

Ep #53: Persistent Pain, Feeling and Beliefs



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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.

With this episode I want to dig into persistent pain, feeling, beliefs, and human potential.

For some people this will be a difficult conversation and very difficult to do. They feel their persistent pain and want to get rid of it. They don't like it, and they want to get back to their life, back to status quo.

For others, they recognize that where the pain is, isn't the problem. And this actually gives them a certain kind of power. They know that more often than not, the actual problem lies under their level of awareness. And if they simply could find someone to help them uncover that which they're unaware of, then they have an opportunity for sustainable gains to evolve.

You see the difference here? One person wants status quo and just get rid of the pain. Where the other sees possibility, evolution, human potential. One wants to solve for the symptom, where the other sees a symptom as an opportunity.

This brings us to the part of the conversation around feeling. Feelings, in my books, can be sensations that we experience in our bodies, or emotions. Both are fundamentally directive. Most people naturally avoid negative sensations and emotions because of how they feel. And most move towards positive emotions and sensations because of how they feel.

It's why so many people shove aside and push aside and wall off negative feelings and emotions. And yet, what's so important is that in the process of recovery, in the process of getting well, in the process of living our true potential, we need to be able to feel.

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If we limit our ability to feel we limit our ability for getting well and for recovery. What's vital to understanding this is that recovery is often not easy. Healing can often suck. It can be hard work. And I realize that one visit to a physio, or a physical therapist, or a yoga therapist, or massage therapist, an osteopath, any one of those healing professionals, including chiropractors and the many other healers and helpers that are out there to support us, one visit to those people can reduce symptoms.

But what we have to understand, part of the issue around persistent pain are neuromuscular patterns that need to be changed. One visit is not going to make that happen. Yes, you will get relief but you need to go through a retraining process. You need to recognize what is contributing to why you needed that relief in the first place.

So you got the relief, but what neuromuscular patterns contributed to that experience that needed the relief. So let me call it stuckness for the lack of a better term. What neuromuscular patterns led to the stuckness, led to the discomfort that needed relief? Because until we resolve for that, until we recognize that cyclical pattern is going to come back.

But here's the thing. It's hard work oftentimes changing up those neuromuscular patterns, addressing those neuromuscular patterns. And it can often be very uncomfortable. And when we can allow for this, the faster people get better.

This is why it is so important to feel rather than to avoid, and to stuff, and to shelve. Ultimately when we do that, we are resisting. And resisting in the form of bracing patterns, of gripping patterns, of compensatory patterns. This can be depleting, fatiguing, exhausting. Yes, you can dull. You can dull all you want, but oftentimes this will lead to a negative net. You will not shift up the neuromuscular patterns that you are so wanting to shift.

But if you can feel the discomfort, if you can feel the uncomfortableness, if you can feel all the things that you really don't want to feel, you gain clarity. You gain a reality of the situation and with that reality and that clarity, you

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can make more significant, more meaningful, more accurate choices for yourself.

So some things to consider with the programs that you have, whether they are movement or breathing programs or stillness practices, is can you be real within these practices? Can you notice what it is that you feel? Can you notice when you go into the to do place of, "Let's just knock off this number of sets and this number of reps, hold it for this number of minutes. I was told to do this program. I'm just going to do this program." It becomes this to do list, like going grocery shopping, running errands.

Can you actually feel the experience of the movement? Of your breathing? Can you be aware of where you brace and grip? Can you be aware of where you compensate? Can you be aware of what you feel?

When I'm working with my clients, I like them to tell me about their feelings and their emotions, which ones are negative and which ones are positive. And I understand and I encourage this qualification of them from a negative and a positive space. Because that qualification of them is information in and of itself for me.

Because in my mind, emotions and feelings of all sorts, they're all good. None of them are negative and positive in the bigger picture. Yes, more working at a ground level place, yes, you can qualify the negative and positive because they're directing us where they want to go. But from a bigger picture, I am just delighted that the person is feeling. Because feeling is a necessary part to healing. And we can't think our way there, we truly have to feel our way there.

We have to have that kinesthetic somatic embodied experience. Feelings are really, really good guides. As I mentioned, they tell us the direction of where we need to go and what we need to do. And in truth, I really can only help facilitate the change to the degree that my client can feel. So the more that you can feel and the more that you can articulate what you're feeling, the better.

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And even if you have trouble articulating it, and you simply say, "I'm having trouble articulating it" is an articulation of that which you can't articulate. And that's a step in the direction.

So sometimes I'll have someone say, "I think it kind of sort of feels like this, but I'm not really sure." And then I'll ask them some more questions about it. I'll ask them is this a negative or a positive feeling? If they were going to change it, what would they want? And then that gives me more and more understanding about what it is that they're experiencing. How it is contributing to what it is that they're experiencing. How it relates to their persistent pain and in the direction that we need to support them.

Discomfort is good, uncomfortableness is good. They provide us direction. We want to be able to feel them. The more that we can feel them and not shove them aside, the better.

I like using the traffic light analogy to explain this. So when clients come to see me, they often are at a red light. They are stopped, there's a restriction in their life and they are tired of that restriction. They are tired of the occasional cyclical pain. They are tired of feeling the way that they're feeling.

So then I start to move them in a variety of different ways to discover what the yellow lights are. Because the yellow lights let us know that the red is coming. The yellow lights are akin to the whispers that let us know the screams are coming.

The more yellow lights that I can help someone become aware of, the better. Because the more fuel that they have, the more understanding, the more variability and the more understanding that they have, the more nuance that they have gives them the opportunity to make better choices for why that pain is arising.

It gets to a point where the person stops feeling red so much, because they're getting clearer and clearer and clearer on the yellows that lead to

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red. So then they start to operate more of their life in yellow. And yellow is like the sun, it is awesome.

Living in yellow is terrific. Because before, yellow is what people blew by. And then they got to red because the yellow wasn't loud enough for them to stop. It was a little nudge here, a little niggle there, but no really big deal. They could still move, they could still get on with their stuff. But then they got to red.

And now that they're living in the world of yellow, they are living in the world of nuance, living in the world of subtlety. They're living in the world of recognizing when that yellow starts to become a little more stale, if we think about it from a traffic light. Or from a dimmer switch perspective, that yellow becomes really bright or moves towards more orange, then they know that red is coming. So then they can intervene. But now they're intervening at a place that is way more down regulated from a nervous system perspective, way more relaxed, way more safe, way more connected.

Then they get to a place where they can start to perceive the green. And I often don't teach someone to hone in on green too hard because green can often be perceived as something static, as a place to get to. And that's not the purpose.

The purpose is to understand that all of this is very dynamic, moving, changing, based on our activities, our life and just stuff. So to get to green is not the goal. The place to play is between yellow and green. There are times when we are still humans that we are going to move away from the negative emotion and sensation and towards the positive emotion and sensation. So even if we're not feeling anything, and that might give us the perception of green, it's not actually what's happening because we are still human.

Which is why I like to have people just recognize when they're in the space between yellow and green. And that helps them stay tuned and attentive and aware of and focused on what these little whispers are that might be

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leading toward red. And so then when they can play there, they get more subtlety, more texture, more nuance, more understanding.

And then those yellows become quieter and quieter and quieter. To the point where, and this might sound strange, that their yellows become their new red. But not in a bad way, more in the way of like, “Oh, now I can recognize how my life feels here. I wonder if I get more quiet on the inside what else I'll discover.”

And then they start to recognize more quieter yellows than even before. Now they're starting to work at even a quieter awareness level. Now that original red they came into seeing before is far, far, far in the distance and they're able to play with those nuances of feeling. The feelings that they tend to move away from, the feelings that they tend to move toward.

But now they've got a much better understanding of noticing their tendencies of when they move away and when they move toward. They have much better understanding of their tendencies for when to shove aside, when they don't want to feel. They recognize the bandwidth and what contributes to them doing that or not doing that. It becomes ultimately a super powerful place to be.

In the end, the aim of what I'm hoping to impart here is that in the times of persistent pain, there is a place where you can experience. One that is a rich in awareness and of understanding that where the pain is, isn't the problem. And that in fact is what gives you power. That knowing that where the actual problem is often lies under the level of awareness. And simply getting the help that you need to support that uncovering of the awareness is often what is required.

If what I'm saying here resonates with you, I have two options for you. We are in the middle of registering for our new program, Healing and Revealing Human Potential. Where this is a process of sacred meeting science. Logic meeting intuition. Where I walk you through my process that I work with with my own clientele and bolster up with the neuroscience. We bring in

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two amazing guest teachers, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroscientist as well as Deb Dana, who's done a lot of work with polyvagal theory. And together there is an amazing process of healing and revealing.

You can read more about this program at functionalsynergy.com/synergy. If you would like a more intimate experience or you want to work one on one with me, then email us at health@functionalsynergy.com. We have spots open for our three month program where I work with you one on one and guide you through the process to help you uncover, become aware of the reality that is yours. You can email us at health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking forward to working with you.