

Ep #35: Injury and Illness as Opportunity



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With Your Host

Susi Hatelty

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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.

With this episode I want to dig into human potential and how we can use injury and illness as tools for transformation. You've heard me say it before that healing is possible, that recovery is possible, and that we don't have to put up with coping if we don't want to. And yet I find it so astonishing how many people don't believe this to be true. How many people live with persistent pain because they've been told by a perceived authority that they must.

And yet what I want people to know is that there is a choice here. But for so many they don't even know they have that choice. Every week I work with people who've been told this. That they've been told that they have to live with what they've got. Whether it's pain, whether it's auto immune flair ups, whether it's migraines, I mean you name it. But the reason why or how they have found me is somewhere through the grapevine they've learned about how I simply don't believe that to be true.

Now, let me be clear about something, I'm not curing anything. Never do I say that, never do I imply that. Nor do I want you to think that is what I'm saying here. Not at all. A diagnosis is a diagnosis, a physiological reality is a physiological reality, as is an anatomic reality. How we live with it though, that's my point.

So, my husband case in point. He has psoriasis. When I met him his legs were red as red could be. Itchy, itchy, itchy, itchy, we'd be out in the summer with his shorts on and people would come up to me and say, "Is your husband like okay?" Like they really thought he may have been contagious, they were concerned, right? They didn't really want to be around him.

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So it was really, really red. He was on medication that wasn't working for him. And then one day I asked him, I said, "Then why are you on it?" And he sort of looked at me with a double take of like, "That's actually a really good point. Why am I on it?" And he was on it because he didn't know what else to do.

If this wasn't working I don't know what else not to do or to do, so I'm just going to keep doing it. But then bit by bit as he hung around me things started to shift. And then for a three-week period of time he just experimented with coming off of a whole bunch of different food products and alcohol. And lo and behold in that three-week period of time his skin was the clearest it ever was since his diagnosis. Interesting, isn't it?

Now, it took him a little bit of time from that point to get into the groove of this new way of being because some of those things that he had taken out during that three week experiment he actually really, really liked. But lo and behold, as he practiced and as he noticed what was working and what was not working. As he could more clearly and cleanly feel what was going on inside of him. How he could notice the stress levels that were going on inside of him and other internal and external factors that were contributing to the way that his skin was responding to his life. He was able to recognize the dial, the bandwidth that he had to be able to consume those foods or not.

The point being here that he has a physiological reality called psoriasis. And when he first met me, he really believed that this was what it was going to be for good. And then he started to see that there was a new reality that was possible. Something he hadn't even considered. And bit by bit, step by step, his skin has been clearer, and clearer, and clearer. And surprisingly in this period of time in the pandemic, when stress levels have been a bit higher, food choices have been a little less good, he hasn't had an outbreak at all because he can listen so clearly.

But yet, as I mentioned earlier so many people don't even realize that that is even possible. Because there is this assumption that if something like

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this trigger, like a psoriasis for example, shows up in your life this is what your physiology is. But how we then deal with it is an entirely different ballgame.

Earlier this week I was working with somebody who has a disc protrusion in the lower part of her spine, has a bunch of numbness down a leg. And when we were working together her numbness started to fade. She started to feel lighter and taller. And she thought to herself out loud, “Hey, this is really weird. Why is it that I’m now moving better?” And it took her brain a little bit to kind of figure out that change was actually possible.

One of the things I was sharing with her, which is what I have also shared with my husband over different periods of time, is that we have no idea what is possible inside the tissue of us being human. We have no idea. Yes, there is research and there is evidence out there that suggests that X percentage of people with ABC symptoms will have this expression of the condition. But how do we really know if you or the person you’re working with is in the X percentage or in the other percentage? How do we really know that?

And the truth is, I think, we don’t. What I do know is this. Is that if we can get quieter, and if we can recognize some of what I like to call the correlating factors that are related to the expression of those symptoms. And we can start to intervene and support some of those correlating factors well then, the symptoms don’t come out as much. They’re not as expressed as much. So the physiological and anatomical reality may still be there, the disc protrusion can still be there, the psoriasis can still be there, but how it’s expressed is totally, totally different.

Now, there are a few caveats to this whole process because not everyone is interested in getting quieter. Not everyone is interested in uncovering what the communication is around the symptoms to see the correlating patterns. One reason for that is because it’s just easier to have the diagnosis and work with that. It’s the reality that they know.

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Another reason is that it can sometimes feel very, very difficult to get quiet and to recognize one's own responsibility in working with those symptoms. I said that. One's own responsibility in working with those symptoms. There are a lot of people who do want to eschew that responsibility to someone other than themselves.

The other is that when you've been told by a perceived authority that this is just the way it is, it is difficult to break that belief. So you've got to get to a certain place in your life where you feel so restricted, where you can't tolerate the symptom anymore, that the symptom itself becomes intolerable. And with that there is a little voice inside of you letting you know that change is absolutely possible even if you don't know how that change is going to come about.

Typically speaking, the people who come to see me have tried a lot of things and they've made some sort of gain. So something has helped them along the way. They've had short-term gain and then things come back. Whether it's migraines, whether it's psoriasis flares, whether it's back pain. They do okay and then they have a setback. They do okay, then they have a setback. It's in that setback they're not entirely sure what's contributing to what.

So the process then that I take them through is one where they get to feel their body. They get to explore it in movement. They get to notice their breath and they see how the pieces generally all work together.

And what's really interesting is a concept that I'm now calling how your biomechanics can actually support your mental health. Because when we get real about what our movement actually is, it can be dramatically down regulating. It can be very stress-reducing. It can be very clarifying. Because when we look at how a body moves, the body moves or it doesn't move.

When I ask someone to bring their ankle to their knee, either their pelvis moves or it doesn't move. Or the leg bone moves or it doesn't move. If I ask someone to bring their arms overhead, their arm bone moves in their

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shoulder socket, or it does not. It's pretty obvious if it's moving or if it's not moving. It's pretty binary.

And I can show them, either through if they're one -to-one with me on Zoom I can show them with their camera on their computer what is actually moving or not moving. And they can actually see for themselves what is moving or not moving. They can get clear on the reality of the situation, the facts of the situation. And out of recognizing what the facts are of the situation they then start to notice that they're thinking about those facts. And that's where some of the power lies.

The arm bone may or may not move in the shoulder socket. The leg bone may or may not move in the hip socket. And those are simply facts, they're neutral. But what we think about them, our opinion of the matter, that is interesting. Because one person can say, "Wow, I am like not moving at all." Another person can say about the exact same movement, "Oh my gosh, I had no idea this was my movement. I had no idea my rib cage moved. You mean if I just don't move my rib cage as I move my arms, I will feel better?"

You see the difference there? When someone starts to realize and become clued into what they're thinking is about those facts, it can really open the door to some realizations and some clarity. The biomechanics is the biomechanics. Their interpretation of those biomechanics is very, very fascinating.

With that, what I've noticed is that a lot of my clients tend to be quite driven, quite analytical, very logical processors of information. So when I point things out to them, they're pretty quick to try to figure it out of like how to make this work better. And then what we'll often see is some other bracing patterns somewhere else in their body. And then as I point that out and they recognize that, then they'll do it again somewhere else in an attempt to get it right.

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This is very, very common. And then I get to show them what it is that they're doing. And they get to see, "Oh look, here I go again bracing over here to make this movement happen over here." And then oftentimes in these kind of situations there's this dawning of realization which is, "Oh my gosh, I am like working so hard to get this right." Which then leads to the next realization, "Oh my gosh, this is like what I do in a lot of my life."

Now that's just an example, not all of my clients have that trajectory. But there is often some similar types of trajectory where they start to recognize how the way that they move and how the way they apply better movement is very similar to how they do their life, to how they do themselves. And while that way has worked with them and worked for them for a period of time, it can also get in the way.

Many of my clients have been told by other health care professionals that the way they're going about doing their work or doing their life is contributing to the way that their symptoms are being expressed. So it's not like they haven't heard it before.

I had one client who actually was told by their physician that if they continue to do what they do their job would kill them. When they asked me my opinion on that my response was this, "Well, I mean I can't advise you on that." Is what I said. "But here is one thing I know to be true, is you could leave your job and rest up, and you will find some other problem in the business world to solve. And because you haven't resolved the way you are around what's going on for you at this time, you will likely fall back into the same habitual patterns."

"Whereas now, if you recognize the way that you are doing things and you start to make a shift about the way you're doing things, not only will your symptoms probably get a little bit better, if not a lot better, but how you do your work will also change too. And you'll have a whole lot more energy, enjoy your lifestyle, and do the things you really want to do." And he chose the latter. And in the process of that, changed a huge amount in his world.

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The symptoms changed a huge amount, how he did his work changed a huge amount, and the way that he was in his life changed a huge amount.

But see, the point being is that there are symptoms, and there are the symptoms and how they are expressed, and they are the who of who we are has a role in that kind of expression. And if we are willing to connect into, and recognize, and become aware of all of what is contributing, like us contributing to the expression of these symptoms we can make tremendous, tremendous change.

It's not about making the characteristics of who we are wrong, not at all. It's taking the very best characteristics, that perhaps are working a little against us right now. That they may have been serving us for a period of time but now they are not. And then refining how we utilize them so that we can use our best gifts in the best possible way. It's an up-leveling.

So if we come back to the symptoms again, the symptoms are communication strategy from, I don't know, call it your body, call it your mind, call it your spirit or your soul. Not to tell you that you're broken but to tell you that it's time to shift, that it's time to change. That it's time to up-level. Now some people when they are in the think of the situation, they're like, "Oh my god, the last thing I want to do is up-level, I mean I just want to rest." So then rest. And then as you connect with and recognize the correlating patterns associated with those symptoms and how you are, you'll probably have an opportunity to refine.

As you connect more closely to who it is that you are, you'll have an opportunity to refine. Step by step, bit by bit, you'll make those gains. You'll recognize those symptoms as a tool, as a friend, as a way through. Not something to get rid of. Not something to fix, but something to inform you.

So here are some takeaways for you. Given my background as a kinesiologist, as someone with experience in physiology and anatomy, I tend to start this yoga conversation from the body's perspective. So I'm looking at how someone moves, and how someone breathes, and how

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someone rests, and if they can rest or not. And I take all of that into account. And I start with very factual objective measures.

Most people who come to see me have some sort of physical condition, and they might have another physiological condition to go with it. And many also have mental health scenarios along with it. So we can put all of those into the assessment and into the process. And I start with the body, because the body is very objective.

Like I said earlier, we can see how the leg bone moves in the pelvis, we can see how the arm bone moves in the shoulder socket, I can point out where there's bracing or there's gripping. And with that increased awareness, with that increase of clarity someone can then shift up their movement patterns. And in the act of shifting up their movement patterns they get to see their thought processes about these factual pieces. They get to see their emotional responses. They get to see what it is that they do. They become so clear on all that contributes to what it is that is going on.

And as I mentioned, bit by bit, piece by piece, step by step they start to down regulate their nervous system. They start to breathe better. They start to move better. And lo and behold they start to feel better. And how they step into life becomes a whole lot different.

Now, there's a way for you to experience this, you can join me for my three-month series to really dig into the contributing factors that you are experiencing. Shine the light there and help you to explore your innate human potential.

And if you are a health professional or a yoga teacher and you really want to take this on, I recommend you come and join me at the therapeutic yoga intensive. We've got two this spring in March and in April. Coming up fast. You can read more at therapeuticyogaintensive.com. I look forward to seeing you.

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