

Ep. #366 - Why Relief Doesn't Last... Yet



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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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Welcome, and welcome back. I'm really glad that you're here because today is building off of last week's episode, where I continued on the conversation around yellow lights, the whispers in our system that happened before the body has to shout, and how change doesn't come from chasing symptoms directly, but instead of how we understand patterns.

I described it as a kind of pattern archeology, where we start to uncover what's been happening in the movement patterns, in the breathing patterns, in compensation, and how those patterns shape what a person's experiencing. I also brought in ideas from Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, and modern neuroscience, and it wasn't to make it complex, but rather to highlight this idea of whispers is not unique to me.

These systems have all described in different ways that change begins subtly, that there are signals before the symptoms. And while we can't currently see those early signals on a modern-day scan or blood work, we can perceive them through ception proprioception, through awareness. That was last week.

Today, I wanna take this a step further because here is what often happens next. People become aware of their patterns. They start to feel things they couldn't feel before. They start to notice how they're moving, where they're compensating, how they're gripping with their breath. And then two things happen.

One, they're not quite sure what to do with what they're noticing, and two, they make a change. They feel some relief, and then symptoms come back. Then what happens is a very common response. They wonder, did I do something wrong, or is this just another thing that doesn't work for me? And the answer is no.

This is how change works, and how I teach this part of the process is fundamental to why my clients get the results they do and why my trainees and grads get the results that they do when they follow these principles. So let's begin by looking at something really important because the first place that we need to go is to look at the expectations people hold about change.

Most people believe that change is linear, that it should look like I do something, which leads to I feel better, which leads to it stays better. And if it doesn't stay better, then something must have gone wrong. Either I did something wrong, or this approach isn't working, or my body just doesn't change.

And that's the assumption, and it's so incredibly common, and it's a big reason why people get stuck. But the reality is that it's not how change actually works in a living system. What actually

happens is something quite different. You do something, which leads to you feeling better, and then that feeling better begins to fade, maybe after a few minutes, maybe after a couple of hours, maybe the next day.

And as it fades, what begins to happen, the old patterns start to come back. Tension returns. Movement shifts back. Symptoms reappear. It's in this moment where most people interpret that what just happened is failure, but it isn't. It's actually part of the entire process. So rather than trying to fix that or change that, or to try to have that not happen, I build it directly into how I work with people because what you accessed in the moment of relief

was not permanent change. Not yet. It was a different option, a new pattern, but that pattern is not yet your dominant one. Your body will always default to what is most familiar, what is most efficient, what has been practiced the most. So when the system is left on its own, especially under time load or fatigue, it returns to the stronger habit, not because something's wrong,

because the pattern is currently more established. So when someone's working with me, I walk them through the process. I'm very deliberate and very, very specific about this. In their first session, it's clear that their pain is starting to drop. They're becoming more aware, proprioceptively and receptively, they're tuning in.

We're recognizing breath patterns, movement, PR patterns, other patterns that are compensatory. They start to feel better. In some cases, we can tie the movement patterns and compensation patterns and the change of those to the relief they're experiencing. Sometimes it's not quite yet clear, but what is clear is relief is happening, and we know we're on the right track.

So very specifically and deliberately, I will say to them, this relief will not last, to which they often look at me like, what? And I'll say what I've just said earlier in this episode, which is because it doesn't have the endurance yet. The patterns that brought you to my zoom room, that brought you to becoming my client, are stronger.

Currently, we need to build up these new ones. They don't have the runway yet. They don't have the endurance, the stamina. What I will ask you is this. I want you to tell me how long the relief lasted. Did it last an hour, three hours, a day, two days? The amount of time is important, not because we're trying to make this last for the entire week, but rather the information for how long it did last is going to be important.

And if you can notice as it fades what else shows up,

you won't always notice it, but if you can, and when the relief starts to fade, you can always intervene with the program that I've provided you. You can choose the whole program. You can choose one of the exercises or movements or the breath practices or not. You get to choose, okay? So I frame all of this very, very deliberately.

So number one, I've been specific with them about saying, hey, you know what? The release's not gonna last, and I want you to pay attention to when it fades, and for how long the relief

lasted, and if anything else that you notice shows up as it fades. And if you want, you can intervene with any part of this program I'm giving you.

Okay. Do you see how I did that? I do this for a few reasons. The first is I want to help them to attend their attention to their body, to bring their movement patterns into their day to day because, in part, a reason why their symptoms persist is because they've been relatively unconscious about their movement patterns, right?

They just haven't paid attention to them. So part of them learning about their messengers of their symptoms and of their body and all the other things going through them, part of this process is them just recognizing what these signals are. The second is I really wanna emphasize they don't have to do the exercises that I'm offering them, but rather if their body wants them to do their exercises or program, then it can.

And I'm doing this because I don't want them to do their program or exercises because I've told them to or that they think they have to, but I want them to notice the feeling of their body.

Again, we're defaulting to their body's cues. So often, so many people who see me are very determined and very ambitious, and they are able to drive through any yellow light. So I want them to be able to notice those and then act on them.

I also give them a lot of bandwidth that if there's something else that their body is asking for, for it to have space to come up. Now, overall, all of this is helping us recognize that number one change has occurred. Their system has found other options, and if the relief lasted 10 minutes or two hours or overnight, all of it is good information.

When they come back for their next session, we can say, alright, let's now have it last for 20 minutes or 30 minutes or two days. The point is, is we're no longer working from zero. We're working from a system that's already demonstrated that it can do something different and for a period of time, and now we get to support the pattern to last longer.

To really understand how to do that, we need to look a bit more closely at what's actually happening inside the body when the change doesn't stick right away because it won't. And when you understand that change doesn't stick right away, but you learn how to pay attention to what's happening inside the body, the whole process starts to make a lot more sense.

So then what is actually happening? Why does relief not last? Well, it's not random. There's a very real, very physical, very neurological reason. Your body is consistently coordinate itself around efficiency and familiarity. From a nervous system perspective, your brain is constantly predicting how you move.

So the motor patterns that it utilizes, the maps of how your body coordinates itself, is a pattern that's very deeply wired, and the patterns that are the most grooved, the most wired, those are the faster, easier automatic patterns. So you move in a certain way for months, years, or decades. That pattern is quite strong within your whole system.

So when you do something new, whether it's a movement or a cue or a different way of loading your body, you access a different pattern. And because a lot of this has to do with reducing compensatory patterns, which are inherently tiring because we're asking a part of the body to do something that's not designed to do, that new pattern is felt as relief.

But here's the key. That new pattern is not yet efficient. It's not yet automatic. It's not a grooved pattern yet. It requires attention, awareness, energy.

So the moment your system is under a bit more demand, time, pressure, fatigue, distraction, load, it will often default back to the stronger pattern. Not just in those higher demand moments, it's also simply living your life because, as I've mentioned, any new pattern, any new habit takes time to build, and it's essentially why my private one-to-one series are three months long.

We can absolutely help someone reduce pain in a session. Absolutely. It takes some time to retrain the pattern, and for most of my clients, they start to really feel the retraining over three sessions, clearly over five, and I added the extra ones just to make sure that it's grooved in. The point here is that there's a natural timeline for how habits change.

Old patterns have had months or years of repetitions. The new one has had minutes or days. So, of course, our system's gonna go back to what it knows, not because something is wrong, but because the new pattern simply hasn't found enough time yet to become the default. So what you experience as I felt better, and then it came back, is actually that you accessed a new pattern and then your system returned to the old one.

Relief is the new pattern. The return of symptoms is the older pattern reasserting itself, and it's also why change can feel a little bit like a back and forth, better, worse, better, worse, because you're moving through different patterning, one that's emerging versus one that is established. But over time, with repetition and awareness, we begin to shift to the one

that gives us more pain relief.

The newer one becomes easier to access, and then it becomes the one your system chooses first because, as you experience more and more movement with less tension and less pain, you want more of it, and you recognize more of the whispers that contribute to having it. When you're able to recognize the whispers that contribute to having the less tension, more efficient patterning, you begin to choose it a lot more consciously.

That is what re-patterning in a living system is all about.

When you start to see progress in this way, something else begins to change. You stop chasing the symptom. You stop chasing the result, and you really start working with the process.

You begin to recognize the quieter signals to let you know that the relief is starting to fade. You start to gain some mastery with your body. You begin to interpret the messages of the various feelings, sensations, the clues that your body is letting you know about where you are at.

And as you do this, no longer are you trying to hold onto a good feeling. You become interested in what happens if it shifts, and it's a very different orientation and a big part of why a lot of people either stay stuck or begin to change because when you're chasing relief, you tend to override, you push, and you try to keep it.

There's this sort of control with a capital C. Also, like in the background or maybe the foreground, there's this consistent, persistent concern of will this next thing that I do flare me up. But when you're working with the pattern in the process, and you start to observe and you start to notice, you start to respond.

It's no longer a guessing game because your body's actually giving you the signals that you can work with.

I wanna give you a real example of this now. So last week I led a program called Power of Pure Movement, strong and engaged glutes. And the reason why I ran it is because a lot of people will say that my glutes don't fire, or my glutes are weak, or I've got dead butt syndrome or glute amnesia.

The point of the program is that it's really not the glutes that are the problem, but rather it's the system, our bodies responding to the forces and patterns going through itself. So if a pelvis is bracing, or breath is holding, or ribs are bracing, or the load is being taken somewhere else, the glutes will respond in kind.

It's not that they're choosing to underperform, they're responding. So when we started to do some movement work and people began to feel their glutes engaged differently or for the first time ever,

that was an example of their system finding new options. And I ran it as a two-day program for the sole purpose of demonstrating what I've just talked about. After the first session, when people had started to feel how their leg bones were moving better in their pelvis, their glutes were coming back on board, their knee pain was going down, their breath was feeling easier,

they were all recognizing new options. But I wanted to highlight that the pattern was not yet the default. The old way of moving, the old coordinating patterns, were still more familiar. So when we came back on the second day, I asked them, and I told them that I was gonna ask them, tell me how long the relief lasted.

Tell me how long these sensations felt better, and then notice when it stopped. It wasn't because the glutes decided to stop working, but it was because the overall pattern that was driving them hadn't fully shifted yet. And that's really the key. It's not about changing a muscle. It's changing the relationship between parts, and that takes some practice and some awareness.

And as you work with that awareness, as you improve those biomechanical patterns, you'll find that your glutes, as this example here, stay more online more and more often. So let's bring this to a summary and a close, and we'll zoom it out. The first place to begin here is if you've had a

lot of pain or strain or tension and you now feel relief even for a moment, it means you can have relief.

Why do I know that? Because you had relief. If you've had relief, it means you have the capacity and the capability for relief. So let's first focus there for a moment. You might be saying, but, but, but, but, but, I know, I know. Hold on, just stick with me. You've had relief. It means you can have relief. Now it comes back.

It's not a mistake. It's not a failure. It's part of the process. Remember, you have had years, decades maybe, of patterning.

You've also had moments of relief. So your system has these two, at least two worldviews, one where there's a set of patterning that is related to tension and strain or pain, and another that's related to relief. So now you see you've got options, and because one of those options has a little bit more runway and endurance,

it's the one your system chooses more often,

but over time, what we're doing is we're helping your system choose the new option, to have it become more familiar, more accessible, more reliable. It's not gonna happen all at once. It doesn't work that way, but gradually it will. And I really wanna emphasize it is an absolute misnomer, completely unprofessional.

I'm sorry for laughing here, but this is very passionate of mine. When a professional says to someone, well, it took you this long to get into pain, it's gonna take you this long to get out of pain is absolutely an utter full of bologna. Absolutely. If that was true, I would not have the success I have.

I have consistently worked with people who are older than me. When I first started in this work at the age of 25, my clients were 50. If it took that long for people to get out of pain, my goodness, I would never, ever, ever have had the results that I have. But it's not about that. It doesn't take as long to get out of pain as it got into it. Goodness, no, it does not take that long.

It does require time. I have found that it happens within three months with consistent and specific connection to one's body, and it actually happens with momentum. So it starts off a little slow, and then it builds momentum, and change happens quicker and quicker and quicker and quicker.

Relief doesn't last right away, not when you've had persistent pain for a period of time, but relief does come consistently, and it becomes persistent.

When we attend our attention, when we recognize the process, the process isn't linear. It is cyclical. It does oscillate, and when we attend to it, it also evolves. Yes, you can absolutely reduce and eliminate pain, and this episode shares part of the process, a fundamental part of the process of how it happens.

If this has resonated with you and you would like my help, and you're a teacher, you wanna build your professional skill, then please check out the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive over at **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**. And if you are someone with pain and this is resonating with you, and you want some help to figure out what to do with the basket of symptoms, the awarenesses, the relief that you've had back and forth, then come join me at Therapeutic Yoga for Shoulders and Hips.

The next series begins in April. You can learn all about it at **functionalsynergy.com/shoulderships**. I look forward to seeing you there.

Hey, does this whole idea of reducing and eliminating pain through the notion of retraining patterns, does that get you interested? Does it resonate? Does it get you excited about really helping people have meaningful change in their life? Well, you will love the therapeutic Yoga intensive, and we're running it this April at **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**. You can read all about it and register there.

I look forward to seeing you.