

You Have Helped Your Client Out of Pain, Then What? Part 2 of 2 | #393



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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 so glad that you're here.

So today, we're building off of last week where we spoke about Model One: getting out of pain through pattern recognition and pattern retraining. We spoke about beginning with a body diagram and listening to the person's story—getting to know them, their symptoms, and their foundation of hope, possibility, and doubt. And then, through small movements, breath, meditation, and nidra, growing awareness, clarity, connection, and feedback, we help them to recognize yellow lights or whispers, building trust in themselves and developing consistency and paying attention.

And this brings us into Model Two: moving from pain into the rest of their life. Imagine this: your client is out of pain more often than not, and they might be doing more quite organically, or they want to do more. And sometimes, they might have some flares. Maybe they've been away on holiday and they've walked a lot. Or maybe they're golfing 18 holes when they hadn't really done that for a long time. And while it may seem obvious why their pain has come back, there still needs to be a plan to help them, because the pain hasn't come back typically because they've gone all the way back to start—like they were playing a game of Snakes and Ladders and they've slid all the way back to square one. No, it's something different.

So today, I wanna talk about that both from the perspective of someone is out of pain, and they are—they're able to stay that way, and they wanna make gains, or the person who has made more and more progress, but they're having some flares and there's not quite the certainty about what's contributing to them. Again, they're not all the way back to square one, right? But we do need a plan.

So let's begin from the initial foundation of awareness, clarity, connection, and feedback. With the trust and consistency that have been growing, we wanna move from that foundational process into more complex work, and perhaps toward more intense work. And it's really in this window, this transition, that a lot of people fall off. They feel better, they do more, and then they go away and walk a lot, or they play those 18 holes of golf. And when their pain returns, they might start to question the progress that they thought they had made. Was it for real? Is it actually working? Why does it feel like I'm back to where I started? Or they wanna do more, but they're worried about losing the gains they've made, so they stay with what they know, even though they wanna move beyond it and into something more. Other times, the client might not know how to make the transition. They might not know how much to add, how often, or what to

pay attention to, or what happens if their symptoms do change. So they've experienced getting out of pain, and now they need a plan for moving back into the activity that they wanna do.

But there's also the perspective from the teacher. They already understand what's needed to help someone get out of pain. They can already help their client grow awareness, work with small component movements, help them improve interoception and proprioception. They can help their client recognize compensation in their yellow lights. They've got it. They've got the pattern recognition and retraining. But then what? How to take those small component movements and build towards the activity this person wants to do? How do I bring in more load, more complexity, more intensity? What actually tells me that they're ready? What am I watching for as we progress? How do we progress? And if their pain flares, is there something wrong, or how do I use that information to decide what we do next?

So, said another way: the client wants to do more, the teacher wants to help them get there. But knowing how to help someone out of pain and knowing how to help them move back to the fuller activities are two different parts of the process, and that's why I call it Model Two.

The first thing to note is that when someone is out of pain, that they have the new awareness—at least through the process that I'm teaching. They have the experience of yellow lights or whispers. They have the understanding interoceptively and proprioceptively. They've had a definition of success that rhymes with "pain reduced" or "pain eliminated." Now we're looking at something new. And because we're looking at something new, the model of success changes. Yes, they have the inner understanding. Yes, they can sense their inner world more clearly. And yes, they are able to make choices based on what they are noticing and feeling and perceiving. And now it's a "now what?" question. Like, for real, now what?

And here is where we begin. Do they want to do their activity better? Do they wanna do it faster? Do they want to do it stronger? Do they wanna do an activity that they haven't even started to do because their pain or other symptoms were getting in the way of that? Is there something else showing up that they didn't expect?

So here are some key questions to consider to help us build out the plan.

What does the person want to do now? There are so many different directions you can go in when a client you've been working with is now out of pain. So how to choose comes back to what's really compelling them. How far have they come? What's driving them? What—where's the gap from where they are now to where they wanna go? Because right now, in this moment, they can really choose what they wanna do. If the thing they wanna do requires more strength, then we train and help them get stronger. If it requires more mobility, then we work towards that.

For example, I have a client who does multi-day walks and walk-runs at Disney. So there are these events that happen a number of times during the year where you're... it's multi-day. So maybe you start with 5K, then you go to 10K, then you go to a half marathon, as an example. And so, over several days, the distance increases. So she was telling me about her splits, and I

asked her, "So do you like the splits?"—meaning the splits for her run-walk times, not like the gymnastics thing called splits. So she told me about her splits, and I said, "So do you like the, the number? Do you like the split time?" And she said, "No, not really." So then I started to think, "Okay, how do we help her get faster?" And that's where the conversation has gone. It isn't about getting her legs to go faster or even her legs to get stronger—mm-hmm—and that's a topic for another podcast episode, but it is about helping her get faster. So that's what we now program for.

The second question is: what does that activity really ask of them? So let me say, for example, somebody wants to get back to tennis or hiking or skiing downhill. What does that activity actually require of the person doing it? This is where it becomes important to be able to break the movement down into smaller component parts. What's required to do that activity? Do they have the capability to do those components, yes or no? If the answer is no, well, then that's where we begin. If the answer is yes, then we can help facilitate greater stability and strength.

So as an example of this, I had a client years ago who was out of pain. He said to me, "I wanna do cool yoga moves." I'm like, "Okay, open up a book. Tell me which cool yoga moves you wanna do." So he showed me wheel pose, and I said, "You realize and recognize that we're just not gonna get you into wheel. We're gonna help you do this in a functional way." And he says, "I would only expect that from you, Susie." So now, this is what we could do: let's break wheel pose into its smaller component parts—what's actually required to do wheel—and then we could see what components he had, what components he did not have, right? This is where those smaller movements really feed into the bigger movements.

I had another client who wanted to get into Warrior Two. Now, Warrior Two is traditionally known inside of the yoga practice as something that can really harm SI joints. For me, I've always thought Warrior Two is a great movement for SI joints because the front leg is doing something different than the back leg. We don't tend to move about in life in any kind of movement that looks at all like Warrior Two. Now, it's a reason why Warrior Two can create problems when someone's not aware, but it's something we can certainly move toward.

So as an example, we can look at: all right, so what movements are involved in making Warrior Two happen? Now, before, inside of Model One, smaller movements were about interoception and proprioception related to pain reduction. Now, they are about building into greater complexity. So now we get to look at how a joint moves, how the parts relate, where the compensation is occurring, and bring those ideas into increasingly complex movement. So if we think about Warrior II, a movement that leads toward that is goddess pose. So legs come wide, legs rotate into external rotation, and then we slowly move into what looks like a squat, helping those legs move into some abduction and maybe a bit of rotation. So question is: can the client do that, yes or no, right? It's a little bit more of a challenging exercise being loaded with gravity and plus adding the squat. So we can look at some of the smaller movements that lead to it, like butterfly. On your back, knees bent, moving those leg bones mostly in a rotational motion, little bit of abduction, but for the most part a rotational. And we can see: does the person have it, yes or no? Can they do it well with little, maybe even no compensation? What are they aware of?

Are they breathing easy? Now we can take that. Now, it's just one example. There's more things that I'd be curious about; this is just one. But when they come up to goddess, we now get to look at similar scenarios when they were in butterfly: the harmony between the hips, knees, and ankles; how the leg bone moves in the hip socket; what happens through the pelvis, torso, and even the shoulders; what's going on with the breath, right? It's just looking at it in a different orientation because now, into goddess, we've got gravity. And then from there, we can start to play around with changing the position of the back leg or the front leg, depending on how you wanna get into Warrior II. The idea here is we're pulling from smaller component movements and bringing them into the bigger one, and we can do that for whatever activity the person wants to get back to.

The third question is: how are we adding complexity? So we've already asked the question of: what does the person wanna do now, and what does that activity require of them? So now it's like, okay, so once we know what they wanna do and what the activity asks of them, how do we actually add the complexity? Now, this can mean adding more joints or more segments or more load, more speed, more variability of movement. And what guides us is what's happening with the person. What are they feeling? How long is that feeling lasting? What compensation patterns are we seeing and they're noticing?

To highlight this, here is part of a conversation I had with a trainee who was really, really, really keen to see a client progress with load and strength in each and every session. And she was getting caught in the "I have to progress somebody, I have to progress them." I get it. But in this conversation, her idea of progression had become needing to increase load and strength every single session. So I offered her the distinction between progression and complexity, and how complexity opens up more ways to work—meaning it can involve more joints, more segments, different relationships between the parts. It can shift up variability, speed, or the amount of weight that we are actually loading ourselves with. And then when we weave in this idea of what we are seeing and what the person is experiencing, we can take that information to guide which one of those layers of complexity we bring in. Still progressing!

And what guides us, though, is that it's about the person's capacity, capability, how they are moving, and what the activity is asking of them. Again, it's a reason why I love Warrior II, and even extended side angle or reverse warrior, turning into Warrior I and back to Warrior II, moving towards pyramid and then back up again, and maybe—yes—even into revolved triangle. They ask us to move our joints in ways we don't typically move day to day, and we can bring these movements in and help us reveal, interoceptively, proprioceptively, yellow lights and whispers. It's layers of complexity that help us to build upon our ability to pay attention, our ability to see how parts work together—not simply at a singular joint, but as multiple joints. We can work the outer hip, the inner hip, rotators, the relationship to the abdomen; we can see the harmony between all of it. In many ways, it's a little like an orchestra: we can get violins playing really well, the saxophones playing really well, the trumpets playing really well, but ultimately, all of them need to come together. Melody needs to be made amongst them, not simply in the parts. We're looking at what's happening between each of the segments, the relationships to each other, and what's driving the movement.

And this all comes from initially what happened in Model One. So it's not actually complicated. It's no different in many ways to learning a language. You start off simply with language learning, and then as you gain more facility with the simple stuff, then you build into more complexity. It becomes natural.

This leads to our fourth question: How are they moving within the activity of choice?

And let me give you an example after I'd hurt myself last year and I was returning back to cycling. I had hurt myself lifting a heavier weight, and I really kinda hurt myself over the weekend in October last year. It was one of those hurts where I really needed to take Advil or Tylenol through the weekend just to be able to get myself moving around. So I did a good number on myself. And as I worked with the osteopath and as I worked my way back towards fuller movement, I was paying close attention to my abilities of interoception, proprioception, what was happening with my compensation patterns, and then noticing the guarding response that I had, watching what it was doing. And bit by bit, through the month of October and November and into early December, I was ready to get back on my bike.

But what's curious is I could get onto my bike, I could move my legs on the bike, but I couldn't bring my arms or my hands onto the handlebars. I couldn't lean that far forward. Now, I'm in—I'm riding inside, so I had all the support to be able to do this. I was able to start riding upright. And I have a bike desk where I can put my computer, and so I could begin to just inch my way forward onto the bike desk, and then I could start to add more load through my legs, through resistance. And then as I practiced and as I kept tuning in, I was able to move a little further down onto the handlebars, and sometimes I moved between the desk and the handlebars and being upright. I could play around with those positions. It wasn't like, "Oh, I've mastered being on the desk, so now I get down to the handlebars." No, because some days when I woke up—'cause I ride in the morning after I wake up—sometimes when I wake up, it wasn't quite the day to come down onto the handlebars, and other days it was. I simply could tune into my legs and how they were moving relative to the position of my upper body. See, that's the transition. It's noticing how one is moving within their activity of choice and taking all the awareness that they gained in Model One, through the complexity they're adding to Model Two, and really noticing what's going on in their activity. Working interoception, proprioception, yellow lights, a greater fluency of body movement.

Which leads us to the fifth bit: When returning to smaller movement is not failure. Sometimes it's important, as people grow complexity, that every so often they need to move to smaller movement, and it's really important to recognize this isn't failure. Now, sometimes it comes about because people could feel some pain symptoms or louder whispers or louder yellows showing up, and sometimes there is a rehabilitative nature to it. But other times, it can be very, very deliberate. Maybe because there's like really, really light whispers that are saying, "Hey, you know what? There's some foundational stability work that needs to be done here."

Let me highlight this with a story from a trainee. She was describing what she was seeing as she was exploring load with her clients. The load was primarily gravity coming into standing. As people were doing this loaded movement, some were losing the connection of really connecting to their hip. One of her clients said, "You know what? I think it'd be really helpful if I could just go back down to my back and do butterfly again." And this is cool. She had recognized something for herself. So this trainee began doing that with her other clients. They'd explore a loaded movement, then return to the foundational pieces, taking the load out of the equation, reconnecting. This is all really reasonable, right? It's inching our way into greater and greater endurance with the new pattern.

I will sometimes do this at the gym where I might be doing a heavy lift or adding more load to the lift I'm already doing, and then between sets, I'll do a movement that helps reconnect myself. So let's call it as a deadlift. So if I add more load through my deadlift, there might be a compensatory pattern that whispers its way in because I've added more weight. So then I take a pause, and I reconnect between my ribs and my pelvis, or between my foot up through to my hip. Right? I connect into that movement pattern again. So we're loading, but then sometimes we need some added reconnection to facilitate a better integration of that load. So smaller movements can continue to be a part of the work as we build in more integration with complex movement. We are taking the awareness that has grown from Model One and using it as we grow into this next round of elevated skill.

So let's use the following roadmap as a summary:

Name what you want to do now. What would success look like for this activity?

Look at what it requires. What movements, strength, mobility, stability, or coordination does it ask of you or your client?

Where to begin? Consider what components are available—where is the gap? Help get that trained first, and then choose how to add complexity—which joints to add, maybe different relationships between the parts, load, speed, or variability—and be guided by that.

And then notice the response. How are you moving? What's working? What's not working? What happens to the breath, compensatory patterns, yellow lights, or whispers? How long does a change last? Do any of those old symptoms start to whisper back?

And then use that information to choose what comes next. Continuing to build, adjusting what you're asking, or return to a smaller movement to reconnect if needed.

And then onward we go.

So the idea here is we have two clear models. In Model One, success is pain reduction and pain elimination. We begin with the body diagram and listening, getting to know the person, their symptoms, and their foundation of hope, possibility, and doubt. And then, through movement, breath, meditation, and nidra, we help them to grow awareness, clarity, connection, and feedback, and they begin to recognize their patterns, their compensations, their yellow lights and whispers. And through that experience, they trust in themselves, utilizing consistency and paying attention. And as that grows, their pain often reduces.

Then in Model Two, the definition expands. What do they wanna do now? What does that activity ask of them? What can they already do, and where is the gap? Now, there's an assumption here that their pain is clearly reduced, even if eliminated, and they have the understanding of what contributed to it. They have the interoceptive and proprioceptive awareness. They understand the yellow lights of what's contributing to it and what's not—like, that's clear. Because we can take those components and build into more complex movement with more load, more speed, more variability, guided by how and what they're experiencing. Their awareness from Model One comes with them. Their awareness of their yellow lights comes with them. The trust and consistency from Model One comes with them. And if they need to return to a smaller movement to reconnect, then that remains part of it. They haven't graduated from Model One and left it behind. They are using what they learned in Model One to grow the next round of skill.

And for the teacher, this means continuing to see and to listen, being clear about what you're asking, noticing how the person responds, and using that information to choose what comes next. And for the client, it means continuing to learn about yourself as you move toward the activity you really want to do.

So it really is a one-two: getting out of pain, and then moving back to fuller activity. Two different models with a foundation that carries through both. From pain, to possibility, to the rest of your life.

Thank you for being here. I look forward to connecting with you next week.

Now, if this has resonated with you and you wanna take this to the next level as a professional—really, really upleveling and gaining skill mastery with helping your clientele reduce and eliminate pain, and getting back to those things they really wanna do—and you want to integrate the yoga model in with movement, then check out the intensive: **www.functionalsynergy.com/intensive**. I'm running this next one October 24th to 29th. You can join me live online, or you can take it by recording. If you can't make the whole thing, that totally works; we've had plenty of people do it that way and have great success. Check it out: **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**.

There are clear pathways to reducing and eliminating physical pain and getting back to the activities you wanna do, no matter your age. If you're a health professional who wants to make this happen with your own clientele and you want a yoga-based approach, a neuroscience evidence-based approach, then check it out: Therapeutic Yoga Intensive, **functionalsynergy.com/intensive**.