

Ep. #331 - The Mechanics of Real Change - From Pain to Possibility Part 2 of 3



Full Episode Transcript

With your host:

Susi Hatelly

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

Introduction (00:00.00)

You are listening to From Pain To Possibility with Susi Hatley. You'll 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.

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Susi (00:22.274)

Welcome and welcome back. We are in the middle of a mini series on this podcast around really helping create change. In episode one, we talked about how mechanical strength supports capacity, how pain-free movement is a signal and not a flu. We looked at how important it is to not step over those moments when pain goes down, to name them, to pause and to help your client recognize that something has shifted. In this episode, we're gonna go one step further because once the pain has gone down, once the compensation has quieted, there's something new present. And if we wanna grow that state to stabilize it, to repeat it, to deepen it, we have to be willing to feel what's actually there now.

This is where sensory clarity begins. Let's name the gap that clients aren't used to noticing. Here's often what can happen. A client says, hey, that's weird, it doesn't hurt anymore. And I might say, great, so it's present now. And there's a pause. Sometimes a look of confusion. And they might say, I don't know. It just doesn't hurt. because they're not used to feeling what's present.

Susi (02:01.622)

In many cases, they're used to chasing what's wrong. And that's what most of us are trained to do. Pay attention to the thing that screams the loudest. But once that noise is gone, there's quiet. And in that quiet is everything. That quiet is proprioception. That quiet is interoception. That quiet is where belief and healing begin to shift.

Susi (02:38.51)

So how do you teach clients to name what's present? Here's where you as a teacher or a practitioner have to be really skillful. Because your client might ask, what do you mean what's present? Can you tell me what I'm supposed to feel? and your job, and this is important and significant, is not to name it for them. You can say, you probably want me to name it for you, but I can't. I don't know what's in your body. That's yours to discover and to name. Even if you don't have a clear word, that's okay. And they might then say, I don't know, it just feels, I don't know, lighter. I don't know, just, before I felt sort of scattered and now I feel solid. I feel calmer maybe. I don't know. I just feel like there's more space.

Susi (03:53.55)

They might even shrug their shoulders and say, I have no idea. Any of those answers are perfect, even the I don't know, because the I don't know can actually be part of the process.

We're retraining the nervous system to pay attention to something other than pain. And for some people that can take some time. But why is this so essential anyway, even when someone's saying, don't know? If all we ever say is the pain is gone, then there's no anchor for the nervous system to return to. And if someone can say, well, I feel peace now. I feel taller now. I feel more connected now.

Susi (05:02.722)

Well then, that becomes the state we can train into. That becomes the new baseline that we can grow from. And this is where the nervous system work really meets biomechanics. Because now we're building not just new movement patterns, we're building a felt sense of coherence. This is no longer about fixing something, it's about restoring access to a deeper kind of presence. So the next time that pain goes down, whether it's your own or a client's, try this. Take a moment and pause. Try not to rush the next movement. Instead say, what's present now? and then let them explore. Because what they name, we can then repeat. We can repeat by saying, all right, let's move in that range of motion. Let's move in the peace range of motion. Let's move in the solid range of motion. And when they repeat that, it becomes more of what their movement is, it becomes more of who they are. So let's now look to see how this connects to nervous system mapping and how to build longer lasting patterns by tracking the states that emerge as pain dissolves.

Susi (06:53.336)

So to reiterate, in this last portion, I chatted about that powerful moment when pain goes down and how if you take a pause and you ask what's now present, like now, you begin to grow a new state of awareness. This segment is about why that matters and how those moments of sensory clarity become the raw material your nervous system uses to repattern itself. Because when you feel something clearly, even just for a moment, it becomes a part of your internal GPS. And if you can feel it again and again, It stops being a novel experience and starts becoming who you are.

Susi (07:53.304)

So let's state this to begin with. Most people don't know what better feels like. Sure, yes, they can tell you what hurts. They can tell you what's wrong. They can tell you what they're afraid of. But ask them what ease feels like in their body. They'll go quiet or they'll guess, joke or deflect. And the key here is that's not failure. That's a nervous system that's been trained to monitor for threat. doing its job. And it's especially true for people who lived in pain or illness for a very long time. Their systems are tuned for survival, not sensation. So when pain goes down and you ask, what's there now? It can feel like walking into an unfamiliar room, which is why when I work with people, we start slowly. We don't force. I help them to stay with what's arising, even when it's subtle. And why does this work? Why does this sensory tracking work? Because what you name you can track, what you track you can repeat, what you repeat you can stabilize. This is the arc that we're working with. The moment the pain drops, that's a novel experience that's now open for availability. It hasn't happened yet, that novel experience. It's what we do next. And what happens next if we do it? When the client feels that pain dropping and then is able to name it, even us inquiring and they might say, don't know. but maybe they say calm or spacious or soft or solid. They're anchoring it in their awareness. And yes, the I don't know still provides a

version of an anchor. It's stepping toward that. Because now we can track it. Grow it, strengthen it. simply by moving in ranges with that in mind. So if someone says, well, it feels calmer or spacious or soft, that's now how I ask them to move. It's in the how of their movement, whether they are doing a deadlift or whether they are doing a simple ankle to knee movement.

Susi (10:51.702)

It can change everything because it's how healing is embodied. Not just temporary relief, but real neurological neuromuscular shifting. And it's the foundation of neuromuscular repatterning, not just motor control, but sensory literacy. Here's what's important though. Your role as the practitioner or as a teacher It's not to name their sensations. It's to simply be with them while they are learning to name them for themselves. I don't even give my students a list of possible names because I don't want them to head off into some part of their brain figuring it out. I want them to sink into the sensations that are there, the space that is there, and then allow for the name to arise. It's different. when that process happens, then taking a word off a piece of paper. There's something being bypassed in that moment of pulling it from a paper. You're not looking for perfect language, that's why it works. You're helping them build a sensory vocabulary from within. Learning to trust the experience they have. So let me give you an example with my son. There was a time when my son was four years old and he was having a lot of digestive disturbances which were leading to other actions and symptoms in his body. And it was something that we needed to help him with. And one of the processes we took him through is as his guts started to feel better, like his abdomen was so tight and hard. And as we worked with him, with an osteopath and with some dietary changes, and he started to free up in his abdomen, he was also able to track, well, I was the one who was tracking it earlier on, given that he was four, but we were able to track when his belly got harder and other symptoms arising and when his belly was softening and those other symptoms dissipating. And so then I would ask him, all right,

Susi (13:13.886)

Notice when these symptoms are arising, what does your belly feel like? And what was sitting around was one of his hot wheel taxis. And he poked the top of the taxi and he said, mom, this is what it feels like. It feels like the hard hot wheel roof of the taxi. And I said, okay, so then what does it feel like when the symptoms aren't there at all? And he had his toy stuffy tiger beside him. says, My belly feels soft like my stuffy tiger. And then I asked him, all right, so somewhere in the middle where the symptoms might arise or they might not. And he said, it's medium. And we were sitting on the couch and he kind of poked at the couch and he said, it feels like the pillow of the couch. So we had words. So I helped him find it. I wasn't giving him any more information than when this happens, what does your belly feel like? Or before this happens, what does your belly feel like? So then where that led us to was when he wanted to have something more to eat that was outside of a regular eating time zone, we found that when he was eating later at night, these other symptoms were starting to come up. But when his belly was really soft and he ate later in the day, then everything was fine. So he started to gain more spaciousness around what was possible for him. And he would check into his belly with his hands and he'd saying, mom, my belly's really hard. I probably shouldn't eat that thing. Or he'd say, Mom, my belly's really soft. I think I can have that thing. Or mom, it's medium. Can we test this to see? And that's how we played. We explored based off of his inner sensation. Now, my

boy is now eight years old. He is well past that period of time when he was four. He has no dietary restrictions other than being a little sensitive to dairy. And he actually doesn't even really like dairy anyway. And he can eat everything else and he can eat really at any time of the day. But he does check in with his belly. He does sense into, huh?

Susi (15:35.104)

What is it that I need? This is a great example of how this works, right? We're not looking for perfect language. It doesn't matter that I understand what a taxi cab hot wheel is or a couch or a stuffy. mean, those were pretty straightforward. It's pretty standard. However, what his world inside, I have no idea what his belly feels like inside. But now that he has that language, even at the age of eight, he's less likely to override it. It's faster to catch compensation patterns. And definitely with him, there's much more trust. And in case of our clients, trust in their capacity to heal. It's body wisdom. So how and why does this create a feedback loop? So here's what's really powerful. When we come back to the movement dynamic here, once someone experiences even two pain-free movements and names what that feels like, they now have contrast. And contrast is what creates choice. Before, everything was braced. Everything was tight and that was considered normal, right, in air quotes. Now there is a new option, something to compare it to. That comparison, that is what makes this different than that other moment. This is where nervous system reorientation happens. It's where the client can say, I don't have to live in that old state. There's something else possible. This is how sensation becomes a feedback system. not just reactive, but guiding. So consider this with you or your clients. This is your invitation. Next time you feel something shift, take a pause. Perhaps rather than asking what do I do next, ask, when am I feeling now? Because sensation isn't just information, it's the raw material of integration.

Susi (17:53.784)

So how can we use these insights to build real momentum? How do you help someone go from one pain-free moment to a whole new way of moving? And we'll look now at belief, behavior, and how nervous system awareness grows through repeatable success. So if we harken back to what we were just talking about, we explored what happens when pain goes down and how important it is not to rush past that moment. We talked about sensation as a feedback system, as a way to grow awareness, refine movement, and track safety in the body. So now let's talk about what comes next. Because when someone feels better, even for five seconds, it's not just a win, it's an entry point. It's a crack in the pattern, a door into something new. And what we do at that moment determines whether it fades or transforms into a new way of being. So this segment really is all about building traction and how we go from one moment of ease to sustainable change. But there can be a tricky part sometimes. Because that first moment of ease or however the person might name it, sometimes people don't trust it. They think it's a fluke. They get superstitious. And they say things like, well, it doesn't hurt now, but it will come back. I don't want to jinx it. I've been here before. It never lasts.

Susi (19:40.462)

So familiar? What happens here is that the nervous system is experiencing a state mismatch. It doesn't know what to do with this new feeling because it hasn't mapped it yet. It's like visiting a new city with no street names, you don't know where you are or how to get back there. So

defaults back to the old route, even if it's painful, because at least that's the one that is known. And this is where your presence as a teacher, a coach, a therapist becomes incredibly, incredibly important. Your job is not to convince them they're fixed. It's not to hype up the moment. It's to stay with them just a little bit longer and ask, can you stay here in this ease for one more breath? Can you notice what it's like to move from the space? What we're doing here is building an internal reference point. We're helping the client name the landmarks in this new landscape. Because the more landmarks they can recognize, the easier it becomes to come back on their own. And that's what nervous system repatterning really, really looks like in real time. Here's a helpful framework that might help. There's a difference between state and trait. A state is something you drop into momentarily, like feeling peaceful after yoga, or strong after a great bike ride. A trait is when that way of being becomes familiar enough that it becomes part of your baseline. It's the work of integration and of teaching nervous system aware movement. It's about helping state become trait. Here is how that typically works. A person has a single experience of relief or clarity. That's a state. They then name it and feel it. They move into more movements with this feeling in mind. And they continue to practice it by moving with it. They grow their interoceptive and proprioceptive awareness. And that equals a nervous system recognizing it as safe and normal.

Susi (22:19.094)

It becomes accessible, repeatable, stable. And that's the trait. And that's what we're aiming for, not just pain relief but a nervous system that knows how to move through life with less brace and more ease, which leads to a layer most people don't talk about, identity. Because when someone has been living in pain, fatigue, stiffness, or illness for a long time, it can start to shape who they believe they are. I'm the person who always has pain. I'm the one who can't do that. This is just how I am now. So when they start to feel something different, lighter, stronger, easier, This is not just a physical shift. It's an identity disruption. And that can feel bloody scary. Even though it's feeling better, even though it's what they want, it's new, which means it's unknown, which means it might feel threatening even if it is good. So if you notice a client suddenly doubting or minimizing a breakthrough moment, it doesn't mean they're being negative. It means the nervous system is negotiating a new identity. That's when you slow down and reflect it back.

Susi (23:56.116)

This allows that new identity to take root, not just physically, but neurologically, emotionally, and energetically. It's also why I keep coming back to the feeling I'm not trying to change their mind or their thoughts directly. I'm wanting them to pay attention to what they sense. because when they're sensing, they're enterceptively and proprioceptively connecting to themselves. And when they can feel that, that's what fuels how they move and their results. That's what helps hone the thought and the identity. So I don't need to do any sort of motivational ya-ya or hoo-ha. I simply need to keep teaching people how to move, how to feel, and repeat. So let's zoom out. One moment of pain relief can feel like a blip. And if you pause.

Susi (25:11.584)

If you allow them to name it, if they are allowed to then practice it, it becomes a thread. And when you follow that thread, moment by moment, You begin to reweave the entire fabric of how

someone relates to their body. It's how people who have felt broken begin to trust themselves again. It's how the nervous system reorients around safety, not survival. It's how the pain that felt permanent becomes something that used to be true. All from that one moment. Practiced, not rushed, not overwritten. In the next episode, we're gonna explore how this plays out a little bit more in real time, especially with clients who don't wanna talk, who might seem shut down, or who resist sensation altogether, seemingly. And we'll explore how to hold presence without pushing, and how to help people co-regulate through your clarity when it seems that words aren't working. Now, in the meantime, if this is resonating with you, and you are a teacher or a health professional and you want to dig into this more. I recommend you join us at the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive. You can read more over at **functionalsynergy.com/intensive** because this is where you really grow the foundation of this. And if you've been following me for a long time, then this is your invitation to join me for the full Therapeutic Yoga Certification Program. We have two now. One that involves all the technical training and a whole ton of business training. And we have one that holds all of the technical training and a little bit of business training depending on what you're seeking. You can read more over at **functionalsynergy.com/certification**. I look forward to working with you and connecting back with you on the next episode. We'll see you then.

Susi (27:33.368)

Hey, are you interested in digging in deeper and growing the skill for yourself as a teacher or a health professional? Then come join me this October for the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive. You can read more over at **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**.