

Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication



**Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**Susi Hately**

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

Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication

**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. I'm so glad that you're here because today I launch into a new mini series on helping people to reduce and eradicate physical pain, primarily focused on the health professionals who are helping their folks and are looking for more tools or refined tools to support the process.

My hope through this episode and the series is to help you get more comfortable with the intangible. Because the thing with persistence of pain is that it is very intangible, as I'll reference later in this episode. So many people have physical pain and there isn't tissue damage. There are people with tissue damage and don't have physical pain.

So we've known for a long time that the correlation between what people feel from a pain perspective and tissue damage, there's not a correlation there. And it doesn't mean that pain doesn't exist or that it's all in your head or any of those things. But it still makes it difficult sometimes for health professionals, yoga professionals, other forms of body workers to be able to interact with their clientele, maybe even believe their clientele when there isn't a very tangible reason that's obvious.

Now I'm someone who has really excelled in the world of the intangible and that is why I'm running this particular series for you to hear about my updated ideas and ways I'm describing what it is that I do so well. What you're going to be hearing from me in this series are just concepts that I teach really everywhere in my classes.

So if you have taken the power of series, whether it's power of the tongue, power of the hip rotators or power of the pits, or even the power of pure movement series, whether it's the feet or the neck or the QL, you will see and hear me teach these concepts.

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

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

Now, I'm going to get into a little bit more of the why in these episodes or a bit more detailed so that you can start to apply it more so with your clientele. And if you happen to be a nonprofessional listening to this, you can take these ideas into your own practice, into the practices that perhaps other health professionals have given you. You'll be able to work through why maybe you're still in a cycle of persistence of pain, even if you're doing all the things.

So the big piece of this is that I'm teaching people about sensing their bodies. How I go about doing this, why I go about doing this, and the tools that I utilize and really this process that I utilize and how it can be often, for many people, the difference maker. As I've mentioned, physical pain and persistence of pain has been a tricky concept for many people in the medical world to resolve.

And again, I think a big reason why is because there is an intangibility to persistence of pain and something being intangible is very difficult for a lot of people trained in the regular medical system. I've seen this when health professionals, OTs and PTs and some massage therapists have come through my therapeutic yoga intensive or my IAYT accredited yoga therapy certification. They initially really struggle because they are used to having very tangible ideas.

And initially the ideas that I'm sharing and the tools that I'm sharing are intangible. And then as they get more comfortable with this intangibility, they see other tangible pieces to it that they didn't see before. And that's when they start to make so many of the great changes and have great successful results.

So I think one reason why I've been able to do this so effectively, and why I have so much success in helping my people get out of pain and also train my trainees how to do what I do really effectively, is I'm not a trained medical professional. My degree is in kinesiology, which at its foundation is exercise physiology, anatomy, biomechanics, motor control and coordination.

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

So my training wasn't at all about fixing injured areas or resolving medical events. So because of that, I've just not ever been trained to see people as broken. And even if there was a medical issue, I didn't have the expertise or training to fix the issue.

So as long as a client comes to me and there's medical stability and medical clearance, my focus has been on where I could facilitate change, so I can help people shift tissue. And when I help people move better, breathe better, and they shift tissue, they feel better no matter their condition. And there's some really cool things that happen along the way.

They become aware of things they weren't otherwise aware of and other correlations relative to the situation that they're experiencing medically. And all of a sudden, somewhat by happenstance, the way they experience that medical condition changes as well.

And the story I always come back to because it's very simple and straightforward and very obvious, is my husband's psoriasis. If you look at him now, you would not think he has psoriasis. The switch is likely still turned on within his physiological system, but he now can tune into what's going on, what creates or correlates to a flare. He hasn't had a flare since 2018. He got through an entirely hugely stressful experience called the pandemic without a single flare. And when I met him, he was pretty red and flaky.

So things really can fundamentally change for people as they learn these ideas that I'm sharing with you today and in the next episodes and all the previous episodes I've recorded so far. Ultimately over time, what I have noticed is that no matter someone's condition, if I can help them move better, if I can help them breathe better, if I can teach them how to become more still and quiet inside, not only does their pain go down or eradicate, how their symptoms are expressed is reduced as well.

And as I've mentioned, that condition may still very well be present, yet how it's expressed inside of them has changed.

## Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication

So there are lots of tools and ideas through these episodes. And there isn't one thing or one tool that I utilize that really is a difference maker. But there are a series of things that I consistently do with each and every client that does make a difference.

And a key piece of this is how I teach about pain. In recent years there has been an uptick in the medical world about pain, what pain is or isn't, what causes or expresses pain. And there is more pain education. And there's still a whole host of work needed to be done because the big issue is that pain is a sensing, subjective experience. And it isn't something that people can see, right?

We know, as I've mentioned, that you can have pain and not have tissue damage. And you can have no pain and have lots of tissue damage. So there's not the correlation between pain and tissue damage. So the word I like to use is it's less tangible. And many practitioners have a lot of difficulty working with people where there's something that's not tangible. And this is exactly where I excel.

And there are four key reasons why and how I work. So the first is that I have tossed out, and I did this early on, the traditional pain scale. I have not really ever loved the traditional pain scale and in all the many iterations that exist.

Yes, I totally recognize that a pain scale can help a person express the intensity of pain that they are experiencing. But because the tool is intended to help healthcare providers and individuals communicate about pain in a standardized way, trying to make the intangible more tangible, there are fundamental limitations.

You can't really make the intangible tangible. It's intangible for a reason, if I could put it that way. Pain is very, very far from being a standardizing or standard experience. So to make it something that it is not, makes it really difficult to facilitate change.

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

So instead of trying to standardize someone's experience, I honor the subjective experience that the person is having. And I listen, and I listen, and I listen, and I listen, and I listen. I don't listen to fix, I listen to listen. And out of that, I begin to really hear and recognize what's happening in my client's subjective world.

And this then leads to part two, because when I can really listen to what someone's subjective experience is and recognize it as their subjective experience, so if they talk about feeling tightness or feeling strain or feeling a wiry feeling or a numbing feeling, even if those words have a resonance for me in terms of experiences I might have, I 1,000% understand that how they're describing those words might be entirely different than how I would describe mine.

And to me, there is no point in trying to gain an understanding of specifically what they're feeling. I can't feel what they're feeling. Rather, what I do is I listen, listen, listen, and understand simply their own experience without trying to make it or reference it to my own.

Then what I do is I blend the objective nature of their movement and their breathing patterns with their subjective worlds. This is not something that can be standardized, though it's very deeply personal and meaningful for the person that I'm working with.

To take this a step further, what I am doing is teaching and modeling a healing relationship, the one they get to grow for themselves because they aren't broken. Their mechanics, physiology, and psychology are responding perfectly to what is happening. So let's meet and greet them where they are at.

Now, the beauty here leads to number three, about how do I actually do this then? And there are two key parts. So how do I actually do this objective subjective worlds? Well, the subjective is simply just listening to what their subjective world is. And then what I'm playing with is because, again, I'm a body-based practitioner. My basis and my experience is with a

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

BSC in kinesiology, biomechanics, anatomy, exercise, physiology, motor control, and coordination.

So I utilize those ideas to watch their movement and to watch their breathing. And I combine those with their awareness. So I'm able to use therapeutic aspects of biomechanics and movement of breath, and then help them to tune in and direct their awareness very specifically and with ease.

Very often I find, and how this is different than a lot of traditional exercising in a rehabilitative setting is that oftentimes rehabilitative exercises consist of sets and reps with a focus on getting in a quantity, whether it's a number of sets or a number of reps or both, and maybe having a certain form or a look in a pose or an exercise. Like knee over an ankle, or a knee in line with the hip and the foot, or ribs in.

So they're looking for it to look a certain way, but little in the way of how the movement is actually feeling or what the internal result is. So people can knock out sets and reps. People can facilitate a certain look of a pose and have their body parts aligned perfectly. But that same person might be gripping and compensating in other ways just to make that all happen.

So what they're doing is they're essentially borrowing from one area in an attempt to move better or to gain strength. But in fact, what they're doing is they're creating overall depletion. It's a big reason why people can get stronger. They can improve range of motion, but their underlying patterns aren't being resolved, so they still will have cycles of pain.

Which is where the work that I do really comes into play, because I am not trying to create a certain form or a shape or an alignment. And I really don't give a hoot about the number of sets and reps that somebody does. My interest is noticing and guiding their awareness to the relationships of their body parts, the relationship between their movement and their breathing and guiding their awareness to those experiences.



**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

So let's play with this for a second. We'll start with this idea of awareness and then I'll blend this in with an example of bridge pose. So awareness is this idea of fine tuning where our focus is being directed. It's an energy that can be led. I can ask you to direct your attention to your pinky finger. And by offering up that direction, you can bring your awareness to your pinky finger.

I then can ask you to direct your attention to your big toe. You'll then become more aware of your big toe. Those are examples of your awareness can be directed. It's an energy that can be led. So I can direct a client as I am helping them move to pay attention to how they are moving and what they are moving. I can direct them to noticing what they are sensing. And by doing this, I can help them tune into the correlation of the two.

I realize that sounds very wordy and difficult to do. So let me give an example of bridge pose. So I have a client who was given bridge pose as an exercise to reduce back pain. When I saw her doing the bridge pose, what I saw her doing and what she also described that she was doing when I asked her, so I was directing her attention to what she was doing. She said, I'm pushing my feet down to push my hips up.

And then she came back down. And so I asked her, what do you feel? She goes, my back is sore. Okay. So I was able to help her direct her attention and her awareness to what she was actually moving and what she was feeling. And the outcome was not the desired outcome for the purpose of the movement.

The other thing she talked about was how she squeezed her bum when she was in the movement. So then I asked her, okay, so now let's play around with the actual movement of bridge pose. Bridge pose is a movement of hip extension. I explained what hip extension was. And in reality, you don't need to push your feet down to make your hips move into extension.



**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

So then I was able to direct her attention to this movement pattern of bridge to see if she could connect to it or even do it. Turned out the movement was a lot smaller to begin with as she was kind of figuring out what she was doing. But lo and behold, she did the movement, she got some hip extension. The movement was smoother and there was no back pain.

This is really common with bridge pose. And I've used examples of bridge pose with different clients in different episodes. So this might seem like a repetition, but it's likely a different client than I'm referring to, but the idea is still the same. When I can help direct their attention, their awareness of what their body is doing changes.

Now they've got some data that they can work with. They can perceive their subjective experience now because earlier on, I was listening to their subjective experience and I didn't discount their subjective experience. I didn't try to make sense of their subjective experience. I simply let them share their subjective experience. I gave them the space to know that their subjective experience was worthwhile and that I listen.

So then she could explain to me what she was now feeling subjectively while she did bridge pose. And I could tune in objectively to what I actually saw and I could guide her to what I saw because we were on Zoom, so she could just look at the camera. And then she was able to bring the two of them together.

I can't tell you how remarkably straightforward this process is. Some people will say to me, but Susi, people don't want to become aware. And I say hogwash to that. I'll call your bluff absolutely. People absolutely want to become aware, they just don't know how. And so many practitioners don't know how to help their person become aware. They don't know how to teach it.

So then because they don't know how to teach it, they don't know how to teach how to work with someone related to a very intangible experience called pain, very intangible experience called anything subjective, that many of them shy away from it or rely on the tools of sets and reps and

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

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

form and alignment and just do it however you can do it. Yeah, just get yourself stronger.

Yeah, getting stronger will improve your bandwidth for sure, but it doesn't necessarily resolve underlying patterns. And so someone can get stronger, but still have these occasional blips that are really, really depleting.

Things can change. Mechanics can shift. The way that you load through your body and transfer and dissipate forces can absolutely and fundamentally change. Tissue can shift. The way you experience your body, the confidence, the safety, the ability to downregulate absolutely can fundamentally change.

Which then leads me to this fourth point is that ultimately the person is now experiencing more freedom and more ease and much more confidence in what they can do. There are new sensations for them to experience. They've got more of a subjective alphabet, so to speak of experiences and of sensations in their body. And they've got connections to objectively what helped facilitate those subjective experiences occurring.

And a lot of times, as these subjective experiences of freedom or ease or lightness or softness arise, the other subjective experiences around pain and grip and tension settle out. So the clarity and the confidence that someone grows because their internal feedback mechanisms are so much more clear, it becomes really cool to watch them progress. The person can now see that they can do it for themselves. They become less reliant on me.

Now, you might be asking, well, how long does it take for this to happen? What I've noticed in my private one-on-one sessions, it takes five sessions for someone to really get this. One session for them to get that it can happen, five sessions to form the basis and foundational pieces for the habit. And then another four to really, really nail it in.

It's why my private series is three months and I see a person nine sessions over those three months. And then we also have a Slack channel where we

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

## Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication

have messaging back and forth as needed, because so much of the change that happens for a person is in that white space I call it between sessions, because they're practicing on their own. They're becoming more aware of things. Their attention is becoming more gently focused on areas. Their subjective world is expanding. Their objective world of their own bodies is refining. Lots of stuff comes together between those sessions.

So those are the key fundamental points for this episode. And I'm going to build on each of these in upcoming episodes. So as a summary, the first one is that, A, I've ditched the traditional pain scale and all the iterations of it because I'm not trying to make something tangible that's intangible. I am honoring the intangible. I'm honoring the subjective experience. I'm not trying to standardize it.

And so instead, what I'm doing is I'm blending objective and subjective worlds. I'm helping them tune into mechanically what's actually going on in the movements that they're needing or wanting or someone has prescribed to them or that I might be working with them on. And I'm tuning that into their subjective world.

I'm helping them direct their attention and where their awareness goes so that they can start to understand why the growth they've already had through the processes they've already tried, why where it's worked and where it hasn't worked and what has been missing. And then as a result of that, they can see that they can do it.

They see the possibility. They see freedom and ease. They see peace. They can feel all of that in their system. And that's very, very powerful.

Now, if you're a professional and you want to work further with me and dig into this, what I recommend that you check out is the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive. And that's a program where we dig into this process over six sessions and people get very clued into their own process and how to teach it to their clientele.

**Ep #273: 4 Keys to Pain Relief: Unlocking Effective Strategies for Client Recovery and Pain Eradication**

It's open to yoga teachers, body workers, PTs, OTs, anybody who is working with clientele and supporting them in the process of getting out of pain. And I mean it truly, getting out of pain. It's fundamentally possible. That's step one of the full certification program. And there is the full certification program, which is the 800 plus IAYT accredited program, which begins very soon.

So if you're interested in that, by all means head over to our website at [functionalsynergy.com](http://functionalsynergy.com). It would be an honor and a pleasure to work with you, to share with you what has worked so well for me and for my grads. Let's help a lot of people get out of pain. It's absolutely possible. See you next time.