

Ep. #326 - The Inner Infrastructure of a Sustainable Yoga Business



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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 get into some concepts around a sustainable yoga business. Now, if you've been following me for a long time, you know that way long ago I started running How to Make 50K As a Yoga Teacher business programs, and that evolved into my yogi business trainings that I ran until approximately 2017. And at that time, I decided to focus more on the technical trainings that I run and helping people get out of pain and training teachers in that piece of it. And I moved all my business training primarily into the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive and into my certification programs, because that's where most of the teachers who are coming to learn about business were landing.

Susi 00:01:12 And then we could build the technical and the business together. But I've still held a deep love for supporting yoga teachers who are interested in learning from me and getting a return on their investment from the programs that they take. So this episode is part of a series that I'm running through an email that it's a ten week yogi business email series, where I'm sharing sort of the top ten things I've learned over the course of my career, and what I've seen really land well for the teachers that I've trained. And so in that email series, there is work around marketing and sales and building your business and "when things get rough," little ins and outs. And it's an email plus a video, there's some PDF downloads for you, so something you can really, really work with because the notion of running a business as a yoga teacher or a movement professional who loves yoga, it's a little different than running traditional businesses. I mean, the business principles remain the same, but the reality is, is that people aren't just buying yoga or not just buying massage or not just buying Pilates.

Susi 00:02:30 They're buying you. And this is a big piece to the business puzzle, and it's where this episode is going to take us, and I call it the inner infrastructure of a sustainable yoga business. And I've been thinking a lot about this infrastructure because it's so vital to sustain a yoga business. It's really what allows you to show up in a really effective way and not burn out. And it's not even about not burning out. It's being able to sense into yourself of when you've got the energy to, and when you need to rest and working in that space so the whole idea of burning out doesn't even enter into the conversation. So if you're interested in what it is about showing up, how you can take breaks without disappearing, how to lead even when life's messy, even when you're tired. This episode will be for you. Because the reality is, is that if you've been teaching for a while, if you've taken trainings, maybe built a website, you've led classes, maybe you even tried a few launches outside of your classes, you've probably realized something really, really important: that it's not about your skill set, really.

Susi 00:03:45 I mean, it is. You've got to be good, you've got to be technically skilled. But there's something more. Something underneath all of it. An inner kind of scaffolding. And let me also add that it's not about pricing or your productivity. It's this inner infrastructure that I

mentioned a moment ago, and I want to break it down today in this episode. Not in a marketing way, not in a hustle way, but in a deeply grounded, real life, nervous system aware kind of way. Because if you're a teacher who's also parenting, caregiving, maybe moving through a loss or an injury, maybe you're moving through the hormonal shifts of menopause. This conversation is for you. And we're going to explore three core ideas. The first one is going to be about self-concept and how self-concept is a thermostat. This is the identity that you hold silently, that shapes every action that you take, and how visibility and energy don't have to mean hustle. And what it really looks like to be felt, not just seen.

Susi 00:04:54 And why, when life gets big, you don't have to shrink but you can lead and grow in the middle of real life. This is the work that I really support inside of the yoga business training that I run inside of my certification program, but it's also the foundational support I run in I Love Kinesiology, where I combine biomechanical clarity with nervous system regulation that feels really human. So if you've been craving a new kind of conversation, one where your body and your business and your capacity are all in the same room together, settle in and let's begin. Your self-concept is the thermostat of your business. It's not your social feed, whether that's Instagram, Facebook, TikTok. It's not how many clients you've booked in this month. It's not whether you're charging \$40 or 400. Self-concept is the identity you hold, often quietly, unconsciously, about who you are and what you're capable of. And it sets the tone for everything. Most people operate like thermometers. Their sense of value goes up or down based off of external input.

Susi 00:06:11 A full class? Woohoo! Confidence spikes. A canceled session? Boo. Confidence plummets. A social post that all of a sudden gets traction? Woohoo! Silence or crickets? That's when the doubt can creep in. Their nervous system is reacting to the room, not leading it. But here's the shift: when you operate like a thermostat, you hold a set point. You hold steady even when things fluctuate around you. You're not waiting for the world to affirm your impact, you carry it. Your belief about who you are and how your work lands doesn't swing with the data. It leads the data. And that's why two teachers can teach the exact same thing, and one gets referrals for months while the other doesn't. It's not just skill. It's self-concept. Let's get more specific. Self-concept is not a mood. It's not about feeling "on." It's the deep structure under how you offer, speak and lead. It's what your body believes in the absence of applause. It sounds like "I know how to help people through this, even if they're not saying anything today."

Susi 00:07:24 My words land. My presence matters. I can hold space, even quietly. I don't need to know everything. I do need to stay connected. It doesn't mean that you don't wobble. It means that your wobble doesn't throw you off your axis, and that matters a lot when you're leading a business inside real life. I once worked with a teacher named Julia. The way that she could feel her own system was very, very clear. She could track compensation patterns through multiple joints and her breath cycles with such precision. But each time she noticed something in a client's body, she hesitated to speak. She'd get quiet. She'd second guess. And then often she would say nothing at all. Her skill was there. Her training was solid. Her words, when she and I would talk, were very well crafted. But her self-concept? It was still forming. In her mind,

being a good teacher meant not getting it wrong, not being too direct, not offending, not sounding like she was trying too hard.

Susi 00:08:30 And because of that, oftentimes her most powerful insight stayed bottled. What we worked on wasn't more anatomy. It wasn't better language. We worked on her nervous system cues around visibility and how she processed silence from a student or from an email; not as rejection, but as digestion. And the embodied identity of being someone whose words could create change. Not just someone who knows things, but someone who moves people. Over time her concept of herself shifted from technically proficient to being impactful, from "careful not to overstep" to "clear enough to guide." And the ripple effect was immediate. Her offers filled. She raised her rates. Clients referred to her without being asked, not because she was trying harder but because her self-concept rose and her presence calibrated the room. So let's do a quick check in if you're listening and wondering where your thermostat might be set, try this: take a breath and think about the last time someone asked, what do you do? What happened in your body? Did your heart speed up a little? Did your brain scramble to find the right words? Did you say something watered down like, oh, I just teach yoga or I help people sort of move better, kind of?

Susi 00:09:54 Or did you say it from the center of your body? Did you say it with clarity, even if it was soft? That feeling right there: that's the shape of your self-concept. And the good news? If you're not feeling so great about the self-concept you're feeling, or even if you're feeling really great about it, it's changeable. You don't have to wait until you believe in yourself. You get to practice who you already are again and again, and then the thermostat begins to hold. This is a shift that I walk many of my trainees through again and again and again. We begin with biomechanics, with observation, with the precision of movement analysis. But the real transformation happens when they stop just knowing what to do and start trusting who they are when they do it. Because it's not about being perfect at all. It's not about becoming internally congruent. You cue more clearly because you're not trying to prove anything. You charge more confidently because you're not trying to earn your worth every time. You rest more fully because your business no longer needs constant output to survive.

Susi 00:11:04 Self-concept is what allows space. It's what allows creativity. It's what allows you to lead, not just show up. So if your business feels inconsistent, if you're working hard but something feels a little shaky underneath, if you're constantly waiting for outside proof before making your next move, just pause and check your thermostat and ask yourself: who do I believe I am when no one's watching? What kind of guide do I believe I've become? Who am I even when the room is quiet? Because your nervous system takes its cues from your self-concept, and your business is taking shape from your nervous system. This is where sustainability starts. This is where results get consistent. This is where your work becomes a home you can live in, not a performance you have to maintain. We're going to keep layering on this through this episode, but for now, just notice you don't need to fix anything. You just need to see what's already there and start turning up the dial. Let's talk about visibility because this is one of the most misunderstood parts of running a sustainable business, especially in the world of yoga, wellness or any field where your presence is the product.

Susi 00:12:19 Somewhere along the way, being visible got tangled up with being everywhere. Invisibility became this overwhelming checklist around how many times a week to post, recording however many videos, and starting a podcast and going live on Instagram and writing a newsletter and doing the reels, the story, the TikToks, the DMs, SEO and on and on and on. Now I'm not against showing up online. I mean, heck, I post regularly. I have a podcast. I write emails. I'm here for connection, though. Visibility, in my mind, like **real** visibility, it isn't about blasting content into the void. It's about being lendable, about being felt. And here is a truth I want you to consider: visibility and energy don't have to mean hustle. What they require is coherence. So what do I mean about being felt? We've all experienced this. Someone walks into a room and doesn't say a word, but their presence is undeniable. You read every single sentence from someone online and you just know that they've lived what they're saying.

Susi 00:13:26 That's coherence. It's the alignment between what you know, what you embody and what you express, and what creates resonance, even in a few words. You don't need to post every day when your presence is consistent. You don't need to be loud when your words are clear. You don't need to explain everything when your energy is settled, because the way you say something is caring as much, if not more, than the content itself. Here's where things can get tricky. When your nervous system is dysregulated, you can start scrambling your signal. You push out a post, but it feels weird. You try launching a campaign, but your heart's not in it. You record a video, but you're subtly bracing and you don't know why people didn't respond. That's an example of a mismatch between your output and your state. And it's exhausting. People can feel it. Not consciously. They're not analyzing your nervous system, but something in your content doesn't land. And that's what can spiral into thinking you need to do more when really the shift is internal.

Susi 00:14:28 This is what I train my students: to observe their own system, just as precisely as they observe a movement pattern. So before you post, check your state. Before you cue, check your breath. Before you offer, ask: am I grounded? Because when you are, you don't have to push. You just have to be clear. So if you're feeling stuck around marketing, not sure what to say, not sure how often to show up, not sure why things feel heavy, start here. Ask your nervous system: what does it feel like when I'm seen? What do I associate with being visible? What's the cost I unconsciously brace for every time I hit publish? You might discover that your current strategies are bypassing your capacity. Or you might realize you've been hiding because part of you still believes your work needs to be perfect to be valuable. Both are welcome. Neither needs to be fixed overnight but they do need to be witnessed and then gently rewired because visibility is not a task, it's a tissue level relationship with being received.

Susi 00:15:44 Let's start making this practical. If you want to be visible in a way that doesn't exhaust you. Here are some ways to begin: Anchor before you speak. Even one deep breath into your low ribs can change how your words land. Let silence be part of your rhythm. Your business can be felt in your pauses, not just in your output. Reuse what's still true. If something you wrote last year is still alive, bring it forward. Trust your repetition. Speak from embodiment, not urgency. Ask yourself, do I believe this right now in my body? If yes, then share it. If no, wait.

Start with one place. Pick one channel, one rhythm. Let that become landable before you spread wider. Because it's not the amount of content you create that builds trust, it's the quality of presence behind it. Here is what I'd like you to remember: your nervous system is part of your visibility strategy. Your energy is carrying your message, whether you realize it or not. And your clients, the ones you really want to reach, aren't looking for more noise.

Susi 00:16:55 They're looking for someone who feels safe to land with. So if you're not posting every day, but you're staying connected to your body, that counts. If your offer is still being shaped, but it's aligned with your pace, that counts. If you're showing up gently but with clarity, absolutely that counts. Visibility and energy don't require hustle. They do require coherence. And coherence comes from relationship with yourself, with your work, with the people you're here to serve. This is what we practice. It's not just learning biomechanics, but learning how to be felt. Learning how to transmit, not perform. Learning how to let your visibility be honest and sustainable because that's what carries your business through the long game. Not just attention, but attunement. Let's talk about what happens when life gets "life-y." Not just busy, I mean like big, sudden, chaotic, tender, demanding in a way that wasn't on the vision board. You're building your yoga business and your child's struggling. You're mid launch and your parent goes into the hospital. You're teaching classes and your nervous system whispers, we're not okay.

Susi 00:18:09 And there's this reflex so many of us have to shrink, to pause the work, to pull back from the thing we're building, to assume it can't hold alongside the rest of your life. But what if that's not true? What if the business you're building isn't something separate from your life, but something you can walk with through it? There's a myth of the clean slate. So many teachers tell me, I just need to get through this season then I'll get serious about my business. And I get it. But here's what I've learned as I've worked with students and I've been through my own cycles of chaos, of family health issues, of stuff: there's no clean slate. There's no pause button on parenting, caregiving, grief, recovery, divorce. There's no perfect time to launch a class or film a video. There's just now. There's what your body can hold today. And there's the decision to stay connected to your work, even gently, as life unfolds. Not in a pushy override your capacity kind of way, but in a "this too belongs here" kind of way.

Susi 00:19:27 Regulation isn't chill. It's coherence. Let's talk nervous system for a moment. Regulated doesn't mean chill. It doesn't mean you're floated on a cloud with perfect sleep and green smoothies. It means you're in a relationship with your reality. It means you can feel what's true and how to choose how to respond. Regulated might look like cancelling a class with a clear explanation and no shame. It's sending out a "here's where I'm at" email instead of ghosting your list. It's teaching a workshop from clarity that heartbreak can bring. It's restructuring an offer so it meets your life now, not the life you imagined six months ago. Coherence means your inner world and outer actions are in agreement. Even in grief, in chaos, even in contraction. I worked with a teacher who had a really beautiful program inside of her. Had years of study, lived experience, a quiet fire. But every time she started to outline it, life would happen. A diagnosis, a family move, a flare up of fatigue that she hadn't planned on.

Susi 00:20:38 She kept telling herself that once things settle, I'll do it. Eventually, she realized she'd been saying that for four years. So we flipped the question. Instead of: how do I make space for my business once life cooperates? We asked: how can I let my business become part of how I move through life? So we slowed the project down. We helped her build her visibility into her energy rhythm. We stopped trying to separate her work from her humanness. But what emerged, wasn't just a beautiful offer, it was a new kind of presence. One that let her show up "as is." One that didn't wait for perfection. One that said, I'm still here. I still know things. I still lead, even from the middle. Let's make this super practical. Staying connected to your business in hard seasons doesn't mean pushing through. It might look like one email a month with a body based insight you're living from right now; teaching one class instead of five and letting that be enough; repeating an old offer that's still valuable instead of inventing a new one; letting your socials say, hey, life's big right now and I'm still here.

Susi 00:21:50 It's the difference between disappearing out of shame versus pausing with clarity and staying in relationship. The nervous system can handle pause. It struggles with disappearance, though. Because when you ghost your work, it's easy to stop trusting yourself. But when you hold the thread, even gently, your body remembers. I didn't abandon this, I just moved with it. Consider that your business is a breath based system, not a machine, not made to run 24/7 with no variation. It's breath based. Inhale output, teaching, offering. Exhale rest to recovery, integration. If you only exhale, you collapse. If you only inhale, you explode. But when you let the rhythm move, you become sustainable. You let your business grow in seasons, you let your energy move like weather. You start designing your offers and your message to move with you, not against you. This is nervous system informed entrepreneurship. It's a skill you can build. So many of us carry internalized business standards that say you must always be building.

Susi 00:23:08 But what if instead of defaulting to I can't do it right now, you asked what's possible this season? What wants to emerge from where I am, not where I wish I were? What if I don't need to be better, I just need to be with myself? Sometimes that means launching smaller. Sometimes it means teaching less and charging more. Sometimes it means letting your body lead your calendar and not apologizing for it. This isn't about shrinking your dream, it's about staying in relationship with it even when things shift. That's where coherence lives. That's where your clients feel your steadiness. That's where you stop needing to bounce back because you never disappeared. Let me say this slowly: you don't have to wait until you're rested to be impactful. You don't have to wait until your kid's sleep schedule stabilizes. You don't have to wait until a grief subsides or your hormones regulate or your house is clean or your spouse is well. You matter now. Your work holds weight now. Your nervous system informed leadership is needed, especially in a world that tends towards rushing.

Susi 00:24:22 This is how we reframe presence. It's not performance. It's not a perfectly crafted launch. It's not a smiling reel when your heart's breaking. It's presence as you are. So if life is loud right now, if your energy is a little scrambled, if you're trying to remember what you're even building anymore, I want you to hear this. You don't have to shrink. You can teach from the middle. You can sell from clarity, not from energy you don't have. You can lead from your current

chapter, not your aspirational one. You're not behind, you're just breathing. And your business, the one built on nervous system wisdom and embodied presence, knows how to breathe with you. Let's build that kind of business. One that grows with your life. One that's shaped by the truth of your body, one that doesn't collapse when things get hard but deepens into coherence. And that's what I do inside of my I Love Kinesiology, Therapeutic Yoga Intensive and certification programs. It's the kind of leadership we put into practice.

Susi 00:25:27 And it begins here with staying connected, even gently, even now, even in the middle of the mess. You're still here, and that counts. So as we wrap, if this episode has landed even just one line, one image, one breath, let it settle. Let it recalibrate the part of you that thought you had to do more, be more, fix something. You're not behind, you're not invisible, you're not broken. You're in motion. You've already become and you are already becoming. Whether you're reworking your business after a burnout or you're just beginning to lead in a new way, you're not alone. Inside of I Love Kinesiology we support yoga teachers and movement professionals who want to grow with clarity and coherence. We blend science with somatics, cueing with nervous system leadership. And you can learn more about that program at functionalsynergy.com/ilc. And then as we get into the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive and into the certification program, we dive more deeply into this, more deeply into the biomechanics, but biomechanics with real life business and real life business coaching.

Susi 00:26:52 So you can build something that reflects who you are becoming. Because this isn't just about teaching better. So if you're ready for that, we're here. And you can learn more about the certification program at functionalsynergy.com/certification. And if now's not the moment to step in, that's okay. Keep listening. Keep anchoring. Keep noticing what's already shifting and follow that. Thank you for being here with your heart, your practice, your presence. Your work matters. You matter. We'll see you next time.