



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 101 – Everyday Life as Mindfulness Practice with Kristen Manieri
January 2, 2022

[00:00:00] Kathy Robinson: 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 101. Thanks so much for joining me. I'm joined today by Kristen Manieri, a mindfulness teacher, life coach, and the host of the *60 Mindful Minutes Podcast*. She's also the author of *Better Daily Mindfulness Habits: Simple Changes with Lifelong Impact*.

The theme of Kristen's work is to help others live a more conscious, connected, and intentional life. Here's what we cover:

- What mindfulness is, and why it's important to live mindfully;
- The barriers to being more mindful and strategies to navigate them;
- The importance of self-compassion when practicing mindfulness; and
- The trend of mindfulness in the workplace.

We end this episode with our Dose of Inspiration segment, where Kristen shares some of the things that are lighting her up these days. As always, I'll put links to those items in the show notes, along with Kristen's website, where you can find her book, blog, and podcast.

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



Kristen, welcome to the *Athena Wellness Podcast*. Thanks so much for being here today.

[00:01:48] Kristen Manieri: Thank you for having me. I just realized when we spoke a couple of weeks ago, I never asked you why you call it that, and I really want to know.

[00:01:55] Kathy: Yes. Well, Athena, being the archetype for having both the strength and the wisdom. When I started my coaching practice, I felt like it was going to be my job to bring those qualities out of my clients. That's how it all started.

[00:02:09] Kristen: I love that. Oh, cool. What a great flavor for this conversation. I'm so glad I asked you that.

[00:02:15] Kathy: Tell me a little bit about you, please. Share with our audience who you are and what you do.

[00:02:21] Kisten: I think at the core, I'm just a student, I'm a seeker. I think that I was put in this world, to not necessarily figure it all out, but just to ask a lot of questions and to keep looking and to keep studying and to keep growing.

Who I pull into that vortex with me is people who are really similar to that, people who are - I like to call it actively engaged in their personal evolution, people who are growing on purpose. Really almost like as a hobby or as a pastime, I've always found personal growth, for the most part, to be entertaining, especially when I started really getting into the neuroscience side of things and being able to watch my mind as a form of entertainment. We're so cuckoo and crazy and yet so predictable and so patterned.

Definitely, I'm just a learner. I read a book a week, I am constantly engaged in coaching groups and certifications. On paper, my resume is, I'm a certified mindfulness teacher. I'm an author, my book came out this summer, it's called



Better Daily Mindfulness Habits. Right after that, a couple of weeks later, two companion journals, the fill-in-the-blank daily journals, came out.

I'm certified to teach habits under the Tiny Habits method. That's something that's really spoken to me, in terms of how do the things that we realize would be wise choices, wise action, or how do we actually do that with consistency? The answer is, we integrate them into habits. We automate them.

That's me. I'm a mom. I've got an 11 year old and 13 year old, and I've got a husband who's just a super great life partner. We're just learning and growing together.

[00:04:23] Kathy: That's wonderful. I love that you use the word "vortex," this curiosity vortex that we're all spinning around and it's always helpful to have a guide to help us be a little bit more mindful as we're getting tossed around in this circular, sometimes, these mental patterns that we get caught up in.

I wanted to start at a macro level, intalking about mindfulness. It's a word that gets tossed around a lot. From your perspective, what is it and why is it so important to live that way?

[00:04:53] Kristen: For me, it started to make more sense, rather than it being just like a buzzword, when I started to see it more as a state, rather than a trait. When I looked at it differently from this thing that I was always trying to be, to a place that I visit from time to time. While I would like to increase the amount of time that I spend in a mindfulness state, I also understand that that's not actually how I'm engineered, that my mind is actually engineered to automate as much of my life as it possibly can.

The reason why is that our thinking and our will, they take up an incredible amount of resources. I can't remember the exact number, but our brain takes up an inordinate amount of resources, as opposed to the rest of our body, all the other functions that our body's trying to do, pumping our heart and breathing our lungs.



Our brain is taking up way more of that. To me, first really understanding, "Oh, I'm designed to be mindless," that actually is part of my survival mechanism.

Seeing that, to assume or to expect that mindfulness as a trait, something that I could just be, is not only unrealistic, but I think it just sets us up for disappointment and to be really hard on ourselves.

To me, mindfulness is a portal. It is a place that we visit, where we return to ourselves, where we find presence, where we create awareness of what's happening inside of us, and also around us. I like to think of it as more like doorways rather than a permanent way of being.

[00:06:39] Kathy: I love that there's such a sense of permission and relief in that explanation that, "Oh, this isn't something that I meant to do 100% of the time." In fact, I've even heard you say that life should feel good, in particular, "conscious, connected, and intentional." That felt so much more empowering to me than this sense of, if you're not being mindful in a particular moment, you've gone off track and there goes the day kind of a feeling.

What does that mean to live in a conscious, connected, intentional way?

[00:07:13] Kristen: For me, in my experience, it really starts with how I start my day. I get up early long before my kids, usually before the sun, and that's when I am by myself. I really covet that time because I know that when I get thoughtful, and I get still and I get quiet, and I think about the living of my life, what am I up to today, what's on my mind, what's my weather right now, just that step of tuning in, and just even noticing what's swirling inside, has me create more awareness, before I even start to create any intention around it.

Now I am conscious to tension or excitement or stress or whatever it is, it doesn't matter. Now that I'm conscious to it, it's no longer going to just run me like a record



player of something that's just going to get turned on and it's now going to co-opt my behavior for the rest of the day.

The next step is setting intentions. I can tell you like this morning, I looked at my calendar, I knew we had this podcast interview coming up. I sat with an intention for it, of being of service, of being a real presence with you, of delight and curiosity and gratitude.

We can just shoot from the hip, we do. We're really good at that as human beings. We can just go through the day and we are how we end up being and life just ends up showing up how it shows up, and that's fine, that's the good news, because luckily, that's how most of us are already living, so fine. You can keep living that way.

What I have found is that my life just works better when I actually approach it from a level of design and intent, like, "What do I actually want to create in this interview? What do I actually want to create in my interactions with my daughters this morning at breakfast, or in the phone call that I had on the way home from school with one of my dear friends?"

It's less of life just happening by accident or by serendipity, and more of me realizing, "Wow, I have real agency in my life." I can say for me, that really lights me up. That gives me such a sense of power and I'm a creator and I'm participating in my life. It just really excites me, it always has.

[00:09:55] Kathy: Not something that's happening to us, but this sense of agency. I love that. You just gave me a new journal prompt, which I think is great, "What's my weather?" What a lovely way to start the morning, of just - it feels expansive just in asking that, "Okay, what's going on with me today?" And then, "What do I do about that? How would I like to step into this day having that knowledge?" Absolutely lovely. I love it.



[00:10:22] Kristen: Pema Chödrön has a saying. I'm not going to be able to quote it directly, but you are the sky, not the weather.

[00:10:30] Kathy: That's exactly what came to mind. I'm like, "Should I quote her?" But she says...

[00:10:35] Kristen: I beat you to it.

[00:10:37] Kathy: Yeah! She says, "You are the sky. Everything else is just weather."

[00:10:42] Kristen: Yes, I love that. And to even just notice that, to even orient our awareness to that first thing in the morning, that underneath what I'm worried about, what I'm ruminating on, what I'm excited about, the roles that I'm going to play throughout the day, underneath all of that is just me, my stillness, my awareness, my consciousness. And to just tap into that, even for just a second of like, "There's just a "me" under all of this thinking and feeling and assessing and analyzing and judging."

To me, that just feels very - like a rudder for the day. Now I'm navigating differently than had I just gotten up late, get in the shower, yelling at kids, "Let's go." It makes me feel more in control.

[00:11:36] Kathy: Right. It's interesting too because we're actually taking that time by doing it. That was another quote. I can't remember who said it, but it was something to the effect of, "Meditate for five minutes. If you don't think you have five minutes, meditate for an hour." That idea that taking that time actually makes you more effective as you are trying to get the kids out to school and doing all the things that you want to do. Just taking that moment to calm yourself down. That's lovely.

Time is one of the barriers where we get off track with mindfulness, but there are others. In writing your book, what were some of the barriers that you identified and some strategies for helping people overcome them?



[00:12:17] Kristen: When we're looking at mindfulness as just a series of portals, just a series of openings or doorways where we can come back to ourselves, transcend the buzzing frantic thinking mind, and go, "Oh, wait. What's going on around me? What's going on inside me?"

When we think about it that way, we see that something like busyness, which is really rampant in our culture because we're just trying to cram as much as we possibly can into every single minute, if I am just zipping like a bumblebee, like flower to flower to flower, I haven't really created the white space. I'm not slow enough to be able to catch myself and go, "What am I feeling? What am I thinking? What's happening around me? What's happening inside of me?"

I love the metaphor of the bee and the butterfly. If you look, a butterfly is doing a very similar thing, it's going from flower to flower, collecting pollen, eating, but it's not doing it in this frantic outcome, intensely focused way of being. It's just meandering a little bit. It's got a sense of just whimsy to it, where it ends up going.

To me, I want to be a butterfly. I don't want to move through my day like this frantic worker bee. I want to be present. I want to come back to myself because that's where I'm my kindest. We are so awful to ourselves when we're busy.

Just from that standpoint, even if the only piece of fruit that you're going to grab onto this tree called mindfulness is that just - we tend to our basic physiological needs when we slow down and we really get intentional about being less busy - I'll take it. You don't need to meditate, just get up and stretch, drink a glass of water.

[00:14:21] Kathy: That's such a wonderful metaphor - the busy bee and the butterfly. And what struck me was - because I'm thinking of me being the busy bee in my corporate life and me being more of the butterfly in my entrepreneurial life - the difference between the two, the bee has a hive to build. There's expectation that the hive needs to be built and there are worker bees and it's never-ending.



The butterfly has already transformed. It's gone from caterpillar to disintegrating into goo to recreating itself to something that has wings and can appreciate that flower to flower visit versus the "I have to build a hive." And I never thought about mindfulness in that way. It's just such a beautiful metaphor.

That's the difference that it feels in your life when you do take those few moments to just collect yourself and check in and make sure your basic needs, as you said, are met and then go on with your day. It's not a place to stay. That is, I think, incredibly helpful as people are looking for that toehold, and how do I do this? How do I incorporate this into my busy life? Busy life doesn't change. How you approach it does. Thank you. Thank you for that.

Let's talk a little bit about your book. I have it right here. I've gone through it. What I love about it is that, much like this conversation, there's a lot of daily activities that are included in it. It's very practical, very accessible. There's tools in there, there are some trackers and some key takeaways. I love the way that it was created. Before I ask you the specifics, what would you like to share with our audience about your book?

[00:16:08] Kristen: I think we write the book that we need to read. I know with my own podcast and I know you've probably experienced this with all the authors that you've interviewed is that it was part of their journey to make sense of whatever it is that was the topic of their book. To articulate it, in a way, to get it all down, "I think I know something about this. I'm still learning. I'm still collecting. I'm still distilling."

When you go through the process of writing a book, this is why authors have multiple books, it's not like, "A-ha, I've figured it all out," but at least for me, it put in one place what I had figured out - so far. Then the just total joyous amazingness of being able to then share that with other people.

The book is meant to be just really accessible and really practical. It's meant to meet you where you are. Mindfulness, if we're not careful, it can become another



thing that we beat ourselves up for. Ever since I did my training in mindful self-compassion, I stand on a much sturdier ground of refusing to create more self-loathing.

My approach to mindfulness, and I really hope this came through when you read the book, is that wherever we are is okay. Even if you just spend 10 seconds a day, if you find yourself in the elevator, just taking a breath, or when you get in the car, just, "Okay. I'm back." That counts. Not only does that count, but that's awesome. That's just awesome. That was my intent for it, was just to make it more approachable and more accessible and more practical. I've heard from some people that that seems to have shone through.

[00:18:11] Kathy: What I loved about it is that everyday life becomes the practice. I call this concept "Taking your practice off the cushion and out into the world." In particular, noticing when you're getting triggered and using that as a practice point. "I'm feeling that I'm getting triggered here. Why?" Just taking that moment. "Why is that?" Then, "What can I do about that? How might I approach it differently?"

It's one thing to be all zen when you're sitting on your cushion or when you're writing in your journal in the morning, but then somebody cuts you off on the way to work and you go out of your mind. "Okay." Just that pause of, "Wow. Why was that so upsetting to me? What was it about that?" Just spending a moment looking into that.

It's those types of practices that I feel like, it's not something, to your point, of, "Oh, I need to put 10 minutes aside to do this." It's how you are digesting the things that are happening in your life in the moment and learning how to be a little bit more in the moment, which by default is mindfulness.

[00:19:22] Kristen: We're always going to get triggered. All of my stuff, my experiences, my beliefs, how I was raised, all the things that have happened to me



or around me, it's got decades of a head start in terms of the neuroplasticity of me being able to rewire my mind, which we all can do.

But I have to be able to honor that, yeah, there are certain ways that if people talk to me, it will absolutely trigger me - every single time. I doubt very much that I will somehow rewire that in this lifetime. And I can also learn to study myself in the face of any trigger, whether it's getting a text on my way home from dropping my kids off to school saying, "Mommy, I forgot my flute, can you turn around and come back?" The answer is no. But it wasn't like, "Oh my God!" It's like, "Okay, that really triggers me." I'm feeling like, "Is she going to be a responsible adult? Why can't she-- Have I done something wrong?"

Sure, I could have gone down a rabbit hole of just a text, "Can you turn around--" from her teacher, "Can you turn around and bring me back my flute?" It was like, "I can be with this. I'm triggered and that's okay."

I think I love having the opportunity to share that because one of the things that gets in the way of our work as we evolve is this false idea that we shouldn't get triggered anymore.

In fact, I was just thinking earlier on when we were speaking about a funny story about the Dalai Lama, I saw him speak about - oh my goodness, it's got to be about 18 or 19 years ago now in Toronto. He was speaking and what an amazing experience, this huge arena, thousands of people there, but it didn't matter. I was like, "Oh my God, I'm in the same airspace, I'm breathing the same air as the Dalai Lama, this is incredible."

What's interesting is wherever the Dalai Lama goes, he brings an interpreter with him. And he speaks very good English, but when he gets going really fast, he likes to speak in his native tongue, but he will flip back and forth.

He is speaking in his native tongue, because he was doing a teaching that I guess was a little more detailed, it was more accessible to him in his native tongue. His



interpreter is interpreting it in English. And at one point, he looked at the interpreter, chewed him out, and then started speaking in English really, really, really fast. I thought to myself, "God, even the Dalai Lama got triggered." In that moment, he was annoyed that the interpreter wasn't saying it right, and he speaks perfect English, so he knew what the interpreter was saying.

I just love that because we put these people on these pedestals and think, "Oh my gosh, I wish I was like that. I wish I could be that mindful." It's like, "Hey, everybody gets triggered. Even the Dalai Lama gets triggered." It's not going to go away, but we can learn to work with it and slow it down and transcend it and not react to everything that we get triggered to, so there's hope for all of us truly.

[00:22:41] Kathy: We are on the same wavelength today because as you were speaking, I was actually thinking of the Dalai Lama and not in that story, but the fact that I think once you recognize your own patterns of being triggered, you see the humor in it. When I think of that, I think of him. Because he's got this wonderful joyous sense of humor in looking at himself and being able to laugh, like, "Yes, that's human nature." I think again there's this permission of we're not trying to change who we are as humans, we're learning how to work with it.

[00:23:18] Kristen: Yes.

[00:23:19] Kathy: That's really what these practices are about. How do we operate better in the world knowing that this is the case, this is how we are, this is how we're wired, and how do we work with that?

[00:23:30] Kristen: My husband, in his coaching practice, he has a great distinction that we are human being, we are human, we are survivalists, we are egos, we are brains and physiological frameworks. We are also a being and they're both there. Being able to honor both sides of that, the fact that we are just a body and a mammal, a lot of the time when you really distill it down like, "I'm a mammal trying to get my basic needs met, and I'm also a consciousness that can



have empathy and compassion and can have true love and connection with people."

I think it's good to just really, really embrace and love ourselves in all of our beautiful flaws in our humanness. It's what makes us wonderful and it's also what makes us wild and you can't have one without the other.

[00:24:32] Kathy: Absolutely. Speaking of connection, you have an absolutely wonderful podcast called *60 Mindful Minutes* and we're going to link up your book and the podcast in the show notes. Can you tell us a little bit about the show, why you decided to start it, and just what you've learned from that experience?

[00:24:52] Kristen: I started at the end of 2017 and I was listening to a podcast. It was with Gary Vaynerchuk or most people know him as Gary V, you must know him, rash and bold. At the time, that's what I must have been aligning with. He was being interviewed by someone named James Altucher and Gary V was riffing about how basically people are lazy.

You have no reason not to start something. Do you want to start a blog or a business or write a book or a podcast? Just do it. There's nothing getting in your way. He said after literally chewing everyone out who was listening for not having one of those things, he said, "I know I'm going to totally regret this, but if you start a podcast in the next 30 days, I will be a guest on it."

I was like, "Really? Okay." Then James Altucher said the same thing, he's like, "You know what? I know I'm going to regret this, but I will also be a guest on your podcast if you start one then in the next 30 days." I looked at the date of the podcast and it was the day before, and I was like, "Huh, I think I'm going to do this." I had been thinking about it for months at the time, but to Gary V's point, I hadn't executed.

So, I did. I think it was two weeks later that my trailer went out and then my first episode went out. While I never ended up having either of them on it, partly



because it wasn't a good fit for their prototype, also, you had to fly to New York, and it was like you got to talk to them for five minutes, and I was like, "Oh, it's okay." I was so grateful for the spirit of that challenge and I took it, so that's really how it started. It was just this Gary V challenge that I was like, "All right, I'll take your challenge." Then it just morphed, it started out being just conversations about connection and then I moved more into talking about mindfulness.

I actually changed the name about halfway through. And I interview authors and we talk about their book. It's such an absolute pleasure to read a book, because I love to read. And I read like I'm eating, I underline and I make notes and I write in my journal, but then to do that and then get to interview the author, it's like I've won the lottery honestly.

It's just the absolute best thing. I love to do it and I think that really comes through. I'm super passionate about it, super excited. Like you, it's like, "What? I get to do this? Are you kidding me?" I know we talked about that offline, but it's a great gig.

[00:27:41] Kathy: I think both of those gentlemen would benefit from listening to your podcast.

When you're looking at your potential guests, what makes a compelling story? What makes you want to contact somebody and say, "You know what? I think my audience would appreciate this?"

[00:27:58] Kristen: It's such a good question. I think that my audience is me. I really reach out to the authors and read the books and ask the questions that I'm interested in, I want to know the answer to. I don't give a lot of thought to that marketing angle of who's my avatar, who is my audience, because I really do think my audience is me.

Because of that, my interviews are very organic and very authentic. They really are just my own curiosity shining through, my own just gratitude for the opportunity to



dive deeper into some concepts and to share what they've spent probably hundreds of hours creating with the world.

To be able to spend 60 minutes with them and pull out what I think are some of the things that resonated most with me, it's just fun. It's just a fun thing to do, so I don't think a lot about. I don't drill through audience demographics.

I think it's really neat to see that it's being listened to all over the world. Sometimes I'll just look and be like, "Wow, there's hundreds of people in Russia listening to it. Wonder what that's all about. Why is this resonating to Russians?" I think that's really cool, and Korea and Kenya, and it's just neat.

Do you ever do that? Are you ever like, "Wow, who is this person in Rwanda listening?"

[00:29:32] Kathy: I have to admit I do! And when I was starting out, somebody said, "No matter how small the audience is when you start, think about all of those people in a room and you're standing in front of them." Because it's an odd job we give ourselves.

My early shows were solo shows, so I'm talking to nobody, but then to get on and see exactly that, look at these people around the world, people I would've never met otherwise, and they're getting something from it.

That's the fuel. It keeps you going. Then you get to expand out and talk to some really lovely people and get their message out. Then it becomes more of that platform to be able to share ideas. And if it's a little uptick in somebody's day, that's a pretty cool job-

[00:30:20] Kristen: Yes.

[00:30:21] Kathy: -to be able to do that. It really comes through in the folks that you speak to, the topics that you cover. Again, highly recommended.



[00:30:30] Kristen: Thank you.

[00:30:32] Kathy: Along with being a writer and being a podcast host, you're also a coach and a teacher. And I'm curious, for some people, these 20 months have been insightful, for some a struggle. Have you noticed a change in your clients and your students in what they're looking for from you over these last almost two years now?

[00:30:57] Kristen: Yes. I think a common thread, and it may be pandemic related, it may not be. I do think that the world has been shifting for some time in terms of people's orientation towards being more intentional, being more conscious, having more awareness.

I was speaking to someone recently and they asked me what I thought about the concept of McMindfulness, this idea of corporate America stealing the mindfulness movement to try to make a bunch of money off of it. While I don't applaud that intent, that there is a commercial underpinning to it, what I do applaud is that clearly if there's people looking to make money off it, then there's people willing to spend money on it. That to me is very heartening. I think that there's a lot of people who are ready and willing and able to start doing their inner work.

I think that the real work for anybody who is a teacher or a podcast host is to just make the space for it. It's just to say, "Here's one book about mindfulness. There's 1,200 more." It's not like I am writing about something that is this groundbreaking concept, but it's all about creating these opportunities, and anyone can create them.

I mean, anyone can read a book that inspires them and then reach out to 10 friends and say, "Hey, how about we all read this book and then just get on a Zoom call in a month and talk about it? I'm not an expert on it. I didn't write it, but it's speaking to me. Let's actually talk about it."



What I see more and more is that people are putting up their hand and saying, "I want to have these conversations. I want to listen to these conversations. I'm interested. I'm open to what you have to say about intentional and conscious living." Yes. I think that's manifesting in every single corner of my life.

[00:33:11] Kathy: Well, tell me then a little bit about your own practices and keeping yourself well. You're a big morning routine fan. What else do you do to keep yourself well, because you're balancing kids and a husband and a business.

[00:33:25] Kristen: I think that the moment that I figured out that exercising actually gives me more energy, I know that probably sounds counterintuitive, like, "Wait a second. If I start emptying the tank at seven o'clock in the morning, then there's not as much in it at seven o'clock at night," but it actually doesn't work that way. It's quite the opposite. I exercise really regularly. I get outside as much as I possibly can.

I orient my time towards connection probably more so than the average person because I realize that's another fuel for me. I have regular calls. I have a friend that I speak to on the way home from school on Tuesday, another one on Wednesday, another one on Thursday. I have my date night with my husband, usually, on Friday or Saturday. I have a date moment or date day. I have a date hike with my youngest daughter and I usually go up for lunch with my other daughter. Connection is definitely a ritual.

What you'll hear me say, if you're tuning into the how, is they're scheduled. I literally schedule these things into my calendar. If you look at my calendar, you'll see that I have "Call Sarah, call Stephanie, call Kendra, date night," that kind of thing. I have my exercise scheduled in there.

When I commit to something, it's not a "should," it's literally time blocked into my calendar. These things, the social connection, wellness, getting enough sleep, it might seem like indulgence or self-care stuff, but it's the core of resilience.



I can't access my sturdy steady self when I'm underslept, underfed, underloved. I just can't. I'm just too wobbly. My weather comes in, as we were talking about, it's just too stormy in here.

How can I possibly access a part of me that's discerning and patient and quiet when I'm on my seventh cup of coffee because I didn't get a good night's sleep? I've just practiced - I've been my own scientific experiment for the last two decades - and realized that doesn't work. It doesn't work to run on caffeine. I don't feel good. I'm kind of a jerk when I'm over-caffeinated. I don't show up how I want to show up.

I think for us to take real control of our wellness rituals, what makes me sturdy and steady, not like, "Wouldn't it be nice," but something that we should be responsible for, because that's what a responsible human would do is give ourselves what we need in order to be at our best.

That's why I think all these habits books are so popular, like *Tiny Habits*, *Atomic Habits*, and *The Power of Habit*. What they have discovered, what they're really sharing with the world is, discipline, willpower, and motivation are finite. You're going to run out of those. They're not going to last. How do we figure out a way to consistently and regularly do what matters, whether that's getting to bed at a good time or turning our devices off at a certain time, or doing some movement in the morning.

The answer is habits. When we habituate something and our mind just does it-- I don't ever have to think, "Should I brush my teeth today? Okay, come on, brush your teeth." It's so automated. I've been doing it for four decades, or more than four decades now. When we can, yes, stop using discipline and willpower and motivation to try to do the things that you want to do and learn about habits and the science of habits and a habit methodology that would work for you, it will totally liberate you from this idea that we have to be self-disciplined. I'm not self-disciplined, I've just figured out how to habituate everything that matters.



[00:37:17] Kathy: Beautiful. Actually, we've slipped into our Dose of Inspiration segment, which is how we usually wrap up these conversations, talking about some of your wellness practices and some of the thoughts behind that.

I know you're a big reader. You've mentioned that, and you've got a beautiful reading list on your website. What's something that you've read or listened to lately that you've enjoyed that you can share with our listeners?

[00:37:40] Kristen: I just finished earlier this month, *Stillness Is the Key* by Ryan Holiday. I love this book because it has a lot of little chapters. For me, part of my morning practice is I keep an inspirational book near me and it's nice to be able to just - that completeness of, "I got a whole chapter done." But the chapters are only like a page and a half, or they're a little bit longer than that, maybe two or three pages.

But it's just an insightful book with lots of just little but really relevant gems of wisdom, great stories. He's a beautiful biographer. He tells stories of JFK and Michael Jordan and Winston Churchill and Tiger Woods that I'd never heard before that really has you understand the concepts in a much more tangible way. Yes, that's the one, if anybody asks me recently, I think, "Oh, yes, that's a good one."

Then I just finished *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*, which I think that book is like 50 years old or something like that. It is so relevant. It is just such a good book. I'm like, "Oh my God, I want to give it to every single parent I know. It's just so helpful, such helpful wisdom."

[00:38:54] Kathy: Wonderful. Envision the perfect road trip. Where do you go? What do you do?

[00:39:01] Kristen: Oh my goodness. It is with my kids and my husband. We absolutely love traveling together. It's a foodie trip. We're somewhere and the point is to just eat our way around that place. It could be - it doesn't matter.



We think of the usual suspects of Italy or France or something like that. This summer, we did a culinary road trip of Vancouver Island. It was amazing. We ate some amazing food. I don't know, I just think food is such a beautiful way to get to know a place and it creates such wonderful memories. Yes, it's food and it's family and being super mindful and present.

[00:39:45] Kathy: Perfect. Lastly, what has you optimistic about the future?

[00:39:50] Kristen: Just the McMindfulness movement. Honestly, I think the fact that – it's funny to say that because I know people speak of it, that whole word is meant to denote some sort of cynicism or criticism. But it's very heartening to me. People that I see, and there's a tremendous wellspring of wisdom, and people are open to it. To me, that says the tides are turning. We are becoming a more compassionate, wise and empathetic species. I really, really think that.

If you think about hundreds of years ago, people used to go to coliseums and watch people get slaughtered for sport. We don't do that anymore. That's not to say that we're no longer flawed or hateful or vengeful or violent, we certainly are, but when we start to look back at where we've come from – barbarians! – I'm like, "We can see hope."

We really can see that we are becoming better as a species, but it just takes us all taking responsibility for our own betterment. Luckily, you don't have to sign up for a course or buy a book or hire a teacher, you can just start tuning in and just doing the work of being better just for today. Even if it's just for the people that you spend your life with. How can I just be better today? I see that everywhere.

[00:41:21] Kathy: Oh, that's a wonderful way to wrap up here. Tell us, what's the best way for our listeners to get in touch with you?

[00:41:28] Kristen: My website, just go to kristenmanieri.com. There's a free course on there about how to start a daily centering practice, so if that's something that has piqued anyone's interest in like, "How would I do that? Where would I do that?"



Why would I do that? What would I do while I was doing that?" I answer all those questions in these videos and audios. It's a great place for people who would like to start setting aside a little bit of time for themselves to do that inner work, that more contemplative space.

[00:41:56] Kathy: Perfect. Well, it was such a wonderful conversation. Thank you so much for your time today. I really do appreciate it.

[00:42:01] Kristen: Thank you, Kathy. I loved this so much! Thank you for having me.

[00:42:05] Kathy: [laughs] Same here.

[music]

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 spirits and love.

If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. 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, have a question you'd like addressed on a future episode, or would like a transcript of this episode, visit www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast.

Until next time, be well!

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