

Ep. #376 - Becoming a Movement Detective 3/7:  
Becoming a Movement Detective with Candice  
Bourgeois, C-IAYT Yoga Therapy Trainee



Full Episode Transcript

With your host:

Susi Hatelty

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

## 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:** Welcome and welcome back. I'm so glad that you're here. I have a special treat today. As you know, we are in the middle of Becoming a Movement Detective podcast series, and I'm bringing in people that I've been training, either private clients or trainees, to really bring some of these ideas and concepts to life.

And today I've got Candice Bourgeois, and she is from, uh, Southern California. She is in the certification program right now. And the reason I wanted to bring her here is because she'll do a great job at exploring where she was before and where she is now. And what I mean by the before and after in this context is someone who is like a Sherlock Holmes, right? Or maybe it's Monk, or maybe it's The Mentalist. But it's somebody who has the space and capacity to be able to look at somebody's movement and know where to go. And there's less doubt, there's clarity, and it's not like, "Oh, I see the thing to fix." It's not that. It's kind of like the detective—they go into a scene and they see all the things, the vase dropped over and the window cracked, and, "Hey, interesting, the wallet is still on the counter. What's up with that?" Right?

And so they're seeing the things that are there, the things that aren't there. They're seeing the relationships, and they figure it out. They see things that other people don't see. But what's important here is why it's important. Number one is because this is fundamental to helping clientele reduce and eliminate pain for real, and Candice did not start here.

And I'm really clear that, and I said this to Candice before we started recording, like nobody out, is walking around saying, "If only I could be a movement detective, then I would help my clients get out of pain better." Like, nobody's saying that. What they are saying, though, is "I'm seeing this stuff and I don't really know what to do with it." And "I can tell when they're in, they're in the final position that there's something that's not quite right, but I have no idea what that is." And that is not something that Candice is facing so much anymore, because she sees so much more, can clarify so much more, and acts on it, and she's able to teach it with her clients, and so then her clients get it too.

So it's pretty exciting. It's exciting for me, it's exciting for her, and I'm really pumped for you to hear her story, and just the, like, getting a taste of what this is. So welcome. I'm so glad you're here, Candice.

**Candice:** Thank you.

**Susi:** Why don't we just start at the beginning? I remember, and we were, again, we talked about this just before we got into the recording, I remember talking and teaching Candice, and

like many yoga teachers, she's very feely, and she can feel lots of sensations, and she can teach from a place of things that you ought to feel.

But I remember you and I talking about the cueing formula. And so how about give, like, a perspective of your before story of where you were, and how would you describe yourself as a teacher, and that, that way of instructing what you saw, but also where your hangups were, if you can remember back then.

**Candice:** Yeah. I've been teaching for about nine years, so I'm going back to 200 hour coming off of that. A lot of the formulas that we learned in 200 hour were verb, your body part, direction, or engage a muscle to create an action, and those are good and helpful, especially when you're new and you're looking for a formula. What I think is interesting, as I'm just saying this out loud, um, is that we don't really have protocols with you and your training. You're really teaching us to look for data points. You're teaching us to collect information, and then to use that information with the concepts that you've given us about how the relationships of parts move, and helping to put the pieces together, so to speak.

So at the beginning, we were very much focused on, you know, teaching to a pose, a peak pose, and throughout the course, even before I found you through the course of my teaching, I had shifted to a bit more of like shoulders and hips focus. Something that was not so much muscle driven, but not so much pose driven, and I really, I knew I was heading in that direction, so when I found you, I think you were helping to put some of again, those pieces together. But it's not that the cues are wrong, but they're kind of confusing. Sometimes we've talked about that.

**Susi:** Yeah, this is great, and I love what you've mentioned. Let's give an example of using, like, there's a body part and there's a direction. And what was the third part to it? There's a body part, a direction, and a... This is what it's for. This is what it's for, right? 'Cause yeah, so give an example of that.

**Candice:** Inhale, mountain, reach your arms up. Exhale, side stretch left. Bring your right hand... Or sorry, I'm doing left versus right. Common, a common issue with yoga teachers. Um, but if you were to do side stretch, um, right, let's say, drop your right hand down, reach your left hand up, engage your right side obliques to deepen the side stretch on your left. That would be, like, an example.

**Susi:** Yeah, and that's great. Like, it's talking like this is where the hand goes.

**Candice:** Yes.

**Susi:** Yeah, and this is where you're reaching. And I remember another one, and we're gonna... you're gonna share a sort of a revised version of that in a minute. But there's, there's also something even simpler, one that you gave me, which was, like you gave me as an example when we were talking about this, which is-

**Candice:** Engage your... or squeeze your inner thighs

**Susi:** Bring your legs together. Yeah. What w-what was that one? Yeah.

**Candice:** Squeeze your inner thighs together to engage your abs.

**Susi:** Yeah. To engage your core.

**Candice:** Yeah. That's right.

**Susi:** And, and so I think what's important here is that some of you might be listening and say, "Okay, well, what's wrong with any of that?"

And the, the point is, is there is actually nothing wrong with it. It gets the job done. And it gets the job done. And there are people that are in classes that when they move by reaching the hand up or squeezing the thighs together, there's a lot of compensation patterns that are happening, and it's not actually teaching about their fundamental biomechanics.

**Candice:** Yeah. A lot of bracing too.

**Susi:** Yeah, so just squeezing the thighs together does not mean your core is gonna engage. Right. Yeah. So I think the piece where what Candice and I are talking about comes into play is specifically around helping people reduce and eliminate pain. Because the fundamental thing that I see is that people who have pain happen to also be compensating.

And so, when I can help them reduce compensation, their pain also goes down. And so if I'm teaching someone about movement, I'm wanting to help them reduce their compensation. And squeezing thighs together in order to engage core, or squeezing thighs together and the core engages, or you think the core engages, which is not necessarily true, doesn't actually facilitate someone understanding and being aware of their compensation pattern.

Or when someone takes their hand up to the sky, I think is what you had said, we can get our hand to the sky in any number of ways. And then to engage your glute, your obliques to get a deeper stretch, if you don't know what the obliques are, how do you even do that? So we're not actually teaching about movement or enabling someone to become clear about compensation patterns, and the reality is, is most yoga classes are not about helping people become aware of compensation patterns.

So it makes sense that that's the cueing that exists in them. But what Candice was looking for was, "I wanna help my clients reduce and eliminate pain." And so now how do we go about doing, how do we go about doing that? So I guess my next question for you then is, if you were focusing on peak poses, and you were focusing on shapes, and you were focused on a cueing formula then, and you already knew that it wasn't totally working, right? You'd already sort of found that way yourself. But over this period of time, now, what's different? How would you describe that? What's the after story now? Or really the during story, 'cause you're not quite done. But what's the, what's the, what's... Where, where are you at, where are you at now when you're wa- Like, you don't need to get into the cueing yet, but just what, like, what's different for you?

**Candice:** Well, it's funny because I think it starts first with our own practice, and I think that's true of anything. You become a good teacher when you become a good student. And I do believe that we're all experts of our own bodies if we take the time to pay attention and listen. But I was really good at feeling all the things, like you, we said, and I'm, I admitted that upfront.

It's not like I was trying to hide it. I feel all the feelings and very in tune. I had done a lot of nervous system work. I had done a lot of learning around the nervous system, so I'm familiar with, like, the idea of dimms and simms. But the whole body sort of, um, or whole person, I guess I should say, um, the layers of the bodies, the subtle layers, the things that come together is something that we, um, have learned a lot more about through your training and, and I think that that helps.

But more importantly, I was lacking, and I, I didn't think I was lacking because, um, I think it's interesting, I have a background in dance and cheer and drill and stuff like that, and you're supposed to, like, put yourself into, like, you're supposed to be one of many, many working as one together, right? Like, um, so you fit into a... You match everyone else, and the way you get there isn't always the same. But what's, what's very interesting for me is that I thought I knew where my body was in space. I thought I had awareness of my body, enough awareness, because I had all this sensation that was going on. And I think what really came down to it was I didn't know what was happening with my leg bone and my hip.

I didn't... I knew I rolled to the outside of my right foot when I walked. I've always kind of stood that way, right? But it's just the way I am. It's just the way I'm built. It's just the way my hip clicks. It's just the way my shoulder does. It's just the way. And I think that in some respects it's good that we can, like, accept where things are and move on and not let that stop us, and in other ways, those compensations tend to wear and tear in ways that you don't recognize until you get a little further along in life, and then you're like, "Why is this not working? Why can't I fix this? What is this new thing that's happening?" Because your body can only compensate for so long, and then it has to compensate somewhere else. And all that to say that our bodies are fantastic, creative compensators, and I'm so grateful for the things that it's done. But I've changed my gait.

My shoes, I don't wear on the outside anymore. Like, there are things about my own body that have changed, and now that I have awareness of that in myself, I'm able to see it and teach it to others.

**Susi:** Where you were before was, it made a lot of sense with a very clean and cut and dry way of teaching shapes, peak poses, formulaic cueing. That worked to a point, but then you outgrew it, knowing that it didn't meet all of the needs that you wanted it to meet. And now, you recognize that the clicks and the tweaks and the this and the that that you notice in your body, that you had been accepting, maybe you didn't have to accept them so much anymore. That maybe they were signals of letting you know that, hey, maybe there's an opportunity here, and that opportunity has enabled you to become that much more proprioceptively aware, which for you is actually a little bit of a cosmic joke, because you had already thought you were proprioceptively aware, but maybe not as much as you actually thought. Yeah?

**Candice:** Which, um, I mean, how many things that we all go through life and we're like, "Oh, I know that."

**Susi:** Yeah, until you know it, right?

**Candice:** And then you're like, "Oh. Yeah. Maybe I don't know it."

**Susi:** Yeah. I love it. All of that said, and we've already said it once before, like that way of starting to teach in, from TT, it's not necessarily bad. You're still teaching some group classes, although I know that's starting to shift a little bit and you're moving more and more towards the therapeutic, a more, a more solidly therapeutic business. How is your cueing changing? How is your thinking like... 'cause you are more so of this movement detective. So why don't we first look at it from the perspective of, in a group class, and you can't, you can't like be looking at everybody's body and what everybody's doing and solve for things in a group class. That's just not what a group class is about. But you're orienting them a little differently so that they have an opportunity not just to put their hand in the air, but to recognize and understand what their body parts are actually doing, and how that's distinct from muscle engagement.

**Candice:** Yeah. I think that's 100%, and the, like when talking about the side stretch, one of the things that I found helpful in my own experience was to place hands on the body parts so that I could make that brain and body connection. So I teach sometimes to like, touch the collarbone as we reach the opposite hand across so that they can feel the collarbone moving with the shoulder blade as it's informing that movement.

So they can't always feel the shoulder blade on their back, but they can feel the shoulder blade pushing forward, you know? And so bringing attention to the parts and using what we can touch, what we can sense. So also a lot of floor work, laying on the ground, you know, and feeling the ground underneath the pelvis, underneath the shoulder blades, that there's just, there's a lot of things that I tend to try to lay the foundation with that, the therapeutic content or connection that we've learned so that when we go through the rest of the classes, they can start to pick up on that. And then I am trying to cue to, like for instance, in the side stretch, instead of engage the obliques, it would be lift or lower your left ribs towards the ground so that your right ribs lift away from the pelvis.

It's different than muscle engagement. Their muscles are gonna engage in order to make the move happen, right? I hope. Uh, otherwise they're gonna collapse into it. Um, you know, and maybe I speak to the muscles as I go along, but initially it's like just try to move your body in that way and see how your body wants to move it. And then once we see how your body wants to move, instead of doing a corrective compensation on top of a compensation, then I can back them up a little bit and help them to find the way into it with more support and more stability in their body with what their capacity is. Because not everybody has the same capacity day to day, you know, moment to moment. So it's like, check in with yourself here with what your capacity is and where we're trying to go, and how is the load shifting in your body and how is your body receiving the load, wherever it is that we're trying to go in that posture or flow.

**Susi:** And your people are responding well to that too. Like, what are, what are... 'Cause sometimes I remember one trainee I had years and years and years ago, and she was saying to me how no one would ever want to be a student in a class like this. And I said, "Maybe. Maybe you're right." But then she came back, she was at LA Fitness, so she was in a fitness space, and she was blown away by how people responded, because they now could feel more of what was going on in their body. And what that feeling, the act of feeling enabled them to do is get stronger, be more balanced, recognize where the... If I- I don't wanna use this word, but I'm gonna use it, but where the deficiency was, where the gap was that they weren't able to perceive before, and now they could actually solve for it way, way more easily. Is that what you're noticing as well?

**Candice:** 100%, whether it's my private clients or in my group classes, um, when they recognize... When we back it up and we start to really tune in to how the leg bone is moving in the socket or how the shoulder is connected to what's happening at the pelvis, whatever the, their, you know, like aha moment is, they're always blown away by how they didn't see it before, you know, first of all. Like, how is that happening and I didn't recognize it?

And then being able to move in the smaller range for a moment, not even like a long period of time, just like backing it up a little bit and getting more stability and more connection to it, they're able to come into more full range. It may not be right away, but they work towards it pretty quickly.

And if they... They're all just so like shocked by how the easier thing is actually bringing them into more capacity. So yeah, I haven't found anyone that says that they don't like this new way that I'm teaching. Except maybe my manager who said I need to use more formulas, but that's okay.

**Susi:** Yeah. But here's what's really interesting is I think one reason why people are gobsmacked when they're doing less and getting more is because it goes against a very cultural, strong cultural phenomenon, which is you have to push more and force more to get results.

And the joke of the matter is, is that when you force and you push, you actually slow down your results. And so I think so many people are pushing and forcing, thinking that that's the formula for getting better. And then when they do actually pull back and go in a smaller range where they're not compensating, so they're actually utilizing the tissue that's meant to be doing the work, and you let go of all that other stuff that's not required, then of course you're gonna improve, 'cause the body's doing what it's actually meant to be doing.

**Candice:** Exactly.

**Susi:** But for people initially, they're just like, "How is... Huh, huh? What?" But then there's the other piece is that when you're forcing, your nervous system is also saying, "What?" And right? It's going into protective mode. Add in some ease, add in some ease, you add in some more safety, and then it allows it, it receives it so much more effectively.

**Candice:** Yes. That has been my experience. It's funny, I heard someone who was doing a weight-centered class, 'cause we do that at the studio I teach at, talking about how they couldn't lift the weights without their wrists hurting, and the teacher was like, "Yeah, that happens after a little while."

I thought to myself, how about we go down and we try it with reps at the weight that you can actually handle without having to feel like you, you know, or stop at the point that, um, that if you're gonna do the heavy weights, then do the heavy weights and take a break when you are starting to do this compensation, when you see the, the yellow light, you know, coming up.

Because I had the same thing happen in my own practice where I was using my wrists, and at the gym I stopped, I lowered the weights. I, you know, went to form over, like, trying to meet something, a particular weight, and I've been able to actually feel my biceps working as opposed to just trying to make the weight happen, which goes up into my shoulders and into my wrists and all the places that it's not supposed to go, right?

So when we practice what we preach, and, and we do those things, we know that it works, and then we can actually, like, speak confidently to our students about that as well. Um, so yeah, I 100% agree with all of that assessment.

**Susi:** It reminds me of a client I had years ago who was a weightlifter, and he said to me, "You know, this is all, all this moving smaller is fine, Susie, but how do I get bigger biceps?" And I said, "Well, let's see how you do your bicep." And how he did his bicep was moving through his back. And it so happened that the point where he was moving from was exactly where his pain was. And I said, "Okay, so how about you not move through your back, because when you're moving through your back, you're not actually using your biceps, so... or as well as you could. So how about you move your elbows and not your back?"

And that was, like, the thing. That was the thing for him, because all of a sudden he wasn't in his back anymore, bonus, and he's like, "Oh, now I actually feel my biceps." And he looks at me and he says, "That means they're gonna get bigger biceps." I said, "Yes." That is what my male clients say to me time and time and time again.

So there's that, that other piece of it that's very motivating for people, because you're now utilizing the thing you're meant to be using, not the other stuff.

**Candice:** I think that's another big piece that I've learned from you is the driver matters. You know, because the movement, all movement is good and it can be done however, right? Um, but if you're trying to sustain that load and transfer the load properly, the driver matters. And so coming backwards, you know, and looking at people and how they're moving, um, just knowing what their driver is, helps you then to determine whether or not they want to change that and, you know, support in their body in a different, way with, I don't wanna say proper driver, because everybody's bodies are different, right?

But, like, there's an intention, a design for how our bodies are supposed to work, and sometimes we use it that way, and sometimes we don't. And, um, and so I think this process that you have,

um, taught us of looking for yellow lights and, and kind of looking for, as you, you're calling it, the clues, right, in this movement detective. When we find the clues, we can put those pieces together, draw the lines back, you know, into what it is that's actually the root cause of the pain or of the shift, cause sometimes pain is not associated with it. It's those clicks and pops, and something just doesn't feel right.

And so being able to back it up and look at all of those clues, then you can start to put all of the connecting points together. Because it's not always like the click at the, at my shoulder, what I've realized, is related to the, the click in my hip, right? Because when they're happening, it's usually in some sort of connected spiral line sort of situation. So, but here again, it... And we're dynamic. We're changing. So, like, we have to be open to receiving fresh clues and, and not necessarily being stuck to what we saw yesterday, but, like, being present in what's happening right here and now.

**Susi:** Yeah. And the clue you might have and the pattern you might see might be between the one shoulder and the opposite hip, and then as you go along and things improve, you might actually see a whole other piece of the puzzle that's contributing. And I think sometimes what people can do is they can say to me, it's like, "Okay, now I see the compensation pattern. I fix that, and everything's gonna be great." And it's like, well, we're, we're not actually trying to fix anything, as absurd as that might sound coming from a teacher who focuses on helping people get out of pain.

And the reason why that's really vital in the work that I do and what I teach is that there's no movement that's inherently a bad movement, and the compensatory strategies that anybody has decided to use subconsciously has been their best subconscious thinking patterns.

So why would I tell that what someone's doing... Like, compensation got them from point A to point B. It's a creative strategy. It's like, it's awesome. So now let's just refine that creativity to support better movement, but it doesn't discount what they already have.

**Candice:** Right.

**Susi:** So right then, that changes the dynamic of it being like something bad.

**Candice:** Yeah, and that's, I think, uh, such... That's something that you are really good about reinforcing is that, I don't wanna say that I learned things were bad in teacher training, 'cause I didn't learn that things were bad. But I think there's a lot of fear-based talk. Like, if your knee isn't at 90 degrees, and if you're not, you know, at whatever the position is, you know, there's just a lot of like, "Don't do this tree pose. You can't have your foot at your knee, you know, 'cause if you push in, you're gonna bend it. You could hurt yourself."

Well, nobody's gonna push them that hard, right, that they're gonna, they're gonna hyperextend their knee sideways. But I get where it's coming from. I get that idea of like trying to be aware and cautious and not wanting to hurt anybody, and I, I have never wanted that to be the case.

In fact, I tell people all the time, "I want you to be able to come back to your mat tomorrow, so I'm not gonna make you do crazy things," right? Like, if you're not ready for it, then, then we don't wanna do it.

But I think it's interesting because more so than just saying that we don't have to be afraid, like you actually celebrate the way the body moves. You celebrate the way that the compensations are not bad, they're just the, the things that, the strategies that we've used to get to this place.

Over time, they may not be the best strategies, and we might need to find new strategies, you know. But like over the whole course of time, our bodies are just doing what we're asking them to do, right? In the best way that they know how with all the resources that they have available.

So when we give our brain a better picture, a more real-time picture of where the body is in space, proprioception, then it has a better idea of what it needs to do in order to actually make the movement happen.

So I think that part of what you teach is just significantly different than the programs that I've been a part of before with respect to there being a little bit more fear-based. Um, and yours is more of a celebrating strategies.

**Susi:** Yeah, we do celebrate a lot of strategies, however those strategies come about, because we get to build... we get to build upon whatever it is that you've got. I love it.

**Candice:** That's right.

**Susi:** I think a way to sort of bring this to close is what does it feel like now, as a teacher who is not like trying to fix, who's not trying to change a shape, who's not using formulaic cueing per se, but rather observing patterns more clearly and cleanly and, and speaking and instructing from that space? And the results that you're getting, what does that all kind of feel like as you as a teacher and the impact you're having, and how that's different, yeah?

**Candice:** It's funny. I feel more confident than ever about my ability to see things in my students, and to offer them suggestions about how to explore further, whether that's a pattern that is coming up for them, whether that's a, um, like opportunity to give themselves support and to play with load. I just, I feel more confident in doing that one-on-one and in doing that in group settings now.

I actually had a colleague say after a group class last week that, you know, they just say, "Listen to your body," when someone complains about something. And I mean, I say it, um, and, and it makes sense. Like, you, but you hear it all over, you know, "Just listen to your body."

Well, what the F does that mean? You know? Um, and now I can be like, "Okay, well let's talk about this. Like, what are you feeling and where is it, you know, like, when, when does it happen?"

And so, um, my colleague's comment was, "You give such good, like, advice in the instruction and wisdom for them." And I was like, "Oh, thanks." I didn't even realize I was really doing it, but it was, it's just naturally happening as I've had more confidence come up.

And so I think being able to tell people with confidence, and you're not leading them down anything... I mean, I always say, "I'm not a doctor, but, like, have you considered this?" You know? And, "What about, um, experimenting with this movement?"

You know? And so anyways, it's... long story short, is I think I have the capacity to see things that I didn't see before, and to connect the dots that I wouldn't have known were even data points previous to this, because it was, you know, like, just listen to your body.

So I think the students feel more comfortable. They feel like they can trust me in guiding them into things, and they feel successful. Like, I've had a couple of them say that they just were... their minds are blown at how that simple change, you know, that simple awareness, like, has changed the posture for them, has changed the movement for them, and how it feels better in their body.

So I just, I think that that is, like, the most rewarding part, you know, is just that people feel good and that they wanna come back to their mat and keep practicing, whether that's with me or with someone else, you know, like, that they just keep coming back to their mat.

**Susi:** So I think how this really sums it up is that, and you said it clearly, you said you're not a doctor. And unless you do have specific training like, uh, some kind of medical training where you have trained in pathology or you've trained in very specific rehabilitation protocols, as we, as like me, as you, we don't have that training. And you don't need that training to be successful at helping someone reduce and eliminate pain.

And really, when we are being the detective and simply watching for how a body moves and how a body breathes and how load is transferred and where things are compensating, and being clear about it and helping the client become clear so that they can grow their own internal feedback between brain and body, now they're doing it themselves.

**Candice:** Right.

**Susi:** Right? And we're really the facilitator or a trusted advisor. And they tap into, and this is something that is said over and over again for my clients, is they tap into the intuition they knew always existed, but they lost as their pain got bigger, and they gained as their pain went down.

And a big piece of that is they are able to tune in that much more clearly to their movement pattern, to their breath pattern, to where they compensate, to reducing that, and it's no longer about getting their hand to the sky, although their hand's getting there.

It's just that they've got a much more tuned-in sensory perceptive self for how their body is moving to bring it there.

**Candice:** For sure. For sure.

**Susi:** Candice, you do work online. If people wanna reach out to you, find you, you are in Southern California. I know Southern California's very, very big. But where do, where can people find you? How, how is the best way to reach you, whether they wanna find you in person or whether they wanna find you online?

**Candice:** I don't have a website yet. Working on it. But I do have Instagram. It's C-R-B, like Candice R. Bourgeois, yogatherapy (@crbyogatherapy) is my handle. And you could also email me, **candice.b.yoga@gmail.com**.

**Susi:** Great. All right. This is awesome. Now, if what you're hearing today is resonating with you, like, "Ooh, I wanna have what Candice has," if you're cueing, maybe it hasn't changed or it has changing, like you're, you're evolving out of some of what you're teaching only because you can see that there's another way.

Not that it's bad, but there's another way, another way that maybe is available, and perhaps the whole listening to your body statement to a client, you'd rather have something bigger and broader to be able to share with them, if you're interested in that, then I am running the Fundamentals for Becoming a Movement Detective this summer, where you will get access to all that goodness, and you can read more over at **functionalsynergy.com/detective**.

I would love, love, love to see you in there. Candice, thank you so much.

**Candice:** Thank you, Susi.