

Ep. #335 - Becoming a Movement Detective Part 2 of 3: Detective



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 Hately. 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 Hately.

--

Susi (00:24.33)

Welcome and welcome back. We are in episode two of the three part episode on becoming a movement detective. In episode one, we explored the power of being an eyewitness, noticing clearly without rushing to fix, name, or judge. Today we take the next step, moving from eyewitness to detective.

Now let me be clear. This isn't detective work in the 'find the bad guy' sense. This isn't pointing the fingers at a culprit muscle, or blaming one tight area. Instead, it's about learning to recognize coordinating patterns and how different pieces are working together or not under certain loads. So just like a detective builds a case from observations, witnesses, and subtle clues, you as a movement professional, gather details from what you see, hear, and feel, and then start to connect the dots.

So what does it mean to shift from eyewitness to detective? As an eyewitness, you describe, "*I saw this happen*". You keep it factual. As a detective, you begin to ask, "*how does this connect?*" "*What might this pattern reveal?*" It's still not about jumping to conclusions. Good detectives don't rely on a single clue.

Susi (01:49.99)

They look for context, for patterns, that emerge over time. The same is true here. You might see someone's pelvis hike every time they lift their arm. As an eyewitness, you notice pelvis hikes with arm lift. As you are a detective, you ask, "*well, what does that coordination suggest?*" "*How does this fit into the larger system?*" "*What's contributing to this system that has the pelvic hiking with arm lift?*" Detective work is about layering observations, noticing what repeats, noticing what shifts when you change the load or the pace or the breath, even. And importantly, it's absolutely not about making something or someone wrong. Compensations aren't mistakes. They are super duper creative strategies, and detective work is about being curious enough to follow the trail.

Now, one of the big misunderstandings that I see in both students and in teachers is the urge to find a single cause. I call this in the context of the movement detective, 'the trap of hunting for a culprit.'

Susi (03:09.77)

For example, someone can have knee pain and the story becomes, *“oh, it's the IT band”*. Someone has back pain, *“oh, it's a weak core”*. Or someone's shoulder hurts, *“it's impingement”*. And those are just examples, right? People have different ways of jumping to these conclusions and causes to describe what's going on with the pain, whether it's a practitioner or a client.

But here's the problem we do. When we reduce the pain that someone or you are experiencing to one culprit, we miss the coordination. We miss the interplay between the parts. A detective doesn't stop at one witness statement. They cross reference. They look for consistencies and inconsistencies. So in movement work, when a client moves and compensation shows up, a detective lens helps us *“all right, what's going on here?”* and out of what's intended with this movement is, *“what's intended happening?”* And *“what's compensating?”* *“Is there something that should be happening that isn't?”*

And those are three really fundamental questions to begin with, and it's where, in the answering of those questions, that people often experience their first or second big AHA! because now the focus has shifted away from, *“my glutes are weak”* to *“huh. I wonder why the glutes are expressing themselves in this way.”* Like, *“what else in the body is actually driving this pattern that has the glutes expressing not firing?”* Now, that opens up the door to so much because the pain or limitation stops being a villain, and it becomes a signal in a much bigger system. If you wanna become a detective with your clients, it requires a different kind of listening and not just with the eyes, though observation is key, and not just with the ears, though words do reveal a lot, but with your whole system, you are tracking breath changes and micro movements, and bracing before the movement even begins. The sigh when someone comes out of the pose, the slight shift in the heel.

And sometimes the most important clue isn't what's being said, it's what's not being said. A client might tell you that their knee hurts, and then as you see the move into a certain position, you see the pelvis shift and you see that as a clue. It's not that you need to fix the knee. You get a chance to follow the thread back to the system that's perhaps protecting or being really creative in how to make and get a job done.

Susi (06:43.37)

And this is a really important distinction because detective work is separate from mechanics. The two can work together, but they are different. A mechanic in a sense, swaps parts. A detective reads and interprets a story. Bodies aren't machines. They adapt, they compensate, they protect, they shift. They're full systems, mind and body, spirit, breath. Pain isn't always where the problem lives. The knee hurts, but the real question is, what's contributing to that? How is load transferring through the hip and the foot? What's going on up in that rib cage? What's intended to move right now that's not, and what's intended to move that is?

Susi (07:48.39)

As a detective, you are layering the evidence and you're beginning with eyewitness data. Whatever it is that they're saying, whatever it is that you're seeing, the facts of the case. And

then you ask two really core questions, knowing what the intention of any given movement is, and it's your intention as the teacher or the intention of the student of what they're wanting to do, we get to break that down into smaller components and really look okay, in this movement, the intention of it is to do this. So is that happening? Yes or no? And, what's not happening? These frame coordination, not blame. And this intention piece is so important because we can look, we use yoga poses for example, there's a bazillion different ways to get into any one post. Think downward dog, think triangle, think warrior two. There's so many different ways in. So the key is, is not what's the right way. It's, what's the intention? We can say the same thing about any activity, whether it's running or climbing stairs or riding a bike.

There's so many different theories about how to do a movement. So we get to step back and go, okay, based off of the theory that the person wants to work with or that you as the teacher are working with, that's the intention. So again, I'm gonna reiterate: what's working? And it's really important to not step over that question because there's a lot in every movement and what someone's doing that is working.

And when we have a context of what's working and then fill in that context with what's not, now we can really see that there's nothing actually broken. It's just something that needs to be refined. The body's not wrong. It's super resourceful. We just need to help retrain that resourcefulness so it works a little bit better.

Susi (10:02.88)

And you're seeing here, I'm hoping in my tone and in the way that I'm teaching this, is that's really about staying curious enough to see the whole pattern. And while sometimes I might go down into a granular movement in a single part, it's not simply about isolating that signal part. It's looking at how the helpers and the compensators organize together and the way that we look at this really builds a deep, deep trust.

Clients feel seen. They feel like you're not trying to catch them doing something wrong or that they're cheating. But rather, you're reading their system with neutrality. And that's not being emotionless. It's just seeing what it is for what it is, and what they're doing so incredibly well already. When you reflect it back and you give them language for their own awareness, they begin to notice too.

They start becoming their own movement detective. *"I notice that my foot is driving the movement into tree. Huh, interesting. I wonder what will happen if I just soften that foot or notice when the softness of my foot starts to go into tension or wanting to drive into tree. Because I notice when my foot is a bit softer, there's a pinch in my opposite hip that lessens. Isn't that cool? Hmm."* That's when they're stepping into movement detective themselves.

Susi (11:43.29)

Let's now move into a practical application of moving into a detective lens, like moving from eyewitness to detective in your own sessions. We see this happening a lot in the I Love Kinesiology program when people are working with the yoga poses that are inside of, I love

Anatomy, and there's amazing back and forth with some of the members as they're exploring the movements and discovering what they are noticing, what they're not noticing, where they're stuck, and then they're sharing their eyewitness accounts of all of what's happening.

And then I am reading those accounts and I am then asking them some more questions based off of me being an eyewitness to their world. And then in the back and forth, there's an analysis that naturally happens and then suggestions that I provide. So it becomes a remarkable back and forthness of someone becoming clearer and clearer and what's happening in their body, and understanding and connecting some of the parts that they might not be aware of.

But they're becoming aware of them by the way that I bring questions back to them. Because again, remember, I don't know someone's subjective world, but I can certainly pull together the threads that they're providing me, the data that they're providing me, define the common pattern throughout which I can then reflect back.

Susi (13:18.24)

Now, if that's interesting to you, you can learn more about the I Love Kinesiology program over at functionalsynergy.com/ilk. Now, if you're working with a client, whether it's on Zoom or whether it's in person, take a look, say as they go into tree pose.

Just notice what's happening based off of the intention that you have for tree. So for me, my tree pose, when I'm teaching it, I have an intention that the pelvis stays square. That the leg bone, the free one that's lifting, that's moving in the socket, and that the body is easeful and breathing. So when I see things like a pelvis that's rotating, or a foot that's driving a movement, or a leg bone that's not moving really well in the hip socket, those are all indicators that something's not happening as it's intended.

Susi (14:31.79)

Now as I'm watching someone move, I'm not leading with those like, *"okay, I wonder what the person's not gonna do"*, but rather I'm like, *"okay, here we're coming into tree. I wonder what they're going to do well here"*. And so I'm looking, is that pelvis stain? Quiet? Is the leg bone lifting? Is the foot coming off the floor? Is there ease to the body? And if I can answer yes to all those, then they're doing a lot really, really well.

Now, there might be some compensations that arise and it's like, okay, great. So things are going really well. And there's also a compensation. Now, through this process, we now get to resist the cop with the culprit trap, right?

So if you hear yourself saying, oh, well it must be this muscle, or it must be weak core. Just hold back a bit and come back to those simple questions. Based off of the intention for this pose, what's meant to be working here? And based off of the intention for this pose, what's compensating here? And then play with, alright, how can I help them quiet this compensation?

Susi (15:47.96)

Then begin to notice as you then teach the next position and the next position and the next position, what are the common things that are occurring? You might start to notice when X happens, Y also happens, and Z goes quiet. As a possibility. I don't know what you are going to see, but the more you're able to step back, see it pose by pose, looking at what's intended, is it actually happening, what's compensating, you start to see more and more of the coordinating parts.

That's detective work, seeing what's intended, seeing the helpers, see the overworkers and the under workers, reading the orchestration behind and through the parts. And the real gift here is when you work this way, the process itself becomes super healing because you're not forcing a correction. You're helping a client's system see itself.

And when awareness starts to shift, coordination reorganizes, and often, pain dropping often occurs as well. Because when we move better, when coordination reorganizes, time and time again, pain reduces and eliminates.

Susi (16:26.05)

So here is the progression from eyewitness to detective: Eyewitnessing gives us a clarity of seeing without judgment. Detective work adds the curiosity of connection. Seeing not just what happens, but how things connect. It's not finding a culprit or a cause. It's about illuminating the coordinating patterns that drive pain or ease.

In our final episode that comes up next week, we'll move further into this series of really integrating these ideas so that you're able to be able to move between witnessing and detective more seamlessly.

Until then, stay curious and practice the art of both eye witnessing and detective work in your sessions and in your own movement. And see how much more clarity begins to unfold. See you next time.

Susi (18:12.38)

If this has really resonated with you and you wanna take this to the next level, I am running the therapeutic yoga intensive this fall. Asynchronously and synchronously. The asynchronous program begins in September, and the synchronous program is in October. You can read more over at **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**.

See you there.