

Ep #291: Selling with a Calmer Nervous System with Lory Newmyer



Full Episode Transcript

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Susi Hately

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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 am so glad that you're here because I have a podcast favorite, Lory Newmyer, here with me today. She's been on other episodes with me to share her insights and growth and all the good things.

And when I was thinking about this Safety In Selling miniseries, I immediately reached out to Lory and she reminded me, and this is why it was so perfect, because she reminded me of a time, and I'll let her tell the story, of when she was considering raising her prices and she was a little nervous to do so. So we're going to be talking about that today. And then what happened out of that.

And then really about what it's like to be someone who has a calmer nervous system and what that means, not only in us engaging with potential clients and clients, but also in the world. There's a relationship between how you're engaging with people who could be clients and just how you are in life.

And so I'm hoping what this episode enables for you is to move away from, I don't like selling or sales is awful to something entirely different. All right, so let's see where we go. So welcome, Lory, I'm so glad that you're here.

Lory: Great to be here, Susi.

Susi: Well, why don't we just dive into that first story?

Lory: Fantastic. This was early on in my relationship with you. And back then, I think I was maybe early in certification or it might have even been a module just before that. We were required to have a certain number of clients, and at that time you had a requirement that we had to have those clients paying.

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And of course, I was such a baby, baby yoga therapist that I was concerned about what is the value of what I'm bringing? I should say that my background was that I was a retired nonprofit executive director. I'd been teaching yoga and was quite trained in yoga at that point. But I was teaching free in a community location. And I really loved this as a community give back.

So here I am now needing to sell my services and in a new modality as a yoga therapist. So we're on a call and we were discussing this dilemma. And I said to you, but Susi, if I charge money, I'm really afraid that all these people who I've been working with for almost a decade at this point are going to now think that I'm, like I've been playing a really long game. And I realized it was a really long game and that I was giving them this service for free because I really ultimately wanted to charge them a fairly hefty sum. And I think they're going to think I'm greedy.

And what you responded with was such a surprise to me. You said, maybe they will. And this was like the last thing I expected to hear. And it was exactly what I needed to hear. And it just stopped me in my tracks. And I thought, oh, wait, she's not comforting me and telling me, oh, no, no, no, you're not greedy. Maybe they will think you're greedy.

And this made me think about, well, do I care what they think? I mean, is that what's really the important thing in my decision making? And of course, you led the conversation there. You asked me if what I thought I was offering had value, which was the critical question. And I said, yeah. Even though I was a baby yoga therapist, I knew I could help people. And did I actually pay other people to help me when I needed help? And yes, I do.

And that was just the beginning of a whole beginning of unpeeling from me about my own unexamined issues around money and valuing the work that I was doing. So thank you for that, Susi.

Susi: And I love that conversation because there are a lot of yoga teachers who are turning yoga therapists who have a similar dialogue in their head. And in part because there is a long history of yoga being offered for free

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and it should be free. And there's sort of a drumbeat of a conversation, although I think that's starting to shift a little bit, but there's still this, it's historically in the soup. If you've been in the industry for long enough, that's a conversation to be had.

And there can be this fear around selling because when you really look at selling, think about your own views about selling and where did those views come from? We can start with Hollywood. And when you think about sales in Hollywood movies, the characters are not typically the kindest, maybe more ethical, moral. They don't hit high marks, typically, by the characters in those particular films.

And then we think about the person who comes by at the dinner hour offering whatever they're offering. And then even my kids will hear me say, it doesn't happen so often, I'll be like, why are they coming over at the dinner hour? And then we just don't even open the door. And so then there's this, like I'm not even opening the door.

And so there's this conversation that's out there where we don't want to be that person. There's nothing really positive if I was to say to you, like what positive experiences do you think about with sales? So we don't want to be sales. I mean, I get it. I get all that.

Now I want to shift gears. And Lory, when was the last time you had a dialogue with a friend or your husband or your kids about which restaurant you wanted to go to?

Lory: Last week.

Susi: That was just a general conversation though, right? And there was a bit of a back and forth about what restaurant to go to, yeah? That is a sales conversation. And so this is part of the reason I'm running this, part of the reason is that it's like what we're doing is we're having conversations with people.

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And there might be someone who says about the restaurant you're suggesting that, no, they don't actually like the restaurant. It's not all that different than, well, I don't want them to think I'm, fill in the blank. If your kid or your spouse is saying to you, I don't actually really like that restaurant, do you take it personally, right? Like depending on the relationship, maybe there is, but generally speaking, that doesn't happen, right?

And so it really starts to become interesting, the things that happen in our heads around this engagement with somebody.

Okay, so now let's start to shift gears. You start kind of moving along, this was early in your training process, and you start shifting along, what starts changing for you? Because I now know that where you are now is very different from where you were back then.

Lory: I mean, the initial astonishing thing to me was that given this requirement that I ask people to pay me money, I wrote a letter through my newsletter to the 150 person mailing list I then had, thinking people are going to throw rotten fruit at the screen when they open it. And I was saying, can five people step up and are you interested in working with me as I get this training? And it's going to cost X.

And to my astonishment, about 12 people responded to that initial email very positively. Some were just saying, we're so excited for you. I mean, a lot of people were very excited for me. But the number who wanted to work with me at the price I had set far exceeded what I was asking, the numbers of people I was asking for.

And this, of course, was just a total revelation to me that, in fact, people do know who I am, they trust who I am, and they actually respect that I am trying to start a business and that that requires investment. And the word investment has kind of echoed in my mind a lot in my growth as a yoga therapist and as a person running my own business, because I've really shifted, Susi, from thinking I'm selling you a product, me, or this thing that I can help you find, to I'm giving you an opportunity to invest in your well-being.

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And if you want to invest in yourself in this way, this is what it's going to cost to do that with me. There are a whole lot of other options, but that's the conversation we're then having. And I would say beyond that, I think of most of those conversations as something of a negotiation.

I don't mean that I'm going to get into a back and forth with someone about what I'm charging them. But I've probably, in the course of our initial assessment, gotten a sense of, am I excited about working with them? What's their capacity to pay my basic fee? And that gives me the opportunity to say, I'd really like to work with you and I'd like to offer you this discounted rate, if I want to do that. And that's the beauty of running your own business, it's entirely up to me what I want to make possible for other people financially.

So I don't have to feel locked into something that I've posted on my website.

Susi: So let's just unpack that really, really briefly, because sometimes people want to have discounts and sliding scales at the very, very beginning. And I think the energy that is being brought to that, there's a lot of fear that someone's not going to want to pay their fee or something of that sort.

And you're nodding at me quite vigorously right now. So do you want to speak to that? Because there's a distinction, I think, between offering that at the beginning, coming from a place of fear, and then from this other place. Can you distinguish between those two places?

Lory: Yeah, I think that's a really great observation, Susi. And I think we do have to be mindful of the sort of exit ramps that we make for ourselves to avoid getting into the conversation with ourselves about what we are afraid of by asking people to pay us.

So I held myself to an agreement with myself that I would ask people to pay me X amount until I had my business up and running. That X amount increased, I think, four times in the course of being in certification. So over

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that first year. And I'm not talking about huge leaps, but I was getting up to what I thought was a really nice fee for my services, and also not gouging the people with whom I was working.

And when I had gotten to that point and then had a waiting list, that was when I realized, okay, so now if I want to work with people who I know actually can't afford this or somebody has a condition that I'm going to learn a lot through, I'm more interested in working with them around that than maybe they are with working with me. That doesn't actually happen much, but I can imagine that scenario.

That's when I began to look at being more creative about the funding. But I really wanted to take the time to show myself that I've invested in myself with the training I've gotten, with the work I've put in and becoming skilled. I wanted to really live in that for a while before giving myself permission to be more, I guess I would say playful about what I ask people to pay me.

Susi: Did you feel like there was a set of skills around the conversations about working with you that you had to build? Like sales skills? Was there an element there or did you feel like it was just a matter of connection?

What I'm going for here, what I want to sort of dig out is when you were in that place of, they're going to think I'm greedy, there was a way of thinking you had, and then there was this other place. Now, granted, I had some guardrails back then that you stepped into and met around clients paying you. And I'll explain that just briefly after Lory answers about why I did that.

But I guess what I'm really wanting to unpack here is what really changed? Was it really just your thinking about it and just getting out there and doing it or what?

Lory: Well, I mean, I did develop significant skills over the course of the year of certification and I was very conscious of my growth in that time. I also was, meanwhile, having a lot of time to hone my craft. I mean we had clients with whom we were working and I was seeing evidence of what I was bringing to people through the work.

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So I would say both the combination of the acquiring of actual hard skills and the practice of those skills, which then resulted in my both understanding what I was doing better, but also learning how to talk about what I was doing better.

So you offered us a lot of opportunities, as did some of your other specialist teachers, to really hone our language and our understanding about what is happening here and what can sometimes look like magic in a yoga therapy session. And that all just gave me tremendous confidence to know that what I'm doing, in fact, does have this tremendous value. That made me much more comfortable talking to people about money.

Susi: All right. Lovely. So what I want to emphasize here is that there are skills in sales that people can grow. And ultimately, what I think that those skills do is help you create better connections, like true authentic connections. And that's what you're hearing with Lory. She's not in like, I need to get a client or I need to find a client. It's learning to explain not so much what yoga therapy is, but what she's doing and the results that it provides.

And the start of that really is listening to what the client is saying, or the potential client is saying, as she's already mentioned, and really tuning into, is this someone I can actually help? And is there a problem here that I have a skill set that I can provide some relief for?

And they're the person who's actually interested in a somewhat transformative experience that they're willing to pay for. And even if they don't have the funds, there's still some skin in the game that they've got, that they're willing to step into it. And so then she explains that process.

So do you see that distinction here? So she's listening to a few things about their commitment and the scenario that they're having. She's explaining a process and a result that they can have. So really, really straightforward connections. It's not trying to convince or persuade.

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And I mentioned this in other episodes, as well as in the emails that I'm sending out about this, where it's really like how you start the conversation with a potential client is what happens when they're in a session.

So if you're convincing someone to come to a session, you're likely going to have to convince them while they're in the session, whether it's to even show up for the session or whether it's to convince them to become aware, to convince them to do their program. You kind of plant some seeds there very subtly with that power dynamic that's there. And that's not the aim here. That's certainly not helping to facilitate safety.

Now, I didn't want to step over what Lory was saying about some guardrails I used to have within certification. This is really important and a big piece around the safety conversation. And I've shifted my view on this, and I'll explain why as well when it came to safety. And the first is that I really believe that the people coming into my training, they already have skills. They're already teaching, and so they're already engaging in a relationship.

So it's like, well, I'm teaching them more skills, but we're just helping people to move better and to feel better. And they already have some of those fundamentals. So why would someone come for free? In my mind, there really needs to be, as I mentioned earlier, some skin in the game, some interest in bettering themselves.

And so that's why I had some guardrails back then. Then the pandemic hit and that became a little more difficult because we couldn't really hang out with people. And so then I changed that. And then we've altered it again around how that works, where people don't have to build a client base based off of paid clients in the practicum portion of the program, but it can evolve into that over the course of the program. And that's just an evolution that I've taken.

And what I've seen here is that it has enabled people to really tune into their technical skills more solidly, and then go through what Lory has just been describing, as to really understanding what it is that you're offering,

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like you specifically are offering, and not trying to describe this yoga therapy thing.

Okay, so let's take this to the next step, Lory, because something that I've seen with you over the years that I've known you is your nervous system has become calmer. And as I mentioned at the outset of this episode, it really is one of those things of like, as the Zen monk, Cheri Huber says, which is how you do anything is how you do everything.

So can you talk to that a little bit about just how you are engaging with people and just how you are in life and how you are, how you and your nervous system interact with life?

Lory: Thank you, Susi. Well, before I was a yoga teacher, I was a nonprofit executive director of a small to mid-sized nonprofit, which was a pretty stressful job. And I would have said that I was pretty good at managing stress.

And I think it was somewhere in the middle of the first half of my certification program that we were studying something related to the nervous system and I had a real epiphany. And it was kind of embarrassing because I was at that point in my early sixties when I realized for the first time how much anxiety I had that I had been controlling. Controlling so effectively that I had not ever had that word be part of my self-concept.

And that was amazing and also the real beginning of an opportunity to look at that in the context of studying to be a yoga therapist and beginning to understand how I could, instead of being in a posture of self-soothing, in fact, come to understand what was making me anxious and how I could use an understanding of the central nervous system to help myself and thus to better serve my clients.

The result of that, after years of now practicing as a yoga therapist and going on to study Ayurveda more deeply and do continuing studying with you, Susi, is that I find that in both macro situations, one-on-one situations, my sense of being seated in myself, being truly in a state of not utter calm,

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but being in myself is much more solid. I have a much deeper sense of my own grounding, which again, I would have said I had before. In that I feel like I have it more solidly now, I recognize that I have much more growing to do in this area.

But also not only in the one-on-one relationships, but when things are happening in the world, like the US elections, my response to large cataclysmic things has really shifted such that because of what I've learned through my work as a yoga therapist, my work working one-on-one, my work working with people about how to think about helping themselves has really fed back into my being able to sustain a much better relationship with myself around all of those same issues.

Susi: So what are some of your go-to ways of noticing when you start to get heightened and then how you settle yourself down?

Lory: I think that's going to be hugely individual for each of us, but for me personally, I journal in the morning and I have a great need to spend time out in nature. And often that's in forests and sometimes that's on the water. Those are two significant activities that help me recenter myself.

I also am very lucky to have loving friends and family, and while perhaps going to them is not my immediate go-to, I tend to go inward first, I take enormous strength from that sense of community and connection around me.

Susi: Very, very cool. So I'm hoping that what you're hearing in this dialogue is that at the core of this is connection, and we play a subtle yet powerful role in – I mean, it's creating the connection, but it's really about tuning into ourselves. So I'm not thinking, like when I think connection, we think about putting an electric cord into a socket. There is a current, there is a connection that enables flow of energy.

And there's not something that I'm specifically plugging into, but there is something that I am fostering and noticing when, and Lory has made a great mention of this, is noticing when our intention starts to shift. When

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emotions of fear or concern or worry or whatever energy it is that leads to, I got to get, I got to find, and notice what that feels like in your system.

And then what can you do to support yourself, first of all, to help settle. And then if you're willing, just to go and explore that a little bit about where that might be coming from.

Is there anything else you might add, Lory?

Lory: No, Susi, I think you've expressed this really beautifully. Thank you.

Susi: Brilliant. Lory, if anyone wants to get in touch with you, there's a way for them to find you. How might they find you?

Lory: Well, my website's a good starting point. It's my name, lorynewmyeryoga.com.

Susi: Brilliant. Okay, we'll put that in the show notes. So if what you're hearing from Lory really resonates with you, do reach out to her. She's awesome. She can help you. And Lory, thank you again. It's so fun having you here.

Lory: Thank you, Susi.

If the conversation with Lory and I really resonated and touched something inside of you that was like, yes, this is what I am wanting, you're wanting to cultivate genuine healing connections that naturally draw clients to your work without the pressure of having to get to clients, then I invite you to explore the Safety In Selling training because the work you do deserves to come from a place of ease and trust and authenticity. So come and join me at functionalsynergy.com/safe.