something with the legs and suddenly the shoulders are free or the opposite way, right? It's that relationship, shifting that changes everything.

Susi: Yeah. And it's really great that we've got the work of Tom Myers, who he's really popularized the notion of myofascial meridians. And there's more maps even within our system, if we care to pay attention, right? And it's a way in. But so many people, as Susan mentioned, they don't quite tune in.

And I think a lot of people have this perception that, oh, if their shoulder is tight, the shoulder is the problem. And they stretch and stretch and stretch and stretch the shoulder or they do whatever, they do whatever, they do whatever to the shoulder and then the shoulder doesn't change. Oh, so that just must be my age. Maybe this is just what it is, right? The best years are behind me and now I just kind of get to hang on.

And that's what it is until they start to move another part of their body that may actually be more of the contributing factor for why the shoulder saying, I got to hang on here. If I humanize whatever is going on in the shoulder, I need to hang on in response to the way the movement is. It's not going to let go if it doesn't feel safe to let go.

So then we create these better and better, more honed connections.

Charlotte: Yeah, and that's one of the things that keeps coming up with my clients, is they talk about feeling safer in their bodies.

Susi: So good. Isn't that what it's really, really, really about?

Charlotte: Yeah.

Susi: Yeah, especially if they've been through a cancer recovery process or treatment or other surgical processes that can really hammer away one's internal sense of knowing. And especially even with a chronicity of

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symptoms. Like we can be upset, I've seen clients be upset with how their bodies are performing and being let down.

Have you had that experience at all? And has that shifted at all with clientele who were upset with the way their bodies were performing and then they have a new view because they're now moving better?

Charlotte: Oh yeah, for sure. One of my clients, she's had breast cancer and was a dancer before. And she thought she really knew her body, but when we started doing stuff and moving into really small ranges of motion, she was feeling very shaky.

But then suddenly something happened and she did the same thing, she said, oh, I feel safe for the first time and that there is less restriction and that she can feel more freedom of movement between the upper body and the lower body. She can still feel some restrictions from her surgery, but it's less in her face. It's kind of moved into the background instead of the foreground.

Susi: So if you were to say something, if someone's listening and they're like, yeah, I kind of want to do this program. If there was something you could say to them about why they should, what would you say to them?

Charlotte: I would say take a leap of faith and experience it because it's the experiencing it in your own body that makes you want to do more. Because you can think something, but until you feel it, it really doesn't mean anything. And the intensive is all about starting to feel things in your body. And even if you think you felt it before, I can tell you, you haven't. Not in the same way. Not in the same way. So, for me, that was really compelling.

Susan: I would agree with what Charlotte said. Same thing, take a leap of faith. The thing that I'm most noticing is how exciting and what an honor it is to think that I may be able to help someone live better in their body and have a more fulfilling life and not have as many blocks.

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I had a client the other day, I'm seeing people changing how they feel in their body, yes. And also I've got some people that have a lot of trauma and we're releasing emotions. One gal this morning was crying through most of the class and felt bad about that. And I spoke with her afterwards and I said it is possible, if you're not able to identify why you're sad, it's possible something that's been trapped for a while is just bubbling up. It's not necessarily a problem. Maybe your body is releasing a little something.

And a couple of weeks ago, one of the gals, we were working quite a bit in just really slow movement through the hips and moving the leg bone in the hip socket. And she called me later that day and said, I had this strange thing happen, all these memories from my childhood came up. Things that I hadn't remembered. And that pain in my hip is gone. And so I don't know, though maybe there was something, you know that idea that the issues live in the tissues.

So it's possible that we can improve our physical well-being and bring along our emotional and mental also. And I just find that fascinating and do not want to stop finding ways to dig in there and see if there's more healing to be done.

Susi: So amazing. So if people wanted to reach out to you and find you, they might be in the same center as you, Susan, where are you and how is it best for people to reach you?

Susan: I'm in Southern Oregon, and they can email me or call me. We'll plug in your email address in the show notes or a way for us to get it to them. So if you're listening to this and want to connect with Susan in South Oregon, then we'll have a way to access that in the show notes.

And how about you, Charlotte? What's the best way for people to reach you?

Charlotte: Okay, I'm on Vancouver Island in Sydney. They can reach me by phone or email and also on my website. There's a link through my website.

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Susi: And what's your website?

Charlotte: It's www.iomt.ca. My business name is Inside Out Movement Therapy.

Susi: Love it. Love it. All right, so we'll put that link there so people can find you through your website. And if you want to reach Susan, we'll have a link for how you can access her email. I don't want to put email addresses directly on our site. But if you want to reach her, then we'll have a way for you to connect with Susan.

All right, you two. Thank you so, so much. This was so helpful. And we will see you in class.

Susan: Thank you, see you tomorrow.

Charlotte: Yeah, looking forward to seeing you.

If you want to learn more about the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive, you can read more over at functionalsynergy.com/intensive. It would be an honor to work with you.