



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hately

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

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.

Susi: Welcome and welcome back. I'm so glad that you're here because I'm going through a series of interviews with some trainees and with graduates sharing their experiences of what it's like to be going through the certification program, as well as once graduated what the world is like as a yoga therapist post-graduation.

And I'm really glad that Susan Morrison is back. Now Susan was initially on the podcast following her taking the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive back in October. And we had recorded that episode in the fall. It dropped on the podcast in early January, I believe it's episode 229.

And it's fun to have her back because it's now June that we're recording this. So if you count the months from October to June, what's that, about nine months. So it really hasn't been that long, and already after she'd done the intensive, she'd already made some really great gains with some clientele and it just continues.

So in part, this is not only an opportunity for you to hear her progress in such a short period of time, but also how she's working with some really key concepts that we speak about inside of certification and how my trainees at a trainee level get really great results. And this is something I'm so proud of because we're not waiting until we finish theoretical training somewhere down the road, the people in the certification program start working with clientele, like right at the beginning.

And the reason for it is, to me, you can get all the theoretical knowledge you want, but it doesn't really start until you get down into it, right? It's where the rubber hits the road, and why not have a great team of trainers to support you as you work?

Everyone who's coming into this program has extensive experience with yoga. And they are professionals in the movement world, whether it's yoga or whether it's other health professionals or Pilates or personal trainers or however. So they're all skilled and we're just helping them refine their skill.

So with all of that, I just want to welcome you, Susan. I'm really excited to chat with you about some of these key concepts that we're talking about. And as you're listening to this, if what Susan is saying really is like, "Oh, I love this girl," then you can reach out to her and we'll have her contact in the show notes. She's in Southern Oregon, but she also works online. So you'll hear more about her, obviously, as she goes.

So Susan, welcome. I'm so glad you're here.

Susan: Thank you, Susi. Lovely to be here.

Susi: So as we were prepping for this episode and we were talking about some of the experiences that she's been having over the past couple of months. There are some really key ideas that were really highlighted, and that is when we're helping our clientele, it's more than just yoga therapy techniques. I mean, I realize that sounds very basic, but truly it's more than just movement and muscles and bones and breathing and Nidra. And it's more than that.

It's really recognizing this relationship, as I often talk about, between you and the client. And it's also getting clear and connected with the client's readiness, readiness to learn and what their compelling reason is, right? And where a compelling reason is like, what's their why? Like where are they at now? And why do they want to do this? Like not necessarily the goal, the goal is part of it. But when their pain is reduced or eradicated, what's then possible? Like what's that driving kind of pull, right?

Because it's one thing to say, "I just want to get out of pain." But it's a whole other thing to say then, well then what's possible if that pain was gone? And that's a really interesting kind of conversation to listen for. We don't

necessarily need to have it because we often hear it as people are talking about what they would like in their world.

There's also this readiness, this readiness to learn, which is why now? Why me or why Susan? Why private series? Like why now? Like there's an alignment with the methods, there's an alignment with the person and it's just like, she's my girl. Like what's the why now, right? And there's a kind of blending.

And it's interesting because sometimes when I'm teaching this with clientele or with trainees rather, there can be this assumption that once you've kind of got the compelling reason or nailed down, yep, they're ready to learn and I understand why, and then it's kind of done. Okay, now let's get to work. Let's do yoga therapy techniques. Let's breathe. Let's Nidra. Let's do all the things. It's like, whoa, hold on a second.

This is actually more of a moving target. It moves along the spectrum because the human who is your client, they are moving in and around and as they feel into their body and the experiences that they have into their body, that ebbs and flows as do how they feel about it and how they think about it and the beliefs that they have. So this is an ebbing and flowing thing of being able to really meet a client every single time.

And so when Susan and I were talking, she was a little bit shocked with her client when he arrived in one of the sessions because she really thought he was like there. He had crossed the line and like we knew what we were doing and why we were here, and then it happened and she's like, huh? So that's where we're going to start the story.

So we're going to share the story of like, I think what would be helpful for context, Susan, is where he was before this session we're going to be talking about, where he was before this, which then had you almost surprised when he said what he said.

Susan: Okay. So this is a 71 year old gentleman that I've known for probably six or eight months and has been coming consistently to a class

that I teach, a yoga class, and has been saying that he's getting great benefit from it. And then started seeing me privately in April.

He's had a number of health issues, so we've taken some time off in between. This is, I think our fifth session, maybe sixth session together. And so he's been very, very on board, interested, doing the work, practicing at home. We've done a number of different movements.

His primary purpose when he first, his compelling reason was he wanted to be able to shuffle dance. And so then we've broken that into other things, okay. Maybe a bit of balance, a little bit more strength, a little bit more flexibility. So things have just been unfolding and seemingly just gliding right along, as you've just alluded to. We're all on board. Here we go.

He comes into this session and starts out with the whole idea of props. So I use a lot of props, a lot of support. If you're trying to open up the inner thighs, maybe with bolsters or blocks on the outside so that the legs can relax and lie down and use blankets and bolsters and whatever it takes so that the body is supported and the muscles can relax and we can see what's really moving, not moving, when lots of the bracing settles down.

We've been just coasting along with this. La la. Today, the day that this happens, he decides that that is no longer appealing to him. I don't want to do that. I do not want to go through my life on crutches. I do not want to go through my life cheating. This is not any longer how I want to approach my yoga practice or my practice in life.

And I was rather stunned. I just stood there thinking, hmm, okay, what would Susi do? So I just said nothing. I listened. One of the things that we've learned is to just listen. So I did. I believe I heard what he was saying. And I said again to him, I said, you know, just like we talked in our very first session, he is a person that is used to being in pain. He is used to pushing. And he's very aware of that, and I think perhaps rather comfortable and maybe even a little bit proud of that.

And I said to him, like I had said at the start, I may not be the person for you. And this approach may not be the best approach for you currently. So we sat with that for a moment. And then just strangely, he went and got on the mat that I'd already had laid out for him, everything was already set, and started going into some of the poses that he would like to feel more comfortable in. Child's pose and hero's pose, which are both very, very uncomfortable for him.

So I asked him as he was doing this, how does that feel? It's horrible. Everything hurts. This hurts. This hurts. This hurts. Oh my gosh, these are so tight. Oh, la, la, la, la. I said, but these are things that you've done. He goes, I did these for years in a martial arts practice that he had and it was never comfortable. I'm like, okay, wait a minute. 20 years ago, you were doing this and this was never comfortable. Correct.

Okay. So I said, okay, well, I can see, yeah, I can see that you're in a lot of pain. And for some reason, I just asked him, I said, would you be willing to give me another try? Would you be willing to try some support in these two postures for the next few minutes? Okay.

So I went and got the stuff. I got more padding for his lower legs. I had blankets for his hips to settle onto in hero's pose. He came into the posture and, oh my goodness, there's no pain. And I can feel my quads stretching, which is what I want. And my knees don't hurt.

So we did a few adjustments, as is common. And I was able to have him sit for three minutes a couple different times with no pain. And then another little bit of something came up in one of his feet. So I grabbed my toe separators and he put those on and then he sat back down and that was brilliant.

Then he was able to go into child's pose, which we had not even worked on yet, and could bring his hips all the way to his heels. He can't remember the last time that happened. This is all within 20 minutes.

Susi: And he could do that without pain?

Susan: No pain. And so I did you, I threw my hands up. I said, huh, I have no idea why that's the case. I'm very pleased it is. And thank you so much for playing with me. And I have no idea. And I have no idea why those toe separators took the pain out of your foot. And if you will commit to working with me, give me a month.

His idea was that once he gets on the prop wagon, that train, his whole life is props. And I'm not quite sure where that idea came from. I said, no, no, no, that's not my goal with you. My goal is to help you learn how to move in a way that your tissues can heal, open, whatever it is you're seeking, so you can move out into your life without blankets everywhere and without having to have a walker wherever you go. So give me a chance. Let's play again and see what happens. And so that's how we wrapped it up.

Susi: So here's what's really, really interesting is that I love having conversations, and this might sound like I'm deviating from the conversation, and I'm not. I just want to circle back after I share this story, and then I want to unpack a few things here for people listening.

There's a physiotherapist friend or a physical therapist friend up here in Canada that I like to chat with about various things physical therapy, because physical therapy has all sorts of cool tools that they utilize to support people. And this friend of mine was telling me a story about an anesthesiologist who had come in to see him and was wondering, you know, this dry needling technique, this IMS technique, like why was it working so well to help release pain?

And the PT said to him, he's like, well, you know, we're just starting the research really, and we don't really know what's going on. And I mean, we kind of think it's this. We know it works, clearly, because we've been using it for years and years and years, but we don't really know. And the guy chuckled, the anesthesiologist chuckled, and he's like, you have no idea how much we don't know in the anesthesiology world.

And yet, I mean, anesthesiologists are, they got a pretty big responsibility, you know what I mean? So it's like there's a lot of things that we don't

know, and there's a lot of things, like the mechanism per se that we don't know. And yet what we're seeing is that it works.

Like we can use the scientific process to say, all right, there was a stimulus provided and there was a result. We can see that something objectively changed. The person can feel both interoceptive and proprioceptive that something changed. So there's a scientific process going through here.

But the actual mechanism, we could make something up based off of some really good understanding of biomechanics and anatomy. But without a scan, without a camera inside, we don't really know. Not really for sure. Not yet anyway. We have to get the funding to even have the studies in the first place, right?

So it's interesting because it kind of opens up this conversation of like, let's just see if people move, help them learn about how they feel about their movement and in movement and go from there. And the piece, there are a couple of pieces I want to unpack, because what I started this conversation with is there can be this fluctuation or this ebb and flow of compelling reason and readiness.

And I don't think his compelling reason actually shifted, but the readiness I think shifted because it's clear he has a vision of himself not as like, in air quotes, an old man. And he was equating being on props with being an old man.

And I see this a lot with people who we've asked them to move in a smaller range of motion and they say something to the effect of, well, but wait a second, if I have to move in a smaller range of motion when I actually have the bigger range of motion and you're asking me to move in a smaller range of motion, sure, yeah, I don't have pain in the smaller range, but how on earth am I ever going to get to the larger range? And well, maybe I'll never get to the larger range. Maybe if I slow down or stop, I'm never going to get to where I want to go.

And that for some people could be equated to being an old man. And so then it's like, I don't want that. So I'm just going to keep going. I mean, heck, everyone has pain when they're older anyway. So I'm just going to live with this. I've lived with this for a couple of decades or more. And well, you know, it's the devil I know, right?

And so that can happen, right? There can be this like, ooh, possibility I could get better. But then when they get into it, it's like, oh gosh, this is kind of frightening because I don't really want this other possible result of not getting to where I want to get to. So there can be this ebb and flow.

And what Susan described here was so great, like being a bit gobsmacked because she thought that she had passed that point. And it's brilliant because there is no point to pass, right? We're all human beings. Things can shift, right? And she just stopped. She didn't try to convince him. She didn't try to cajole him. She didn't make him wrong. She just stopped.

And as she said, she just, you did your very best with listening to what's going on and then gave him, the word these days we use is agency. You know, we gave him agency, gave him the opportunity to simply do what he wanted to do, which was, I want to do the poses. I want to do the poses that I know of.

And the beauty of it is that they have a relationship where he could be specifically articulate of like, this hurts, and you could bear witness to him saying this hurts, which then it was like, okay, you know what? If you want to move that way, have at her. There are tons of people in our world with pain who are moving in pain because that is their preference or they don't know there's an alternative and all the other myriad of things.

But there are people I know who would prefer to move in pain than to slow down. I know those people exist. I know them. And so it's like, all right, no problem. There's nothing wrong here. And you know something, that's just not what I do, as you said, right? It's just not what I do. So it's like, it's just not what I do. But you know what? If you kind of want to do it, we can play, which is sort of what you offered up.

It's like, I mean, we're here, we got this hour together. What do you want to do? And so it was sort of one of those, like, because you had the relationship and then let's just try something. Let's just try something. Not, oh, you shouldn't move in pain and pain is wrong and blah, blah, blah. Because there are people out there who follow me who think that that's what I think about pain. And I'm like, good Lord, pain is physiologically normal and it can absolutely be reduced and eradicated.

So it's like, you were giving him this opportunity. And then he had the experience and it blew his mind. And it opened up the gates of possibility again, which then helped him step into that compelling reason, readiness because the possibility was reawakened for him. Not because you told him, but because he experienced it semantically.

Susan: Right.

Susi: Yeah.

Susan: And he said, I'd forgotten this, I need to revamp my idea about pain. He said, I recognize it's no longer serving me. And in my mind, I'm wondering when did it serve? None of my business. And I love that you've talked about it's that ebb and flow. Because you commit to something and you have a positive experience and you're in, does not mean that you wake up with that same commitment tomorrow.

We are shifting. We are moving targets and everyone's life is happening. Things are going on I know nothing about. And I'm so grateful he trusted me enough, or us enough whatever it was, to just sit with me for a little bit and have a different experience.

Susi: Or have an experience.

Susan: An experience.

Susi: And then that experience turned out to be a different experience.

Susan: Yeah. And he'll be back next week.

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

Susi: And the cool thing here is what I really want to emphasize is I think it's beautiful. Truly. I mean, people who, again, follow me, they know about the healing helix, it's this DNA helix, kind of double helix that I had created a number of years ago, but it really kind of sums up the model with how I work with people. And we know we're in it together.

Sure, I have a ton of expertise. I've got a huge track record of helping people. But I'm not in the person's body. I don't see myself as having any greater knowledge than the other person. The other person has lived in their body way longer than I've ever known them. And I trust them explicitly and implicitly to know their body.

Now, are there aspects about their body they aren't maybe able to articulate because they're not aware of? Yep. But does that make them any less of an expert on their body? Nope. Is it my job to teach them some skills and tools to become aware? 1000%. And then out of that awareness, be open to hearing the experience that they have subjectively, and then matching that with the objective experience that we both can see. Totally.

That's the skill development between the objective and the subjective world, which is the piece that really helps them tune into, access their inner healer and take those next steps to really get themselves well. It's all them. And I'm guiding them in this certain set of skills that they don't have coming in, but we get to help them connect to.

I mean, I think they have the skill. Let me rephrase that. I think they actually have the skill. They have forgotten it or they have unlearned it or they have covered it up with other tension patterns or they've covered it up with ambition or drive. And it's not about getting rid of the ambition and drive, it's helping to rechannel those drivers in a way that really serves them.

So people who tend to have those types of characteristics utilize them so much more effectively to really create some cool stuff. Yeah. So it's really a power with, and you really expressed that really well.

There's another piece to this though, that I also want to address. And we talked a little tiny bit about it, but I want to go into it a bit further, which is when I'm working with people, it's really common for them to have a range of motion that's a lot bigger than they really have. And there's a bunch of compensation patterns, tension patterns, bracing patterns.

And when we can make that movement initially smaller, so they're not in a braced or a tension or at least it's less, it's reducing that. Then we can start to make some progress in terms of retraining neuromuscular patterning. And it's not uncommon for people to then kind of like, say, "Oh God, I don't like this. I mean, I like that. I feel a little better, but I really don't like that I have to move so small. Like, am I going to have to move small for the rest of my life?"

And that's where he was going with the props, is like am I going to have to be on props for the rest of my life? And to him, he was cheating. To him it wasn't real. To him it was whatever, like we could throw all the words that it could possibly be, right, that are sort of inside of that spectrum.

And something I've gotten better and better and better at explaining over the years is to say, you have the full range. He has full capability. He has it. And when they do that full range, when he does that full capability, there's a bunch of pain present. So people can go about doing their full range and doing it about like he is his own person and he will have pain present. And so if you want to change that habit, habitual pattern, then one way is to move in a range where that habitual pattern doesn't express itself.

So what's the range where that pain doesn't arise in his case? And then what will happen is as you continue to improve that and then start to connect with these other parts of the body that have been contributing or correlated or responding to the tension holding patterns and start to shift those patterns, now you're going to start to see the growth kind of coming back to what your actual range is.

So said another way, we have all of what we need inside. I mean, I know that's so cliché, but truly. What I think, and this is not just my words, these

are words from other people I've heard from too, is like, there's just a lot of tension and a lot of bracing and a lot of breath holding and a lot of go, go, go and push, push, push that's covering over the actual expression.

And then as you start to just change up the patterning, that actual range, him doing those poses he wants to do will be present without convincing or cajoling. The body will open into it when we give it the opportunity to. And he started to experience that.

Like within 20 minutes, he was on whatever, three blankets and a felt pad or something of that sort. And he had been trying to get into a child's pose before. And as you may have said this before the recording started, but he was five inches away from his heels. And then he became like one inch from his heels. And not that getting into the pose to that degree is the point, but in some ways for someone like him, it is the point because he did a greater range and he had no pain.

Susan: And his forehead came to the mat. His forehead never comes to the mat in yoga practice. So everything softened. It's remarkable.

Susi: Yeah. So the idea here is then people will say, well, how did you do that? We did it by having him move in a range that didn't increase pain. We gave the nervous system, we really gave the whole system, the whole system, not just the nervous system, but all of him, the opportunity to move in a space that didn't have a whole bunch of tension, strain and pain.

And in my mind, it just gives the system a chance to settle, to breathe, to give space, to not hold so darn hard and to use these inefficient patterns that are really freaking exhausting to hold. And then stuff changes. I know that's so technical sounding, right? But it's like things shift and that's what he experienced.

And then in that experience, she didn't have to, Susan didn't have to convince him. He's just like, I'm here. Okay, I see this again. I am reminded about why this works. And he's back in. And next week, he might come

back and be like, “I don’t want to do props.” That might be. And it’s like, okay, we start over. We don’t ever know.

And I say this for people, because sometimes teachers early in the training process will say, “Okay, so they’ve done this today, I better create the plan for next week.” And it’s like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You can, if you want, but recognize that a lot can happen between now and next week, and that person might show up. Who knows what’s happened?

What part of the iceberg is going to show itself or what happened to the, again I’m using the iceberg proverbially because we only see the tip of the iceberg. So what’s arisen now is going to show itself. And we have no idea. And we simply have to meet the person, see what we see, connect and go from there.

Susan: Yeah, which is a lot of what you teach us. Be present. Don’t have an agenda. Of course we think about clients in between and we process and we discuss things with each other and have ideas, certainly. And nothing that I had in my “plan” for today came to pass. Not a single thing other than he walked in the door, we spent some time together and then he left. Everything else was not at all what I was thinking was going to happen.

Drive that home to us again and again, and again. Be curious. Be present. Just greet them where they are. We’re not here to fix or to prescribe. Just, okay. Huh, let’s see how this goes.

Susi: And I also want the listener to know that Susan and I had this podcast recording booked and I had anticipated we were going to talk about another client. So like we’re actually modeling this for everybody because she shows up and she’s like, “I’m going to talk about this guy.” And it’s like, okay, let’s go, right?

And so it’s like the concepts and the principles are there. And we just simply, like you can hear the engagement and the rapport that Susan and I have, and just we’re feeding off of this. And that’s really what a session is. It’s really an epitome of just the human relationship and modeling in that

relationship, the relationship that they can build with their own selves, with their own body, with their own tissue, with their own symptoms, with all of that because their body is communicating to them and they can work with that which they hear, right?

It's really quite lovely and calming and clarifying, right? It's that it's like that calm alertness that comes with equanimity, right? And as people come into that space, their nervous systems just totally, totally settle in and much changes when that starts to happen. There's just a greater space to be.

Susan: Yeah, exactly. It's wonderful to be witness to. It's just, I feel so excited, happy, calm. It's a bunch of stuff going on with the yoga therapist also. Which you also address in our training, is to be checking in with ourselves and how we are feeling and what's going on in our system.

It's really an honor to be able to go through this with people. It's quite an intimate opportunity.

Susi: In a very, very, very loving way. You know, like it's not just here's the yoga Advil to support someone. It really is the opportunity for shifting and changing for real.

Susan: And being the witness and then being the support and just all of it. Yeah, I'm just so thrilled to be a part of this. It's amazing what's happening in my life as we go through these months together.

Susi: And just to reiterate, we're recording this in June and Susan took the intensive in October and then the final module began in January. So we're like six months into the final module and we still have lots of time to go. So I'm super excited to see where you continue to go with this, Susan, because you're just on a clip right now. It's really great.

So with that, as I mentioned, all the trainees who are working with me are seeing clients because that's part of the process. And if what you're hearing really resonates with you and you're in South Oregon close to where Susan is, you can work with her in person or you can work with her on Zoom.

And so if you want to reach out to her, Susan, do you have a website yet?

Susan: I do not.

Susi: So the connection is through email, yeah?

Susan: Yes.

Susi: Okay. So if you're listening to her and this resonates, then send us a note through functionalsynergy.com and just ask for a connection to Susan, because I just don't want to put your email address online. So you guys can connect with us and we will put you in touch with Susan, no problem. And you can have a great time exploring the season. It would be my honor, actually, to do that.

Susan, thank you so much. This has been so much fun.

Susan: Thank you so much. And I've had a great time and I look forward to chatting again.

If what you're hearing with Susan and I has really resonated and you are looking for training so that you can have a similar relationship with your clients or build a business in the same way that Susan is, working with clients in a very sort of down home, earthy, supportive way where clients get real agency in their process of getting better, then the certification program might be for you.

This program is designed for yoga teachers as well as health professionals who love yoga and both want to integrate therapeutic aspects of yoga into their practices and there's a basis of biomechanics, kinesiology, anatomy, and also more of the Koshic layers that really tap into your inner healer.

For more information, you can go straight to our website at functionalsynergy.com. It would be great to have you aboard.