

Ep #115: Being Curious – A Yoga Nidra “Inspired” Practice



Full Episode Transcript

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.

Welcome and welcome back. With this episode I want to bring together the concepts that I've spoken about in the past few episodes around being curious about what's going on in your body and considerations for paying attention to your thinking, and paying attention to your feeling, and noticing sensation.

And really recognizing that this process isn't one about getting your body back on board. But it's really paying attention to the whispers and listening to those whispers. And as you listen and gain clarity of what those whispers are, you can intervene much more successfully and not have to hear your body scream.

Your body has been giving indications all along and we are a culture, or in many cultures, because this podcast goes across the globe. Our cultures of those who listen to this podcast are ones that have not honored the body for decades and decades. And we've really been cognitively based. Logic supersedes somatic intelligence.

And what I'm suggesting and what I've seen over the past 30 years of working with people is that we must get in touch with the language of our body, bring it up into our cognitive processing in order to get better, in order to recover, in order to heal. And truly, to really reveal our human potential, to really come into that peak performance that we know we're capable of.

So what I'd like to do with this episode is walk you through what I call a Yoga Nidra-Esque. It's not quite going to be a yoga nidra, I've got some other episodes that I'll put in the show notes where you can explore a Yoga Nidra that I've recorded for the podcast. But really, it's more of a Yoga Nidra inspired type of practice, which will bring you into a state of curiosity, I hope, of what's going on in your body.

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Now, as you explore this, what I want to offer up, that if this resonates with you, you'll probably love, love, love Healing and Revealing Human Potential where we get more into these Yoga Nidra type of practices as well as a host of other practices to support you in reducing and eradicating symptoms. And you can learn more about that program at functionalsynergy.com/synergy.

We are in enrollment right now for our summer session. But as a taste of what you can experience and something to really take you into this idea of curiosity I want to walk you through this Yoga Nidra-Esque experience of you listening, you tuning into these sensations, of taking that moment, of taking that time.

And the result really will be not only a down regulation of your system, of a relaxation, of a recovery process of your system, it'll be tuning you into what your body is actually saying. Not sort of demanding of your body of something, but really tuning into what it wants you to hear.

So what I'd like you to do to set yourself up is just find a place that's super comfortable. Whether it's sitting in a chair, lying down, lying on your side, maybe it's in your bed, maybe it's out in the sun. But to find a place that is comfortable where you can really just allow yourself to settle in. Maybe you close your eyes, maybe you tune in. The key is to allow for the distractions in your life to be away from you.

So if you've got kids, then you're in an area where the kids aren't, where you won't be distracted by their sounds or any other types of distractions that might get in your way. Turn off your phone or put your phone somewhere else, other than you're listening to this podcast. But all the other devices that you don't need, leave those off to the side.

Okay, so now that you're here I want you just to settle into your inhale and your exhale and feel what they feel like. And I like to talk about the breath as there's a phase in on the inhale, there's a transition which is often a pause but not always. But the transition towards the exhale, and then the

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exhale goes out and then there's another transition, perhaps a pause at the bottom of the exhale, and then inhaling again. So you'll be taking this process of inhale to exhale and just noticing the quality of your breathing.

And as you practice breathing and noticing your breath, you'll become more aware of its texture and its quality. And you'll start to recognize more of what it's telling you. So you might be someone who tends to hold their breath in certain circumstances in your day. And then if you're someone who does that, for example, then you might notice tension in your belly or in your pelvic floor, or maybe even in your feet.

You might be someone who has a tendency towards chest breathing, or holding your jaw when you breathe. Or maybe you're a reverse breather, so your belly pushes out when you exhale and then pulls in on the inhale. I mean, there's so many different ways of breathing.

You just become more tuned in to what you do with your own breath and you start to notice your response to the world around you and to the environment around you and how your breath changes. And as you start to note these things, as you start to guide your attention to these things, they start to establish a pattern. And you really begin to see how your system as a whole is responding to that which is around you.

So you're just tuning in right now to just the way this inhale is coming in and the way the exhale is going out. Is one faster than the other? Are you rushing through the process? Just what's happening? And can you simply watch it the way you might watch a sunrise or a sunset?

Being really curious, there's nothing wrong or broken. There's not like this right way to breathe, although you can read many books that tell you such. But really what is your way? And the only way for you to know is to pay attention and become curious about what is happening and how it changes and how it morphs.

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Okay, so now bring your attention to your feet and your hands. And simply notice your feet and your hands, the spaces between the digits. So the spaces between the toes and the spaces between your fingers. And then notice the bottom of your feet and the palms of your hands. And allow yourself to keep your attention on the feet and the hands while you are also breathing.

So notice these things, your feet, your hands, how your breath is moving in and out. And allow yourself to bear witness to this. So really, it's like you're watching that sunrise or sunset and you're just taking it all in. Not deciding that there's something right or wrong, or how to improve it, but just rather enjoying the experience of your breath, of feeling your hands and your feet.

And then starting to add in the limbs. So the legs and the arms and how they connect to your torso. So arms to the shoulders, legs to your pelvis. And you notice yourself breathing. Taking yourself, all of yourself in.

And so now you can pay attention to the quality of your breath. How it's moving as well as your limbs, and your hands, and your feet. And then allow your awareness to come to your neck and your head. Just explore what this feels like.

So this was an experience of your noticing your body by way of breath and by tuning in really simply to your hands, your feet, your legs, your arms, your neck, your head. Tuning into your torso, so feeling the whole of your body, the physical structure of your body along with your inhale and your exhale.

And then just notice, like just notice what you notice. There's nothing to change, there's nothing to fix. So this is your body and your breath. So what becomes interesting is when you start to pay attention to your thinking, and the cool thing about thoughts is that thoughts just arrive. They arrive and they arise. They just kind of pop up, they move through.

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Different authors and researchers will document the number of thoughts that we have per day, and there's a lot of them. The number changes depending on who you read, but there's a lot. We have a lot of thoughts that go through our minds. And these thoughts just kind of like pass by one thought passes by, another thought passes by, another thought passes by, and then there's a thought that kind of smacks you and sticks to you.

So kind of notice, what are the thoughts that are sticking to you? Pay attention to those. And oftentimes the thoughts that stick to you have a bit of an emotional component. So just notice. As you notice the sticky ones, what's the emotion that's also connected to that thought?

And then notice where that emotion resides in your body, right, it's going to vibrate somewhere. And so maybe it's a vibration like a tightness, or a tension, or a grip, or a hold, or a buzz, or a flippity flop, or an opening, or a clearing. I mean, holy smokes, it could feel in so many different ways. So just notice where it sits and how it sits. And maybe it sits or moves through your body.

Okay, so now let that go and come back to just noticing your thinking. And again, just watch the thoughts kind of move through and pay attention to the thoughts that are just kind of moving through. You notice how they don't stick? And just be curious about the ones that don't stick and the ones that do stick. It's kind of interesting, isn't it?

And then notice, one that becomes sticky again, that kind of comes around and comes around and comes around and grabs your attention. And again, notice what's the emotion that's connected to it?

So thoughts lead to emotions and those emotions vibrate in our body. So notice where this one is vibrating in your body. Where do you feel it? Is it in your chest? In your ribs? Is it in your jaw? Or your head? Your eyes? Your legs? Your feet? Where is it? And what is it doing? Like does it slump you? Does it harden you? Does it lift you up? Does it open you? Does it brace you? Does it free you? Does it excite you?

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So just notice what's it doing. See, this is where it becomes really cool because our thoughts, like I mentioned, lead to emotion. And that emotion resides in our body. And that emotion is the fuel that generates actions and behaviors. So just notice how these emotions are vibrating.

And then what you want to do next, what's the impetus? Now what becomes curious is that there will be times where you'll feel an emotion that you really don't want to feel or a thought you really don't want to experience and you want to shove it aside. And you might want to start thinking better thinking thoughts. Or you might want to just convince yourself that there's a better way to think about it. Totally reasonable way to be.

And when you're ready, just notice when that thought or that emotion comes back and see if you can feel it just a little bit longer without avoiding it. There's a lot of science that has evidence around this idea that emotions take 90 seconds to move through us.

And when I share this with my clients and my trainees, someone invariably says, “Okay, so can I put like a stopwatch on here and just like time it?” No, no, no, that's not the way it works. Can I think a better feeling thought while it moves through me? Uh-huh, that's not the way it works.

If you start thinking a better feeling thought, if you go off and buffer or avoid or compensate or whatever, you're now not allowing that move through. If you start kind of deconstructing it and pondering it and like overthinking it, it's not moving through you. You're now placing more meaning around it, so you don't give it a chance. You're almost damming it up, you're damming the flow.

The key here is really to sit with it and sit in the feeling of it. And it will feel like, for me what it feels like is it's like a washing over. And sometimes it's gross. It's like sometimes it's awesome and sometimes it's absolutely and utterly gross. And I just remind myself to feel. And it's not like I'm watching on my stopwatch, it's just all of a sudden I notice it pass through me and there's some clarity that arises as a result. But it takes practice to be with.

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So as you play with this now, if we come back to your thinking and the emotion, if you want to work with one more, again, just notice which ones are sticky. And then notice the emotion that's attached to the thought. And then where it vibrates in your body.

And again, the idea here is that you're becoming really curious about this process. We're not trying to fix the thinking because A, there's nothing broken. We're not trying to fix the emotions because of course those emotions are rising, whether they are considered negative emotions or positive emotions. Of course they're becoming present, it's totally okay. And you can simply just be with them.

Now, granted, some of them are a lot harder to be with. And as I mentioned before, it makes sense if you shift and avoid and compensate and buffer if it's difficult to be with them. And then you inch your way towards that process. Or you might realize that you need extra support by way of someone to speak with or other support to work through that process as you become aware of emotions and thoughts that might be more difficult for you to be with.

But again, the idea here is this curiosity. This curiosity of our thinking, the curiosity of the emotional content, just like being curious about our body and its sensations, about our breath. And when we can be in that space of curiosity and we can simply watch, some really interesting things arise.

Now, some people will ask me like, okay, but that's really fine. But how do we fix it? Here's what's really, really interesting, when we can actually grow our ability to be with the sensations that are inside of us, when we can be with the thinking and the emotions like truly then, and it sounds so weird, but the obvious step arises and shows itself.

We don't need to preempt it by trying to fix it. We can simply be. And again, in that being we start to really build up our capacity for resting and digesting. We build up our capacity to down regulate, to be less fight or

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flight. And then as a result there's just more clarity, more knowing. And then our ability to take next steps really, really grows.

Now, I appreciate that for a lot of people this is not a common way to be. We live in a culture that really is about fix it and there's got to be something wrong with our bodies. And again, in all of my years of helping people get better, because I am not a physical therapist, because I'm not a physician, because my background is in exercise, physiology, and kinesiology, and yoga, my skill set is to support people to feel their movement, to understand their mechanics, to tune into their breath, to down regulate and come into quiet.

Because when we can really nurture that ability to be quiet, we can see so much more and feel and tune in so much more to what our body is doing, what our brain is doing, and how our brain and our body truly, truly, truly are one, right? Our thinking can be felt as emotions in our body. Our thoughts are generated through our brain, for sure. And they are felt through the rest of our being.

When we can really be in that space, it's remarkable the solutions that we come up with, and there's so much science to show this to be true these days. So allowing yourself to feel, allowing yourself to be and really tune into this space. And if you find that you're resonating with it, you can always just take time through your day and five minutes, two minutes, three minutes to really tune in.

So with that now let's come back to your body and back to your breath, feeling your hands and your feet. Feeling your limbs, the legs and the arms, coming back into your torso and feeling your breath. Tuning into your neck and your jaw and your head and your face. Coming back to simply noticing you where you are in sitting or laying down.

Noticing what it is that you are resting upon whether it's the floor, or your deck, or a chair, or your bed. Noticing whatever is touching you, perhaps

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the air that's caressing your skin. And feel into this world that you've connected with.

And if this has resonated with you, I would love, love, love to work with you to help you reduce and eradicate your symptoms. To really tune yourself into this wisdom that's your body, to have you really see that your brain and your body truly are one. It'd be such a delight to be able to support you in that process, to really tune you into that potential that is yours.

And we are into Healing and Revealing Human Potential, enrollment for the summer is open now. And you can go and check that out at www.functionalsynergy.com/synergy. It would be such a delight to work with you. Take care.

If this episode has resonated and you're looking to deepen this idea of getting your body back on board, of listening deeply to your symptoms, of listening to the whispers so you don't have to hear the screams and you're looking for one to one support or professional training, then reach out to us at health@functionalsynergy.com where we can customize your learning path. That's health@functionalsynergy.com. Looking forward to hearing from you.