

Ep #25: How to Be Present



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With Your Host

Susi Hately

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Susi: With this episode I want to dig into tools that will help you become more present. Now, the reason I'm teaching this is because when we have greater presence we can be more in tune with the moment that is here now which means we can be more in tune with the client that is in our space which means that we can be internally more slow in a good way so that we can connect on a variety of different levels with our client. Our brain can become more clear and we just choose things more accurately and effectively.

When we're present, we're in a greater state of flow, greater state of connectivity. There's just an ease in the process even when it's challenging. So, when we can build our state and our understanding of presence we can develop such better results and on the other side of the spectrum we can finish our day feeling so much more fulfilled and full of vitality.

Then, how do you actually develop presence? I want to dig into three ideas here and some of these you might actually be asking yourself as I go through them, "How on Earth is this a presence technique?" Because so many people think that developing presence comes from sitting quietly in meditation. That is one way of developing presence. The techniques that I have here are really about you in the moment when you are with your client. You in the moment of connecting with yourself, noticing what you're doing while also noticing them.

Because presence really is not just looking and being with the person at the exclusion of everything else, but rather you're in the moment fully. So you are as in tune with yourself as you are with the other person. Let me tell you, when you develop that state it is absolutely incredible as the practitioner, but also as the client.

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When a client feels heard it's powerful. When a client feels like the information that you're giving them is more than just intellectual mumbo jumbo, that it feels really real, that's powerful. When we can teach a client how to recognize their sentient experience, like they're sensing experience in their body of what it is that they're experiencing that is really powerful. So, let's dig in.

The first of these techniques I call "Eating your own cooking without throwing up." Have you ever asked a client to do something that you're not willing to do? Have you ever asked a client to do something that intellectually you probably think is right but when you've tried it it's not right at all? That's what I'm talking about here. It's getting really clear on what works.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that you only teach the things that work for you. I'm not saying that. I'm talking about this from more of a principle, conceptual standpoint. So, one of my principles is to move in a range that doesn't increase pain. Another one of mine is to reduce compensation. So, I practice those concepts so when I'm asking someone to do those things it comes from a very real lived experience because not only do I have the track record of seeing my clients get better consistently when they follow those principles, I know them to be true on a very visceral level.

Because of my knowingness on so many levels of my own being and seen it work for my clientele it's very easy to teach. On the flip side, my clients can feel it. I've had clients tell me, "I've heard somebody else say the same things that you say, but I can just tell that you do it. It's real for you." So, someone's more willing to listen when they can just tell.

I remember watching an HBO episode years ago, it was *Actor's Studio* and they were interviewing Bruce Willis and somebody asked him what technique he used when he was acting and he sort of guffawed and he said, "It's not about the technique, it's about being authentic in character and when you're not authentic in character the movie will flop."

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Now, the audience won't necessarily say out loud, "Oh, they weren't authentic in character." They just won't like the movie. They'll come up with all sorts of reasons about why the movie doesn't work. Now, shortly after watching that episode I saw a preview for *Gigolo* which I believe was with Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez and it was a preview, I didn't even see the movie, but watching the preview I'm like, "Oh, look at that." You could see it. Again, interestingly enough, the movie flopped.

So, really consider what you're offering and does it really work? Do the principles really work? Do they really work? Are you eating your own cooking and not throwing up? Is your cooking nurturing and nourishing you? Think about it from that principle perspective. The second one is listening. It's so powerful. We all know this, right? Listening is so powerful so much so that in my training programs I don't even have a module called "Take in history." I have "Listen to the story" because it's so important to take that time to just sit there and listen to a client talk about the story, about what led them to the space.

When I work with somebody what they receive from me is a body diagram and I have them draw on the body diagram and I have them tell the story of the body diagram. Now, if they don't have the body diagram then I'll hear the story through Zoom, but in some form or another they're telling me the story. The reason I bring the body diagram up is I don't want to have a clipboard of questions to answer. I want to show them an area that they can color, that they can write on and so when I ask them I say, "So, tell me the story. How did this happen? How did that happen? How did this happen? Tell me about this." They just start and they keep going.

Then, we get to a point where I can say, "So, is there any connection between these things?" They can either tell me yes or they can tell me no. That just gives me more information about whether they feel parts of their body are connected or not connected or issues are connected or not connected. It gives me a much greater understanding of where to start.

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But this idea here of taking that moment and being with them so that they can share in full the pieces that make up the story. Now, sometimes people will say, “But how do you – what happens if they keep talking and talking and talking and talking?” Well, I’ll let them talk, particularly if it’s a first visit, I’ll let them talk. It might be the first time they’ve ever had the time to talk it all out and in truth my experience is that when people are given the space to talk they don’t nearly talk as much as if there’s a resistance to the talking. That’s my world. That’s my experience. So, I just give them the space to talk and then when they’re finished then I can ask the most questions like I mentioned a moment ago. “What are these pieces? How are these pieces? Do you see a connection with these pieces?”

I ask them where they want to start first. What’s the most important to them and if that was to be resolved what would that provide them? Now, I’m able to get a greater understanding of what’s compelling them to be here in the space. What’s compelling them to move forward? What’s their carrot for the outcome that they really want to achieve? It gives me a really good understanding. Listening to all aspects of the story gives me a good understanding of what drives them, their character, their personality, how that’s contributing to the state that they’re in and also how that contributes to helping them get out of that state.

These are all really important, subtle components that you gather when you just fully listen, not just for facts, but for the fullness of who that person is and how that will help them recover and heal which leads to the third component which is this idea of blending the subjective and the objective worlds of information. In my view, yoga therapy enables the teaching of skills and tools to help somebody reduce or eradicate their symptoms. The key here is to teach skills and tools.

One of those skills, because this is yoga we’re talking about, is listening to one’s body. When someone can listen to their body and understand what those sensations are actually saying to them it gives them an incredible amount of information and clarity which, ultimately, is powerful. I’m not sure

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when it all started, but it seems that there is a general understanding that sensations should not be listened to because most clients who come to see me have done a very good job of pushing those sensations away that they're not considered important and yet, in the learning of those sensations and understanding what they're actually communicating they're able to determine if those sensations should be something they should listen to. Meaning they should either pull back or rest or maybe they're indicating that they should push a little bit more.

But without giving them the time and space to even recognize them as important you won't get there. So then, my job then as a yoga therapist is being able to help someone into their own state of presence through the awareness of these sensations and symptoms. By my ability to connect into my own sensations, my own subjective reality I'm able to help teach them how to do that for themselves.

Now, here's what's cool is that we do this through the teaching of the objective reality. So, the subjective, in a sense, is their own personal story of their own sensations. I can't measure someone's sensations, but what I can do is teach them an objective reality of how does your leg bone move in your pelvis? How does your arm bone move in the shoulder socket? I can see if there is gripping or bracing. I can tell if they are breathholding. Those are objective realities that I can also show them simply on Zoom we can see it via the screen. If I'm one-to-one with someone in person in the same space I can show them through a mirror. I could put my hands and touch them and show them, "Here is your arm bone movement in your socket. Here is your leg bone movement in its socket." I can direct them to the objective reality of their ribcage or their breathholding.

Then, as they experience that objective reality, they can then share the sensation or subjective reality of how that objective reality feels. There are a realities that I just used there, but when someone gets the understanding of how their body is moving from this objective state they can correlate it to how their sensations are being experienced, what they are feeling.

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An example of this is I remember working with a client who was doing a side bend and I looked, and I thought, “He looks really awkward.” He was bent over in a really odd way. I could’ve said to him, “You really should straighten up,” but instead what I asked was, “What does that feel like?” He said, “My shoulder is killing me.” I’m like, “Interesting.” Then I said, “Can you now move back up to a place where your shoulder isn’t killing you.” What’s curious is he moved to a place where his shoulder was great and objectively his movement was way better. Then, I could show him how his movement and the movement, the subjective reality of his movement related to his sentient experience, that subjective experience of what he felt in his shoulder.

So, he might not have felt at the same place that I could see the awkwardness of that side bend, but he felt it in the shoulder. It becomes really important in this way so that someone doesn’t have to be able to feel what it is that I see exactly, but it’s important that they feel and then we correlate it to that objective reality. When a client is walking around, when a person is walking around, they’re not – or I don’t want to train them to be in their head all the time figuring out where their body parts should be. There’s too much life to enjoy. There’s too much more our brain could be capable of to have our brains continue to think about where their body parts should be or what they should be doing.

Rather, I want them just to perceive, let their sensations be their guide. Let their sensations be their communication mechanism and they can utilize that knowing the subjective reality and what that correlation is. It becomes really powerful because we’re helping them utilize their awareness to become more present. We’re helping them become their own greatest teacher and that is such a boon for taking ownership of one’s health which just leads to better outcomes.

Three things then to consider around honing your own presence which in turn helps your client hone theirs. The first one being, are you eating your own cooking without throwing up? Take time to listen to the story. Notice

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how you are actually listening. This idea of sensation being communication and blending the quantitative objective experience with the qualitative subjective experience and allowing those to be correlated. Just watch, see what happens as you play with one or all of these concepts.

If this idea really resonates with you and you want to grow your own presence from this yogic standpoint in January I am launching a yoga approach to the biopsychosocial model where we dig into presence, to listening, to blending this idea of the objective and the subjective reality to really enable a person to embody and to feel and to allow that sensation via communication mechanism.

It will help you become that much more present as a practitioner, too, so that you in your own presence naturally enable them to be more present themselves so that you can step into that state of flow more easily, that state of clarity, that magic mind. So you can blend that magic mind with that logical mind and really enjoy the results that you get. If you're interested you can read more at www.functionalsynergy.com/biopsychosocial. I would love to see you there.