

Ep. #310 - Becoming the Practitioner Clients
Remember: Inside the Functional Synergy
Certification



Full Episode Transcript

With your host:
Susi Hately

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

Introduction 00:00:01 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.

Susi 00:00:23 Welcome and welcome back. I'm so glad that you're here, because I am inviting you into a special conversation today. If you're a yoga teacher, movement educator, or a health care practitioner who's felt a tug like your work is good and you know you're skilled, but there's more that you want; more clarity, more ease, more results; then this episode is for you. Because today I'm going to give you a behind the scenes look at the Functional Synergy certification programs and why I created them, what I teach in them, and how they can help you become the practitioner your clients remember: because you've helped them not only change their relationship to pain, and truly their lives, you've done it by helping them reduce and even eliminate their physical pain.

Susi 00:01:08 So grab a notebook, take a breath, and let's dive in. Let's begin with the landscape that we're working in. A lot of yoga professionals are passionate, devoted, and so, so very skilled, but they're often working within fragmented systems. They're trained in poses, but not necessarily how to observe movement. They're trained in sequencing, but not how to track a nervous system. They're trained in "this is where you should feel this stretch," but they're not really sure if this compensation is leading to this sensation or if the person's actually moving well to enable the sensation. So they're often over-cueing, over-efforting and trying to do it right, but still feeling like something's missing. Meanwhile, clients are arriving in physical pain and truly not just physical pain, but life pain, nervous system, pain, fatigue, overwhelm. And in some cases, there's just persistency of symptoms that really boggle the yoga teachers mind, which leaves many of the professionals asking, how do I actually help this person? Not with a protocol, but with presence, with clarity, with something that actually works.

Susi 00:02:29 That's the gap that the certification program fills. You see, a lot of practitioners, and maybe you're one of them, feel really stuck. And you may have said any of the following, because this is what I hear a lot from the professionals that meet me and then enroll in my programs: I see that something is off in the way my client is moving, but I don't know how to name it; I can tell that they're compensating, but I don't know how to redirect it; I'm really scared to make it worse and to put them into more pain; my client tells me they feel better after sessions, but I have no idea why. And this obviously leads to a lot of second guessing, self-doubt and disconnection from their, and perhaps your own, brilliance. So what might happen is maybe you start playing small, maybe you avoid complexity, or maybe you get overly fixated on technique, hoping to get it right. But here's the thing. Healing isn't about performing knowledge. It's about embodying it and knowing how to meet what's really going on beneath the surface.

Susi 00:03:41 This leads to truly what the shift is. And the shift I'm talking about here is seeing more, feeling more, and doing less. Because what I teach is simple, but it's not simplistic. When you really understand how the nervous system, movement patterns, and compensations work

together, you don't need to do as much. You learn to see more, feel more and do less, which often leads to faster, more sustainable results for your clients. Just imagine watching a client move and knowing what's contributing to their issue and not guessing. And I don't mean like, oh, I gotta do this to this particular muscle. No, because hint: it's never one muscle. Imagine this: imagine giving one cue and watching the tension melt away. Imagine being able to explain why it worked because you understand the system behind the symptom. This is what building embodied clarity is all about. Which leads me to why I built my certification programs in the first place. I didn't set out to build a certification program; I set out 30 years ago to help people feel better.

Susi 00:04:57 But over the years, news of my results spread and more professionals came to me. Yoga teachers, massage therapists, physical therapists. They would sit in my classes. They would watch me do my work. They'd ask me: what are you seeing that I'm clearly not? Where did you come up with that cue to make that happen, to have that result happen for that student? What are you actually paying attention to? And so I started to teach them one at a time, small groups, labs and then more. That's when I wrote Anatomy and Asana preventing yoga injuries back in 2004. And from those anatomy workshops became my Therapeutic Yoga Intensive. And people said, okay, Susie, this Therapeutic Yoga Intensive stuff is fun, but I want to go deep with you. I want to really get good at this stuff. I want to master this stuff. I want to build a business with this. And all through that time, as I continued to work with teachers and health professionals, it became very, very, very clear that the best results that I received with my trainees who are now grads, the best results are the ones who really understood that this work is not about fixing people.

Susi 00:06:16 It's about presence. And when a professional can really learn how to listen to the nervous system, observe with precision and guide someone's body back to itself, that is where the magic happens. And that is really what fuels the certification programs that I run. Let me walk you through the core teachings, tools, the core pillars of what is taught inside of my programs. The first is the Functional Synergy framework. And what I teach you how to do is see compensation patterns and understand what they mean and how to respond, real time. As a result, you stop chasing symptoms and start working really specifically on what is underneath that symptom. Because where the pain is, is really the problem. But it is a signal; it is a sign of limitation or dysfunction. So where is that? Where do we get to work there? It's that piece is usually under the awareness of our client. It's outside of the radar of awareness. So how do you bring that subconsciousness into actual conscious awareness?

Susi 00:07:37 So it might be structural, it might be breath based, it might be nervous system related. But I teach you how to get there. And I teach you with the Functional Synergy toolkit, which is a set of adaptable, science-rooted movement tools that work across a wide range of conditions whether it's autoimmune, hypermobility, post cancer recovery, chronic and persistency of pain symptoms, osteoporosis and a whole lot more. I help you to see beyond the pose. The reality is, is I'm not teaching you about alignment cues for triangle pose. I'm not telling you about the modifications, even for triangle pose. It's about knowing how to adapt a movement so it works for your client's current pattern, which opens up a path towards ease and

strength. Adaptive cueing and true intelligent observation. What I'm teaching you is how to cue less but better. How to watch movement differently. What's going on in the relationships between body parts. What activates, what grips, where breath stops and how to guide a shift with just a few words or a gentle suggestion that lands.

Susi 00:08:54 Like kerplunks round peg and round hole. Not like trying to slam a square peg into a round hole. Working with science in a way that lands, and not trying to speak from a research paper in gobbledygook that a client would not get. Not because the client isn't smart or intelligent. We want to have language really resonate and have meaning for our clients. So we're teaching anatomy, biomechanics, pain science, kinesiology in a way that really, really sticks. Not rote memorization, but real application. This also goes with the Ayurvedic teaching that we do, because the Ayurveda is so core to the yogic understanding and the way that our body functions and moves and digests and metabolizes. Nervous system coherence: everything we do is built on this. When your system is coherent, your presence amplifies your results. You learn how to regulate yourself, model safety, and become a clear leader for your clients to trust. Because you are learning how to teach a client how to listen to themselves. So much about persistency of pain where people are stuck is, like I said earlier, is what they're not aware of, and we're helping them to become aware by modeling that action.

Susi 00:10:20 We're modeling a healing relationship. And when you can model a relationship with yourself in the teaching with your client, then they start to embody it for themselves. All of these pieces: nerve assistant coherence, science that lands, adaptive cueing and intelligent observation, moving beyond the pose, the Functional Synergy toolkit and the Functional Synergy framework; all of these are supported by real time mentorship with me, guided practice labs, case study discussions, and a strong and passionate community. So here are a couple of stories of people who've been through my program and what they're doing now, and not just one story of a client, but they've got businesses that they're running because a big piece around my certification programs is it's not just education. It's really about helping you integrate this into the practice that you already have, so you have a real uptick in capacity and an uptick in results. And who better to start with than Natasha Boldireff? And I interviewed her on my podcast back in September of 2023. It's episode number 196 and it's called Ten Years Post-Graduation.

Susi 00:11:42 And she had actually graduated more than ten years prior. Natasha, when she came to me, she was already very, very talented as a yoga teacher, but she was also very flighty. And she'll acknowledge this too, like some of the cues that she would use, I was wondering: I get why your clients don't quite understand the cues you were using because they were very, very out there, very airy and very ungrounded. And Natasha was also that way, and she will be the first one to acknowledge that. So I'm not saying anything outside of the lines here. The amazing thing about Natasha is how she was able to take the information that was shared with her and really embody it and apply it with her clientele. And she's grown into a yoga therapist who also combines Somatics, and she is working with people who are what they call "catastrophic cases," that there's been some big, big injuries and big outcomes in their bodies and minds, that she is very successful at helping them with by combining a lot of the work that I shared with her, along with Somatics and a couple of other things.

Susi 00:12:52 So she's done a great job of being this integrative therapist, getting remarkable results with clientele. She works very closely with occupational therapists in the province of Ontario in Canada and has tremendous, tremendous results. So I highly recommend that you come and check out that podcast episode, episode number 196, because it shows the longevity of what is possible. The other person that I can say is offering really unique, integrative style to this work is Lisa Newcomb. And Lisa is also based out of Canada; she's in British Columbia. She came into the Functional Synergy program as a fitness trainer who also loves yoga. I remember her when she came into the intensive, and she talks about this on one of the episodes that I interviewed her on. She talks about how that intensive, we didn't work really at all with the feet, and yet her feet felt so much better. She is a long distance runner, like very long distance running, and she had almost decided to give up running because her feet were so sore. And yet the work that we did in the six-day intensive had her feet feeling better than they had in a really, really, really, really long time.

Susi 00:14:05 And yet we didn't do any feet specific work. So it was a great example of where the pain is, is not the problem. Now, Lisa has recently graduated from the certification program earlier this winter. So I'm recording this podcast episode in April of 2025, and she is of the recent cohort that graduated in February/March of 2025. And she's doing a remarkable job integrating yoga therapy with her personal training clients to become a true integrative fitness professional, blending yoga and fitness. And I interviewed Lisa on episode 239 back in March of 2024. Maria is a really, really great example of someone who took our training who was very international-living down on Cozumel in Mexico. And Maria is someone who suffered from a lot of migraines and came into the yoga practice seeking support in helping reduce migraines. And she learned so much from the application of yoga and the work that I was teaching her, really listening to the yellow lights and to the whispers and what was contributing to the migraines arising. And she's now working with people, in part helping them to reduce their migraines.

Susi 00:15:31 And I interviewed Maria in September of 2024. It's episode number 279 Reducing Migraines with Maria Hykin. And there's something really powerful in this message. So if you're someone who is suffering from migraines and you're seeking support, Maria is someone for you to connect with. And she's also an example of being in Mexico and learning from afar, sometimes in an internet connection that was a bit shaky, but being able to do a fantastic job at integrating the work that I was teaching with the work she's already done to create some great programs for her clientele down in Mexico. Two other people that I want to make sure that you listen to are Ruth Ann Penny and Lori Neumeyer. Ruth Ann Penny and Lori Neumeyer have been interviewed on the podcast a number of times, for a number of reasons. The episodes that I really want to focus, though, on are when we're you're somebody who is over 65, over 70, and we have a lot of trainees who are over 65 and 70 years old, and Lori and Ruth Ann are two of those folks.

Susi 00:16:46 Why would you commit to an intensive year of training in yoga or yoga therapy when you're at that stage of your life. And these are two great examples of people who've jumped into the training and are turning people away. They are really happy with the lifestyle

they have. They're really happy with the classes that they are running, the people who they are teaching. It's really working for them. So you don't necessarily have to be someone who wants to work full time. You might want to be someone who has a retirement business or is working part time, or you're someone. We've got a couple currently in the current cohorts where they're coming out of being a stay at home mom, and they're wanting to get back into meaningful work. But the key is, is you might not want to be full time for any number of reasons. And Lori and Ruthann really share a compelling reason. If it's in you of like, oh yes, this is the next chapter and this is possible, and I can make a return on my investment.

Susi 00:17:48 And I interviewed them for this particular episode in October of 2023, episode number 201 Yoga Therapy Certification, being over 60 and 70 years old. Now, the key piece with each of these examples that I'm sharing here is that each person knew what they wanted. They knew the outcome that they were seeking, and they knew that I was someone who could help them get there. They had experience with taking a program of mine, they understood the way that I teach. They understood the way that I view a body and a mind and the healing relationship. And it just resonated very, very, very deeply that they did not want to be lectured at. They wanted an integrative training that was a program, not a modular activity. So we begin this next training cycle in April 26 of this year 2025. And it begins with a therapeutic yoga intensive following the Therapeutic Yoga intensive. There are four private training sessions with one of our key trainers, Kirsten. And then after those four trainings, we start that next module, which is the next training week.

Susi 00:19:05 And there's now five more training weeks after, and those five training weeks happen approximately every three months, approximately, just depends on the calendar. And each of those training weeks have a slightly different focus. But they are progressive in nature. So we start at a foundation in training week one, and then between training week one and training week two, you integrate those things that you learn. There are weekly calls with me. There are monthly calls in Ayurveda, and then we get into the next training week and we learn the next level and we now apply that. And the same thing goes, training week after training week after training week. And all the while you're integrating working with people, and they could be paid clients, they could be friends or family, but there's this integration phase as you go. So it's not just information that stays in your head, that it's actually real time practice. We have a private messaging board over on Circle. If you don't know what circle is, it's a platform for educators and it's a great way of staying in touch, of asking questions, of posting video, of us being able to see what you're doing and when you're working with clientele like "oh, how do I do this? What do I do?" It's like having Susi in your back pocket.

Susi 00:20:25 And the class sizes are a size of a certain number of people that you get all the attention that you want. Different people learn in different ways and so we're able to work with people in the way that suits them, to support them in their learning. You heard me say through this episode "certification PROGRAMS" because we, in fact, have two: we have a Functional Synergy certification and we have the IOIT-accredited program. The Functional Synergy certification program has the foundational technical training, starting with the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive and carrying through everything that I just said there, having Therapeutic Yoga

Intensive, the training weeks with Kiersten and then the five training weeks and the aspects that happen between each of those five training weeks. The IOIT-accredited program has the extra of some business training as well as an extended practicum. So the number of people that you're working with is more and that just meets the IOIT requirements. It's possible that you start with the Functional Synergy programming, and then you add on the modules that make up the IOIT programming. Totally fine.

Susi 00:21:37 They are two separate paths, simply because not everybody wants to have the business training. Not everybody wants to have the extended practicum. Not everybody wants to have the IOIT accreditation. Some want to work with me solely through gaining and really honing that technical skill, and that is all that they want. So we offer these two paths; one can build on top of the other, they happen totally synchronously. So currently we have people who started with us in January and they chose one path and then already they've said, actually, I want the whole thing, I want the whole enchilada because I want that business training. I want the support for creating a signature program. I want that support with creating more people for my practicum, because I really want to master this craft and I really want to help people. Just depends on where you're at, what you want, and the outcome you desire and the support that you want to have. So with all that said, who is this program for?

Susi 00:22:37 If you've been listening to what I'm saying, you either have a full-body "yes," you have a full-body "maybe," or you have a full-body "no." So let me put some words to these feelings, perhaps. The certification programs are for professionals who are really to lead from a place of clarity. You don't need ten years of experience, but you do need curiosity, humility, and a willingness to learn. You're ready to move beyond the performative layers and into what really works. You want to help people get out of pain, and you want to understand why it's working when it does. So you can repeat the process over and over again. It's for people who've already done programs with me and know that what I'm teaching really resonates for them. That's really, really key. You know that the container that is led by me is the container that you want to be in. It's not for folks who are looking for a plug and play protocol. There is no one-size-fits-all formulas here. It's all about precision, adaptability, and deep, deep support.

Susi 00:23:46 You're going to receive real time mentorship and feedback. You're going to receive consistency and our weeklong training process and our week-to-week training calls. So we are together, we are in it for the term. You are going to get science and application blended from day one. It's all online and highly interactive, which means we have people all over the globe who are joining us all over the globe, from Australia to Germany to the UK to Greece, to China, Japan, Canada, United States, Mexico, Caribbean. We have people all over joining us in a variety of time zones because we can. You'll finish the program with a new way of seeing, cueing, leading and helping people heal. So what are your next steps? If this episode has resonated, if you feel your body leaning into it and your breath is getting calmer as I spoke, then I invite you to take this next step. We are enrolling for this entry that begins April 26, 2025. You can read more at functionalsynergy.com/certification.

Susi 00:25:01 You can apply there, I read every application personally and if I think there's a fit, we'll have an engagement. And if I don't think it's a fit, I'll outline why and what I think your next steps would be. It's not about pressure. It's solely about alignment. Let's help people feel better. Let's make pain optional. Let's lead with clarity. Let's do this together. Thanks for listening. You're a vital part of this healing community, and I'm so grateful that you're here. I'll see you next time.