

## Ep. #322 - Anatomy Isn't Sliced It's Woven



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With your host:  
Susi Hatelly

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

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 today I want to dive into an idea that continues to shape how I work with clients, how I teach movement professionals, and how I personally move through my own yoga and fitness explorations. And when I do hurt myself, how I recover and move back to areas of strength, stability, and coordination. To begin, let's take a closer look at how a lot of people are introduced to anatomy, especially in the world of yoga, fitness, and in some cases, many health professionals. It usually starts in pieces. You get the muscle charts, the bony landmarks, the origin-insertion-action memorization lists. You learn that biceps bring flexion to the elbow.

Susi 00:01:15 Glutes can extend the hip. The rhomboids can retract the shoulder blades. The books are neat and color coded. The muscles drawn in clear layers stacked like building blocks. Sometimes you get plastic models where you can peel muscles away. It all feels very organized, doesn't it? And as great as it is for basic learning, starting with the fundamental blocks, it's also where a problem can begin because as helpful as that information can be for learning structural reference points, it's fundamentally incomplete. It presents the body as if it functions like an assembly of Lego bricks; stack one on top of another, fit them into place and voila you have a person. But the human body doesn't move like a Lego body. It doesn't function in isolated parts. It moves in coordination and sequence in relationship. It compensates, adapts, and responds. It organizes itself around breath, emotion, intention and demand. What we learn in those early anatomy lessons isn't wrong, though. It's only part of the story. Here's the distinction I really want to make clear.

Susi 00:02:28 Textbook anatomy is about structure. But functional anatomy? The anatomy of real life movement? It's about patterns, relationships. And when we only focus on structure, we miss the forest for the trees. Let me give you an example. Imagine a student or client says, my right hip feels tight. A very common instinct and one that many of us have been taught: let's go straight to stretching that hip. Maybe it's the piriformis or the TFL or deep lateral rotators. We might reach for a pigeon pose or a foam roller. We assume the tightness is the problem and that needs to be released. But what if the tightness is a response and not a cause? But what if that hip is holding tension because there's a lack of coordination to the foot on the same side, or because the opposite hip is lacking in stability? Or because the opposite shoulder is collapsing or because the breath isn't supporting? Perhaps the pelvis is needing to do more than its duty, it's being asked to do more. In these cases, and they're more common than you might think, stretching the hip won't resolve the issue.

Susi 00:03:46 In fact, it might aggravate it because the tension wasn't random. It was the body's best attempt to hold itself together in the face of something else being off. This is what I'm referring to as a compensatory pattern. It's not a mistake, it's a survival strategy. The body will always find a way to get from point A to point B but if we're only looking at the part that's

talking or complaining, we're missing the deeper story of how the system is operating as a whole. And when we keep treating symptoms in isolation, we create a frustrating loop for clients. They might feel temporary relief, but the issue always seems to return. Why? Because we haven't addressed the pattern. We haven't shifted the load or clarified the coordination. We've just zoomed in on one piece and tried to make it "behave" better. This is especially common in yoga, where cueing often reinforces this segmental view of the body. How many times have you heard or said, activate your glutes? Draw your navel to your spine.

Susi 00:04:51 Drop your shoulders away from your ears. These cues often aim for specific muscles, but they don't account for what else is going on in the system. You can't cue the glutes to fire if the pelvis is not in a position to support that activation. It's difficult to engage the core meaningfully if the breath is shallow, the ribcage is braced, the diaphragm mechanics aren't working well, and you can't really relax the shoulders if the ribcage is flared and there's no structural support for the scapula to rest on. My point here is it's all connected. And this is where shifting our perspective from "sliced" anatomy to "woven" anatomy really makes a big difference. Instead of memorizing which muscles do what in isolation, we begin to ask: how are these muscles talking to each other? How is this person transferring load through their body? Where is the support missing and where is compensation showing up as strain, tightness or fatigue? That's when real clarity begins to emerge. Not because we get better at naming muscles, but because we got better at listening to movement.

Susi 00:06:03 In this way of a woven model, we can call it, the hip isn't just the hip. It's part of a whole leg, whole pelvis, whole kinetic chain. The shoulder isn't just ball and socket, it's the end point of load that traveled through the torso, spine, and even the opposite foot. The neck isn't just a stack of cervical vertebrae, it's a tension node that reflects everything from jaw mechanics to diaphragm function to emotional readiness. This is where so many movement professionals have their "aha" moment. They realize that their frustration with recurring client issues that shoulder that keeps flaring up, the hamstring that's always tight, the back that seizes under load isn't because they're missing the better exercise, it's because they're still working inside of a sliced model. They're targeting the symptom rather than re-patterning the system. So as we continue through this episode, I want to invite you to gently set aside your anatomy flashcards. Not forcefully, they're still useful but for now, for today's episode, let's step into a different way of seeing.

Susi 00:07:06 Let's begin to explore how the body actually behaves in motion, not just how it's drawn in a textbook. Because when you start to see through a lens, a relationship pattern and load, everything begins to change from sliced to woven. To really understand how the body functions in motion, we need to go back in time to the early days of anatomical study. Back then, our understanding of the body came from dissection. Cadavers were opened, layers were carefully peeled back, and muscles were identified, labeled, and catalogued. The tools of the trade were scalpels and forceps, instruments designed to separate. Anatomists were creating maps, but they were maps made by cutting, by dividing. And in many ways, that legacy continues today. Most anatomy education is still based on these static sliced models. And again, it's not that they're wrong, but they're limited because those bodies on the dissection table

weren't moving. They weren't breathing, they weren't adapting, they weren't alive. And the living, breathing body isn't cleanly separated into compartments.

Susi 00:08:16 It's not a stock of isolated levers and pulleys. It's a continuum, a symphony, a network. And one of the most important players in that network is fascia. This is the connective tissue that weaves through, around, between every structure in your body: muscles, bones, organs, vessels, nerves. It's like a soft tissue matrix that both holds you together and allows you to move. If the old anatomy model is about slicing, about pulling apart to understand; fascia, then, is the invitation to stitch things back together to see how the body communicates with itself. Fascia isn't just packaging. It's sensory. It's structural. It's responsive. It allows for force transmission, which means when you push off the ground with your foot, the force doesn't stay in your foot. It travels. It moves up through your ankle, your knee, your hip, your spine into your shoulder, and even into the opposite arm. This is what we mean by kinetic chains. Movement isn't local, it's global. And here's where things get fascinating. When there's a snag in that fascial web, whether it's from an old injury, repetitive strain, poor load transfer, or even emotional bracing, this load gets redirected, the system adapts.

Susi 00:09:31 But those adaptations do have a cost. Let's say you sprained your ankle a decade ago and you recovered enough to walk, maybe even run. But the fascia around that ankle lost some of its elasticity, some of its capacity to transmit load cleanly. So your body found a workaround. Maybe it changed how your knee tracked or how your pelvis rotated when you walked. Maybe your ribs started shifting slightly to counterbalance the change below. Over time, you developed tension in your opposite shoulder, not because you injured it, because it was bearing the downstream effect of that old ankle issue. This is why the sliced model doesn't help us solve persistent pain or compensatory patterns, doesn't account for these distal effects. It teaches us to look at only what hurts, but not to ask why it's hurting. But when you step into the woven map, everything starts to make more sense. You begin to notice patterns. You see how someone's forward head posture might be linked to tightness in their hip flexors. Not because they have bad posture, but because their pelvis might not be moving as well in the chain and adapting to maintain balance.

Susi 00:10:39 You realize that the person who keeps having shoulder issues during yoga might not need more shoulder strengthening. They might need better ribcage-pelvis connection, or a clearer breath pattern, or better relationship between that pelvis and leg. You start hearing clients say, I had no idea my foot could affect my jaw. Or man, my low back feels so much better by relaxing my neck. You don't need to jump in and fix everything. You just need to learn how to see clearly and start to work with the system and not against it. Another metaphor that I sometimes like to use with my clients is to imagine a body is like a sailboat. If the sail gets torn, you don't just patch the sail, you check the rigging, the mast, the tension of the ropes. You check how the wind is moving through the whole system, because one small tear might be a visible issue but the solution requires understanding the whole setup. The same is with movement. A local system is often the result of a global imbalance. When we move from a model of "what's the tight or weak muscle?" into "how is the load being transferred through the body?" we get far better outcomes.

Susi 00:11:49 What I love about this woven approach is that it's not prescriptive, it's observational. It's relational. It's about seeing what this person's body is doing, not what the textbook says should happen. It gives us a way to work with people whose patterns don't match the norm. People have been told their pain doesn't make sense or should have gone away by now. People who tried strengthening and stretching but still feel stuck. When we look through the lens of fascia, force transmission, kinetic continuity, we stop chasing symptoms. We start listening to the system and recognizing relationships. We ask different questions and the body, resilient, adaptive and brilliant as it is, begins to reorganize. It's not about doing more. It's about seeing more clearly. And sometimes one small shift in how the foot meets the ground and how the ribs rotate, or how the breath moves can change the entire pattern. Now that we've explored the difference between, say, a sliced and a woven model of the body, let's dive into one of the more elegant and practical frameworks for understanding the woven nature: fascial chains and kinetic patterns.

Susi 00:12:57 This is where anatomy stops being theoretical and becomes deeply functional. It's where we begin to see how someone moves, not just what they're moving. And for so many yoga teachers, movement professionals, and even curious movers, this is the moment when things really start to click. I'll say it again. It's not about necessarily *\*what\** they're moving. It's *\*how\** someone moves. It's inherently relational. Let's begin with the concept of a fascial chain, also called a myofascial meridian or kinetic line. These are lines of tension and continuity that weave through the body, allowing force to be transmitted efficiently from one area to another. Think of them as highways of movement when one area activates or receives force, these chains determine how that energy gets distributed, where it moves smoothly, where it's absorbed, and where it might hit a traffic jam. The first one is the posterior chain. This is the one talked about in strength training and functional movement very, very commonly. It runs up the sole of the foot, up the back of the leg, through the calves and hamstrings, across the glutes and spine, and all the way up to the base of the skull.

Susi 00:14:09 The lateral line is the second one, and it runs from the outer edge of the foot, up the side of the lower leg, through the lateral hip, ribs, and into the shoulder and neck. The spiral line, this one can sometimes be a bit more complex. It wraps around the body, connecting one shoulder to the opposite hip, and continues in a corkscrew pattern. It's deeply involved in rotational movement: walking, twisting, reaching across the body. Also, think about pitching a ball or throwing a Frisbee. When this line gets restricted, people often lose their sense of fluidity. It's common to see their gait stiffen, their back tensing, and they may feel disconnected from one side. What's powerful about these chains isn't that they exist, but rather they teach us how to look differently. Let's say a client comes in with neck tension. A common approach when we're looking at this from one segment area, is to stretch the traps or roll out the upper back. But if we start looking at it from a chain perspective, a myofascial meridian perspective, we might be able to trace that tension down through to the ribs, down through to the breath, perhaps down to the pelvis, maybe even all the way down to the feet.

Susi 00:15:28 The same can be looked at with recurring knee pain, which I've spoken about a few times on this podcast. Traditional approaches might focus on quad strength or patellar tracking. Through the lens of chains, we can ask: well, hold on a second, what's going on through that pelvis? Going on through that foot? What's that connection, that kinetic chain connection? How does that move upstream through to their shoulder girdle? Their rib cage? Their head position? As we widen our scope to full chain and even interactions of those chains, we stop being mechanics and become movement detectives. We don't guess, we trace. We listen. It also means that we likely will cue differently. Instead of cueing, for example, "pull the ribs in," we might just say, hey, like, notice what's going on between the ribs and the pelvis as you do this movement. I realize that is a lot more words to say, but it becomes one of an exploration. It becomes one of improving interoception and proprioception.

Susi 00:16:35 The whole dynamic of the class begins to reverberate in a very, very different way because these aren't just anatomical cueing. They're relational invitations. We're inviting our students to connect with their body, to connect with their body into a space that's more efficient, more connected. We're helping their nervous systems let go of compensatory effort so movement can become more easeful and precise. What I really want you to take from this is that fascia is a feedback system. It tells us how the body is communicating, where it's stuck, where it's overworked, and where it's asking for help. And when we bring attention to these lines, when we support them, explore them, refine how they move. We create more than physical change. We create clarity, coordination, and trust. You don't need to memorize every single chain. You don't need to become a fascia expert overnight. What matters is you start considering your own body and your client's body as woven systems and not as disconnected parts. This shift alone can really shift up your teaching, your practice, and your capacity to help more people move out of pain and into possibility.

Susi 00:17:54 And that brings us to the heart of this theme. Anatomy isn't sliced, it's woven. It's responsive, relational, and full of potential when we stop trying to force it and start learning how to listen. So let's land here. We've looked at how anatomy education often slices the body into pieces and how that view, while tidy and certainly good for the basics, can actually limit our understanding. Understanding of movement, of healing and of pain reduction, even pain elimination. And we explored what becomes possible when we shift to a woven model, one that honours fascia, load transfer and deep intelligence of how our bodies adapt and compensate. This isn't about throwing out your anatomy books, though. It's really about upgrading your lens, learning from that perspective. The singular muscle perspective? It's the basics. I'm talking about adding depth. Seeing the connections that exist between the labels and realizing that sometimes seems like a strength issue is actually a compensation issue. What looks like tightness is the body doing its best to stabilize without sufficient support elsewhere. When you start to see the body in this way as a set of interconnected, responsive patterns, something important shifts.

Susi 00:19:22 You begin to see differently, cue differently, teach differently, and better yet, your clients feel the difference. This is the work we do inside of I Love Kinesiology. It's a program designed for movement professionals, yoga teachers and health practitioners who are ready to

go beyond memorization. People do want to sharpen their eyes, refine their language, and understand not just what they're seeing in their students and clients, but why it's happening. If you've ever had the experience of seeing compensation, but not quite knowing what to do with it; if you've felt like your students aren't getting it, or your cues aren't landing the way you hoped; if you wanted to bridge science and intuition in a way that's grounded, clear, and profoundly effective; this is your next step. Inside of I Love Kinesiology. We break down the building blocks of movement in a way that's practical, relational, and immediately applicable. We explore nervous system biomechanics, fascia load, breath recovery not as separate modules, but as part of a living system. And we do it together in community with support.

Susi 00:20:27 With a steady cadence that lets you and helps you integrate, not just consume. So if this episode really resonated with you, if you felt a little click of recognition in your body, if you're curious about how to teach from a place of clarity and connection, then I invite you to take a closer look. You can learn more at [functionalsynergy.com/ilk](https://functionalsynergy.com/ilk) where you'll find details on the program structure, upcoming live calls, and how to join. And if you're not ready yet, that's okay too. Just stay close. Keep listening. Keep noticing. Because the way we understand movement is evolving and so are you. And whether you join the program now or down the road, the invitation is the same. Start seeing the body not as a set of problems to fix, but as a system asking to be heard. Start teaching not just for strength, but for clarity. Start trusting that the answers you're looking for might not be in the parts that hurt, but in the pattern that it's connected to. Thank you for listening today.

Susi 00:21:31 We'll tune in next week, and until then, keep listening, keep exploring and remember the body doesn't lie. We just need a new map. See you next week. If you are a movement teacher, yoga teacher, who knows that there's more to what's going on than you were taught in your foundational training, and you're ready to see the patterns behind pain, to speak with clarity about why something is working or isn't, and to guide your students with more confidence, I Love Kinesiology was made for you. You blend biomechanics, neuroscience, and teaching strategy so you become the teacher your clients already believe you to be. You can learn more and join at [functionalsynergy.com/ilk](https://functionalsynergy.com/ilk).