



**The Athena Wellness Podcast**  
**Episode 142 – Is Nomadic Living Right for You? with Heather Markel**  
**July 20, 2022**

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**[00:00:05] 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.

**[00:00:30] Kathy:** Hello and welcome. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

Today I'm joined, once again, by professional traveler Heather Markel. During this discussion, Heather offers advice to those who dream of living a nomadic lifestyle and offers some insight into how she travels light.

And now onto the show. I hope you find this conversation helpful.

**[00:01:05] Kathy:** Once again, I'm joined by professional traveler Heather Markel. Welcome back, Heather.

**[00:01:09] Heather Markel:** Thank you.



**[00:01:11] Kathy:** Heather, I'm envisioning the listener who may be on her way to or from her corporate job and maybe she's got a similar dream or has a feeling or a longing that there's something more. What steps might she take to begin to get some clarity? What advice would you have for her?

**[00:01:32] Heather:** The first thing to me is really acknowledge that feeling. I spent a lot of time in my head explaining to that feeling why you can't exist, why you should go away. Because this feeling isn't going to help us make money, pay rent, or retire. And so, I guess, first, realize that there's more to life than retirement and put the emphasis on living well and allow your heart to speak and to sing.

And then, if you are someone that wants to explore this full-time traveling, know that there's so many paths to doing it. What's lovely now, what people can do now that I couldn't do when I quit, is you can work remotely. So if you are someone that wants something without so much risk, you can explore. Go talk to your team and your manager about what opportunities are there for you to work remotely. You might investigate spending 6 or 12 months doing your job in different places of the world.

And your, of course, challenge will be the work-life balance. "Well, I've come to Peru to do my job for a month. How exciting. How do I not spend all my time in Peru indoors [chuckles] working?" But it is a path that is possible for you.

Another thing you can explore is a sabbatical. Maybe you actually, don't want to work while you're traveling, but you also don't want to give up your lifeline of work. Even if you could take three or six months off, isn't that amazing? So explore whether that's a possibility.



If you decide, "No, I want to go all in, if I'm going to do this," I would suggest experiment with vacation. Depending on how much vacation time you have in a year, take as much of it as you can at once. If you can do a month all together, do it.

And challenge yourself within that vacation to do it differently. You might book your ticket there and your ticket back and then book a couple of nights accommodation and then don't book anything else. [chuckles] See how you feel. Are you comfortable? You probably won't be, I can tell you that. It is uncomfortable to move out of vacation plan travel and to just go with the flow.

But try it and see if you can get a feel for like, "What's it like for you to have your suitcase and change location and not have your own bed?" It's like you have all of the responsibility on you to plan every day and create the experience you want, which is both scary as heck and also really empowering.

So take the time to feel into that as you go and how do you feel as you recognize that you have this amazing power and also this amazing responsibility.

**[00:04:40] Kathy:** I'm curious how your routines have changed since 2017. Meaning, I'm guessing that as you can trust into this synchronicity and these coincidences, that you're probably carrying much less with you as you go on these trips. Can you talk a little bit about what you were taking early on and how that has shifted over time?



**[00:05:03] Heather:** Yeah, and I got to tell you honestly, it doesn't matter that I've gotten better at packing. I still feel like I have too much. Just my computer and my camera is already more than I want to carry. [chuckles]

But yeah, I think my first trip was like a bigger bag and throwing as much in it as I could. In Costa Rica, that couple I mentioned that I had wanted to meet up with, they taught me, man, they had next to nothing with them. They were traveling for six weeks, they had this wonderful folding technique. I had met this woman about a year before on my way to Iceland who told me about the military rolling technique, so I learned all these ways to pack better.

And then, as I went, man, I have a friend to this day in Costa Rica because I had a power bank with me. I'm like, "Obviously, I got to have the best technology with me." It was like a brick. I'm like, "I can't do this anymore." I had a technology incident of some sort while I was there. He drove me all the way to-- it was like a half-hour drive away to get to whatever this place was where I needed to get the cord or whatever. Anyway, I gave him my power bank. I didn't charge him. I'm like, "Please take it." He was like, "Can I pay you?" I was like, "No, no, no, you're saving me from carrying this." We're still friends to this day. I, actually, just talked to him last week.

So, what I've learned is to attempt to think really carefully about taking the stuff, making piles before I start of what I know I need, and then maybe a nice-to-haves in a separate pile and attempt to leave out as close to all of the may be nice-to-haves and take only what I need.

Also, you know what? I will wear the same shirt two days in a row, unless it's a really hot place. I don't travel elegantly. I travel as lightweight as I can. I'm now inspired



by these friends that I made in Costa Rica. I travel with a carry-on suitcase and a backpack that's even smaller than that. That's all I have. I want to avoid airline baggage fees, so it's really about condensing and questioning everything I put in the bag.

I've gotten used to three pairs of shoes. One hiking shoe, still on my feet and then two other pairs of shoes in the bag. Sometimes I think maybe only one other pair of shoes will be enough. It's bring a little because also when I arrive at a place, oftentimes you find like, "Oh, everybody here--" Like, "Oh, the climate's different than I expected. I'm going to need to pick up this thing."

In New Zealand, it was a sweater. In Thailand, it was fun pants, whatever. So leaving the space to know that you want to pick up a couple of things that make you feel like you're more at ease within the culture.

And then, on the road, being willing to just throw out stuff as you go and you realize you made a mistake, donate it to a secondhand shop or just leave it for people. If you are in a hostel, they love that. Just leave it and somebody else will take it.

**[00:08:30] Kathy:** Wonderful. So your advice then would be pack light, start as small as you need to, but by all means consider and give it a try.

**[00:08:40] Heather:** Yeah, absolutely.

**[00:08:42] Kathy:** Wonderful. Thank you so much. I will link up all of your information in the show notes. Heather, I really appreciate your time today.



**[00:08:48] Heather:** Thank you for having me.

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**[00:08:53] Kathy:** 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.

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](http://www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast).

Until next time, be well!

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**[00:09:55] [END OF AUDIO]**