

Ep #55: Kintsugi and The Art of Repair



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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 touch upon the Japanese concept of Kintsugi and how it relates to the process of recovery and healing and revealing your human potential.

Kintsugi is the art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. The word itself is a combination of two Japanese words kin, which means golden, and tsugi, meaning joinery or repair.

The idea with Kintsugi, or golden joinery, is to not disguise the damage, but to make something beautiful and artful out of it. To highlight the damage, not to hide it. To recognize that in the damage there is wisdom and beauty. And when we care for that damage in a tender, vulnerable, and impactful way with purpose, and deliberateness, and with a delicate touch, that the wisdom and beauty really show itself.

So how does this relate to the process of getting well again? When I spanned the years of working with my clients and trainees, and I watch the process of recovery and healing a number of key patterns emerge. The first is that for healing to truly occur, transformation must also occur.

And the second is that in the process of transformation, the how of the process comes from a relationship with myself and the client. Much like the artisan and the damaged pottery. Part of my job is to help my client become their own very best artisan.

So yes, I'm helping them move better. I'm helping them breathe better. I'm helping them bring their pieces back together. But in that process, I'm also teaching them how to tend to themselves. I love that word, tend. Think tenderly or tenderness.

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I'm teaching them how to tend to themselves with their own lacquer to mend their own breaks. It's a beautiful process, which I realize is so different than what is out there in the western culture within which I live. We're so often I see people seeking a fix and wanting to get back to a status quo. Perhaps even longing for what used to be.

And in the desire to just get well again the focus can be simply just remove the damage already. Of wanting the bad times to give way to the good times, be more willing to push away and repress rather than to reconnect and reengage. This idea of embracing wounds, I realize is so different. And yet I also believe it resonates with so many.

When I work with my clients, I like to start off by telling them that healing is possible. That their disc protrusion, the facet joint deterioration, the degeneration that has arisen from osteoarthritis, yes, those are structural changes that have arisen. And they are structural changes. They do not have to be limitations.

A lot of those times those structural changes also come with compensations. And those compensations in how they breathe, or move their shoulders, or overuse their quadratus lumborum, or underutilize their glutes, those compensations can change.

So when I help them move better, or breathe better, or absorb and dissipate load better, their forces moving through their body, they start to change. And the area of structural deterioration doesn't impact their movement as much, if at all.

It's a great example of not getting rid of the damage, but rather utilizing the damage as an opportunity to grow. To tune in. To grow awareness. To improve function so that better movement arises. The up leveling of our skill, the up leveling of the status quo.

The same thing occurs, I find, with clients who are burned out. Most of the time they don't arrive to my Zoom room with that diagnosis. Rather, they

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come with back pain, or trouble sleeping, or concentrating. And they simply want to get rid of those things so they can get back to work already.

And then in the process of recovery they become aware of something they didn't even realize they were doing. They become aware of hiding a vulnerability which they think is a weakness, or they thought was a weakness. Something to not expose to the light of day. And yet as they tap into that vulnerability, they realize it is actually the key to getting well. And the avoidance of it was what was exhausting them.

So you can see here that for someone in a cycle of burnout, that it's so easy to endure and stay there by avoiding the very thing that will actually shift the cycle. That by highlighting it they can change the cycle of enduring, of white knuckling, and of needless suffering.

I get it. I get that we're in a culture that doesn't tend to think this way. That we're in a culture that either wants to hide what are perceived to be flaws and vulnerabilities and to show up as our polished version of ourselves.

And what I'm offering is more tenderness, more art, more poetry to this process of recovery and healing. Rather than hiding or contracting around the damage, to embrace the damage to enable the growth into something beautiful. And through our cracks, letting our light shine in a whole new way.

So let's look at how to hear. I want you to imagine or to consider that the damage is what I like to call red lights. It's the body or our system getting very loud or screaming at us for attention. And if we apply the principles of the Kintsugi these enable you to discover your whispers or your yellow lights.

As you move inside this realm of the whisper, as you quiet your compensations. As you relearn new movement patterns. As you reformat and retrain these new patterns. As you improve your coordination, your

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control. As you improve the communication between your brain and your body. That is all the pouring of lacquer. Of mixing the gold.

This is a process that is not about coping or finding yoga modifications or workarounds. It is embracing what is and reformatting. Of pouring in the lacquer to bring about a new art form. Of listening to what the damage is asking of you.

What is the greater force asking of you? What is this opportunity for evolution of growth? What is the now version of you asking to be expressed? Here are four bullet points to consider.

Recognize that the recovery process really is an inside job. And that yes, working with a health or a medical professional might be necessary for any number of reasons. And to recognize that their job, as brilliant, perhaps as genius as they are, is not to fix you. But rather to inform, to advise.

That ultimately you are the one in your body. You are the one in your system. That you have the inner authority. I know there are times when you're troubleshooting and you're getting frustrated and you do not know the answer. And you want to offload that responsibility to some other expert.

But the reality is that I've seen over the years of working with my clients, of training my professional trainees, that when I can help them to step away from this idea of seeking the answer outside of them. But rather to consider the barriers they have, to recognize that the answer sits inside of them.

Liken it to that Rumi poem. Your task is not to seek for love, but to merely seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. That now with that in mind, you can take the advice from the health or the medical professional.

And you can bring that into your own system, into your own intuition, into your own ability to sift through what is right for you. What is your right next

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step? Understanding that as humans we all have messy at times. And at times we all have experiences on the spectrum of emotion, from anger, to fear, to joy, and to pleasure.

And that because there is damage, it doesn't mean that there's something that's inherently broken. But rather, there's an opportunity to grow. There's an opportunity to evolve. There's an opportunity to test the limits of what it is to be human. To have this expression fully, to allow that light to shine through.

Kintsugi, the art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. Golden joinery, not designed to disguise the damage, but to make it something beautiful and artful. To highlight it, to not hide it. To recognize that in the damage there is wisdom and beauty and how we care for that damage in a tender, vulnerable, and impactful way with purpose and deliberateness. That's when the wisdom and beauty really show itself.

If this resonates with you, there are two ways that you can then take the next step. The first is you can join me for a series of private sessions, my three month series. And you can contact us at health@functionalsynergy.com to bring out and bring forth the Kintsugi for you.

Or if you would like a group process there is Healing and Revealing Human Potential. And you can find that at www.functionalsynergy.com/synergy or email us directly at health@functionalsynergy.com. Have a great time exploring.