

# Ep #240: Healing & Synergy: My Clients Just Want a Fix



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With Your Host

**Susi Hately**

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

## Ep #240: Healing & Synergy: My Clients Just Want a Fix

**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. I'm so glad that you're here because today we continue the healing and synergy podcast, which is my talking about some anatomy and biomechanical concepts as well as interviewing grads and trainees and digging into some of the business aspects around growing a client base that really does nurture you because you need to be nurtured as much as you are nurturing your clientele. So these three components really are the synergy that enables a healing process, helping clients to reduce and eradicate physical pain.

Today I want to dig into a concept I've been hearing, or a comment I've been hearing a lot lately, and it's something I hear a lot over the course of my career but it's often from trainees or soon to be trainees about, ugh, all clients want is a fix. They don't want to know what's going on in their body. They don't want to dig in and experience their body. They just want to come for a fix.

And so I want to dig into that idea. I want to explain what I think is the background to why that idea even exists in our world and how I work with it, because I don't get a lot of people coming to me looking for a fix. Sometimes yes, and I'll outline how I work with them. But most of the time people aren't coming to me for a fix. And I want to explain why that is and how I nurture the relationships I have with my clients to cultivate this alternative to seeking the fix.

So let's dig in. So first of all, here's what I think is the reason why there are people out there who are looking for a fix. So they're going to their healthcare professional or they're going to their yoga therapist, they've got a problem and they want the fix. They want the thing to go away. And the reality is that we have grown up and we live in a culture where there is a problem, so please fix it for F's sake. Like get rid of the problem already.

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And that is everywhere in our world. Not only in the medical model, not only in many rehabilitative models, it's everywhere. So it makes sense that when there's a pain or a strain or something, somebody just wants it gone.

I think about a story from an integrative medical doctor who I interviewed for one of my online conferences years ago. She was relating the story about one of the issues that she's sees in medicine is that when a physician sees that someone has had a test for blood iron levels and they see that the test shows that they're low, the response then is, well, we better give more iron so the person can increase these blood iron levels.

And her comment was that's only part of the scenario. See, what the doctor in that case has done is said, oh, because the blood test shows low blood iron levels, the problem must be the blood iron levels, right? Do you follow? And her point is that that's the start of the conversation, which I 1,000% agree with that these tests are opportunities. Movement patterns are opportunities. They open up the dialogue, but they aren't the end of that dialogue.

Now, curiously a story that goes along with that was right around the same time I had a client who became a trainee and is now a graduate who had, lo and behold, low blood iron levels. And we had this conversation that perhaps the blood iron levels are a signal, a messenger, an idea to consider. And lo and behold, her physician gave her, as a prescription, iron. Which makes sense, right? And interestingly the blood iron levels did not change very much.

When she started her certification training and she finished the first week, a few weeks later she gets back to me and she's like, you're not going to believe this but my blood iron levels have increased quite dramatically. And so I asked her how or why, because she was not taking any more iron, she was doing other factors that she had learned from movement and stillness, down regulation, Ayurveda concepts. And all of those helped contribute to her blood iron levels going up.

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So here's the thing, the blood iron was an indicator that something was going on. And what was contributing to those iron levels being low? That's where we start to explore. That's where we get to have some fun. And I'm using physiological measures, anatomical measures, but we can do the same thing with movement.

Movement is the same thing. They're looking for the muscle that's the problem. I need to strengthen this muscle or mobilize this muscle. This is the muscle that's at fault. And the reality that I see with someone in particular with persistent issues is that there are layers of things going on. There might be a muscle that is feeling very tight or might be short or might be locked long, the question becomes, well, why? What's contributing to it? Why does that muscle, tissue, want to respond in that way?

It harkens back to me like early on in my career when I'd see clientele who were also seeing other professionals who were doing manual techniques. And there are lots of different professionals who do manual techniques. And they'd be going for their regular visits and they started to notice after regular practice of therapeutic yoga that they didn't have to go back as often. And they were really interested by that.

And one of the things that I said is you can go back for manual technique and kind of reconnect or reset whatever intervertebral tissue relationships have been going on. And so you get that reset, you kind of get things put back into place, to put it in a very layman's term. But then what's contributing to it being disrupted in the first place?

And that's what you're helping to shift when you're coming to your yoga, is you're shifting the neuromuscular dynamic patterns. So then because you're shifting those patterns up, you're actually shifting up the way the body is functioning. And that intervertebral segment might still be at issue, but you've got a much greater bandwidth, so it doesn't get as disrupted as often.

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And we can play with that as an idea of whatever is happening in one's body is really the start of the conversation, not the end. It doesn't mean that it is. We don't need to get resigned to this. Our tissue is way too supple, things can change so easily. Nervous systems are plastic. So much can change because we are these dynamic human beings. And I also appreciate that we are all swimming in this soup of, there is a problem so fix it. Find that problem that's at fault and fix the darn thing. I totally get it.

All right, so then, awesome. I totally get it. What's the solution? What's the fix, right? Well, where I want to guide you through now is an exploration, because that's essentially what's happening through a process of someone working with me, both in a private connection as well as in the intensive, as well as in the certification program, is that there's an exploration that's happening.

Yes, I'm teaching a bunch of stuff. I am totally filling up and satisfying the prefrontal cortex of the left brain. I am giving a lot of information and I am also teaching it in a way for your body to really know, for your body to settle into, for your brain to settle into. I'm teaching it in an interoceptive and an embodied way so that you get it through the various layers of your being because when we are experiencing it, we can't fake that, right? We can't fake an experience we haven't had.

So the idea here is to explore, to experience. And in that exploration and experience, we can reclaim our bodies. We can reconnect. We don't have to hand over our bodies to somebody else to do to and to fix. We can return to ourselves. We can help our clients do all of the same things.

If we're not the practitioner who is basically asking for our client to hand their body over to us, we improve connection. We help them improve their connection with themselves. We help them to return back to themselves. We engage in a dialogue, in a connection, in a relationship.

I heard someone say recently that it's hard to be human. How can we do it better and with more ease? This process of yoga therapy is both an

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experience of physics, it's biomechanics, and it's also an art. An art of being able to connect. So there's both the scientist, the physicist, as well as the poet, as well as the painter. And enabling those layers of ourselves, who is the practitioner working with our client, and knowing which layer to connect with.

Now, that might be all fine and dandy and sounds very lovely. How does this actually play out for, say, a health professional who's working in 15-minute blocks of time? And there are realities around what it takes to have relationship, what it takes to create connection. And what I know to be true is when I'm in a rush, I'm often in a place of less connection, except when I notice I'm in a rush.

And in fact, when I jump into my car, and I'm like, "Ooh, I'm in a rush, I better get going," that's a sure sign for me to slow down. So when I hear myself saying that I slow down, because I know that when I'm in a rush, it's just not good. I've pulled out of my garage and I have whacked my side view mirror. Not pleasant.

So when I feel like I'm in a rush, I slow down because I know what being in a rush can create. So being in a rush often does not lead to great connection. So there is a limitation in terms of environment for this process of being able to connect with someone.

Now, having said that, you can have 15-minute blocks of time and not be in a rush. Think about a 15-minute block of time having coffee with a friend, and that friend is listening to you clearly and cleanly. And what it feels like when you leave that 15-minute coffee with a friend.

Now, granted, I know coffee with a friend might be very different than being in a clinic. And it's the idea that I'm offering up. To go with that, there's an exercise that I teach during the intensive, where it's just prior to people really getting into teaching each other. They've already done a little bit already, so they know each other, there's connection already happening.

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But this is a listening exercise that I take people through. And so I've sent them off into breakout rooms, two by two. And one person's a pretend teacher, one person's a pretend client. And I ask the pretend teacher to simply listen to the pretend client tell them about their body, however much or little they want to share.

Invariably, when people come back after that breakout room, which lasts about five minutes for each person, so 10 minutes total, sometimes a bit longer. Invariably, what I'll hear is, when I was the pretend client, the experience I had was I have never felt so listened to.

And then on the teacher side, the person who's being the pretend teacher, this is really fun, particularly those people who have training in active listening techniques. They'll say, I did a pretty good job at listening. But man, I got to give up those active listening techniques, because I was spending so much time thinking about, am I actually actively listening to my client, that I'm not sure I was actually listening. Because there's this belief that if you nod your head and you say, mm-hmm and you do those things, that the person's going to feel heard.

But simply you say, mm-hmm, and you nod your head, how do you know that that actually means that they are heard? And that's what I didn't mention when I sent them off into the breakout room, is they can't do those things. They simply sit there and listen. Some will even say how uncomfortable it initially felt, but then they could feel the connection that started to happen. And that, by far, is what people share, is that as they get practice at it, they're like, oh, this is what being in a relationship is.

Now, for the record, I'm not advocating that people don't nod their head and say mm-hmm, when they're with their real clients. I want the person to be aligned and true to themselves and how they are. I mean, I certainly nod my head and say, mm-hmm.

But the key piece is, are you doing those things to distract yourself from being connected? Are you doing them to pretend that you're connected?

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Are you doing them to truly be connected? Are they actually organically arising because of the connection you have with your client?

Because ultimately, if we are wanting to move out of the paradigm, that soup that we all swim in where there's a problem, fix it, if we're wanting to move out of that paradigm into something that's more connected, we need to model connection. We need to recognize how we are connecting with our clientele.

That's when the result that we see becomes more of ease, becomes more of trust, because what we're cultivating is a trusting, more easeful relationship. We're wanting to help our clients come back to themselves, to reclaim themselves. So our job is to help them do that. Our job is to help them grow their awareness. Our job is to listen.

If they were able to reduce and eradicate their physical pain, what would that mean for their life? I ask that question at the beginning of almost every single intake. So what would this mean? What could you do?

Sometimes I don't ask the question because the person has said it straight to me, if I could have this pain gone, I could do X, Y, Z. So then I clarify, what does that actually mean? If it's running, do you mean run three times a week? Do you want to run 5k? Is it 10k? Is it a marathon? Is it an ultra marathon?

If your pain was gone, or reduced, what would that enable you to do? This is not a goal. I am not setting a goal. I am merely discovering what makes them tick. I'm understanding their layers. I'm understanding them. I'm understanding what they want.

Having a conversation like this as well, it helps somebody see that I do not see pain as a boogeyman. I see pain as a messenger. I see pain as an opportunity of connecting, of reconnecting, of tuning in. In the words of Rumi, "This being human is a guesthouse, every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an



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unexpected visitor. Welcome and entertain them all, even if they're a crowd of sorrows who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honorably, they may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes because each has been sent as a guide from beyond."

Pain is the messenger. Signals are the messenger. But for someone to recognize that they are a messenger, there needs to be a relationship with themselves, and we model that relationship.

Now, some of you might be listening to this and thinking, still, Susi, so many people want a fix. Yes, there are those who do. And this idea of listening and building relationship, of exploring, of excavating, of understanding, it's a whole series of skills that we can bit by bit, taste by taste, seed by seed, skill by skill, one step at a time, teach our clients to be able to connect with that relationship. It's a skill, something that is not taught in a lot of places in our world, which is why the default keeps coming back to, here's the problem, so fix it.

Now, a lot of the times when people come to see me, they've often been to many other people. They have stories similar to the one of blood iron levels being low and nothing is working to get them up, to the point where they're almost resigned that maybe this is just the way they are. But something still niggles at them, that maybe there is another way.

And in this case, my client with the blood iron levels, there certainly was. And I would harbor a guess that is the case for many of your clients too. So begin, begin by thinking about relationship. How can you help them become more related to themselves? How in your own relationship to them, your own relationship to yourself, can you enable that experience to be had for them and with them?

That is the power of the healing relationship. That is the power of the recovery process. That is synergy and healing.

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If what you have heard really lights you up and resonates deeply with you and you want to take it a step further, consider the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive that's happening April 20th to the 25th. And even the whole yoga therapy certification, if this is something you've been digging around and looking for and researching.

If this is what really resonates with you, then come on over to [functionalsynergy.com/certification](http://functionalsynergy.com/certification). That's got all the details there. And for the intensive, [functionalsynergy.com/intensive](http://functionalsynergy.com/intensive). I'm happy to address any of the questions that you have. If this is being called to you, if you're feeling pulled in this direction, it would be an honor and a real pleasure to work with you. Take good care.