

Ep. #367 - Relief to Sustainable Results



Full Episode Transcript

With your host:

Susi Hately

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

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 so glad that you're here because today we are in essentially a part three of three around healing and change, the process of change, and really enabling relief to stick now. To be completely honest here, when I started the episodes two episodes ago, I didn't expect this to become a three-part series, but as I finished each episode, it's like, oh, okay, here's the next step, and oh, here's the next step.

So here we are at the final step of this particular series, and to make this episode make sense, let's just do a quick review of the previous two so you have context for what I'm gonna be sharing here today. So in the first episode, I talked more about this idea of whispers, which, if you listen to the podcast from episode number one, whispers, yellow Lights, all that stuff.

Listening to that which is really quiet within us is one of the fundamental principles for how I work. So it wasn't that I introduced the idea of whispers in the last episode, but rather brought them that much more to life. The whispers are the early signals that your body gives you before things become really loud, before they become pain, and before what we might call a red light or even a scream.

So it's like the idea of listen to your whispers before you hear your body scream, or can you catch the yellow lights before they become red? But here's the thing that's really, really, really important to understand: the whispers are super subtle, and while they show up in how you move and how you breathe, and how your body coordinates overall, how they show up in small compensations, because they're small and because they're quiet, for most people, they go completely unnoticed.

It's not because you're doing anything wrong; it's because you've never been taught how to perceive them. And so I spoke about why that was very briefly, but I also talked about how there are systems when you look at things like Chinese medicine or Ayurveda, which is the Indian form of medicine. Those forms of medicine focus in on the whispers.

The reality is that when people come to see me, they're already at the middle of the story where pain's very present, symptoms are very high, and it's constricting their life, and they really wanna get out of this. They want to fix the pain. And in that episode, I really wanted to emphasize, like I talk a lot about through this podcast, that pain really isn't the problem, but rather it's the result of this pattern.

And so a lot of my work is not about chasing the symptom, but rather to see if we can find out what the pattern is. And the pattern shows itself data point by data point by data point through

movement, through breath, through reducing compensation patterns. And then when you start to really kind of piece those together, you begin to feel things that you didn't feel before.

And that's where the change begins, right? So it's being able to get there knowing that you blew by those yellow lights or your clients blew by those yellow lights or whispers. That's not a big deal. We're now going backwards. We're kind of rewinding in order to come into the place that is much more clear in terms of your movement and really what's contributing to what.

Then in the second episode, I took it a bit further where people can start to get aware. Awareness, while it is the, like the governing first step we could call it, they can feel stuff and they are starting to notice some change, and then it comes back. So symptoms go away, then symptoms come back, and this is where a lot of people get stuck.

There's an assumption, spoken or not: change should be linear, right? I did the thing, I felt better, so it should stay better. And then if it doesn't, then something is clearly wrong, either the person, the practitioner that I'm seeing, or the exercises I'm being given, or the modality that I'm using—it's wrong.

But the really important thing that I spoke about in that episode is that's not how change works. You don't do something once or twice or three times or stick to on exercise and then things are done. It really is this idea of recognizing when you are gaining the relief, you're starting to develop a new pattern, but it's new.

The older pattern has a little bit more longevity to it, a little bit more groupness. It's more of a survival strategy. The nervous system knows it well, and so the aim is we need to practice that pattern and then clue into more of the data points related to that pattern, so we start to really gain clarity on the layers of the new pattern we're building.

So if you've had an experience or if your clients have had an experience of I felt better and then it came back and ugh, that sucks—well, I mean, it can suck. I will acknowledge that. I also want to acknowledge that it's like I felt better, then it came back, and yes, it might suck, but also I found a new option and my system hasn't learned how to choose it yet.

When you start to understand change in this way, then things can really, really begin to shift, that when you have those moments of relief, that's a glimpse of what's possible. Just listen to that for a sec. That's a glimpse of what is possible.

It doesn't mean that, oh, well, the symptoms are just gonna come back. Well, of course they are, because the glimpse has to become a moment, and that moment then becomes more long term. Just think about when you had a—if you have kids or if you've ever watched little kids learn to walk—they don't get walking right away. They get up, they fall down, they get up, they fall down, they get up, they fall down.

When kids are learning to write, they get their ease backwards and all the things, and we cheer them on expecting all of that stuff. But something happens in the whole thing of reducing pain.

There tends to be this belief that if it's gonna happen, the change is gonna happen and then it's done.

And anyway, so this whole process here that I am wanting these episodes to highlight, just like this whole podcast, is that that's not the way change works. And if I can kind of bring you over to my side of things, you can get out of pain really quite quickly, but you gotta understand the way change works.

And it's also why I run the Therapeutic Yoga for Shoulders and hips program, because I run it seasonally over 12 weeks, and we run eight to nine sessions over those 12 weeks because I know that people will experience a reduction of pain and then their symptoms will come back, and we need to practice consistently.

Building out the skill of understanding the data that is the patterns in our body in order to make the consistent change that we need. And big changes can happen with that deliberate, specific, consistent practice week by week by week by week, and even more so when you've got someone like myself to be able to ask questions to and to clarify what it is that you're experiencing.

So that's really where we then move to with this episode, is looking at what happens next and knowing that we're aiming to uncover whispers and we're aiming at building new patterns, knowing that these glimpses of relief that we get grow into larger moments the more consistent we are with the process.

So then what happens next? Let's get into the episode.

So let's take this episode now into a day one of the Therapeutic Yoga for Shoulders and hips program. Where on day one, I will often share something of the following: like over the course of this first hour session, you are going to feel some new things in your body, and I'm gonna guide you and teach you how to attend your attention to different parts of your body.

And as you do that, you are likely going to experience relief because time and time and time again, when I'm working with people who have pain, when I help them reduce compensation patterns, their pain goes down. Now, that sometimes will lead people to think, oh, if I have compensation patterns, that's what leads to pain. No, no, no, no, that's not what I'm saying.

There's lots of people who compensate that don't have pain. I'm one of them. Like all human beings, compensate. Compensation doesn't lead to pain. And when someone has pain and I reduce compensation patterns, pain shifts, symptoms shift. So that's really where we start at the beginning on day one.

'Cause I'm helping them to deliberately attend their attention. It's so easy to kind of get caught up in the symptoms that we're experiencing and those sensations, and then the relief that then we experience from having those go away. But if we don't know what's actually contributed to that shift, then we get lost.

And that's why we can kind of bounce between symptoms, no symptoms, symptoms, no symptoms. And then it can—we can then—then it just makes people kind of go a little bit into a place of resignation that things can ever change, and they're just gonna bounce between pain or symptoms and no pain, symptoms.

So I am helping them really attend their attention in a very, very deliberate and specific way. Then at the end of that session, again, I'm very specific in what I say. I say to them, okay, when you come back, I am going to ask you how long the relief that you're experiencing here today, how long it lasted for, and you might come back and say 20 minutes, you might say one hour, you might say three days.

Any length of time is completely fine. No length of time is better than the other. The key is we're wanting to understand in your system how long that relief lasted, 'cause that's gonna be our new baseline. Then I'm also gonna ask, alright, if you can—and this is sometimes a bit tricky, we sometimes don't catch it, that's okay—but see if you can notice what happened around that same time that you noticed the symptoms starting to come back or when the relief started to fade.

Right? And I talked about this in the previous episodes, but I wanted to repeat this here because it is so incredibly vital. So often, people will feel the relief fade away and go, yeah, well you know that, right? And I don't mean that in a mean or a nasty way, but that's what can tend to happen.

So again, I'm deliberately bringing people back to, okay, hold on a sec though, what also was happening around that time? And people might miss it entirely, but it just gives their brain something to think about because then the next time they start to piece together, oh, interesting.

I was driving three hours, or I did a workout, or I—and it's not saying that the driving three hours or doing a workout was the cause of the pain coming up, because we're still just in figuring out what are the data points that are contributing to symptoms going and symptoms coming back, right?

And we just—we start to see the lay of the land. And by doing that, what I've seen time and time again over the past three decades, as I help people recognize that the symptoms they're experiencing are not the enemy, but rather they're indicators of something, they're the messenger.

The pain itself, the symptoms themselves are not the problem. They're the messengers of something that's happening. But when we get too glommed onto that pain or the symptom, it's very difficult to see that.

So part of this process is me unglomming that process by giving very specific direction of how I want a client to attend their attention. That is what starts to really build the confidence and the clarity and the understanding of what's going on in one's body.

Because again, the reality is that what goes on in my body is different than what goes on in your body. It's different than what goes on in my children's bodies, but there are clear principles that are very similar, and this is one of them.

Alright, so the pain is not the problem. The symptoms are messengers. The relief is a messenger. Let's see what's contributing to all this. Let's see what's related, what's correlated, and then we start to pull these data points together and the pattern starts emerging.

So let me give you a couple of stories to really highlight this, for it to make it more clear.

So in the therapeutic yoga intensive, there was a client this past series who had neck pain, and she said, I used to stretch my neck all of the time because my neck was really bugging me, and stretching felt good, but then within 30 minutes or an hour, my neck just felt crappy all over again.

And after about three sessions, she said, you know what? I stopped stretching because what I've learned is that when I am doing these small movements of really understanding how my shoulders move, how my shoulder blades move, what happens with my rib cage when I'm moving my pelvis, my neck feels better.

I'm realizing that this is not just my neck, that my neck is expressing the biomechanical realities of how my body moves, but I didn't know it. And I'm like, yes, exactly.

So now she gets a greater understanding of the lay of the land of what's contributing to her neck speaking to her. Then as the subsequent weeks progressed, she was able to tune more and more into why does her arm and her shoulder and her ribcage and her pelvis move in the way they do.

Why are they choosing to move that way? So now she's understanding not only the yellow lights associated with neck pain, which was her shoulder blade, ribcage, pelvis relationships, but then what contributes to those relationships.

You see, then as you start to become more tuned in to each of these levels of relationship, you get quieter and quieter and quieter on your inside, and you tune in more intuitively to your inside, but you also tune more into not just intuition, but interoceptively and mechanically how your body is moving and responding to day-to-day things.

You're starting to become what I like to call a movement detective. You start to notice, huh, maybe it's not my neck, maybe it's not my hip, maybe there's something here contributing to this.

Another great example of this is someone who I was working with who had back pain, and she and her physician suspected there was perhaps spinal stenosis. And in the first number of weeks I was working with her, her symptoms improved quite a bit.

Her function improved quite a bit. Her ability to lift her children improved, her ability to bear load improved. She could walk more effectively, she could ski better. And then she got her MRI, which was really great.

Right? It's great to get the scans to see what's going on anatomically. And when she came into our next session, she was devastated. She's like, oh my gosh, my life's a bit over here, 'cause now I have this spinal stenosis.

And I said to her, well, hold on a second here, what have we seen over the past few weeks before that scan came in? That even with the diagnosis, your body was already moving better, right?

So structurally, anatomically, stenosis is a real thing, of course. It doesn't have to impact functionally as much as she was thinking it might. We'd already seen that to be true. She was already increasing load. She was already walking further, not because she was pushing herself, not because she was having to, but she was listening to the yellow lights.

So the realities are, yes, there's some tissue change for sure, absolutely. Are you the same human being before that tissue changed? No, you aren't. Structure has changed, and when we shift up the way that biomechanics are moving through one's body, the way forces move through the body, the way the body dissipates and transfers load, when that changes, you feel better.

And that's what she began to really, really see. It's the same thing when someone has had a hip replacement or a knee replacement, or as they're preparing for the knee replacements or hip replacements, is that there is something structurally a problem in a sense.

That's why you are needing or why you needed the replacement. So is that joint what it was before the degeneration happened? No, of course not. And there's a lot that can be done mechanically to improve compensatory patterns that really can change up the way that you prepare for your surgery so you come out of surgery better.

Also, if you don't prepare for surgery, that's totally fine, but you do come out of surgery and you can work with your medical team in a much more effective way.

Let me share a couple more stories.

So let me share a story about the shoulder. So I had a participant in this, again, last session of the therapeutic yoga for shoulders and hips, and she was there because of shoulder pain, and she'd been working on her shoulder for a long period of time, trying to strengthen it, trying to stretch it, trying ultimately to fix it.

And then inside of one of the sessions, when we were working through ribcage and pelvis connections, not touching the shoulder at all, working initially with smaller movements, again, me helping attend attention to the actual mechanics of the movement, she paused partway

through and said, wait, this is really weird, 'cause my shoulder feels really, really different, and I'm a bit stunned because I haven't touched my shoulder.

And that's really when she started to see it, that the way her rib cage was moving, the way that it was moving in relationship to her pelvis, especially during twists and side bends, that shifted what was going on in her shoulder and some of the bracing patterns that she was using through the pit of her shoulder around the rib cage to the shoulder blade.

That started to change, and it was really eye-opening for her because for years—and this is so common—if you've been trying to fix the same area of your body and you've been doing everything, you're almost at that point of resignation, or you've kind of dipped into resignation and come out of resignation and dipped in.

The likelihood is that even though the pain's there, it's likely not about the shoulder. There might be an actual issue in the shoulder for sure, but to get to the next level of better function, reduced pain, it's likely somewhere else which has been working or compensating or bracing and just getting really pooped out, that when you change that area, then the shoulder goes, oh, yes, finally.

Now you might be asking, well, how do I know where to go? Well, that's the process, because you can't change what you're not aware of.

And so many of these underlying patterns that are actually the area where we need to start, they're not in your conscious awareness. And so working through a process that helps bring that back up through to your conscious awareness very deliberately, very much on purpose, that's where the change can really happen.

The same happened with somebody who was dealing with hip issues for a long period of time. She also noticed something really, really interesting, is she wasn't feeling her hip at all when she was walking.

So when I mentioned to her, when you are walking, I want you to notice just the swing of your leg, so the femur, that femur head, the head of the thigh bone moving in your hip socket, and she's like, nope, I can't, I cannot.

I know intellectually that that's what's happening, but I cannot perceive that at all. And so we just did something really, really small, did a few little movements, actually not at the hip, because if she couldn't be aware of the hip, there's no point in trying to yell at the hip or yell at her—and I'm saying yell in a very metaphorical way—to try and get that thing to come into her conscious awareness.

No, we were doing some other movement patterns that were bracing and holding her. And when that shifted, now she could feel the movement coming online, and she could feel it shift as she walked. It shifted as she stood from sitting, and ultimately it changed how she related to her body because these things came back online, not because we hammered at them, but because they could unravel and settle in.

It happened because she stayed with the process.

So the key here is that the results might sound somewhat dramatic, right? Someone's shoulder that she'd been working on for a long period of time, it starts to shift, or someone who has a diagnosis of spinal stenosis is able to move, or someone who couldn't perceive their hip then was able to perceive her hip.

I mean, it's all really cool. The results are awesome. It's why I love my job, but what I want you to get is that we're simply helping people bring into their field of awareness that which isn't moving well, and also that which is moving well, and starting to tweak.

I'm not working with trying to get a psoas online or glutes online or free up whatever muscle. And the reason for that—and I'll say that here very deliberately—is because I can't see through a Zoom room. I can't even see if I'm in person with somebody.

It's not my skill, it's not my training. I can't see if someone's psoas is engaging or not engaging. I can't see which layer of glutes are engaging or not engaging. That's just not my world.

But I can see how a leg bone is moving in the pelvis. I can see when a rib cage braces. I can see breath holding. I can see someone clenching their eyes when doing something, and those are the things that we really can pay attention to.

Lots of the teachers I work with have some basic anatomy, but they also get a little scared about anatomy. So for me to even speak in muscular terms, that can sometimes freeze them right at the start. And that's what we want—we wanna facilitate connection, we wanna facilitate nervous system downregulation.

Yeah, so that is the process by which we are helping someone, supporting someone, and growing their awareness, finding that connection, and then repeating that and repeating that and repeating that.

And quite naturally, the complexity of movement grows, because when someone has that fundamental awareness, that fundamental clarity and connection, and they can feel the feedback through their system, now they can do whatever.

They can add load, they can add weights, they can add repetition, they can start to add speed when they can have and use the newly gained awareness.

So if this resonates for you and you are wanting to kind of dig into this process, this process of change, whether you are a teacher with pain, whether you're a teacher who wants to help your clients out of pain, or if you're someone listening who's not a teacher, not a professional, but you wanna help yourself, you are welcome too.

I'm running the next series of therapeutic yoga for shoulders and hips beginning in April, April 9th, and we've got three options: the option where you can self-practice, another option where

you can have me customize the programming for you, and another option for professional training for teachers.

So we kind of cover all the bases wherever you are at.

You can learn more about that over at **functionalsynergy.com/shoulderships**, and the link is in the show notes. It would be such a pleasure and honor to work with you because really this process of helping you reduce and eliminate, eradicate pain, it's possible.

It's absolutely possible, and I've helped a lot of people, and I would love to help you too. And if you're a teacher, well, let's help even more people by helping your clients get better faster.

Again, that's **functionalsynergy.com/shoulderships**. We'll see you there.

Hey there, are you wanting a step-by-step way of supporting yourself or your clients in getting out of pain? Well, the whole fundamental basis for what I do is being taught in this 12 week series called Therapeutic Yoga for Shoulders and Hips.

It was the first program I ever ran therapeutically, and I'm doing it again.

You can learn more at **functionalsynergy.com/shoulderships**. See you there.