



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 073 – Right Timing
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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.

00:30

Hello and welcome to Episode 73. Thanks so much for joining me.

Bring to mind some of the biggest decisions you've made in your life: what you wanted to do for a living, who to spend your life with, whether or not to start a family. Those are all forks in the road, long lasting and impactful decision points. And aren't there times when you just know you're making the right choice, in spite of the data or popular opinion?

During my 18 years on Wall Street, there were plenty of times I thought of leaving, yet something that I still can't articulate was keeping me in place. I had a great run there. I worked for some of the finest institutions in the world. And when that phase of my life was truly winding down, there was no doubt in my mind that it was time to go.

I made the decision to leave while on vacation in July, having no idea how I would finally make the leap into something new. By the end of that month, a former boss called and offered me the number two spot in his department at a Fortune 250 company with a much better commute. And I started that new job in October.

If I tried to plan that, it would have never worked. And yet there was something about letting go of my old familiar situation that allowed the new opportunity to form and present itself. That happened almost 20 years ago. And I still marvel at how all the pieces fell into place without effort. And that's what we'll be exploring today.



We'll cover:

- The concept of right timing;
- The Law of Timing, according to author John Maxwell; and
- How to work with and encourage right timing.

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

02:40

We've all heard the sentiments: timing is everything, right place, right time, if it's meant to be... and so on. But there are times when you want something to happen so badly and it doesn't. When you're poised to make a move, but in your gut, you just know it's not time. And then there are times when the very thing you've been dreaming about happens without effort.

So why do certain things happen at certain times? According to the Urban Dictionary, right timing is defined as "the moment of coincidence, quirk of fate, or instance of destiny, which reveals itself in one blessed instant, that was previously deemed impossible by external forces."

This is slightly different than divine timing, which is a little more spiritual. Divine timing is the belief that life's events occur at the right moment and you can handle whatever comes your way. Everything occurs exactly when it's supposed to. It's more fate and faith-based in the belief that not everything is up to us, and that things flow in their own time.

04:07

As with most things, I think the truth is somewhere in the middle. What I can share is that I've been a student of other people's success. That is, when I find someone I admire, I love learning about their backstory - how they built their business, or how they created their body of work, how they live their lives, what's important to them, and what was the tipping point to the life they're living today and their daily habits to support that lifestyle.

I'm going to generalize here, but there seems to be a common pattern. As an example, let's take an entrepreneur, and you can think broadly about what that means. It could be



somebody who makes a product, who offers a service, maybe an artist or a musician, anyone who is earning their own living.

The folks I'm most familiar with had some sort of "normal" job before going out on their own, perhaps starting as a side hustle. Or maybe they got let go from their 9-5 job. We usually meet these folks as they're rising in their field. But what we don't see is what led them to that point - the doubt, the failure, the course corrections. We just see someone who's living a life that we'd like to live.

There's a lot of information available on how to create a profitable business doing what you love. But what doesn't get ample exposure is the shift that needs to occur in your inner world to be able to prepare for right timing.

So the pattern I've noticed is how these folks get from the people they were in a more structured 9-5 world to the entrepreneur who seems to have the world on a string, and it looks like this:

First, there's a change in the old world that was either planned, such as a retirement or resignation, or unplanned, such as a reduction in force or a firing. If it was planned, the transition is a little easier. But if it was unplanned, there can be a lot of emotion that needs to be processed before the person can even entertain what's next.

However long it may take to begin to ponder what's next, the initial steps seem to be taken as if the person was still in the 9-5 world, meaning there's an emphasis on making things happen. This can take the form of expending a lot of effort, both mental and physical, to see results. And this phase has a controlling quality that usually stems from fear and scarcity.

07:16

At some point, there's a glimpse of ease. Even within all the busyness, there can be a spark of inspiration or an outcome that happened without effort. The more this happens, the more the possibility of shifting into more ease can feel possible. The path forward seems to open. This shift has the quality of trust and abundance.



When we're in this place of trust, we're in receiving mode. And I can tell you from experience that this is not the most comfortable place for someone who's always made things happen by executing a plan. But receiving does not mean we're kicking back and just waiting for something to show up. There is plenty of work involved. But the effort is rooted in positive energy and non-attachment and with the expectation that everything is working out for the greatest good.

In the end, when you get to this place, there's no right or wrong path, no right or wrong timing, just the universal unfolding of your life.

So let's test this out with an example of where you've experienced right timing. Think of a situation that you were desperate to change. But at first, you were unable to do so. Perhaps a job change or maybe leaving a relationship. What were the things that were holding you back at first? What was the shift that led to the actual change? What led up to that shift? And what happened in its wake?

Let's step through those questions with the example I shared in the opening of this episode of when I decided to leave Wall Street. I had worked at a number of firms during my 18 years on Wall Street and was always looking for "What I was meant to do with my life." I earned a great living and I was leading a good life. But something always felt off.

But there was something that kept me there. Some would call it the golden handcuffs, meaning for a kid who grew up in a blue collar home, the financial incentives were alluring. At the end of my time there, I was working for one of the top tier firms on Wall Street and I enjoyed the perks that came with that name recognition. I had to bring my "A game" every day, just to stay relevant.

But after four years there, I had grown increasingly unhappy due to personnel and role changes. And I was working harder than I ever had - the proverbial Wall Street life. I knew something had to change, but I had no idea what or how.

And when I finally made that decision and said it out loud to my partner when we were on vacation, that's when things started to shift. I felt different inside. And even though I was working just as hard when I returned, I was less invested in the outcome. I stopped



micromanaging every move that I was making. And in some way, I felt a bit removed from the day to day that I was stepping through. In a word I *surrendered*.

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This was not noticeable to anyone else. I completed my work and I kept my commitments. But I felt freer inside, knowing that somehow I was going to move on. And within three weeks of returning from that vacation, I got the call to join another firm from someone I worked with six years prior, and he was my favorite boss. I was in a new company in a new role and in a new life in a matter of weeks.

As I dissect this situation, I can see how all the relentless planning and worrying I did in the months leading up to that were an inordinate waste of energy. But it was my way of coming to terms with the fact that I needed to leave. So the emotional churn did play an important role. But the question remains, could I have gotten to the point of surrendering without all the angst?

I don't know the answer to that question because I handled things differently back then. It was almost 20 years ago. But if I had to give my younger self some advice, knowing what I know now, here's what I would have offered:

1. Pay attention to the tightening feeling in your chest and examine what you're trying to control and why. Is it fear? Outdated expectations? The outcome?
2. How might you work through the uncertainty and impatience? How can you get more comfortable in the discomfort? What can you do to burn off the excess energy in a healthy way?
3. How can you surrender? If it's not time, could there be a reason? Could life be planning something bigger than you're anticipating? Is there something you need to grow into? How can you remove anything that's causing friction? Perhaps there's old patterns or limiting beliefs that you're still holding onto. Know that surrendering is about expressing appreciation no matter what the outcome, even if there are setbacks or interim steps. Surrender is about playing the long game and having faith in a larger plan.
4. Once you can let go, do you feel some sense of peace or ease? If so, you're on the right track. This doesn't mean there won't be challenges ahead. But it does mean that you're learning that there's a reason for what's occurring and you know you have the resilience to work through it and learn from it.



5. Keep showing up. Work just as hard and bring the job to completion in a way that makes you proud and will help the remaining team once you leave. Know that when you're ready in mind, body and spirit, external factors will align. Until then, trust the process and be patient while you keep doing your best at the task at hand.

14:30

Beyond my personal experience, people have been researching and writing on this topic for decades. Author and leadership expert, John Maxwell, wrote a seminal book in 1998 called *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. One of his laws is the Law of Timing, and I'll link that book up in the show notes.

Maxwell's Law of Timing states, "*When we do something is just as important as what we do.*" And I love the way he explains this. He says:

- The right action taken at the wrong time is resistance;
- The wrong action taken at the right time is a mistake;
- The wrong action at the wrong time is a disaster; and
- The right action taken at the right time is a success.

Going back to my example, I was feeling resistance when I wanted to leave Wall Street months before I did, it was the right action at the wrong time. And I made myself miserable trying to fight through that resistance. If I insisted on a move, and either left without another job or went to a similar firm, it would have been a disaster, the wrong action at the wrong time.

If I turned my former boss down and went to a similar firm instead, that would have been a mistake, wrong action at the right time. But thankfully, that sense of surrender allowed me to take the right action at the right time. And it was a successful move for me back then.

I love this model that John Maxwell shares, it makes so much sense. I was unaware of it back when I needed it most. It clearly indicates how impactful right timing can be in business situations. And the less friction we create, the more productive and effortless it can be. What you'll find happening is you'll become more in tune with when to take action and when to hold off. And life overall just works better.



As my corporate career matured, I became more adept at doing the preparatory work for whatever big change I wanted to make in the company. I called it woodshedding, which is a musical term for practicing, just putting in the reps and learning all I could. So when the perfect storm of there being a need - usually because something went wrong or a personnel change or a request - I'd be ready to offer a solution to an emerging problem.

That maturity comes with knowledge, experience, intuition, and preparation to recognize when the time is right and then decisively act with confidence. It worked like a charm because there's a built-in support system when someone steps up to fix an issue. That approach itself is an act of surrendering. And it avoids the emotional churn of trying to push something through before its time.

18:15

In the absence of the woodshedding approach, there are two common pitfalls I've seen. The first is impatience, wanting to make something happen now, and taking an impulsive risk with an unfavorable risk reward ratio. And the second is slacking, just losing momentum and not fully showing up until things change. This may feel like a righteous thing to do in the moment, but it rarely leads to a place that you truly want to be.

The next time you find yourself at a crossroad, give woodshedding a try and commit more fully to your current circumstances while preparing for your envisioned future state. Putting in that extra effort will not only prepare you when the time is right, but it will funnel any negative energy into something worthwhile.

So let's flip this equation around and talk about **how to work with and encourage right timing** by preparing and laying the groundwork:

- The first is just **noticing**. When you're at a decision point, where do you feel constriction in your body? Some common areas are the throat or the chest. Just think about what thoughts are bringing that tight feeling. For now, all you need to do is just observe and note.
- The next is **release**. When you get that sense that a big change is on the horizon and you feel yourself wanting to control how it will go, practice letting go of expectation and outcome. Relinquish unnecessary effort and show up as best you can each day with wholeheartedness.



- Next is **listen**. When you're in tune with your inner guidance, it will never steer you wrong. Whether a gut feel, a dream, or an intuitive nod, note what you're sensing, and pay attention to recurring themes.
- Next is **patience**. It can be difficult to wait when we really want change. It can feel like an uncomfortable mix of pain and doubt and fear, and not the time we want to practice trust and surrender. Taking small steps and acts of faith that align with your vision will help you sync with the Universal life flow.
- And last is **lighten**. We're conditioned to believe that we can control everything. When we understand it's not true. It can feel like a weight has been lifted. Our load lightens. We become less fearful and more at ease. We stop resisting and begin allowing. We surrender.

I'd like to leave you with this quote from Eckhart Tolle. He says, "Always say yes to the present moment. What could be more futile, more insane than to create inner resistance to what already is? What could be more insane than to oppose life itself, which is now, always now. Surrender to what is, say yes to life, and see how life suddenly starts working for you, rather than against you."

22:07

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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