



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 038 – Thoughts on Re-emerging Post Pandemic
May 19, 2021

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Welcome to the Athena Wellness podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that's dedicated to supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

Today, I wanted to share some birthday reflections as well as some thoughts on post pandemic life. First, some birthday thoughts.

I do some deep reflecting at the beginning of the calendar year and mid-year, which loosely coincides with my birthday. As I record this, I'm in the early stages of my mid-year review. But one thing became very apparent and it's this: I'm so grateful to host this podcast. It's so much fun. And it's a privilege to have you listen each week.

I wanted to find a way to show my gratitude and say thank you while getting to know you better. So I'm offering free one on one meetings with me until the end of June 2021. If you have a brief wellness question I can help with or you just want to reach out and say hi, I would love to connect with you via Zoom. Just send a short email to info@athenawellness.com and we'll send you a link to book a 15 minute meeting at your convenience. You have my word that this is not a sales pitch of any sort. Just a way to say thank you for your support. I appreciate it more than I can say. I'll put a link to my contact page in the show notes. I'm really looking forward to meeting you.

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Now let's switch gears and share some thoughts on reemerging post pandemic. This episode is being released mid-May 2021. And I bet many of you, like me, are sensing a bit of a shift. Last year at this time the pandemic was taking hold and the future felt fearful and uncertain. And today, there's hope of a return to some sense of normalcy.

Now, I know this isn't everybody's experience. Having traveled to dozens of countries throughout my corporate career, I have friends all around the world and they're struggling in some places like India. It's really heartbreaking to see the human toll that this virus is still taking. So many of us have experienced trauma of some sort, losing someone we love, being on the front lines as an essential worker, or being separated and isolated, just to name a few. And as a result, our next steps can feel tentative.

There was a recent survey that found that 49% of adults feel uncomfortable about returning to in-person interaction when the pandemic ends and 46% don't feel comfortable returning to pre-pandemic life. But even so, the fact is that some of us, including those in the US, are beginning to venture out again. And personally, I don't feel any desire to get on a plane or go to a crowded restaurant or venue just yet, but I have met with some former colleagues one on one, people I haven't seen face to face in a long time. And I do have plans for small outdoor gatherings at my home in the coming weeks and months that I'm really looking forward to.

When I've talked to my friends and my colleagues about how they're feeling and how they plan to re-engage with the world, I've sensed a few themes and I'd like to share those with you, along with some suggestions to make your journey back into the world a little easier.



Here are three themes:

1. **Normalcy versus old life.** While those I've spoken with are looking to feel some sense of normalcy, few want to return to their old lives because they just don't miss the endless cycle of busyness. As disruptive and upsetting as this last year has been, there have been sweet moments and reminders of a more analog life, like the simple pleasures of walking, noticing the seasons change, unplugging, and spending time connecting with loved ones.
2. **Depth versus breadth.** That slower pace brought the opportunity to deepen relationships, including those with long lost friends and relatives through video gatherings. For those working remotely, connecting with their team and colleagues took a more personal slant. And that sense of care brought increased engagement.
3. **Incremental versus wholesale.** The changes we're making to get back to our daily routines can happen a little at a time, kind of like dipping a toe in the pool versus diving into the deep end.

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And now here are a few suggestions to prepare yourself for more in person activities:

1. **Reflect.** Take a little time to think about what made a difference in your life over the last year. What was meaningful? Did you work on a social cause, enhance the quality of your relationships, catch up on sleep, develop new self care practices, enjoy some flexibility in your work schedule? Make a Quality of Life list of the ways your life was enhanced, the things that you want to keep intact.
2. **Make deliberate choices.** With your Quality of Life list as a guidepost, think about how those activities made you feel connected, empathetic, balanced, healthy, supported. Use that short list of emotions as you make choices on how you want



to spend your time. Does the activity you're contemplating make you feel like you want to feel? And if it doesn't, but you feel you need to do it, is there a way you can reward yourself afterwards by doing an activity that you enjoyed during the pandemic, like taking an outdoor walk or taking a pause or a break? Other important elements of making deliberate choices are going at your own pace, understanding your own personal boundaries, communicating those boundaries upfront in social situations in a respectful but firm dialogue, and having a plan on what will help you in your first social interactions.

3. **Check in periodically.** Review how it's going, how you're feeling and honor what's surfacing for you. If things start to get heavy and you find yourself working through a backlog of anxiety, reach out and get support.
4. **Find and tend community.** There were so many wonderful stories of virtual connections made throughout the pandemic, as well as a reawakening of being outdoors. If that fed you during lockdown, keep those virtual touch points and continue socializing outdoors. That's one of the things that has me looking forward to the spring and summer this year.
5. **Practice self-compassion.** It's going to take a long time to process the full impact of what we collectively experienced over the last 15 months. Talk it out, write it out, work it out, allow the grief to take its natural course. You're not alone.

If journaling about these topics is of interest to you and you'd like to join a small supportive writing circle, I'll put a link to the latest writing group that I host in the show notes. These are some of the topics that we talk and write about over a six week period. And I hope to see you there.

I hope you found these themes and suggestions helpful as you find your way in the post pandemic world. Please take good care of yourself and those you love.



Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time. Thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.

If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle.

If you'd like to access the show notes, download the Gentle Spring Reset PDF or would like a transcript of this episode, visit www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast.

Until next time, be well!