

Ep. #317 - Embodied Clarity: Retraining Past
Patterns Through Biomechanics, Neuroscience, and
a Bit of Woo



Full Episode Transcript

With your host:
Susi Hately

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

Introduction 00:00:01 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 00:00:22 Welcome and welcome back. I'm really glad that you're here today, because the last two episodes that I've recorded have really been about supporting people who are in TTP 200, who are those level of yoga teachers, and they've got this inner calling and desire to go into therapeutic practices, and they're just trying to navigate the gap between TTP 200 and into the yoga therapy journey. And this episode builds upon that. In many ways, it's a bit of a love letter to the precision of science, the magic of presence and the quiet reorganization that can happen when safety really lands in the body. And that whole idea, this idea of... gets really magical when it all starts to happen. And when someone who's a TTP 200 grad, who has this desire to become a yoga therapist or a therapeutic yoga teacher, they start to get tastes of this.

Susi 00:01:23 They start to see it as being possible, and they can also feel the gap more strongly. But the reason why I'm plugging in this episode is to build upon those previous two, and then we're going to just kind of keep the pace going and the tempo going over the next number of weeks, where you can start to see this blend between the various aspects of mechanics, neuro mechanics, neuroscience, and of course, a little bit of woo all wrapped in to this amazing thing called yoga therapy or therapeutic yoga. Alright? So let's dig in. So to kind of say it in another way, today's episode is one of those conversations that lives at the intersection of nuance, embodiment and integration. And it's really, for those of you who are super curious, those who are thoughtful: teachers, professionals, and the lifelong learners who know deep, deep, deep down that healing isn't simply about doing more. As I've mentioned, this is a love letter. It's a love letter to the precision of science, the magic of presence, and the quiet reorganization that happens when safety lands in the body.

Susi 00:02:32 And that's why I've titled this Embodied Clarity: Retraining Past Patterns Through Biomechanics, Neuroscience, and of course, a Little Bit of Woo. So whether you are walking or lying down or driving or sitting still as you're listening to this, let yourself soften. Let yourself arrive. Let's get going. So when I think about the power of embodied clarity, I want to consider the following. We often talk about healing like it's this big, huge event. Like a breakthrough, an "aha," a massive "aha." A moment of sudden release or transformation. And sometimes it is. There are those moments: the full body exhale, the spontaneous tears, the spine that suddenly stacks in a way that it hasn't in years. And there's just this like, "whoa" moment. I've seen them and I've experienced them, and truly, they are something to honour. But you know what's happening more often than not? Clarity doesn't typically crash in. It lands. Softly, subtly, unexpectedly. It's the breath you didn't know you were holding until it lets go.

Susi 00:03:50 It's the quiet shift in how your foot meets the ground. It's the moment your student no longer needs to grip their jaw to feel stable. It's the knowing that you kind of always knew and then you know it. In other words, embodied clarity isn't about becoming somebody new. It's about coming home to who you were before the bracing, before the over-efforting,

before you believed that being good enough meant being perfect. And that kind of clarity is what rewires not just movement patterns, but entire belief systems. Here's what I've seen again and again. When somebody starts moving from embodied clarity, everything changes. They stop trying to force posture and start living from support. They stop chasing complex fixes or releases and start noticing subtle truths. They stop trying to fix their clients and start trusting what they see, hear and feel. And this is how we model healing. Not by preaching it, but by being it. Which leads into this next segment around the nervous system not forgetting, but it can rewire.

Susi 00:05:05 So let's dig into this, because none of what we're talking about can happen without the nervous system. Your nervous system is brilliant, adaptive, designed to protect you. It doesn't store memories only; it stores patterns, reactions, and protective impulses. So if your pelvis tilts a certain way, your jaw clenches, or your breath stays high in your chest, it's not random. It's protective in many ways. And these aren't bad habits. They're habits that arose out of our best processing powers, not just necessarily thinking like, they don't arise out of our best thinking, because many of these things aren't thought about but they come about because of the best of our creativity at the time. They're also, in some cases, survival strategies. The problem is that most people are trying to fix those habits, those patterns, those strategies, before really understanding them. And from what I have seen with clientele, especially the folks that I tend to see, is that they've been around through many different practitioners and so they've been trying a lot of things.

Susi 00:06:13 That when they are correcting a pattern the nervous system still thinks is keeping you safe, it's going to trigger more resistance. Even well-meaning techniques can register as a threat if the system isn't ready. So we start with listening and with honouring, with asking: what might this tension be protecting? And then, through micro movements and breath and precision, some deliberateness, we can offer some new inputs. This is what it's all about when I'm asking people to reduce the compensation patterns. And you know what's interesting? I hardly actually even say it in that way. What I say is: you know something, when you're moving your arms over your head, you notice that the ribcage is moving? So how about we move those arms, so only as far as the ribcage doesn't move. And this is different than moving your arms without the ribcage moving. Because anybody can hold the ribcage down and prevent it from moving. What I'd love for you to notice is: when in that range of motion of those arms overhead, does the ribcage start to whisper at you that it's going to move? That's the new input I'm talking about here. When we're working with biomechanical granularity.

Susi 00:07:36 Easy, easy breath. And this deliberateness and the precision that I'm working with, that's the input we're playing with. It's an input that says you're safe here. And let's just explore this movement without needing to brace. And that's the heart of the neuroplasticity, it's: the system doesn't need to be forced. But there is an invitation. And when that invitation is clear enough, kind enough and consistent enough, the nervous system, well, it says yes. And it begins to reorganize. Trust is present. And so interestingly, when trust in reorganization, when that "yes," that full body "yes" is there, letting go begins to happen as a result. Letting go of what it once gripped with all of its might. That's the moment that we're moving toward, and it can't be rushed. It's why I like to say that biomechanics really isn't about fixing posture, it's about

freedom. Yeah, I mean, sure, of course, people have better posture. For sure, I notice that their pain has gone down.

Susi 00:08:54 But here's what's really important here: I'm not trying to go after changing the posture. Yeah, sure someone's got a head poke forward, or maybe who has got more lordosis or something is amiss in their posture. But I'm not trying to "change" their posture, I'm helping them move better. When they move better, their posture shifts as a result. It's not the goal in my books. And yet, what do we see so many people out there trying to do? There's so many that are trying to fix their posture without understanding what's really underneath it. Remember, posture is the safest and most supportive place that someone believes to be. It's not conscious thought. It's what's happening internally. In other words, posture is a reflection of your support systems. your breath, your load distribution, your ability to feel safe upright. If your body doesn't trust the ground, of course it's going to shift forward. If your breath can't travel all the way down, of course the ribs might flare or collapse. And if you spent years bracing against pain, stress, or pressure, well, of course your structure will have ways of reflecting that.

Susi 00:10:05 And when we use biomechanics not as a set of rules, but as a lens of listening, something starts to open. It's using biomechanics in this way that can help us decode what's happening underneath the compensation. It shows us why the left glute isn't firing or why the jaw won't release. Why those upper traps keep seemingly hijacking the effort. And when we slow it all down, when we respect the timing of this system, we can begin to restore true support. That's when posture starts to shift. That's when breathing becomes more efficient. And that's when strength builds without strain. In my books, it's not about holding your shoulders back, it's about having enough internal scaffolding that they don't need to collapse forward. Biomechanics in this context then becomes a map and not a mandate. And when paired with nervous system regulation, oh it's liberating. So let's move into this next piece of this episode on when thinking becomes bracing. And this is the part that hits home for many people listening to this podcast overall. Thinking is not the enemy.

Susi 00:11:25 Let's say that first. We want to understand the body. Most people who follow me, that's what they want. They want to understand. They want to know why something is contracting when it shouldn't, or how to get something contracting when it's not. We want to be thoughtful about our language and our cueing and our sequencing and our adaptations. But here's what I see, sort of on the I can call it the "dark side," with the yoga teachers and practitioners that I work with: that in that thinking can come overthinking. Yes, they're so, so smart. So insightful and so caring. And all those three together really is this amazing trifecta of power. And yet sometimes there can be quite a bit of fear of doing it wrong, of doing whatever they're doing, teaching whatever, doing it wrong, that they stay stuck in that mental loop. Overthinking then becomes a way of feeling safe. Precision becomes perfectionism and learning becomes a shield. And the irony is it's not that they don't know enough, it's that they don't trust what they already feel.

Susi 00:12:38 And how that knowing has been embodied. If you're recognizing yourself in what I've just said, you're not alone. Thinking truly is amazing. It's awesome. But when it overrides

presence, it can create tension, bracing and more. So here's the shift. Let thoughts support you, not control you. Let your knowledge guide your observations, not replace your intuition. Let your curiosity remain open, not locked into right-versus-wrong. Because the most profound shifts don't come from thinking harder, they come from noticing deeper. From presence. And when you trust that, something else begins to arise. And what is that? What happens when the nervous system actually begins to soften? When thinking stops bracing, when breath and biomechanics have that really amazing alignment that's not forced, but just happens? Something really cool begins to emerge. It's not performative, certainly not performance. It's not compliance, it's not discipline. It's devotion. The kind that arises naturally when you're not trying so hard to get it right. Devotion is reverent, rooted, rhythmic.

Susi 00:14:07 It's the quiet impulse that brings you back to the mat not because you should, but because something in you longs to return. It's what carries you through the subtler practices. It's what deepens your presence with clients. It helps you move from a space that's not based in fear but in deep connection. So I want to be clear that when I say devotion, I don't mean, in this context, a religious obedience; I mean devotion as fuel, as coherence, as the nervous system saying yes, I'm here, I trust this. And in that trust, the body begins to reveal things it's held for years. This is when biomechanics becomes relational, when breath becomes a bridge, when awareness becomes an art. And that devotion I'm referring to sustains you through it all. So let's talk about what happens when you live from this place; when you've retrained the patterns, when you've restored clarity; when you're no longer trying to perform calm, but you actually are calm. You become someone people can feel. Like, you can perceive that person who "is" that.

Susi 00:15:32 That alignment, that true practice. You become a lighthouse. The light is shining out. You don't need to fix. You don't need to perform. You don't need to take on other people's energy. Your job becomes simple: stay steady, hold presence. And out of that, you notice your breath is just easy. You're not even having to maintain it, it's just there. Stay in your body even when others leave theirs. That alone is transformational. But as I mentioned just a moment ago, you become the lighthouse. Think about the lighthouse shining the light out into the harbour, helping boats be guided in to port. The reality is most people are used to being in spaces where they aren't being managed or subtly corrected especially, at least in the history of yoga, that's been so true so much overcorrection, so much fixing and doing it right. All the alignment talk, right? So when someone truly is coherent, your system can feel it. They know it.

Susi 00:16:40 It's like a coming home. When someone models clarity, your system responds. And what it means when we say nervous system repair and action, like, we can feel that. It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. It's how you sit, how you breathe, how you respond. But it's not from this performative external space. It's because it's this internal to external alignment. And it's in that space, because it's so easy and free, that invites others to do the same. So let's get practical and tangible for a moment. All of this, this neuroscience, biomechanics and presence talk can feel very abstract, but the way we apply it is incredibly grounded. So here are a few tools that I work with and that I teach. So I talk about biomechanical granularity. And the reason I use that term is because ultimately, I'm helping people move through complex movement, whether they are wanting to get back to all the yoga poses like warrior two, triangle,

crow pose, pincha mayurasana, shoulder stand, headstand, whatever. Any of those, right? But we can break all those movements into small component parts.

Susi 00:17:49 I call it biomechanical granularity and build from there. Someone else might call it micro movements; small intentional shifts that can interrupt, help retrain compensation, and help reveal what's really under there. What's really the fuel for why people feel the way they feel and start to shift and change that. Another one is breath. And not from this, again, performative or even pranayama before someone's ready. It might be restorative, so it might be relaxing, but underneath it it's really about regulating. It's directional, functional and responsive. Because in my mind, the body really is a mechanical pump. And so we can bring air into our nose and that becomes breath and it does its respiratory thing and goes out again. But the tissue around our body how limited or tight or short, restrained that can limit the movement of the key parts that impact and influence breath. Load adjustments is a third tool. So where there's biomechanical granularity and then how I work with breath, the load adjustments is also important. How weight and force move through your system. How it's dissipated, transferred, absorbed, how small changes can really completely shift your strength or stability.

Susi 00:19:13 And then of course, awareness. That's really the fundamental bit. Noticing without judging, observing where you hold, where you collapse, where you grip, and how that's tied to patterns, past patterns, current patterns, patterns that have an opportunity to retrain and rewire. What's most important here is not so much what you do, but how you do it. Presence amplifies every technique, and slowness allows sensation to emerge, and repetition done with reverence rebuilds trust. And that's the real technique. And that's the real method. And that's what I teach. All throughout my work, not because I want you to memorize more; I really want you to move with more meaning. Superficial cues, universal cues? Yeah. They're great. They get "a" part of the job done but if you really want to help yourself or your clients, if you really want to move from that 200 hour TTP into just an extraordinary yoga therapist, that's what this is about. It's why my grads are so darn good at what they do. So where does this lead us? What's that journey forward? Well, let's see where we are.

Susi 00:20:33 This notion of embodied clarity? It's not really a destination, nor is it a checklist. It is a way of being, a way of being that emerges when the nervous system feels safe enough to soften. The biomechanics are refined enough to support, and the mind is quiet enough to notice what's actually true. It's what arises when you stop overriding and start listening. And if you're still with me, if this conversation is stirring something inside of you, you already know. You know that you don't need to push harder. You know that you don't need more willpower. You know that you need to return to what's true, to what's possible, to what's already unfolding. This is the work I do. This is the work that we share. Thank you for being here with me today. If this is stirring something inside of you and you'd like to take the next step, I have something really fun coming around in June. It's called I Love Kinesiology. "I" is presence. "Love" is the fuel. And "Kinesiology" is the lens that lets both land.

Susi 00:21:49 The information page with all the details is almost ready. Stay tuned. Check out my social. Get on to my email list. Mm-mm-mm. It's going to be good. I can't wait to share with you! Stay tuned for more. We'll see you next time.