



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 050 – Attuning with Nature’s Interconnectivity
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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.

Hello and welcome to Episode 50. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

In Episode 49, we talked about how shifting our perspective can be a useful wellness strategy. Today, I'd like to share some insight that I just learned and give you some simple exercises to deepen your connection with nature as a way to shift perspective.

So sit back, take a nice long breath to ground yourself in presence and let's get started.

Setting the stage...

Author, professor and theoretical physicist, Lawrence Krauss, wrote the following passage in his book, *A Universe from Nothing, Why There's Something Rather than Nothing*. Quote, "Every atom in your body came from a star that exploded. And the atoms in your left hand probably came from a different star than your right hand. It's



really the most poetic thing I know about physics - you're all stardust. You couldn't be here if stars hadn't exploded, because the elements: the carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, iron, all of the things that matter for evolution and for life weren't created at the beginning of time. They were created in the nuclear furnaces of stars. And the only way to get them into your body is if those stars were kind enough to explode. The stars died so that you could be here today." Unquote.

Lawrence Krauss also supports the theory that the molecules we breathe are redistributed evenly in our atmosphere within a number of centuries. And if that's the case, he argues for a mathematical probability that more than 99 out of 100 of our breaths will contain molecules from people anywhere in the world from any time period.

Did you know that the average breath you breathe contains 10 sextillion atoms? When we breathe out, that carbon dioxide contributes to photosynthesis. When we breathe in, that oxygen is the outbreath of the natural world. We're deeply connected with that world.

And if we look subterranean, we find the plant world is intimately connected with what's called the Wood Wide Web. Mushrooms are made of tiny threads of mycelium. These threads form an underground network linking the roots of trillions of trees, allowing them to share information and nutrients and defend themselves against toxins, sharing resources with the young and the sick trees.

I share all of this because when you're in nature and you feel held or a calming yet palpable energy beyond your everyday experience, it's this universal life force. Call it Ki or Chi or Prana, whatever name you give it, it's real and we can work with it.



So how do we do that? **The first way is by connecting and attuning with nature and its interconnectivity.** Let's start by becoming aware of this energy. You can find a quiet place outdoors where you feel comfortable.

If you're in need of energy, rest your hands, palms up on your thighs. Focus your awareness on your palms. I like to envision a blue white energy that originates from the sky and travels into my hands. When you feel a pooling of the universal energy, place your hands on your heart and visualize it circulating throughout your body.

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If you're in need of grounding, get close to the earth or a tree. I like to sit with my back to a large cedar tree that's in my yard. Visualize yourself taking root in the ground, connecting with the Wood Wide Web. Feel your breath, Your outbreath, nourishing the plants. Your inbreath, a gift from all living things that are surrounding you. Feel yourself being held.

In your notebook, you can explore a series of questions. How does the pulse of life make you feel? Can you feel held and supported by it? What's your contribution to the web of life, to this ecosystem? How might you incorporate these practices into your day?

The second is by listening and holding a question while sensing an answer. Nature photography editor and conservationist, Nancy Newhall, once said, "The wilderness holds the answers to more questions than we can ask."

So how can nature help us frame our questions? What comes to mind is a Moody Blues lyric from a song that's almost as old as I am. It's called *Tuesday Afternoon* and here's



the lyric: "Something calls to me. The trees are drawing me near; I've got to find out why. Those gentle voices I hear explain it all with a sigh."

So my suggestion is to stay open and curious to see what pulls you. Try exploring these questions: What do I need to know right now? Where's my growing edge? And what fresh approach can I take? You can write or take notes as you feel or just sit there or walk or just be.

Lastly, I'd like to explore meditating in nature and it's not what you think. Although I will start with an old Zen saying that goes: "You should sit in meditation for 20 minutes a day. Unless you're too busy. Then you should sit for an hour."

So while that's sound advice, my suggestion is more in line with what I'm guessing your current life will allow. First, if you like to try to meditate, it can be as simple as sitting in stillness for five minutes a day. To anchor the habit, do it consistently for 90 days. You can increase the time any day, but do sit mindfully for at least five minutes.

If the word meditation makes you squirm, you can still get a sense of calm and inner harmony through a mindful activity that engages your senses and connects with natural elements like earth, water, air or fire.

Here's some simple suggestions:

- The first is **movement**. You can connect with yourself and that natural energy by just walking in the woods, allowing the movement to guide you.
- The second is through **observation**. You can mindfully gaze at a natural element, such as a flame, a flower, rainfall, ocean waves, which is one of my favorites,



falling leaves, a river current, snowfall, a waterfall and so on. Observe the details with your senses and look for its essence and connect with that life force.

- And the last is **loving-kindness**, sending the peace and ease you feel in the natural world to yourself, to your loved ones, and to your community.

I'll offer one more meditative activity to loop back to how we started this episode, talking about stardust. This practice was inspired by a William Blake quote and he said, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is - infinite." And since I seem to be on the classic rock kick this episode, I'll share that Jim Morrison got the idea to name his band The Doors from that quote - The Doors of perception...

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So here's the practice. Find a place where you can gaze at the night sky. First, take in the expanse. Breathe in that vastness. Then find a constellation that you can identify, like the Big or Little Dipper or perhaps Orion. Look at each star. Then look at the relationship within the constellation. What do the stars look like individually and collectively? Be part of that starlight and then be part of the dark backdrop. Think of the stardust that you're made of. Can you feel the limitlessness? What can you learn as a result?

I'd like to leave you with two more quotes. The first is from naturalist, writer and philosopher John Muir. "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home. That wilderness is in necessity." Keep in mind that John Muir died in 1914.



The second is from Australian mountaineer, author and filmmaker Greg Child, who said, “Somewhere between the bottom of the climb and the summit is the answer to the mystery - why we climb.”

If anything you heard today is intriguing you - don't put it off. Spend a bit of time outdoors and find out why.

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.

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Until next time, be well!