

Ep #281: How To Get Clients To Do Their Programs – It Isn't What You Think



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With Your Host

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.

Welcome and welcome back. I'm really glad that you're here because today I am talking about how I help my clients do their programs. So many teachers and health professionals will tell me that they struggle to get their clients to do their programs. They ask me about how I get my clients to not be noncompliant and how do I get them on board and get them believing and doing the work.

And I'm more than happy to share about how I do this and how I work with my clients. And I'm even more happy to share that for at least a couple of decades, all of my clients have done their programs in some form. Not necessarily exactly 100% in how the program was written, but because they've done what they needed to get the results they wanted.

And I can't stress how important that part is. It's not that they followed them 100% in the way it was written, but they've done what they've needed to do to get the results that they've wanted. So that statement there is dripping with trust. So this episode is going to have a lot about trust and how I help cultivate it and how that is a fundamental value, a fundamental fuel source for how it is that my clients do so well, how it is that I do so well, why it is, one of the reasons of why I get such fantastic results with my clientele.

Now, if what I'm sharing here really resonates with you and the ideas that I'm offering are something you can put into place and you want more guidance, I have a program. It's one hour long and I get into more detail about how I do this. And you can read more about it over at functionalsynergy.com/blueprint.

So as I've mentioned, I'm happy to talk about how I work with my clients, what I see as being fundamental to why they do the work themselves because, and I think this is really, really important, I have not ever had a noncompliant client in over 20 years. Even if my clients have begun to be a

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little nervous, even if they forgot or were too busy to do their program for one or two weeks, I was able to support and nurture their interest in getting better and they did.

Now some might say that this is due to the high quality of clients that I attract or that I've been at this for 30 years and that's why. And the reality is, sure, that could be the case. And I also know people who have been at this, professionals who have been at this for 30 years and they're actually quite resigned because they believe that clients just don't do the work.

So what I'm sharing here are some key fundamentals that I do with each and every client and as a result of my doing them, my clients commit to themselves. And when I teach these to my trainees, when they forget to implement them and then I remind them to do them, then they too regain and continue to get consistent results. The same thing with my graduates. It's so important.

So there's the fuel of trust. It's also things I specifically do in the process of supporting someone in getting better. I also think another important piece here to keep in mind is I believe that this whole philosophy I have about my clients and them doing their programs, for them making the gains they make, I believe it all started about 25 or so years ago when I happened to read a statement.

I don't remember where, I don't remember the context for reading the statement. I simply remember reading it, which was related in the medical field that a patient takes their medication at a proportional rate to the level of trust in their doctor. And this is vital, right? It's not about if the medication was beneficial, it was about if they trusted their doctor.

So me as a young yoga therapist, a young yoga teacher, new in the game-ish, like new-ish, it really showed me how important my role was, how important the relationship was. And it led me down a path to recognize the distinction between power over and power with. On a bumper sticker then is the fundamental core to a client so-called doing their program is what was the relationship I have with them.

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So what I've done ever since then is that in everything I do, everything I say, that relationship needs to be at its core. And I've spoken about healing relationships in previous episodes, and so with this one you'll see how I implement this idea in how I then work with them around them and their program, them and what they do outside of their sessions with me. How this translates into application.

When this relationship, this healing relationship is sort of front and center, there are a bunch of factors that aren't happening, i.e. what's not happening is I'm not making someone do their program. What's not happening is I'm not trying to facilitate someone's commitment. What's not happening is I'm not someone's motivator or cheerleader.

And this is really important because when there is a good healing relationship, there's a fundamental trust and belief that the person has got all of the innate inner capacity to do what they want to do next. Whatever that thing is that they want to do next. And again, this is also really important because I can hear some people listening to this saying, yeah, but my clients don't have that inner capacity. And that's where I'm going to call a little bit of bull malarkey on you.

This is a clean show, so I've got to say bull malarkey to you because it's the recognition of what exists inside of someone that is the important piece. And you'll see this as I keep talking about this and talking through this. So while I'm not a client's motivator or cheerleader, I will raise the proverbial pom-poms when someone gets better and has breakthroughs. I mean, I did that this morning with a couple of my private clients, right? Like it's like, woo-hoo, they're getting it, awesome.

And the clear distinction is the pom-poms, me raising them, are in celebration of their progress. It's not in order to facilitate a commitment or to facilitate progress. They're a result. The pom-poms come in as a result as opposed to the fuel to make something happen, right? I'm not putting all this energy out to try to make someone do something. That's not my job. It's not what I was trained to do. I'll leave that to other folks in the motivational sphere.

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So that's essentially number one. I'm really clear on my role in the relationship and how I perform my role. I'm also clear on my client's role. I'm clear that when my client shows up in my Zoom room, when they express the need for support, that there's a spark of something. They have a hope, an inspiration. They've got desire. They want to get better.

So whether they've heard a story of another client or they've watched a YouTube video or they've taken a short course with me, or they've gotten some kind of results from somebody out there, another rehab professional, they've gotten some results. They've got some spark, some hope, some possibility. Somewhere there has been this spark that's created. That spark is where I attend my focus. That spark is what I want to nurture.

That spark is symbolic of what they want next and what they want for their future. And that might sound really simplistic, but it's so, so, so important. I believe in that inspiration for them showing up. I don't specifically ask them, so what inspired you to show up in my Zoom room? What inspired you to sign up? I don't ask that question that outrightly. But as they talk, I am certainly paying attention to what that spark is in all that they say and all that they don't say.

Which really leads to number two is I believe in their future. I believe in their goals and desires. When I'm listening to their story about their pain, about their symptoms, the work they've done so far and not done to support themselves, what has worked, what has not worked, I'll often ask them a question like, so if you could have this pain reduced or eradicated, then what could you do?

And I listen closely and I believe every single word, even if what they say I don't necessarily think that they could do. It's not up to me for my prefrontal cortex to place the judgment on whatever the thing is that they want. I just recognize that's my own prefrontal cortex making a belief about whatever their statement is. That's all right. I don't have to believe it, but I do.

I listen closely and whatever my thoughts are, whatever my judgment is, I still believe what they want to believe. That's very, very distinct in my mind.

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And I keep whatever it is that they want in mind as we begin our session so that I can see where the person is now, now in this moment relative to the outcome they want? Where do they want to be? What is that gap?

I can see their movement patterns, their compensations, their ability to transfer load, their belief in themselves, how they think about their condition, what they think about their process, what they think about their future. I can also see the gap.

Now some of you might have been caught on that statement. It doesn't matter if I believe in what their outcome is or not. Like if I believe in their desired goal. And if I disagree with their goal, won't that impact the relationship? And the answer is no, it doesn't. Or if I believe that the gap is too big, because the reality is it's all really curious what it is that I think about their goal or what I think about the gap. And really, I'm kind of like, who cares? Who am I to put the brakes on someone's goals and dreams? Who am I to say the gap is too big?

There's so many paths of healing. There's so much that can happen that it can enable amazing outcomes. I've seen so many amazing things, no matter the age of the person, no matter the condition. I mean, I see it every single day. So who am I to say that what they want is too much? Why not instead nurture that? I'm not being Pollyanna. There's so much more to healing than someone's anatomy and biomechanics. I can't express how important this part is to the relationship and to the process.

The third piece is when all is said and done through the process of our first session, as an example, I outline their program. And I really, really, really keep it simple and I keep it connected to all of what we've had a conversation about and what I've already said and what they have already said.

And as an example of this, I have a client who came in with some knee issues and she was due for a knee surgery. She knew that she was going to be having knee surgery and then ultimately she wanted to get back to certain activities.

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This was going to be a long journey that had me help her prep for surgery and then would support her post-surgery along with the PT and the outpatient work she was doing with her surgeon and her surgeon's team. And I was going to be helping her all the way along and be kind of a support and all of that. And then following the graduation from the medical process to continue to help her move towards her desired outcomes.

And the piece was, that I could keep the process simple now, but also keeping the end goal in mind. So keeping things really, really simple to what she could do now and outlining too, how this related to the bigger picture so that we kept seeing the future even while we were working in the present. And this helped her also stay connected to the future while staying connected to the present.

Many people I find who are driven and ambitious have a tendency to want to push beyond what they can do. Like they've got the available range, but it's very compensated. It's very grippy. There's a lot of breath holding. So they've got lots of capacity, but the way that they're doing it is full of compensation, and that compensation is kind of getting in the way of things.

So if I can outline a program that addresses that and then helps them come back to some smaller movements very simply, so long as I'm showing them how this connects to what they want, nine times out of 10, the person will happily do it.

Then that 10th time, they might be a bit more frustrated and they might go back and do their program and kind of push and blow through some of what they ought to have, but then they bring it back and we just talk about that. We address that. We connect with that because that piece of wanting to push through says something awesome about who that person is and what that character is.

I don't look at that and think, oh God, the person's going to keep pushing through. They're not going to slow down. They're not going to go in a smaller range. Like how am I ever going to do my work? No. I'm like, cool.

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You want to keep pushing through? Sweet. That is an amazing characteristic of yours. It's kind of getting in the way of the process, but how can we utilize this desire to keep pushing through and use that as a way to help you do what we need to do to support you and where you want to go?

So you notice what's important there is I don't tell them that they're wrong. I just utilize the very things that they're doing to support them. There's trust there. I'm not knocking them down a peg, I'm lifting them up.

And many of these folks that I've seen as clients have persistent symptoms. They've made gains and invariably somebody has told them they push too hard. They've got to slow down. They have to rest and do all these things that innately they don't necessarily want to do. And I find these ways of supporting them by saying there's nothing specifically wrong here. Let's just use these attributes that might be slowing you down. Let's use them to support you in speeding things up, and that gets their attention.

And we can do this with any individual, whether someone is fueling themselves off of their own inner desire or whether we need to help cultivate that. We can take that which is already working well and allow ourselves to guide towards what's already working well and integrate that into a simple program because if you think about it, if we guide them towards whatever is working in their bodies, don't you think that then they'll focus on what's working in their bodies?

And I'm not being euphemistic here. I'm not stepping away from the things that aren't working. But don't most people who go into a rehab place, aren't they told a lot about what's not working without being really clear about what is working from an authentic, true way? Not just in a I'm going to butter you up with some things that I'm going to pull out of the hat that are working, but really what we need to address is what's not working.

No, no, no. We've got to think about like if someone told you all the things that you're doing really, really well right now and inside of that context said, oh, and here is how we're going to make things even better and we're going to utilize all these great skills and talents and attributes and

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characteristics and personality that you have, we're going to build the program inside of that to support you, to take what you do so well and then take it the next step.

Which leads to the last point, which is while they've taken their program away, I ask them to pay attention. So it's not me just giving them a program of like, all right, do this four times with five sets and 15 reps or whatever. I'm asking them to pay attention. I'm asking them to pay attention to how their body moves and what they feel, noticing how the movement impacts their body, impacts their thinking, impacts whatever had come up in that session.

I'm specifically giving them some direction. And I then say, because when you come back the next time, I'm going to ask you about what you noticed. So it's just not knocking off, like I said, five sets of 10 or three sets of 15 or whatever. I want you to pay attention while you are doing the movement.

Particularly if they're feeling really good at the end of the session, I also say to them, okay, now your symptoms are going to come back because we're creating new motor control patterns and motor coordination patterns. These patterns take some time to hone, which is why we need the session length that we need.

So one of the things I need you to do in the growth of those new patterns, the refining of those new patterns for the endurance we're gaining around those new patterns is for you to pay attention to what was working, what wasn't working, how long the new patterning lasted. So then we've got a benchmark for where we work next.

So they already know, right? They already know where we're going to go next. They know what I want them to pay attention to. They know it's not just, okay, one person out and the next person comes in. It's just not a revolving door, that I actually care about their progress. No, I'm not the cheerleader or the motivator, but I do deeply care.

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So those are the key pieces. One of them starts with the foundation of the relationship. I'm not a motivator. I'm not a cheerleader. Even if I don't believe in what their outcome is, it doesn't matter. I just noticed, A, that I think that, but I believe what they say to me. I believe in their desire.

I believe in them and what they want. I focus on how they're moving and how they're not moving, and then compare that to where they want to go and what is that gap.

And who am I to say if a gap is too big? It's my perception of what the gap is. That's all just perception. So much can happen in the beauty of a healing relationship, in the magic of that healing relationship. And then I give them very specific, step-by-step guidance in a very simple, formatted program that they can easily integrate into their life. And they know that when they come back, I'm going to have some questions for them.

They know I care. They know clearly that I care. There's no assumptions in the way that I've been behaving or responding or whatever. I know some health professionals will say, but Susi, I do that all. I do this checkpoint, this checkpoint, this checkpoint, this checkpoint. That's great. That's a great to-do list, but how did that to-do list actually land for that person? That is what's fundamental and that is what is key.

So if this really resonates and you would like more, I highly encourage you to actually do two things. One is to check out the blueprint around how I help my clients really get their results, the Committed Client Blueprint. You can read more over at functionalsynergy.com/blueprint.

And also if you want to take it even deeper, we've got the intensive coming up and you can read more over at functionalsynergy.com/intensive. Looking forward to connecting with you. Have a great rest of your day.