

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hately

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hately

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

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 share a story that I had with a client of mine finishing up her three month one to one series. And she looked at me on the last session, and she was a bit gobsmacked about where she had arrived given what she had come into the three month series with.

And I said to her, I said, "You're not the first and you're part of a community of people who often have this way of being, this state. Because they can't believe where they have come to, they can't believe the progress they have made. Particularly because none of it feels very logical." And we had a good chuckle. And for the first part of our session, we just really hashed that out. And it's things that I share a lot.

And I wanted to spend some time in this episode highlighting the key components that I shared with her. And why it was that she got better, from my perspective anyway. And why, although it didn't feel very logical, and it felt more mystical to her, that there was a very logical way that it went about.

So I want to share these three things with you to support you wherever you're at in your healing process. And if you find that how I'm speaking really resonates with you, then send me an email at health@functionalsynergy.com and we can set you up for this three month series that I do with people.

And really what it is, is it's an opportunity to approach your recovery and healing process in a way that might be different than what you've experienced in a traditional medical process. Where I'm working with all of you and I'm helping you really become aware of what's contributing to what's going on.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hately

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

It's a very collaborative process with other treatment providers that you're working with. And I find that those people who are working with massage, or chiro, or treatment processes like chemotherapy or radiation, it can really blend very nicely because it's taking the very, very best of what you know about your own body and your own being, and just accentuating it. And it can be very, very powerful.

So if it resonates with you, then do send us an email at health@functionalsynergy.com and we can get you set up.

So on to some of these key things that I was sharing with my client this week. Before I get into it, let me just give a little bit of a framework for where she was and then where she is now.

So at the beginning she had a lot of tension and a lot of pain. She's the mom to a little one and there was a lot of fatigue and depletion. Through the time together she found a lot of peace. She actually would describe her range of motion and her strengthening as peaceful. Meaning when she moved in a peace range of motion, her pain went down. I know that sounds a little bit odd, but I'll explain more as we go.

She is now able, what she couldn't really do much of, she's now able to do jumping jacks, she's able to run in place. And she now can see the possibility of her being able to go for a run. So that's a next piece that she'll be working on.

So these three things that contributed to her from going to a place where she had a whole ton of pain to a place where not only is her pain eradicated, but she's got a lot more inner peace and she's able to do more loaded activities. How did she get here? Well, let's speak about three key things.

The first is load, L-O-A-D. In my mind, a lot of what I do is really about how we absorb and dissipate load. So this relates to both our biomechanics and how we absorb and dissipate the load that we interact with day to day.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelty

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

So I want you to think about standing on a scale, for example, and there's a number that is read on the scale. That number is a reflection of your body weight and gravity. And if you were to move your body and kind of move around or jump on it, that number would go up. So if you were to hold a child in your arms and do that, then that's more load and the number is going to go higher as well.

So we want to be able to move and dissipate and transfer that load, absorb that load really well in our structure. So we want to have an integrity or an infrastructure internally that can do that. When we compensate, we start to utilize muscle groups to do a task that they aren't designed to do. We see this a lot with everybody.

We all compensate, the trick is, though, is that when we are in pain, what I find is that when people can reduce their compensation, their pain goes way, way down. And if we don't have pain, when we can reduce our compensation I find our function goes up in an astonishing way, our efficiency of movement goes up. And we can move about with a lot more ease.

The thing is, is we don't tend to address our compensation patterns when we don't have pain, because there often isn't a compelling reason to do so. Which is why you'll hear me talk more about reducing compensations when people have pain, because that's typically why someone comes to see me.

But what's interesting, the people who I continue to work with, like those who are wanting to become more effective in the activity that they're doing, or I've got people who are competitive in the sports that they're pursuing, they're wanting to gain more efficiency. They're wanting to gain better strength. They're wanting to gain a better ability to do the work that they do. And we can do that by improving their compensatory patterning.

The other thing about load that is interesting is that it's not only physical load, but I find that our body and mind move load, mental load, through our system in a very similar way as physical load. So as people become more

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelly

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

aware of the compensatory patterns with physical load, they also see compensatory patterns with mental and spiritual load and emotional load.

So it all becomes really interesting to explore. And when I can start the process by working with someone's body, they then start to see the relationships themselves to their mind, to their brain, to their spirit, and they can apply it there as well. So then they can just become more clear as to when they compensate.

So a big thing we did with this client is over that course of time, like all my clients, I help them become aware of how they move. I help them become aware of where they compensated. I help them reduce that compensation. And when they reduce that compensation, then the muscles that didn't have to be involved, stop being involved. And the muscles that were meant to be involved, now became more involved.

So not only did they reduce the tension of the patterns that weren't necessary for the movement they were doing, they were able to gain strength with the muscle structures that were. That's why I'm not a huge fan of just getting someone stronger.

Like someone will come to me often and say, "I'm in pain, I need to get stronger." And I get what they're saying, I get the feeling of weakness. And what I have found is that people who go after just getting stronger, they're strengthening off of or strengthening on top of compensatory strategy. So it's like building strength on top of tension, it's building strength on top of a house of cards. At some point it's going to fall apart.

So I want to help someone improve the patterning that they have so that the strength naturally grows. And what I mean by naturally grows is this, I had a client of mine, it was a fellow who was really surprised at why he was getting more toned and just stronger when we were doing these small movements. And I said, "Because now the muscles that are meant to be doing them are doing them." So because there's better efficiency, less inefficiency, they're just stronger.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelly

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

So it really sort of brings this whole idea of efficiency in our movement, efficiency in our training, the greater awareness we have of how we move, the less compensation that we use, the stronger we become. And it's much more sustainable.

And what's also curious is that because now the body parts are doing what they're meant to be doing, there's less tension. I find there's a correlation to the nervous system settling down a lot more clearly because things are just better connected. And the neuromuscular patterning, which is what we're really talking about here, it's better improved so there's better communication between their brain and their body.

So the nervous system tends to be less wired, less fired up, less withered away. There's a better ability to dissipate that load. And so I described to this client of mine who I've just referred to, we just finished up her series, that this is what you're now able to do, you've got better ability to dissipate load.

That's why you are better able to do the jumping jacks. That's why you're better able to run in place. That's why you can now foresee yourself in the not too distant future of being able to run. You just need to now take on this practice of running with the same mindset that you were able to get yourself out of pain.

I like to think of biomechanics as being just awesome because how objective it is. When I'm watching someone move, their arm bone moves in their shoulder joint or it doesn't. Their leg bone moves in the hip socket or it doesn't. It's something we both can see clearly. It's a very factual way of looking at one's movement.

And what becomes interesting is the person's views on that is what becomes highlighting. Which when we initially worked together, she was able, like many of my clients, was able to see like, "Oh my god, I really move like crap." That's an opinion about the way she moved.

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

Over time as she became more confident and clear about what was going on she could just sort of see, “Oh, look, isn't that interesting? This is now my body is doing that makes sense, given what I did over the weekend.” Or this makes sense given what happened last night. This makes sense.

So there's less fear about a compensatory patterning. There's less fear about, “Oh my god, I'm never going to get better.” It just becomes a reality like, “Oh, okay, yeah. All right, I see this, and I know what I now need to do to support my body to move better.”

So it's really lovely to be able to show someone the reality of the way they move and for them to gain that awareness. To not feel a victim to it, to not feel like, “Oh, well, I guess this happens when you age” because those are not true. That no matter your age, you can actually improve. Because no matter your age your tissue can change. No matter your age your efficiency of movement can happen. Age doesn't matter. Really, it's just about improving the way that you move so that compensatory pattern can quiet down.

And with that, which is the second one, is she was able to take ownership because she had the reality and the clarity of what was contributing to why she was feeling what she was feeling. She was able to see when her brain kind of got in there, her thinking and her opinions got in there about the facts of her biomechanics. And she was able to discern between the two. And by doing that, she was able to take ownership.

And that discernment is really, really interesting. When you can bear witness to yourself in the process, it's like you're becoming your own best teacher. You can be more clear and intervene for your own self, and then measure what's working and not working. And nurture that which is working, and then improve or quiet that which is not working.

So then there's this realization that you've got the power. So when she would come back to me for her sessions, she'd say, “Okay, this is what I discovered. This is what I learned.” Rather than her coming back kind of

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelty

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

like, “Well, now what am I supposed to do?” As if to look at me as being the one who had the answers.

And granted, I do have lots of answers. And granted, I do have lots of experience. But her being able to bring her own experience to the table, we were really able to collaborate well to move her forward. So it wasn't as if she was coming to me to get fixed. She was coming to me to learn and to gain clarity so that she could ultimately intervene and then really trust that neuromuscular feedback that was being shared with her through her body.

So now it wasn't needing to get her body back on board, now it wasn't so much fighting with the symptoms. It was recognizing that her symptoms had something to say. There was a sensation that was guiding her to let her know when was too much, when was too little, when she needed to go a little bit more, when she needed to back off. She was able to grow her stamina and the sustainability because she had that clarity of the reality of what was so.

And I find where people can sometimes get stuck is they can fight with reality. And or they can believe that their opinions are actually fact when opinions merely are just not, they're just opinions, right? But so often all of us as human beings can get caught up in that cycle of yet we know they're opinions but we state them like their facts. And that can really hamper ourselves in our healing process.

And when we can get clarity on what it is that we're actually doing and see it for what it is, it can be really powerful, that ownership. You get the ability to give yourself the relief that you need. And then you retrain those neuromuscular patterns to take it to the next level.

A third piece of this, in which blends into the load, into the ownership is her naming the experience. So she came up with the word peace. I remember it very distinctly. There was one moment she was lying on her side and I used something called a felt pad to help facilitate a side bend in a certain

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

area of her body. And she was coming up out of it and she's like, "Oh, god, that's not feeling good."

So I said, "Don't come up quite yet, just lie there for a moment." Then she started to feel better. And I asked her, "Okay, that feeling better feeling, what does that feel like?" And she said, "It feels like peace." And I said, "Okay, so now when you get up, I want you to move in your peace range of motion."

And then as she did, she moved and it was not a problem at all. So there was a distinction she got to see when she moved in a peace range of motion and when she moved in a range of motion that wasn't a peace. And she didn't name the other, but she could feel it.

So then she just could discern it and work with that nuance of it. And that was really the thing that was her thing that got her over the hump. That was the thing she could really tap into from an awareness perspective, of being able to listen to her body as a barometer to let her know, "Oh, you're not in peace right now. Do this thing in peace." And when she did, her pain went down more and more and more and more consistently. And that became the new habitual pattern that she could grow.

It's interesting, because so much of what I've learned over the, gosh, almost 30 years that I've been working with people is that oftentimes there is not actual tissue damage associated with pain. And what's so curious is that science is really showing this to be true, is that pain is interpreted in our brain. Now, there are times, yes, there's tissue damage. But there's an inordinate amount of time where there is not tissue damage.

But here's where I think things go sideways for people who share this, is that sometimes they'll say, "Well, there's no tissue damage so there's nothing wrong. So your pain is really all in your head." Some people are saying that because we interpret pain in the brain. But that statement can be interpreted like it's all in your head. When the reality that I find is there might not be anything structurally wrong, but there is something "wrong."

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hately

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

There's something in our system, our system, our overall mind, body, spiritual system that is saying there's something wrong, meaning there's something up. There's something that's not quite aligned or integral or something. So pain can be a messenger.

And in her case, she was able to tap into this opportunity for peace. And when she moved within peace the pain wasn't there. And she was able to start to listen to more of the whispers that led to her moving in a range that wasn't in peace.

So then she was able to build the habit of being in peace, the neuromuscular habit of being in peace, of moving in peace, of standing in peace, of eating in peace. And then more peace existed and less pain was present.

So there's a huge habitual patterning, neuromuscular patterning that can occur that can really shift up the way we experience pain. And we don't need to make up other thoughts to get us out of it, we can simply experience our body and have our body be the guidance.

So with this episode, what I shared here was these three key things for my client, which I see over and over and over again with all my clients. Which is load and understanding load. Understanding why biomechanics is so awesome. Ownership, taking ownership. And then with that really naming, naming it using the client's words and not mine.

When those things come together, some really powerful healing processes can occur. Change can happen, that's the bottom line. Tissue can change. It does not matter your age, tissue can change. You can have a different experience in your body and your mind.

As I mentioned earlier, if this has resonated with you and you would like to connect with me for a three months series, you can email us at health@functionalsynergy.com. I see a handful of people at a time so I can really pay close, close attention to you. I would love to work with you over a

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelty

Ep #65: Pain as a Messenger

three month window of time. Give us a shout. I look forward to talking with you.