



The Athena Wellness Podcast  
Episode 093 – Authentic Living and Well-being  
with Joe Rich and Victor Briere, A.D.  
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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 93. Thanks so much for joining me.

Our guests today should be familiar to longtime listeners of The Athena Wellness Podcast. Victor Briere and Joe Rich are the co-founders of the International Institute of Ayurveda.

We first met Victor, who is an Ayurveda doctor, in Episodes 39 and 40, when he provided an overview of the Ayurvedic healing arts and the importance of living in balance. And then we met Joe, who is a longtime practitioner and teacher of Kundalini Yoga in Episodes 57 and 58, when he and Victor talked about the link between Ayurveda and yoga.

In this conversation, we have a chance to go much deeper and we talk about:

- How we become separated from our authentic selves;
- How this separation impacts our health and well-being; and
- The importance of having support while doing the work.

This episode has a beautiful ending, as we talk about Victor's experience of leaving one life path to pursue another. What was intended to be a softball question on my part became a living example of what Victor and Joe covered and recommended to listeners earlier in the episode.



Throughout the conversation, Victor and Joe reference a number of books and talks, and I'll link those items and their contact information in the show notes.

And now onto the show. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

02:11 Kathy

Victor Joe, welcome back to The Athena Wellness Podcast. Thanks so much for being here today.

02:17 Victor and Joe

Thanks for having us.

02:19 Kathy

So Victor, you are my first three-peat guest, so congratulations!

02:25 Victor

All right, I made it! I made the cut!

02:28 Kathy

And Joe, you're no stranger, you're back for round number two. So welcome, it's wonderful to see you both.

02:35 Joe

Thank you. Thank you.

02:36 Kathy

So there were a few themes that I know are top of mind for you. And so let's start with the first one. And that has to do with authenticity and attachment and how they relate to our health choices.

02:50 Victor

Okay, so there's this idea in the West, this way of thinking about health, that our body and the rest of our life are somehow detached from each other. That is not the case, as I know you talk about a lot on this podcast. And it's so not the case that actually the exact opposite is true.



Our lifestyle decisions and the way we view the world and our core belief structures, both conscious and unconscious, have more of an impact on our health and wellness, then, for example, the “magic pills” we try to take to fix everything wrong in our body these days.

So Ayurveda, that's what I'm a proponent of or we're a proponent of, is an Eastern health system that originated in what's now India. But you'll notice that Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, all those practices, they all have very similar philosophies at the core of them. And the idea is that we're constantly creating or crafting our health profile, based on our mindset, life choices, lifestyle, so on and so forth.

That is just considered completely true in those health systems. No one would argue that. And then you bring in certain herbs or supplements or things like just to support a certain way of life as a support, nothing more, no magic pills.

And so that brings us to this topic of authenticity and attachment, where we have these modern day people in the healing world, one of which is a man named Gabor Mate. He is a western MD and he did tons of work with heavy, heavy, heavy addiction over many years, and is speaking very publicly now about this dichotomy between authenticity and attachment. The two fundamental needs that each person has, which is to be able to express their authentic self and also the need, not just want or desire but actual physiological need, to attach to other people for survival and to thrive.

And the kind of classic example he uses is, you're born and as a baby, you're completely dependent on your caretakers, parents, completely - you will die if you do not have those entities in your life. And so that's all attachment. And then, ideally, that attachment is honored and ideally, when that child starts to express their authentic self as they grow, then that's nurtured as well. But the ideal never happens.

When that child is faced with wanting to express something out of their authentic self, but if that were to even hint at threatening their survival - like if I want to go draw a picture but my dad's angry and I need to go ask for the crayons but now's not the time to ask for the crayons, because maybe dad will get really angry and then I won't get when my survival needs met, then I'm going to suppress my authentic desire and go for attachment.



So we do that in 20 million ways as we grow up and then that has a huge, huge, huge, huge, huge effect on how our health is going to turn out. And the problem is, we can always change that, but we continue to do that well into adulthood and throughout our lives.

06:33 Kathy

My guess is that the old wounds don't go away and we have new experiences that build on that. And so the unhealthy attachment, then, especially with that doctor's work, is we're trying to numb that pain that comes from detachment. Is that fair?

06:54 Victor

Yeah, so there's a whole host of compensations that we do to fill the void of being able to express our authentic self. And that's where we create our persona or our personality, to fill those voids. So if as a kid, I didn't get to express myself very much because, let's say, I lived in a house full of rage and it was dangerous for me to express myself, then I create a personality that compensates for that.

And then the problem, the real problem is, more often than not, I identify with that personality. But that personality is not who I am. It's a compensation or adaptation, in order to remain attached.

07:37 Joe

And that mental health diseases are coping mechanisms, not truly diseases. You're not ill, you're coping when you create what we call mental illness. In other words, depression is not an illness, it's a coping mechanism.

07:56 Victor

And so when you look at those things in that light, we layer these problems in our society. So someone is coping, they're depressed, because they're actively trying to push down their authentic expressions in order to maintain attachment and survive. So they're depressed, they're pushing something down.

But then we go in and say, "Oh, you have a disease," or "There's something wrong with you," or "You're broken," or something like that. "You need medication," which then increases that urge to depress, because they feel more isolated. Instead of saying, "No, no,



no, this is a coping mechanism. And we need to get to the root of why you even just decided to cope and whether you even still need to cope. Or if you've just now, that's become a part of your persona and you don't know another way."

08:44 Joe

Right, you've transferred it or you've projected it now from childhood trauma. You think the world, it's your worldview that I need to suppress, because that's what I did as a child. But as a 35 year old, that isn't necessarily true anymore. You might have the opportunity to go ahead and express and have it welcomed, but you don't know that because your worldview now has become, "I should suppress."

So now you're depressed as a coping mechanism. And you don't even know to try. You don't even know to think that. Because your worldview is that, "To survive, I must suppress." That's been established at 10. But that's not the trauma. The trauma is that at 10, I then separated from my authentic self. That's the trauma, not the coping mechanism.

09:38 Kathy

So when we're not living from this true place, there's stress that we create an Ayurveda is all about dealing with those imbalances. So it's causing an imbalance, mental and physical imbalances, that can show up as depression, anxiety, fatigue, and so on. And chronic illness.

09:56 Victor

Right, those are the presenting symptoms. There's a very simple thing in Ayurveda that's taken for granted. Ayurveda describes three primary causes of disease. We won't talk about all three, we'll just talk about the one that's relevant.

One of them is suppression of the natural urges. That's a primary cause of disease. One of three, not many, not like 500, but three. And that statement is addressing this: If you're not expressing your authentic self, you're suppressing your most basic, natural urge. And then that will create a pathology in your system and it will create disease over time, physical disease.

10:36 Kathy



It astounds me that these are practices that came from thousands of years ago. And what was that original intent, I wonder? I mean, it makes perfect sense the way you're describing it today, but all of those years ago, you just wonder where this came from.

I know, you don't want to get into the other two, but now I'm just curious. Can you just say what they are?

10:55 Joe  
(laughs) Go, Doc.

10:57 Victor  
Yeah, sure. The other two, one is called crimes against wisdom, meaning you know what to do and you don't do it because of some other desires or urges. If I am disconnected from my own wisdom, or my own internal guiding source, my wisdom, my authentic self, and then I will fully act against that, that in and of itself, is a cause of disease.

And then the third one is time, allowing time to go by before finding balance. So in that time span, my disease grows or develops or progresses.

11:37 Kathy  
Which is what our Western philosophy is based on, right, don't deal with it unless it becomes a problem.

11:42 Victor  
Exactly. Yeah, wait until you're basically super ill to manage your health. You're healthy until you're really sick, but that is that's not the case.

11:53 Kathy  
When you were talking about this term authenticity, it reminded me of the hospice nurse, I think her name was Bronnie Ware, who wrote a book called *Top Five Regrets of the Dying*.

Joe  
Yeah

Kathy



And the number one regret was, "I wish I had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me," which is how this would manifest over time, right?

Joe

Yes

Kathy

Maybe the crayons when you're a kid, but you carry that psychic imprint and it becomes, as you say, part of your personality, and it's how you're showing up in the world and therefore the situations that you're attracting are reflective of those experiences.

12:34 Joe

And I think that's why it's important to go back. And I know I just said this, but I want to repeat it again. It's Gabor Mate and these guys, they keep saying - the trauma wasn't that your parents denied you the crayons, it wasn't the act. And that's what we like to say the trauma is, "I asked for crayons and my father yelled at me and that's the trauma." No, it's not, not according to these guys.

The trauma is, "I then chose to do what it took to remain attached versus staying in my authentic self. And when I separated from my authentic self, that was the trauma."

So I created the trauma, by my choice, not by the act of the father saying, "I'm not allowed to have my crayons." It's not what others do to us that creates the trauma. It's what we choose to do with the act that was done from the external.

And that really leads you to the sense that, "I create my own reality, I create my own life." It doesn't detach you from the creation of your own being.

And then you say what you just said that that nurse said and it fits perfectly, right? If I would have had the courage to speak up and say, "No, I insist that I do my authentic self" in the face of people separating from us and isolating us or criticizing us. And so we then we have to face our aloneness and our loneliness and all those things we don't want to look at. But that's the courage it takes for us to live in our authentic self.



And so no one's doing anything to us. It's what we're doing to ourselves by our own choices.

Kathy

Mmhmm. It's beautiful, beautifully said.

Joe

And that, I think, really is important because you guys are dealing with it on the micro level of an individual in their health. I deal with it more on "Isn't that exactly what we're doing to our environment?"

14:43 Kathy

Exactly where I was taking this conversation.

14:47 Joe

Oh great, take it then, you're gonna get a lot of me then.

14:48 Victor

You just got the golden segue. (laughter)

14:52 Kathy

But something just came to mind and I never made this connection before. When we're looking for these inauthentic connections, meaning, "I'm going to step away from who I am to be able to stay attached."

Joe

Yes.

Kathy

We get this feeling of separateness, but the people that demand that, "You know what, I'm going to be true to myself." Those are the ones that are usually considered the loners.

Joe

Yes.





Kathy

But they're actually more connected, because they're connected with themselves, than those that try to play the game to fit in with society.

15:25 Joe

Okay, maybe. Maybe. Here's the maybe to that.

My coping mechanism as a child when my father or mother, I don't want to keep sticking it on the dad (laughter), my coping mechanism might have been to detach or disengage. I might not have fought, I might have fled or froze. I might have chosen to disengage or detach in order to protect myself, that might have been my coping mechanism.

Brene Brown says, "Disengagement is the greatest of all betrayals." The greatest. And not only are you betraying the other in relationship, but you're betraying yourself.

So you take the artist type. That artist type might run to their studio and start painting. Are they doing it because they're really in their authentic self and they're refusing to give that up in order to attach? Or are they doing it as a coping mechanism because that space is a way for them to detach and disengage from you, let's say.

Because you're saying, "I want you to stay home and give me attention or play with the kids tonight." And they go, "No, I'm going to the office because I have work to do and that work is my authentic self." Is it? Or is that a coping mechanism and they're really using that as a flight mechanism? Because that's what they learned to do when mom said, "You can't have your crayons."

So you better differentiate between: Is it a personality structure or is it truly embracing the authentic self.

17:11 Kathy

So anything can be a numbing agent, it really comes down to intention.

17:15 Joe

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. That's beautiful. Why are you talking to me? You could just do this on your own. You're good.



17:22 Kathy

(laughs) You're making me think, you're making me think. We're going to continue taking this to more of the environmental in a bit.

But I do want to, because I know Victor, you're a proponent of vagal tone and vagal health. And while I was doing research for this segment, I found that there are studies that show that people who are able to experience authentic connection, usually have healthier vagus nerves. Has that been your finding?

17:48 Victor

Oh, absolutely. And I would venture to say that those who have cultivated healthy vagal tone are the ones who are going to be much more capable of expressing their authentic self. So it probably runs both ways.

Kathy

Interesting.

Victor

Because it's that vagus nerve that switches your parasympathetic nervous system, which is the one in which you're nice and relaxed and calm, to your sympathetic nervous system, which activates the defense mechanism. And if that's too easily triggered, you're going to have a really hard time expressing your authentic self in the face of a perceived threat.

And that's the important part. Because that's when we decide to give up our authentic self. If we never met a threat in our life, we would have never given up our authentic self. The moment we perceive, and it just has to be a perception, there doesn't need to be a real threat, and actually, more often than not, there's not a real threat, it's just a perception. That's when we say, "Okay, okay, okay, I give, just stay attached, because I need to survive."

And people who build and cultivate a resilient vagus nerve, or autonomic nervous system, are much more likely to feel that hit of fear, but then not completely flipped into a defense mode. They can feel that hit of fear and then the resilience, that natural kind of pushback that your nervous system has or your body has, is like, "Wait a second, I don't need to go



into code red here. I'm gonna assess the situation, determine what to do and respond instead of react." And what am I going to respond with? My authentic self.

19:23 Kathy

Hmmm. So to make this practical for our listeners. I can picture somebody driving in their car and this is resonating. They're seeing themselves in some of the comments that you're making and saying, "Gee, am I really acting out of who I am or am I fleeing?"

What are some practical things that they might consider or incorporate or what do they do when they have that awareness? What's that next step to begin to work through it and work with it?

19:48 Joe

Okay, so the first point I want to make before we get any further down the road here with this, is that you always have to maintain some attachment. This is not 100% either/or. This is not a black and white issue. You're going to always have to have some attachments and you're always going to have to have some sense of safety. You're not going to be willing to take a risk if there isn't some part of you that also feels safe in the world.

Esther Perel talks about that in relationships. You have to have some degree of sense of safety and comfort and all of those issues before you're willing to launch yourself into a big risk. And the risk and adventure in the erotic is the best part of life. So you definitely need to do that.

But you're not going to do that if you feel like, "I have 10 cents in my pocket and I don't know where I'm going to get my next meal." We need those basic kinds of safety and security issues covered before we can launch ourselves into risk and adventure, which is what we call the creative urge - the artist, that's going to the studio and painting the painting.

So we need a sense of attachment and we need a sense of safety - we need to have that feeling inside of us and we need to identify who those people are.



Now, you ask the question: Okay, I'm driving in my car and I'm thinking, "You know what, this job isn't about my authentic self, this job I'm driving to isn't about my authentic self. This is just about paying bills, there's nothing here for me, what do I do?"

Well, you need to go to your critical lovers or to those people who really care about you and talk. You need to get truthful with yourself, you need to find your truth.

And I would, again, I'm not saying do it alone because our ego will cause us to lie to ourselves. The ego is going to feel threatened when you say, "I want my authentic self at all costs." And that's what you're going to need to say to yourself. So now your ego is going to feel threatened and it's going to start lying to you. It's going to bring the perceived threat in, even though there isn't one. That's what Victor just said. It's going to make you believe you're going to starve to death.

So you need to get to your people, you need to find somebody you could talk to. And you need to find your truth. And when you're finally speaking truth to yourself, as well as to others, that will create a sense of trust. Now I can trust myself to make good decisions for myself. And I can trust the other, so I do feel a sense of attachment because I can trust you, because you're willing to exchange truth with me.

When that happens, you can now open up to a sense of vulnerability. You can allow yourself to become vulnerable to your own self, into your own desires. So more truth now comes in.

You know, it's the scene you've seen in many movies, where, finally, the person breaks and starts crying and says, "You know, I've spent the last 20 years being an accountant and I've paid the mortgage and I put the kids through college, but I've always wanted to be an artist." And then the next scene is they are painting these incredible paintings in Paris, of course, and you know, and it all works out for them and they're happy now.

23:31 Kathy

The ultimate in self-actualization, yes.

23:33 Joe



Yeah. (laughs) So that was the break in the vulnerability, though. That was allowing yourself to become vulnerable. That's why they usually cry and they show that emotional break. And it's like, "Here I am."

23:48 Kathy

Well, it's the walls starting to come down, right?

23:51 Joe

The walls are starting to come down. So if you read Gabor Mate teacher, A.H. Almaas, his books. I'm reading his books. He talks about how you have to tear down your personality structure and you have to replace that with your essence. And essence is just - Gabor Mate took that and turned that in into the authentic self, it's the same, they mean the same thing.

But he talks about how there's this transition period between breaking down the personality and finding your essence and you're gonna have to spend a period of time and what he calls the void, or it's that transition period. And you have to be comfortable with just sitting in that void and not doing anything but allowing yourself to feel the being of who you are. And then the essence will find you and begin to pour back into you. It's not something you can do, it's an allowing.

But you have to be willing to sit for a while and that discomfort of the void. Because you're neither your personality anymore nor have you become the artist in Paris yet. You're in that in-between state where it really gets scary like, "Oh my god, am I going, is this gonna work out or am I gonna starve to death?"

25:12 Kathy

That was beautifully, beautifully said. I love that because so many times we think, "Oh, I have to go find my purpose." And we know that it's really the opposite. You need to be able to drop who you are to allow that to find you. But you want to talk about activating all of these things inside of us - sit in that liminal space while the caterpillar is turning into the butterfly and you're just in that goo? There's no definition around that. That is some scary, scary stuff.

25:46 Joe



And you're going to need some support, if not physical support, emotional support. Again, that's why you're going to need some attachment. Please, don't anyone hear this and think, "Zero attachment." No, no, no.

And that's what should have been given to us as children, going into adolescence and into early adulthood. The parents should have been there to provide the attachment to encourage this, the thing to become the butterfly, right? But they don't. They start telling you how to be the butterfly. Or don't become a butterfly. Get a job and make money and don't listen to your heart's desires.

But really, the parents should have been providing you with that structure to go from the caterpillar to the butterfly. So now maybe at 35 or 40, we need to do that with either some friends, or a wife or husband, or somebody. Doing it alone is really going to be tough because of what you just said - man, those fears are going to hit us right in the face.

And then it's like Victor said, we're going to perceive these things happening to us and we're going to act like they're real. And now we're buying, Eastern philosophy would say, you're buying into your illusions, that life is dangerous. That's an illusion. And it's true, it is an illusion, because it's a perception. It's not a reality.

27:16 Kathy

And it's also when we get into that place where everything is dropping away, it's hard to come from a place of love, because you're acting out of fear. It's scary. And so to have that support system to remind us that if we keep coming out of a place of love and acceptance, that that's the path, not the fearful one.

27:35 Victor

Yeah, and so there's this other side to it, where we have this nervous system and it is designed to handle a threat. And there are real threats. And if you find yourself in a genuinely threatening situation, you want to respond as though it's a threat. That's not the time to sit there and be like, "Oh, I better calculate what my authentic self would do," right, and sit in a void state or something like that. No, when it's a real threat, you act as though it's a real threat.



The problem is - is that threat time stays in us and when the threat is long gone, we're still acting like it's there. That's the problem. And that's where we spend most of our lives and we build entire identities around it, around a single moment in time that is not going to happen again, ever.

And that's when we run into problems. That's when we start really sacrificing ourselves and causing trauma to ourselves. We sort of say, "No, no, no, I can never get in a car again because I was in that car accident that one time. I can never get in the car again." And now that one choice, out of fear, just completely ripples throughout the rest of life and completely changes. And then that person just says, "Well, that's just who I am. That's what I feel like." Well, no, that feeling is subject to change if you were to do certain work around it.

29:04 Kathy

Mm hmm. So you know, I've been thinking about our last conversation. And we talked about this concept of it's all one, which is the belief that we're all interconnected through the oneness of being.

Joe

There you go.

Kathy

But when we look around us, we see countless examples of people who are feeling separated and isolated. And maybe this just takes us back to where we started. But how can we work to heal some of this sense of separateness. We said the word illusion, which may be a nice place to start, that this is an illusion. So that would be my first question and then I've got a follow-up.

29:41 Joe

So we're not separated. It's totally an illusion. We're all in this together. We're all one. And it's that idea that we've been talking about all morning here, which is: In order to attach, I separated from the most fundamental part of myself, so of course now, I feel as though I am separate and isolated, because I isolated and separated from myself.



So if you go back to your original trauma, and say, “When I made the choice at seven to isolate and separate from my authentic self as a coping mechanism, I started this whole illusion in my mind that I am separate.” And when we go back and heal that trauma, we also will bring ourselves back into the awareness that we are all one and that we all need to be living our authentic lives in order to stay whole.

So not just me staying whole, like you guys are talking about my health. But staying whole in the sense of the wholeness of all of us as being one. So for every micro, there’s a macro exactly to it. And that is what is creating the illness of our society. It’s the same exact pathology that you and Victor just described as to why the individual is sick – I separate to survive, I think of myself as separate as the individual and then I act accordingly, so I’m willing to ruin the health of the earth in order to make sure that my own needs are met. So therefore, I lack compassion and empathy for Mother Earth. But in the long run, I also lack compassion and empathy for myself, because by destroying Mother Earth, I destroy myself.” Same exact pathology, exactly the same way of thinking.

31:52 Kathy

And it feels like it’s rooted in a sense of powerlessness.

Joe

Absolutely.

Kathy

So how can somebody who’s listening to this saying, “Yes, I’m agreeing. I don’t know what to do with that, though.” How did they start to work with it? Is it meditation? Is it compassion practices? Because I would think that, before we can turn that outward, we have to find a way to feel that wholeness within ourselves. So what might be some ways that people can start to work with that?

32:25 Joe

Well, that’s what I said before, I think the first step you need to take is to find somebody to talk to. And I’m all about meditation. I’ve been teaching Kundalini yoga for 22 years. I love to meditate. But I’m afraid for a lot of people, when you sit down to meditate, if you’re not used to meditating, the first thing that’s going to come up is the awareness of all your fears.





And that's exactly what should happen. That's not a mistake. That's what meditation does. It's going to bring up all your fears. Because you're going to finally let yourself be quiet enough and you're not going to be distracted with your daily activities. You're going to start feeling the fears that you've been trying to deny for 40 some years. So I don't think you should be alone at that moment.

So I think, yeah, you can go ahead and meditate, but take notes on all your fears and then get to somebody that you can talk to and start understanding that most of those fears are illusions, most of those fears are perceptions. And those things are being driven as coping mechanisms from the original trauma. And that you need to get back to that trauma, a true understanding of that trauma, and begin to heal that. And then it'll work backwards, you'll begin to eliminate the fears.

And I think the best way to do that, you know, Gabor Mate calls it Compassionate Inquiry. I think you need to be very compassionate with yourself. I think the other person you're talking to, they need to hold you to the truth, but they need to do it compassionately. Because this is going to be a tough time. You're going to feel a lot of pain and suffering. And you have to embrace that pain and suffering and allow it to be your teacher. Not hurry up and pop a pill or take a drink or distract yourself with too much work or any of these other things we use to medicate so that we don't feel the pain and suffering.

You have to invite the pain and suffering into your life and know that it's part of the process. It's what the void is going to feel like. And that you have to be comfortable with it and invite it in as your teacher. And that's what started you off on the wrong step to begin with - when your mom or dad said no to the crayons, that was a suffering to a child, that child feels a sense of suffering.

So the child says, "I want to alleviate the pain of this suffering." So I go, "Okay, mommy and daddy, don't separate from me and let me stay attached." And Daddy says or mommy says, "Okay, you're a good little boy," and we get our hug. And so now our body is filled with dopamine and whatever other chemicals and we feel all good and like, "Okay, so I don't have to feel the pain and suffering of being denied my desires."



Well, guess what? At age 40, 35, 55, 67 in my case, you need to be able to sit in that pain and suffering and say, "I invite you in as my teacher. I'm going to sit here with you until we get to the bottom of this thing, get back to the childhood, start healing the trauma." You will begin to heal simply by becoming consciously aware that when your mom and dad said no to those crayons, at 40 years old, you're afraid to ask for love. Because you're afraid to hear "No." So now you're afraid to reach out to somebody and say, "Will you love me? Will you care about me?" So you isolate yourself and you go, "Screw it, I'm just gonna make a whole lot of money and I don't need anybody." But it ain't gonna work, guys, sorry.

35:58 Kathy

Do you think some of this is the root of what we would typically call a midlife crisis? It's these things coming up and trying to reconcile all of this?

36:09 Joe

Yes. But unfortunately, what do we do? We substitute the fact that we were never able to really create an intimate, vulnerable, trusting, truthful relationship. Since I'm the male, let me just speak from my point of view. So I never was able to create that with my wife. And now, what's the midlife crisis, 52, something like that? So what do I do? Do I sit with that suffering and pain and change and tear down the personality structure and rebuild myself into my authentic self or my essence? Or do I go screw my secretary and buy a red Corvette?

Kathy

It's usually the latter.

Joe

Unfortunately, we take the pill, don't we? We swallow the pill.

36:52 Victor

To avoid the pain.

Kathy

But there is a choice. But there is a choice.

36:55 Joe



There's a great choice. And that great choice is the only choice that will ever bring you happiness. And that is to step back into the authentic self or into your true essence. And yes, you may be alone, but you'll be happy. Or you can keep not being alone, but you're not really happy, are you? Or why would you be going through a midlife crisis?

37:19 Kathy

Mmmmm. The last time we spoke, you had recommended a movie called *The Art of Being*. And for those who are unfamiliar, it's a documentary film that takes us throughout India to meet Ayurvedic medicine men who are living in harmony with nature and treating their patients' mind, body and spirit, very much in the way that we've been talking about today through these ancient healing methods.

And Victor, I know that this movie was quite impactful for you and put you on the path to become an Ayurvedic doctor. So I'm really curious about that a-ha moment. Because I think it ties into what we're talking about here of when something really resonated and rang true. I mean, I'm envisioning you watching this movie, something was hitting you the right way to want to learn more.

Can you talk a little bit about what that experience was like? What clicked when you were watching it? And what was that journey like to learn about these healing practices?

38:17 Victor

I think, actually, I'll answer that for sure. But I think more important than that was the stuff that happened before the a-ha moment. Because, you know, that's a common thing, when I talk to people and in the modern spiritual world. It's like, "Oh, yeah, I'm gonna get that moment where everything becomes clear, I'm going to get that intuitive hit," or something like that. And then all the pieces of the puzzle will come together and we're good. I don't really believe in that, personally. Because there's so much of the story that happens before an epiphany or an a-ha moment or all that preparation beforehand.

So I think that's really important. Because I recognized, I was fortunate I guess, to recognize how unhappy I was doing what I was doing in my early 20s. And then I was like, "I'm not going to spend my whole life like this." But I didn't want to just bypass everything. And I'd had some experience with yoga because it helped me with a health problem. So the doors had already opened up a little bit there.



And then what I did was, and thankfully I did this, I didn't know what I was doing at the time, but I sought out someone to talk to, which was Joe. So I started doing what we're talking about. I started talking to someone about, and I didn't know - I didn't know what Ayurveda was. I didn't know anything. I just started talking.

I was like, "This isn't working for me. I don't want to live the rest of my life this way. And I have all these fears and I don't know what to do about them." And so of course, he just started talking with me and giving me some yoga practices and things like that. And pranayama breathwork.

And little did I know, I was starting to work on my autonomic nervous system, building resilience. I was in communication with someone, so I had a level of attachment with someone who is kind and compassionate and open to listening, because that was something I was lacking in my upbringing. I could talk, but it wasn't really listened to, it wasn't really acknowledged. And that was just normal for me. People say, "Oh, yeah, good luck, I hope you figure it out." There was no real connection or the feeling like someone was in it with me and for me on my behalf and knew things that I didn't know. Because I was only 24 and I didn't have a lot of life experience.

So all that stuff led up to this. And then Joe suggested I look into Ayurveda, because he saw that kind of thing in me. He wasn't just saying it because that's what he wanted. He wasn't saying, "Oh, you should become an Ayurvedic practitioner because I want you to be an Ayurvedic practitioner." He saw I had an interest in that kind of stuff but I wasn't able to get there myself. I didn't even know what Ayurveda was, I couldn't just pull it out of thin air and say, "Yes, that's what I'm doing. I know it, I'm done."

So he sent me on an exploratory path. And part of that was that movie. And I watched that movie and I was feeling what I was feeling inside. And I was like, "Yeah, I want to do this more. I believe that these people have wisdom or something that I'm missing, so I want to go deeper into that exploration," which I feel like was an expression of my authentic self. Not Ayurveda, but the desire to explore more deeply into the truth of all that - that was the expression of the authentic self. And then that became unique in its expression in my own personal life. So that's how I would describe it.



41:46 Kathy

And that is the perfect conclusion, because you just perfectly illustrate everything that you've talked about in theory over this last hour. Well, this is how it really works in life. And I really appreciate you taking that step back, because to your point, the only reason why that movie had impact was because you did the work leading up to that. And sometimes we don't even know that we're doing that work.

42:09 Victor

Exactly. And that's the fun of it. We get surprised. You know, we do all this work and then we think we're aiming towards something, but then something else comes and you know, it's like, "Oh, that was what this work was actually in preparation for that. There was just no way I could have known that."

42:27 Kathy

And then Joe, as the compassionate guide on that journey, what was your perspective and seeing Victor work through this?

42:36 Joe

As I listened to Victor, you know, all I had to do was really hear him and then reflect back to him what he was telling me. And Victor, his impulses to his behavior, his personality structure at the time, was in conflict to what he really wanted. So I had to ask him to make some pretty radical changes, like to stop dating a certain young lady that he was dating at the time, that relationship was not his authentic self.

And so as that all unfolded for him, he made the transition away from his personality ego needs and to really looking and hearing himself when he talked and go, "Yeah, you know, what I really want is to be doing is this other thing, to be in service," it was pretty easy for me to point him in that direction because of my own life experiences. I'd been living an Ayurvedic lifestyle when I met Victor for 30 some years. So it was really easy for me to say, "Hey, you know, G, why don't you look at this stuff, because I think that's what you're looking for."

But really, it was just me mirroring back to him what he was saying to me. He was telling me he wanted it. He just couldn't hear himself. Because again, it's what I was saying



earlier, when he suggested to himself that I want to make major changes, his ego was throwing a temper tantrum, and saying, "Oh no you don't, I'm not gonna let you do this."

So my role was just to bypass his ego and provide him with another voice and say, "I would not listen to that friend of yours called ego. I would listen to this friend of yours called Joe right now, until you can hear your own voice, which is the voice of your intuition, not your ego, because intuition is the voice of the soul. And the soul is the authentic self."

So what is the intuition? It's the voice of the authentic self. When that becomes clear to you, when that voice is reaching you, I'll shut up and so will your ego shut up and you can take it on your own and I'll just be your friend. But until then, I had to be a little bit of a guide in the wilderness. And the only reason I can be that is just because I'm old. (laughter) I've already gone down the path for myself. So come on. I don't want to be that much older than Victor.

45:11 Kathy

Excellent. Do you have any closing thoughts or comments that you'd like to share before we wrap up?

45:18 Victor

Yeah, I do want to just reiterate one thing that Joe said, which is: I'm a firm believer, and I've experienced it many times, if I didn't have someone to talk to who was listening compassionately and reflect back to me, I would have tricked myself. I think that's really important for people to understand and it's crucial in the process. No one does it alone. Wellness does not happen alone. It doesn't.

And then, we always like to offer to people listening, just a way to connect to us. So Joe does numerology readings and you can reach out and email us at [reception@iiayurveda.com](mailto:reception@iiayurveda.com). That's completely free, no money, we will not upsell you, we promise. And then I do something similar just with Vedic Astrology, called Jyotish. All we need is your birthday, time and place. So if you email that to us and request it, then we'll get right back to you.

46:22 Joe



Yeah, and I'll send you an email with your little numerology write-up. And then I always put at the bottom that this is just a general reading. If you want something more, you can either ask me questions or we can Zoom talk and I don't charge for that either.

I really like meeting people. So it's just a way for me to meet you. So I'm willing to do a numerology reading just to get the opportunity to meet you - that's why we're doing it. We're just trying to connect. We're trying to put it into action. And really, if I could meet everybody in the world, I would love that. But I don't think I have time to meet what 7.2 billion people so...

47:00 Kathy

You've got a ways to go there.

Joe

(laughs) Got a ways to go.

Kathy

Well, thank you both for being friends of the podcast.

Joe

Yeah, sure.

Kathy

As always, I really enjoyed the conversation. Thank you so much for joining me today.

47:13 Victor

Thank you. We'll talk, we'll go for number four soon.

47:16 Kathy

That sounds wonderful. That sounds good.

47:18 Joe

Anytime you want, just tap us in.

Kathy



Beautiful.

47:22

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!