



The Athena Wellness Podcast

Episode 076 – Journaling as a Wellness Ritual with Angel Shannon MS, CRNP

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00:05

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

Today I'm joined, once again, by lifestyle medicine expert Angel Shannon, who shares her thoughts on writing, and how to ritualize journaling as a wellness practice. And now on to the show. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

00:58 Kathy

Once again, I'm joined by coach Angel Shannon. Welcome back, Angel, good to have you.

01:05 Angel

Thank you so much, Kathy, good to be here.



01:07 Kathy

I know you're a big proponent of writing practice. So can you share a bit about your own practice and why that's beneficial from a wellness perspective.

01:17 Angel

So I've been a writer since childhood. I started with just a little diary with a lock and key, writing down my thoughts, my dreams, aspirations. I'm the sixth child of six children. And my brother is three years older than me and then it goes up from there. So I always sort of had myself as my primary source of entertainment.

I'm somewhere between an introvert and an extrovert. And so writing for me is just a way of really exploring my own inner landscape, making sense of the world. That's the way it started. You know, as a child, as I said, with diary, and then as I grew, you know, older became a parent, went through college, all this kind of thing, I just held on to that practice, of always having my journal as my own safe space to explore life to develop more, what I'd like to say is social, political, cultural consciousness, and my own consciousness, my own mindfulness. I did delve into more creative writing as my children were growing up, short stories, poetry, essay writing, things like this. So I've had the pleasure of, you know, dipping and dabbling in different forms of writing for my own development.

02:44 Kathy

And then how about from a wellness perspective? Do you ever "prescribe" that as a way of maybe working through some of the things that your clients are facing?

02:53 Angel



Absolutely. Journal practice is central to what I encourage in my coaching work. And in my clinical work, especially for those who come to me with concerns that surround behavioral health or mental health.

I say all the time, especially in the clinical practice, medication will only get you so far. Medication, I'm not anti-medication, I prescribe when and where I need to prescribe. But the other half of true healing, of really true healing, and if what we're talking about is true healing, and that is what I'm talking about in my clinical practice. I don't know any other way to get to that point but through the path of self-awareness and a safe space is a journal practice, highly recommended.

I think when we spoke in our podcast, you mentioned that there are some providers, physicians and nurse practitioners and all, who literally write it on a prescription pad, I'm one of those people. I will literally write it down. And I have several journals that I will send links to, to patients or coaching clients. Here's a great journal, this one will help you, it's full of journal prompts, or here's one that may help you in this particular area of developing your own mindfulness practice. And it's certainly core to my coaching work, because that is just core to coaching is self-awareness and understanding behaviors and emotional triggers and things like this.

04:29 Kathy

Somebody is in their car listening to this and it's piquing their interest. There's, it's like, there's something here but they have no idea how to go about creating a practice like this. What might be a way to kind of dip your toe in the water when it comes to journaling?

04:46 Angel



Sure. I believe in habit stacking. Make it something that's just so painfully easy to do that it just becomes part of your everyday thing.

I always say to people, "What do you do when you get out of the shower?" "Oh well, I grab my towel." So you get out of the shower, you grab your towel. You weave journal practice into something that you're already doing, some space of your day that it can exist logically, and you keep it simple.

You get a notebook, you know, just something a spiral bound notebook, if you want to at the dollar store or at the wherever you go to get notebooks. And you literally just start there. You keep it simple, you make it practical, and you weave it into something that it could ordinarily be woven, you know, just directly into. It isn't something that you need an app for, or anything like that. Just something that it just automatically triggers, "Okay, this is my journal practice time."

I love the power of ritual. So for me, my journal writing ritual, especially for closing out the week, you know, my Monday through Friday and moving into my self-compassion practice of the weekend, my personal time, is to journal out my wins for the week. So what went really well for me, that's part of that.

So if you have a ritual where, okay, every evening, after all this is done, I get my tea, I get my journal, I set a timer, 30 minutes, 20 minutes, 15 minutes, whatever, you weave it in. And once I close that journal, it's lights out and it's off to bed, it becomes just that - a ritual, part of a routine.

06:30 Kathy



That's beautiful. I love the idea of what went well. Do you have some other go to prompts that you suggest for your clients?

06:39 Angel

Sure. So a go to prompt might be: Today I am feeling. Today I am feeling. One of the things I want to do differently is... Okay? So it's not punitive. It's not all the, you know, what I did wrong, but what are the things I'd like to do differently?

Another prompt might be: In my ideal life I would be... Because a lot of times people are looking to make career changes when they come to me. I have a lot of clients who are midlife, so they're looking to make career changes. So we explore: What's your ideal life look like? What's your big dream? So things like that.

And I like prompts that are affirmative. So in my ideal life I would be... What I'd like to do differently... Tomorrow is... I feel... And then, you know, it just becomes free writing from there.

07:47 Kathy

Beautiful, inspiring. Thank you so much, Angel. I really appreciate your time. Thanks for being here today.

07:53 Angel

You're so welcome. Thank you so very much for the invitation. Kathy.

07:59



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!