

**Ep #214: Reducing & Getting Out of Pain
at the Therapeutic Yoga Intensive
with Nona Jordan and Karin Rossi**



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.

Susi Hately: Welcome and welcome back. I'm really delighted that you're here because I have another series of interviewing trainees from the therapeutic yoga intensive, or rather they're graduates now, and they attended the October training. And the intent from this episode, just like the previous one, is to help those of you who are thinking about taking this program and you have got questions like, what the heck is this program about and would it really be of benefit to you, is it something that deeply resonates or not.

And so we've got Nona and we have Karin here and they are going to share a little bit about why they thought about joining it, what they were expecting from it, what actually happened in it, and we'll find out if it was a match or not. And just anything else that they want to add. And I think what you'll find out of this is you'll hear it from them, how it may or may not resonate with you and I think you'll get a lot of your questions answered.

And if you do have more questions about the program, I can talk about how to reach me at the end of this episode. But for now, let's welcome you, Nona and Karin. I'm so glad that you're here.

Nona Jordan: Yeah, thanks. It's so great to be here.

Susi: So we finished the intensive back in October. And I'm always so fascinated, truly, I mean I was saying to the previous group in the previous episode this is like the 20th year I've been running this, and I run more than one a year. There was a time that I ran four in a year, so I've run it a lot. It's one of my signature programs for sure.

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And over the years it's always fascinated me why people decide to enroll in the program. And so I'm going to ask that question of you. Why? Why did you decide to come in? We'll start with you, Nona.

Nona: Yeah, well thanks. I took the neck intensive, Unwind The Neck. I injured myself rock climbing and I've kind of had this ongoing thing happening with my shoulder and my arm. And the Unwind The Neck program, I loved it and I really experienced greater ease in the movement of my neck and really a reduction in kind of chronic ongoing issues with my neck, but it didn't really touch my shoulder or my hand. And I was like, well, I'm just going to go ahead and do the intensive then.

And then as I signed up for the intensive I started listening to your podcast and I was so inspired by what I heard on the podcast. And I'm a business coach, I mean I'm a yoga teacher but I'm a business coach. And I was like, wow, what would happen if I could help my clients who are creating businesses and growing businesses not be in pain? What would happen?

So I got very inspired by that and so, anyway, it was my own experience with my pain that really brought me to the intensive, but you laying out the possibilities that could be available for other people got me thinking about how it might apply in a wider range in my life and in my work.

Susi: That is so great. I don't think I've ever had someone who was like a true blue business coach take the program for that reason. And I love that. I really love that. And it's so brilliant because it's so true, the clients that I see, many of them are not yoga teachers. There are some of them who are yoga teachers, but there are many who are not yoga teachers. They don't know anything about yoga, they've just heard that I can help them get out of pain and I have a certain approach to doing it and they run businesses.

And many of them are CEOs and many of them run big corporate businesses. And to see how their bodies change and to see how their

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minds shift and the integration of that into the way that they run their businesses is really freaking cool.

I still remember one retreat that I did with one fellow who took me on a retreat with his whole executive team and they started crying. I'm like, I don't think this happens normally. It was just really, really lovely as they all sort of settled in. It was not something I would have expected.

And so there we have it, right? Not that I'm expecting that people would cry, but there was a certain connection that occurred. And so that's so cool that you have the opportunity to do that with your clientele as they get out of pain and what is possible because pain takes up a lot of space and a lot of energy.

Karin, how about you?

Karin Rossi: I was familiar with you from way back in my yoga teacher training, we used your anatomy book. And I just felt that the book made sense. I'm not a sort of hoodoo voodoo yoga teacher, I very much love the science piece. And that's what really drew me to your work.

And then when I decided I wanted to move on further and to begin to explore being a yoga therapist, I investigated a lot of programs and I kept coming back to yours, listening to your podcast, because it was so practical. And the idea that I could help, as Nona said, people get out of pain was really intriguing to me.

I come from a trauma background, working with trauma survivors, and I'm very, very hypersensitive to approaching them with that lens. And so I wanted to be really, really careful who's program I decided. And I think I had shared this in the intensive, when I listened to one of your podcasts and you used the word interoception, which is not often used, now it's becoming a little more popular, but that is a key component to the program that I was involved in.

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So when I heard you use that, in terms of your work with folks, I thought this is it, this is going to just be a natural transition for me to not only help people with their emotional trauma, but also their physical pain. So I thought, let me try the intensive, see how that works. I had been taking some of your Pain to Possibility classes and I had this binder, I've got all these markers in different colors. I mean, those pain to possibilities, I am writing like I'm back in graduate school.

And what was so interesting was I barely took any notes during the intensive because there was so much, and not in an overwhelming way, so much self-reflection. So much of the work didn't happen with pen and paper, but it happened internally and introspectively that it wasn't something that I could necessarily put on paper. It was such a personal process.

And the main thing that I came away with was, oh, I really need to know how this lands and feels in my body before I can do anything with anybody else's body. So that was really profound for me.

Susi: Really interesting. Did, Nona, your expectation or your assumption coming in, what was that? And was it met or did something else happen that accentuated it or altered it? Or was it not met, right?

Like sometimes we go in with an assumption or expectation and it is met, other times it's not met. Other times it might not be met, but something totally different than we expected actually happened is more what I mean. So which of those sort of branches actually happened? Like, what was your assumption and then what occurred throughout and then after?

Nona: I'm not sure I had an assumption. I had a wish. I had an intention. I was, honestly, sort of hoping for a miracle with my shoulder and my hand. And I'm going to say that I still have numbness in my hand, but here's what I'm going to tell you, it's okay. And it's okay because the rest of my body

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feels so much better. I'm not like, I wake up and my back is a little achy because I'm 52 and that's what happens. And oh, my neck is like this.

All of that as I've continued to practice, with the intensive being like the starting point, I can literally say I wake up in the morning and I pull on my – I was telling my husband this, I was so excited. I was like, "Eric, I pulled on my workout shirt this morning over my head." And usually there's a point at which I kind of go, oh. Like it's going to hurt, I can tell it's going to hurt. And I just like, whoosh, and I was like, what just happened? It was so crazy. It was so amazing.

So even though this is still an issue, although I swear it's getting better, I swear it is. But the rest of my body feels so much better. And I love the movements and I love the tension and the granularity. And I just love the experience of it.

And the other thing that was shocking to me, and I don't think I'm being dramatic but I was like, I cannot believe how much I brace. Like how much other parts of my body are getting involved in movements I'm making. And learning how to quiet that, like pay attention to it and let it quiet has been truly life changing. I cannot say enough about just the awareness of like, huh, am I bracing somewhere? Am I using muscles I don't need to?

It met my expectations and exceeded them. Like I said, I didn't really know what to expect. But the thing I loved, really, really loved is that you really invited us to embody the experience of the work first, before you talked about how to use it with other people. And, for me, that's my favorite kind of learning. And then really feeling it in my own body and the lasting results of it has just, it's just been awesome.

Honestly, like when I talk to my clients about it, they're like, oh, yeah, when can we start? Because they are cueing off of my enthusiasm for what is happening in my body. And you can't make that up. You know what I

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mean? If I was just watching a video and taking notes, I wouldn't have that, right? So I hope that answered your question.

Susi: Yeah, I think basically what you're saying is that you can't fake an experience that you haven't had. And I find that one of the most effective ways of teaching is not to teach from my experience, but to have an experience which I can teach from. Do you see that? It's a nuanced distinction, right?

Like, I'm not teaching you the things that I do in my yoga practice. I'm not teaching you when I do my pranayama practice. But because I practice, there are things I have learned and there are principles that I can then teach from.

You're a great embodiment, too, of you made a lot of gains, there's still some tingling that seems like it's getting better. And yet, you're seeing the progress. You don't have to have all of your pain gone before you teach. But there's that progress piece that you've tasted it, you now know what possibility is. And so then now you can say, hey, you know what, tissue can change. And not only in you, but you saw it in the other people in the group.

Nona: Yeah. Yeah, which was really amazing.

Susi: So how about you, Karin? What about you? What was if you had an assumption or expectation? And then did he get met or not or was there anything else that arose out of it that was unexpected?

Karin: I had a hope. And the hope was, there's that expression that the longest journey is the 18 inches from the head to the heart. And so in my head I knew intellectually I could do this. I could learn this material. I can ultimately teach this material. I know that. But embodying that and having the confidence that I can do that and coming from the place of compassion to do that and work with folks that are in pain, I didn't have that going in.

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So that was my hope, to bridge the gap from the head to the heart. And 100% that happened. Now, of course, the test will be can I effectively teach this? I've already begun to incorporate it, not only with my classes and private clients. But using these movements, if you want to call them stretches, exercises, postures, whatever resonates, absolutely using them every day, completely changing the way that I prepare for my run in the morning.

I have just thrown out these classic ways of stretching your hamstrings and your quads or doing a vigorous yoga practice to prepare. And I do these subtle and yet powerful movements. And I am running pain-free. Pain-free. This is really a game changer. And so that proved to me, and these are your words, that if I continue to move into pain, I'm going to continue to be in pain. So here's a novel idea, why don't you prep for your run in ways that don't cause pain? And then maybe you won't have pain. And there it is.

So I'm a rubber meets the road girl and I'm proof that it's working. I really am. So yes, expectations met and exceeded.

Susi: All right, interesting. So I want to kind of build upon this novel idea of move in a range that doesn't increase pain, or that doesn't cause pain is, I think, what you said. And you're now running pain-free. Was that a difficult idea for you to embody? Or did it come pretty naturally?

Karin: Yeah, absolutely. It wasn't something that was introduced to me ever. The first time I ever even caught sight of it was during my trauma training, that if something felt unsafe in my body or a yoga teacher was suggesting something that felt unsafe, I actually had agency and I didn't have to do it.

So I have a little piece of that, but the idea that I didn't have to do these big preparation stretches and that pain did not mean gain at all, that is still something that, again, a little bit waiting for the head to the heart. I actually have the evidence now to know that, but I think it'll take some time because there's so many years of conditioning and I'm surrounded by people that

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are still using their bodies in ways that do cause them pain and they're feeling good about it.

So to be the outlier on that, it's just going to take a little while. But I'm going to continue to operate in what I call this safe space because I've seen the evidence in my own body. My body feels stronger and ultimately it feels, I can't use the word flexible, there's just, there's more space in my body.

Susi: So interesting. I remember when I took some yoga therapy training in India with Dr. Karandikar, who is no longer with us, and he would talk about yoga therapy as being a high-tech space science. And the whole notion is we are creating space, like helping our joints have space, helping our body have space.

And then as I sort of played with his idea, I found a quotation from David Frawley, which is actually on – I think it's on the front, or it might be on the first page or second page of my anatomy book. I'm not going to get it completely right but basically it's like where there is space, prana rises. And so it kind of makes me think of that for you, is that there's this thing that you're now experiencing that is more novel for you than what you had before.

And it'll be interesting, because it also reminds me of a story about someone who when she was a trainee in the CERT program, she started CrossFit training. And she was brand new to CrossFit and not sort of your classic looking CrossFitter, and she just followed the principles. And the people kind of ignored her initially. And then she started lifting more and more and her pace of change just blew them away. And they were like, what are you doing? Like, what is going on?

So it'll be interesting to see if as you continue in this way, and it's in a way that's not depleting, that in the Ayurveda world we say it builds ojas, as opposed to depletes it. It'll be interesting to see what people start to notice about you as you go about just you doing you.

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Karin: Yes, I'm excited for that.

Susi: Yeah, I'm super curious about that. Not to expect it but I'm just, I'm really super curious if something like that were to arise. Yeah, so interesting.

When you're thinking, Nona, about applying this with your clients, I want to harken back to this because I'm still fascinated by it. When you're working with your clients, what do you envision with your clients? You're helping them run their businesses, you're helping them build your businesses, whatever phase of the business process you're at with them, how do you see yourself utilizing what you learned? Is it a principle-based piece, like I'm really curious about what you're envisioning for yourself.

Nona: I really do hope to clarify that a little bit more as I continue with the certification training. Like I reached out to a handful of clients and I was like, "Hey, do you want to do this?" And they were like, "Hey, of course I do." So I'm really just doing the movements and going through with them and showing them the principles.

And I've done a lot of yogic principle work with, especially healers and coaches and psychologists who have an aversion to being business people and making money and all that kind of stuff. So I can see a place where, potentially, people are building a foundation of peace in their bodies. Like ease and peace and calm in their bodies as a foundation for creating a strong business because a lot of my courses have been Nidra based or breathwork based, and then bringing in yogic principles.

Not my one on one coaching, per se, but courses I've run for folks in business. And so I could see it being an antidote to hustling and feeling like they have to stay on a hamster wheel. So many people who were in my practice are like, yeah, I don't get up to pee during the day. I'm like, wow, that really cannot be good for you.

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So there's just this sort of this pushy nature to being in business and the expectations we have of ourselves and I can really see this being a way to build awareness, to slow down and to build a business that's really aligned with their wisdom when they're listening to their bodies deeply, the way that your certification and your work helps me, hopefully, to offer to them.

Susi: Interesting. I'm curious if you're willing, Karin, I'm fascinated by the trauma piece and the training that you have, and the in-depth training that you have with the trauma certification you've done. And clearly, you're skilled at it. Like it's very clear. How does it weave together? I'm really, really curious. They do fit, and I'm just curious what your take on that is.

Karin: I think that that is something that's going to be a bit of an evolution. And it's very timely that you asked that because this morning I did have a client who specifically wanted to come to me for both things. She has trauma from a motor vehicle accident and she had terrible scoliosis as a child and has a spinal fusion, and she is in chronic pain.

So I really gave it a lot of thought, and for right now what I did with her was I did roughly a 20 minute trauma practice. And then I said, okay, now we're going to take a step away from that, because the trauma practice is extremely invitational and some of the yoga therapy, there is a way of saying it that sounds a bit more prescriptive.

So that's something that will, in time, become more nuanced, where I know that my languaging will be able to offer more choices the way I do with the trauma piece. That being said, as I was moving through this with her this morning, I realized I could still use all of the interoceptive cueing in the yoga therapy piece.

For example, I used the felt pad on her side. And so using the same kind of cueing, you may notice, I would offer to her you may notice some sensation as you take an inhale breath, you may notice some sensation in your area

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of your ribcage. So giving her these interoceptive cues in the same way I would, but yet using the props and the yoga therapy tools.

And not that this is ever, ever, I really want to stress that, ever a goal of mine to be provocative or evocative, I do not feel that I've accomplished something if somebody comes to tears. But it was very profound for her. She got an actual release from some physical pain in her neck and back. And she wasn't upset afterwards, but it was kind of just some tears of release.

And again, that doesn't mean to me like, yay, my work here is done. But something moved in her body and that was really, really neat to see.

Susi: And it's interesting because a line that I've been using more and more over the past couple of months is this idea of blending physiology and psychology, from the perspective of there's anatomical and physiological things that we are doing.

And then those when we, like as Nona had said, as she's recognizing bracing patterns and gripping patterns and where duct tape is being held and when there's more support present, how some of those patternings can just settle out, right? We're not having to force them into an opening or into a release. But by the nature of the other support mechanisms that we can help facilitate, then those holding patterns can then not have to hold as much.

And sometimes that can also relate to where our beliefs are and where our thinking is and where our emotional states are and how these things weave together quite interestingly. And so it sounds like, through both the work that you were doing with her and just your state of being, as well as what you were teaching and how you were teaching it and how you were weaving these things together, there was this inherent structure of support there that enabled this result to happen.

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I mean, that's kind of what it's all about, in a way, right? We're helping to facilitate a structure for them to do whatever that work is that they have available to do.

Karin: Yes. And I think that that's something that we overlook. Like in terms of the psychology piece, yes, we think about, wow, this really is my work to do and there'll be a mental health practitioner that's the facilitator. But we do forget that in the physical piece, that is our work to do as well. You're absolutely right.

Susi: Really interesting.

So with that, is there anything, Nona, that you might add? If someone's pondering this and it's resonating with them, what else might you share with them?

Nona: Well, I'll just say that one of the things that really spoke to me when I was deciding whether or not to do the intensive was I heard you say on a podcast like, if you feel the pull. It was like having a tooth missing, for me. That might be a bad metaphor, but I just could not stop coming back and looking at it and looking at your work. And I was like, this doesn't make any sense for me, but I couldn't stop.

And I think that, too, is something that has bones in our body, right? Like that kind of impulse, that kind of draw is in our body psyche. And so I would say, gosh, follow that. Like, if you feel an inclination towards it, there's something here for you. I mean, I know you've said that before, but I would say that too because I didn't really know what I was getting into, and I still kind of don't know what I'm getting into as far as the certification program. But I am trusting that my body is leading me in the direction it needs to go.

Susi: Well said. How about you, Karin?

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Karin: I really loved when you were talking in the training, and I'll probably butcher the way that you said it, but that when we are in some kind of physical or emotional pain, there's an evolution happening. There's a call to change. And while I wasn't in physical or emotional pain, when I made this decision, there was a discomfort, there was a pull that I was ready for something more.

And so similar to what Nona was saying, if folks start to feel that pull, at the very least start to investigate it. Talk to us, research it, listen to some podcasts, dip your toe into one of the Pain To Possibilities and start to investigate. Because if you're feeling called to do it, there's something in you, if you believe in the higher self kind of thinking, there's something that's truly calling you. It's worth investigating, for sure.

Susi: So great. Thank you so much, you two. If people do want to reach out to you for whichever reason, whether it is to talk more or even to work with you, what would that look like? How can people find you, Nona?

Nona: They can find me, email me at nona@nonajordan.com. And my website is nonajordan.com.

Susi: Great, perfect. We'll have that in the show notes. And, Karin, how about you?

Karin: All of my contact information is on my website, and it's bee, like the bumblebee, B-E-E, mindful, and then the word space.com. Beemindfulspace.com. And special programs, contact information, all of that is there and I welcome any inquiries.

Susi: Really lovely. Thank you again so much for your time.

Karin: Thank you so much.

Nona: Thanks so much.

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Susi: If you are interested in the therapeutic yoga intensive and what Nona and Karin have shared with you today about what the intensive did for you and you are feeling that inner pull of this being right for you, you can read more about the therapeutic yoga intensive at functionalsynergy.com/intensive. Our next program is running in April 2024. It would be an honor to work with you. Take good care