

Ep #90: The Evolution of the Yoga Therapist



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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.

Really quick before I get into this episode I want to make a significant announcement that we are hiring at Functional Synergy. We are specifically looking for someone with proven expertise in YouTube management as well as social media management.

So if you fit the bill, you love what we're talking about, we would love to talk with you. We have our job description and outcomes and all of that awesome stuff so that you know exactly what success looks like. And if you would love to be part of our team send us a note to health@functionalsynergy.com.

With this episode I want to share something that I've only recently been really able to articulate. Given the years that I have been training yoga therapists, given the years that I have been working in the arena of rehabilitation utilizing yoga as my primary modality. And seeing yoga therapists being trained and being able to have a keen eye for those who are really good, and then those who are growing, and those who are struggling.

So with this episode I want to share some of the insights. I actually posted this document on our Slack boards for our certification program just last week. And it's been a really interesting tool for people's brains to really harness where they're at and then how they can move forward and grow.

Because the reality is, at least through the certification program that I run, there's an evolution of your thinking, there's an evolution of your being, there's an evolution of how you are with your clients. Which is really what puts in a lot of fuel towards growing a client base of really seeing the results that you're getting and gaining consistency with what it is that you're doing. So that when people graduate, they have solid client bases and they feel really confident in what it is that they're doing.

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So before I get into that list, I just want to mention if you are interested in our certification program, we are taking applications for it right now. Our first module begins, we have one in March, and we have another module one in April. And then the remainder of the program, for those of you who want to go on starts in June.

And it's a tremendous journey towards growing a client base, getting consistent results, and growing yourself out of pain. So if you're interested, send us a note to health@functionalsynergy.com and we can give you all the goods.

So to get into these three phases that I've organized the data over the number of years of training teachers and just seeing other teachers out there. And this actually pertains to a lot of health professionals I find too, physical therapists, chiropractors, physicians that you can really see those who are super at their craft and those who are new or struggling or growing, the distinctions are really, really clear. So here are a few points that might be interesting.

So I call this first phase, the pre-synergy phase where so many trainees start. And they find that the technical work of biomechanics, of anatomy, of seeing movement, it's just really stressful. It's hard, it's confusing, and there's often a mysteriousness to it. And what I mean by that is they've already started to tap into that anatomy and biomechanics are not the answer all of the time.

They've tried a number of templates, they've learned a bunch about how the body moves. And yet it either hasn't worked for them or it hasn't worked for a friend or a colleague. So they recognize that just knowing the anatomy or the biomechanics is not the way in. It's part of the answer, but it's not the whole answer. And so there's this mysteriousness and confusion of what to do next.

Because of this, there's also a lot of second guessing, there's a lot of doubt. There's a looking for the right answer and hoping and praying that whatever they do is going to work. It's easy to get wrapped up into this

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notion of a right or a wrong way of doing things and like the right application of yoga therapy, the wrong application of yoga therapy. Being like so sure of what contraindications are and being really prepared before a client comes around like what do I do with this person who has this condition?

There's an obsession with finding the what, the why, and the how. And there's a looking out around them. There's a lot of internet searching and social scrolling, finding the thing that's the thing that's going to get them to the place where they think they need to get to.

There is a tendency to want to define yoga therapy because there is a belief that if they can just explain what yoga therapy is, that will get all the clients that they want. But that's actually not the case. Trying to explain yoga therapy is not what's going to bring in more people. People don't come to a practitioner because of the yoga therapy piece, not a lot anyway.

So then what begins to happen is as the person practices and as they start to gain more awareness, as they start to learn the concepts that I teach, they start to move into the second phase. Which is really them growing awareness, and clarity, and connection, and courage, right? And they start to get some traction.

Already, they've had clients who have gotten out of pain. It's less of a mystery about why they've gotten out of pain. So the first few times, it's like, "Woo-hoo, I got someone out of pain!" And they're super excited, which is great because that's the first couple of times getting under their belt.

But then they get like five people, and then there's six people. And then they've got a client list of about 10 people or 11 people who have successfully reduced or eradicated pain. And there's less of a mystery as to why this has happened.

They're gaining more understanding about what they're doing to contribute to the scenario. And they are really clear on how their client is contributing to the scenario. They're getting a really clear sense of what the healing relationship really is all about and they recognize that they have influence

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and impact. But it's really distinct from being responsible for what happens with the client.

No longer is there a right or a wrong, just as we learn in a variety of different ways that any stimulus can be someone's poison or someone's medicine, the same person even. And within a population of people with the same condition some things work really well for some people, and some things work really well for others.

And there's a greater clarity as to what might be the so-called poison and what would be the so-called medicine. It's what is needed at that moment and there's a greater clarity and accuracy with getting the correct stimulus at the time.

And what's important about getting more accurate with what you're choosing is that you are looking at the data, you're looking at the results for the feedback and direction. So it's not trying to memorize a whole bunch of exercises in the rolodex in the head, it's that you're really seeing how the stimulus impacts and how it changes what's going on in someone's body and mind.

There's a recognition that this reduction of pain really is about a re-connection. A re-connection of the body parts, a re-connection to brain and body, a greater connection of feeling force and the way that loads move through a body. There's a different way of how those loads are being dissipated, absorbed, transferred.

And the work that they're doing as a practitioner is a lot less effortful. And they're noticing that they're a whole lot more creative and willing to experiment within the realities of the results that are being gotten. It's not just experimenting for the sake of experimenting. It's not just throwing something against the wall. But there's a process through which they are going and that they're making decisions and that they're working with the client and taking in the dialogue that's happening between them and their client.

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They're starting to really, really see that, yes, anatomy and biomechanics matter and it's only part of the story. That helping someone really drop into their body to really embody the process is vital. They're recognizing that sometimes, yes, knowledge, and understanding research, and being able to explain that to a client, giving the client knowledge can sometimes quiet the mind so that the person can settle into their body. Like it creates that sense of safety.

But there's, again, only so far intellectual knowledge will take someone. At some point, we've got to help them drop into their body. And understanding the tools that enable a person to do that or to have that happen. As this is all occurring, simultaneously with this there's a lot more kindness that the yoga therapist has for themselves.

There's a lot more compassion, that when they've made a mistake, maybe didn't give a cue that really landed well, or they did choose something maybe like a stimulus, like as an exercise or a technique didn't work. Maybe the pain levels went up for their client. There's less kind of like, "Oh, I made a mistake." There's more like, "Oh, all right, that didn't work. What about it didn't work? What result here is happening? How can I make this better? How can I support this person?"

There's a responsibility and there's not as much of a riled up-ness. The nervous system is a lot more calm, even when there's a boo boo that was made in terms of what was decided. But they recognize they're making the decisions of how they're working with their client in their very, very best brain with all of their heart.

They're utilizing their intuition and sometimes they make mistakes, right, because of the assumptions that they make. But they're getting clearer and clearer and clearer on what's impacting those assumptions so they make better and better choices. So then with that, obviously, when they're in this space, their client roster is growing. And there's just this greater sense of quiet and calmness about what it is that they're doing.

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Now, before I get into phase three, a lot of my trainees who are in certification, this is where they come to in about a month or two when they're in the program. Like there's this real realization of all of these pieces coming together. And they're able to settle into their own bodies.

And we like to say in our certification program that we can only take people as deep as we've taken ourselves. Because when they can have that for themselves, it's just a lot easier for them to have that with their clients. I'd even say that it's not even a lot easier, it's like a non-negotiable. When you have that for yourself, it just arises for your other person.

So then what begins to happen when they get to phase three, which I call functional synergy, which is entirely on purpose and deliberate given the name of my company, Functional Synergy. It really is the blending of so many factors that make magic happen. And things really, really take off. And there's real enjoyment on becoming clearer and clearer with oneself. And the clarity becomes almost calming.

The relationship that one has with their client truly is a power with versus the typical medical model relationship which is power over. They really understand what healing is and how it's an ever evolving process of deeper love, connection, awareness, and feedback. That they only are focusing in on results. They are a data hound, they love results and they know that they can tweak them toward the goals they want for the outcomes their client wants.

They're seeing this relationship of how this lands in their body, in their businesses, and in their lives. And while I didn't mention this in the earlier phases, because it's more jargon-y, within my own company I talk a lot about whispers and yellow lights. And there's a well-known phrase that's not mine, which is listen to your body when it whispers and you won't have to hear the body when it screams.

And as people get into this phase three of functional synergy, they're listening to some very, very quiet whispers. They can tune into their bodies and their minds at a very, very deep, nuanced level. And they become

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excited about becoming even more nuanced, right? And they can tune in more clearly, more refined.

They start to really come into a space of like the traumas and the wounds that they've had over the course of their life. They're not making as many decisions from those spaces, which can be kind of like a defensive type of process. But rather, they're really stepping into a place of love and a place of power. A place where they really honor themselves. And their ability from that space to see movement patterns is amazing.

They see compensation. They hear what's being said and not being said. They see the layers of their people, of their clients, they can see the context a lot more clearly. They see less of what's wrong and they see more of the whole being. And a lot of times in the pain science world they talk about well, you know, people are complex, pain is complex. And they now see that as not a problem.

They love the complexity of the human. And because they're so quiet inside, they're able to see where the best place is to work with with the client. So the complexity of being human is not a bad thing, it actually enables them to choose more wisely and more accurately.

They love results. The confidence that they have gained enables for more courage, more clarity. They're no longer mystified about why they get the results they do. Like it's just really, really clear as to why people are coming, that they're actually really good at what they do. They know it.

And they themselves have really dropped into their own bodies. And they are a powerful example of what's possible. They eat their own cooking, and they're not throwing up. And even when life gets hard, they still love themselves through all of it.

So that's a synopsis of some of what I wrote up for our certification groups of these phases that I see people moving through sort of pre-synergy, and then the awareness, connection, clarity, courage phase. And then the

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functional synergy phase where it really all comes together. And this is what happens through our certification program.

So if this is something that is of interest to you, if you really want to move through this and become really good at being a yoga therapist, growing a client base, or just really tuning into your brilliance and working with someone, that would be me, who is so amazing. To speak, my genius is I'm really amazing at helping people see their talent and honing their talent, and really allowing the uniqueness of your voice to come through and to come up and out. Oh yeah, I'd be delighted to work with you.

And we are, we're taking applications right now. We have module one beginning in March. We have a second group starting in April because we take module one in a very small group access way. And then if you want to continue on with us, then you could start again in June for module three. Man, I would love to work with you if this is resonating for you and your kind of heart is going, "Yeah, but I'm sort of scared." That's exactly who we want to work with, who I want to work with, who my team wants to work with.

So what I recommend you do is to email us at health@functionalsynergy.com or send us a DM on any of the social platforms. We would love, love, love, love, love to talk with you and share more of the information that we have so that you can make the best decision for you. You have a great time exploring, looking forward to chatting.